

OVERVIEW & OUTLINE

Romans

The evangel according to Paul

“My evangel” (2:16)

BOB EVELY

2011.

“For God locks up all together in stubbornness,
that He should be merciful to all.” – Romans 11:32

*All Scriptures taken from the Concordant Literal New Testament
and the Concordant Version of the Old Testament unless otherwise noted.
Concordant Publishing Concern, 15570 West Knochaven Road,
Santa Clarita, CA 91387 (www.Concordant.org)*

Grace Evangel Fellowship:
P O Box 6, Wilmore, KY 40390
www.GraceEvangel.org

About the Author

The writer of this letter clearly identifies himself as *Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, a called apostle...* (1:1) Let us recall the commission Paul received on the road to Damascus: *He is a choice instrument of Mine, to bear My name before both the nations and kings, besides the sons of Israel.* (Acts 9:15-16) And we know from Acts that Paul did go first to the synagogues to proclaim Christ to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles. Peter, John, James and other New Testament writers had a commission to Israel only. Paul alone was commissioned to go to the Gentiles.

We cannot assume Paul's message to the Gentiles was the same as the message proclaimed by the others unto Israel. Paul stressed that the gospel he proclaimed was not received from man, *but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.* (Galatians 1:11-12) If he preached the same gospel, why would he not have studied under the Twelve who had heard and observed Christ Himself during His earthly ministry? And why would Paul refer to his proclamation as "my evangel" instead of "the evangel?" (Romans 2:16; 16:25-26). Paul notes that he had been entrusted with the evangel of the Circumcision, and Peter had been trusted with the evangel of the Uncircumcision. (Galatians 2:7). He did not say that his was the evangel *to* the Uncircumcision; but *of* the Uncircumcision. It was a different message, and this can be clearly seen if we examine the details. Paul is the only one to have mentioned the rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:13, or the expectation of the body of Christ in the celestials in Ephesians 2:6. Israels' expectation was always upon the earth, not in the celestials or heavens.

Paul was abandoned by nearly all at the end of his ministry (see 2 Timothy 1:15; 4:16; Acts 21:20). Note in the Acts passage that when Paul returned to Jerusalem he was opposed not by unbelieving Jews, but by believing Jews who were zealous for the law – a clear signal that Paul's message was different than that of the Twelve, and as a result Paul was opposed by Jewish *believers*.

Paul, in his writings, refers to a mystery that had been previously concealed, but which he was now revealing as God had instructed him. ... *His body, which is the ecclesia of which I became a dispenser, in accord with the administration of God, which is granted to me for you, **to complete the word of God** ... the **secret** which has been **concealed** from the eons and from the generations, yet now was **made manifest** to His saints ...* (Colossians 1:24-16) ... *by revelation the secret is made known to me ... the secret of the Christ, which, in other generations, is not made known to the sons of humanity ...* (Ephesians 3:3-5)

Clearly Paul was commissioned to address a group not previously addressed by the Twelve (the Gentiles), with a different message that had been revealed to him not by man but by Christ Himself.

Introduction

ROMANS 1:1

What can we learn from the letter's introduction?

Paul is an apostle (1:1). The Greek for apostle is *apostello*. When used as a verb it is translated *commission*. An apostle is one who has been commissioned by God.

But here is an interesting thought. When God worked thru Israel as His instrument there were twelve apostles ... no more, and no less. Just as there were twelve tribes in Israel, there were twelve apostles. When Judas departed there was a need to replace him with just one, to bring the number back to twelve. Not so with Paul, who is **a different kind of apostle**. The Twelve were commissioned to proclaim the *evangel* (*gospel*, or *good news*) to Israel ... the twelve tribes. The *good news* concerned the coming of the Messiah to reign on David's throne, and the restoration of the kingdom upon the earth; the promises made *to Israel* thru the Old Testament prophets. Paul was the first commissioned to go **to the Gentiles**. We see in his writings a message concerning the *body of Christ* (Jew and Gentile alike with no barrier or preference). In Paul's writings we hear for the first time of things pertaining to Christ's return to *snatch away* the body (1 Thessalonians 4:13), the body's destiny in the heavenly realm (Ephesians), justification (as compared with pardon) and reconciliation. Paul was a different kind of apostle, commissioned to go to a different group of people and bearing a different message.

Paul was **severed** (1:1), or *cut out* from his fellow Jews and from the other apostles because God had a special purpose for him. We should not *assume* that Paul's work and message were the same as that of Peter and the others. Peter and the Twelve went exclusively to the Jews, as we see throughout the book of Acts. Paul was *severed* to go to a different group ... the Gentiles. And if we look carefully we will see that his message was not the same as the message borne by the others. The differences in his message led to Paul's persecution by the others, even as he returned to Jerusalem late in his ministry and was opposed by *tens of thousands* of the Jews *who have believed* and who were *zealous for the law*. (Acts 21:20)

Paul tells us he was severed for **the evangel** of God (1:1). Study the word *evangel* in its every occurrence throughout the New Testament and you will see that it simply means *good news*. It is not always the same good news in every instance. Most popular Bible teaching tells us that the gospel (the word *evangel* in the Greek) is always the same. But clearly this is not so, as can be clearly seen by any who would study the word *evangel* every time it appears throughout Scripture.

Paul was severed, or set apart from others, for **the good news of God concerning His Son**. (1:3) Paul will proceed to tell us specifically what this good news consists of. As to the flesh, the Son came of the seed of David (1:4), thereby satisfying the Messianic requirements outlined by the prophets. We remember that the Jews placed great emphasis on satisfying fleshly requirements, like circumcision. But the Son was also *designated Son of God with power* (1:4). So as it pertains to the Jews, the Son came of the seed of David. And as it pertains to all mankind, He was designated Son of God.

We recall that **Jesus was commissioned to go exclusively to the lost sheep of Israel** ... the Jews (Matthew 15:24). And Jesus commissioned the Twelve to go to the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 10:6). Their message to Israel concerned the nearness of the kingdom ... the kingdom that had once belonged to Israel ... the restoration of which had been foretold by the prophets. Israel was awaiting the restoration of the kingdom. Even in Acts, following the resurrection and ascension of Christ, Peter speaks **to the Israelites** (Acts 2:22; 2:36). Later when Peter is called to go to Cornelius, a Gentile, he resists. And when finally Peter does go to Cornelius, we see that this is a unique case. Cornelius is not just any Gentile ... he is *devout and fearing God* (Acts 10:1). And even after this incident Peter does not re-direct his ministry toward the Gentiles. In Galatians 2:7 we learn that Peter had been entrusted with *the evangel of the Circumcision* (Israel).

It is Paul who has been chosen by Christ and commissioned as **an apostle to go directly to the nations**. Paul was entrusted with *the evangel of the Uncircumcision* ... the Gentiles (Galatians 2:7). It is for this that Paul was *severed* from the others, because his commission was a new direction being established by God.

For faith-obedience among all the nations. (1:6) This, then, is the purpose for which Paul was given grace and chosen as an apostle ... so that those of all the nations might have faith-obedience ... just as Abraham had faith and it was reckoned to him as righteousness (Romans 4:3). It is important to recognize that *faith obedience* is not faith *and* obedience. This is clearly not what this passage tells us in the original Greek. So what is faith obedience? It means *to obey by having faith, or to believe*. It is the act of having faith that is the obedience. It is, therefore, faith alone ... and not faith plus works of obedience. We will see this more clearly in Paul's later comments on the subject, but for now we simply note that the Greek in this passage does not read faith *plus* obedience ... it is simply *faith obedience*.

This letter is directed **to the saints** in Rome (1:7). *Saints* comes from the Greek *hagios* which is translated *holy* when speaking of things other than people. So a saint could be referred to as *a holy one*. A study of the word *holy* in Scripture will reveal that God is the acting agent. To be *holy* means to be *set apart* by God for some purpose. It is not a trait or behavior of a thing that causes it to be holy ... it is the declaration of God as to what *is* holy. We see in Romans 1:7 that these saints (holy ones) in Rome are also referred to as *the*

called of Jesus Christ. It is God who does the calling. Abraham did nothing to earn righteousness. God spoke to him and he believed, and this was *reckoned* to Abraham as righteousness (Romans 4:3).

Paul concludes the introduction noting that he is making mention of the saints in Rome, always, **in my prayers**... (1:8) We see many references to prayer in Paul's letters. Here we see him thanking God for the faith of the saints in Rome, and beseeching God to be able to come to Rome if that be God's will. The frequency of Paul's mention of prayer should cause us to make prayer a key element in our own lives. And Paul's petitions are always God-centered, not self-centered. Paul's desire to come to Rome is for the purpose of *sharing some spiritual grace* with them, for the saints *to be established*. But there is also mutual benefit when Paul meets with the saints ... *to be consoled together among you through one another's faith, both yours and mine.* (1:11) There is benefit to be derived when saints meet together.

The evangel is introduced

ROMANS 1:14

Paul is eager to bring the evangel to the saints in Rome. He is not ashamed of the evangel. (1:15) As noted already, the word *evangel* simply means *good news*, and we must look at the context to know what specific good news Paul is here referring to.

Here in Romans 1 we learn that the evangel is **God's power for salvation for everyone who is believing** (1:16). The focus of the evangel is on God, and His power. This power for salvation is revealed to those who are believing. Those who do not, or cannot believe, do not recognize God's power.

We also learn that in the evangel **God's righteousness is being revealed, out of faith for faith.** (1:17) Out of whose faith? And for whose faith? Romans 3:22 sheds light: *... a righteousness of God through Jesus Christ's faith, for all, and on all who are believing...* So God's righteousness is brought forth **out of Jesus Christ's faith**, and it is **on all who are believing**. [More on this when we look at 3:22]

Is it our CHOICE to believe or not believe?

Consider this. Was it Abraham's choice to believe, or was the ability to believe granted to him by God in order that God's purposes might be fulfilled thru Abraham? Did God speak equally to all men, giving all the same chance, but only Abraham believed ... or did God speak to Abraham in a way that he had not spoken to others, because Abraham was chosen by God? Think about these passages:

For you it is graciously granted, for Christ's sake, not only to be believing on Him... (Philippians 1:29)

... the god of this eon blinds the apprehensions of the unbelieving so that the illumination of the evangel of the glory of Christ, Who is the Image of the invisible God, does not irradiate them. (2 Corinthians 4:3)

Consider Paul's conversion. Paul did not simply *choose* to believe and become a follower of Christ. As a matter of fact Paul was the premier opponent of Christ. Yet he was chosen outside of his own "free will." Paul was directly spoken to in a way that others had not been spoken to, because he was the one chosen for this special commission. So it would seem that the *saints* at Rome, the *called of Jesus Christ*, were those chosen by God and given the eyes to see and believe in order that God's purposes might be fulfilled thru them.

Now we have seen, from Paul's brief preliminary remarks in Romans, that the evangel is God's power for salvation for *everyone who is believing*, but **is salvation only for Believers?** Let us remember what Paul says elsewhere in his writings:

God, Who wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4)

(God) Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will ... (Ephesians 1:11)

Christ Jesus, Who is giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all... (1 Timothy 2:6)

God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers. (1 Timothy 4:11)

God's will is that *all* mankind be saved. God is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will. Christ gave Himself as a correspondent ransom *for all*, not just those that believe. God is the Saviour of *all* mankind, especially (it does not say *exclusively*) of believers. *Especially of believers*, for believers recognize God's power for salvation and His righteousness in this present age while others do not. But while God is the Saviour of believers in a *special* way, this does not preclude the fact that He is the Saviour of *all* mankind, and that Christ Jesus gave Himself a correspondent Ransom for *all*.

This evangel that Paul brings is God's power for salvation, and we who believe can see this power and glorify God for it! This is an evangel not to be ashamed of. It is good news that Christ's ambassadors should be eager to proclaim.

God's indignation is revealed

ROMANS 1:18

Whereas God's righteousness is being revealed in the evangel, we will now consider the crucial need for the evangel ... because God's indignation is revealed upon man's natural state apart from the grace of God. Let's follow Paul's line of reasoning.

God has revealed Himself to mankind in a way that should be apparent. (1:19)

But man does not glorify God or thank Him. (1:21)

So God causes man's reasoning to be vain. And while men think they are wise, they are made to be stupid. (1:21)

Man continues to turn away from God, changing God's incorruptible nature into likenesses that are corruptible, like a human being or a creature. (1:23)

God gives man over to his base, fleshly nature ... to the lusts of his heart. (1:24) Man gives way to uncleanness, to dishonoring his body (1:24) and to dishonorable passions. (1:26) Some examples of this uncleanness are given ... females altering the natural use of their bodies into *that which is beside nature* (1:26), and similarly *males leaving the natural use of the female as they are inflamed in their craving for one another, males with males effecting indecency and getting back in themselves the retribution of their deception which must be*. (1:27) [Is there a clearer condemnation of homosexual activity than in these passages?]

So man's mind is made to be *disqualified*, doing things that are not befitting or appropriate. (1:28) A summary list of man's unrighteous behaviors is provided: *filled with all injustice, wickedness, evil, greed, distended with envy, murder, strife, guile, depravity, whisperers, vilifiers, detesters of God, outragers, proud, ostentatious, inventors of evil things, stubborn to parents, unintelligent, perfidious, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful*: (1:29) Those committing these things are **deserving of death** according to the just statutes of God. (1:32) And this also includes those who may not be participating in the behaviors, but who endorse them.

This, then, is the sorry, hopeless state of mankind, before the revealing of God's solution ... a righteousness from God which is announced in the evangel. We can clearly see in this description of mankind the desperate need for a righteousness from God, as there is certainly no righteousness to be found within natural man.

Note in 1:32 that the behavior of man is deserving of **death**; the same sentence pronounced upon Adam for his sin. Eternal torment (hell) is not the penalty, but death.

God Will Judge (in a day to come)

ROMANS 2:1

To begin with, **man is not qualified to judge**. Despite the fact that God's indignation is revealed upon mankind, when a man judges another he condemns himself, because any who judge are committing the same things. (2:1) Man's judgements, therefore, are hypocritical. Not so when God judges, because *the judgement of God is according to truth*. (2:2)

So does this mean that a man should *never* judge another? Consider what Paul has to say in 1 Corinthians about dealing with an immoral brother ... *that the one who commits this act may be taken away from your midst*. (1 Corinthians 5:2), and: *Expel the wicked one from among yourselves*. (1 Corinthians 5:13) It must be remembered, then, that there is a place for judging a brother in matters of immoral behavior. But relative to judging those *outside* the body of Christ, and even those within the body in lesser matters (as Paul will address in his other writings) ... we judge *ourselves* using our conscience, but we do not judge others.

Why does God permit man's wicked acts to continue? Why are the wicked not judged immediately? *Are you despising the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, being ignorant that the kindness of God is leading you to repentance?* (2:4) Man wants to judge immediately, despite the fact that he is guilty himself and not qualified to judge according to truth. God is delaying His judgment, showing great patience and kindness, allowing man the opportunity for repentance.

But despite His great patience and kindness, **God will judge**. He will not delay judgment forever. This judgment will come *in the day of indignation and revelation of the just judgment of God...* (2:7) Many today say that God cannot be just as they observe events in the world around them. But we have not yet seen God's just judgment. We see today only His patience and forbearance.

But in *the day of indignation* what will God's just judgment look like? God *will be paying each one in accord with his acts: to those, indeed, who by endurance in good acts are seeking glory and honor and incorruption, life eonian; yet to those of faction and stubborn, indeed, as to the truth, yet persuaded to injustice, indignation and fury, affliction and distress...* (2:6) Without the evangel Paul brings, this would describe God's judgment upon all mankind **based on acts** (not faith), and with the sentence being either life eonian (life in the eons to come) or indignation, fury, affliction and distress. Fortunately our destiny is not determined by our acts and abilities. God provides a *rescue* as we will see later.

Note that this passage is not referring to *eternal* life for those who believe in this lifetime and *endless* torment for those who do not. The judgment and

reward here is dependent upon acts, not faith. And eonian life refers to life during the eons to come, not that which *follows* the conclusion of the eons. We must remember that the Greek *aion* refers to a time period with a beginning and an end ... not endlessness. No passage of Scripture, even when talking of judgment, will supercede the final outcome declared by God. Death will one day be abolished, and all will be *vivified* (given life) when God becomes All in all (see 1 Corinthians 15:22-28).

Another point relative to God's future judgment ... All mankind will be judged by God **without partiality**. (2:11) *Whoever sinned without law, without law also shall perish* (2:11) ... *and whoever sinned in law, through law will be judged*. (2:13) When those of the nations do that which the law demands, even though they have no law, they *are a law to themselves* as they are displaying actions of *the law written in their hearts*.

God's impartial judgment will come *in the day when God will be judging the hidden things of humanity...* (2:16) Man cannot judge because he does not see the entire picture. Man can only observe the outer, visible things ... but God observes the *hidden things* of humanity.

“My” evangel

ROMANS 2:16

Paul uses a phrase in 2:16 that is very interesting: *according to my evangel* (2:16) We see this several times in Paul's writings. *My evangel* is the good news brought by Paul.

We must remember there is not just a single *gospel* or *evangel* in the Scriptures ... but each time the word is used we must examine the context to determine what *good news* is being referred to. The fact that Paul uses the term *my evangel* instead of *the evangel* should cause us to ask what is unique about the evangel that he brings!

Paul was given revelation directly from Jesus Christ. *For neither did I accept it from a man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ*. (Galatians 1:12) When Paul was converted, if he was commissioned to deliver the same evangel as the Twelve, would it not have made sense for Paul to study under the Twelve who were eyewitnesses of all that Jesus said and did during His earthly ministry? Instead Christ *revealed* things directly to Paul. This is why Paul can refer to the news he brings as *my evangel*. And if we read the Scriptures carefully we will see that Paul's gospel is different from Peter's.

The Jews dishonor God

ROMANS 2:17

As we consider the depravity of mankind and the righteousness of God, we recall that God had in the Old Testament chosen Israel. They were His people. They were given the Law. They were set apart from other nations. So at this point in Paul's letter we might ask, "What about Israel?" True, mankind is wicked and deserving of judgment. But what about Israel, God's chosen people?

The Jews were resting on the law (2:17). They did have a form of knowledge and the truth, but they failed to teach *themselves* (2:20-21). They taught others not to steal, yet they steal. They taught others not to commit adultery, yet they commit adultery (2:21). As a result they dishonor God. And because of them God's name is blasphemed among the nations (2:23).

Circumcision is beneficial, but only if the law is put into practice. Instead, Israel became a transgressor of the law. Israel's circumcision had therefore become as uncircumcision (2:25). It had become of no benefit. It is as if they were *not* circumcised. For *circumcision is of the heart, in spirit, not in letter, whose applause is not of men, but of God* (2:29). [This does not mean that Gentiles that practiced the law had become Israelites, thereby *replacing* Israel. It is saying that only those among Israel that practiced the law were truly Israel.]

Now if God's chosen people are unfaithful, does this mean God is not just or faithful? No. God is true, though every man is a liar (3:4). And if man's unfaithfulness serves to commend God's righteousness, is God unjust for bringing on His indignation? No. *Else how shall God be judging the world?* (3:5)

None are just; and the Law cannot justify

ROMANS 3:9

Here is the bottom line. *Not one is just – not even one. Not one is understanding. Not one is seeking out God.* (3:10 ... from Psalm 14:1-3) Since no one seeks out God on his own, how shall *any* ever come to know God and be saved? **How can any believe God, if none are seeking Him?** Could it be that God enables some (the called) to believe, even when they were not seeking (as in the case of Paul), so that through this group all mankind will ultimately be blessed?

No one can be justified in God's sight by the law (3:20). But the law did serve a purpose ... for *through law is the recognition of sin* (3:20). The law revealed to man what sin was.

God's righteousness is revealed

ROMANS 3:21

What a dire picture of mankind! None are just; and the law cannot justify. Yet despite man's helpless condition, Paul's evangel proclaims God's solution: *Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness of God is manifest ... a righteousness of God through Jesus Christ's faith...* (3:21) This is not righteousness resulting from man's faith. It speaks of **God's righteousness**, manifest to mankind through **Jesus Christ's faith**.

... for all, and on all who are believing, for there is no distinction, for all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God. (3:20) God's righteousness is provided to mankind thru Jesus Christ's faith. Its effects are **for all**, because there is no distinction ... **all** sinned and are wanting of the glory of God. The means thru which man *receives* this righteousness from God in this present age is thru faith, or belief. God's righteousness is for all, and it is currently received by those who are believing. But there will come a day when Christ reveals Himself by sight, to those unable to believe by faith ... as in the case of Thomas (see John 20:29). Remember: *God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers.* (1 Timothy 4:11) Blessed are they who believe without seeing (*especially of believers*). But as in Adam *all* died, so also in Christ will *all* be vivified.

In God's forbearance, man's **sin had not previously been dealt with.** *Being justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Whom God purposed for a Propitiatory shelter, through faith in His blood, for a display of His righteousness because of the passing over of the penalties of sins which occurred before in the forbearance of God)...* (3:24) Here we see the meaning of *propitiation*, or *the propitiatory shelter* (*atonement* in most Bible translations). The blood of animal sacrifices did not *pay* for the sins of man ... they simply served as a means for God to *pass over* the penalties of sins that had occurred. This was God's patience and forbearance at work, but sin had not been permanently dealt with. Sin had only been passed over until the permanent solution came.

Since these sins committed in the past had not been dealt with, how can God be righteous and just? Here's how! God justifies man through His grace ... His free gift to an undeserving mankind ... providing *deliverance* through Christ Jesus. *...toward the display of His righteousness in the current era, for Him to be just and a Justifier of the one who is of the faith of Jesus.* (3:26) Christ's faith has revealed that God is righteous and just ... and that God justifies those who are *of the faith of Jesus*. In this present age, those of the faith of Jesus are those who believe.

Now if belief (faith) is something man can muster on his own, he would have reason to boast. But we read: *Where, then, is boasting? It is debarred!* (3:27) Despite the fact that no man is just, or even seeking out God (see 3:11), man is **given** deliverance and justification as a gracious gift from

God. If man had to do something to earn or receive this grace from God ... even weighing the evidence logically and thereupon believing ... it would no longer be grace, and man would have a reason to boast! [More evidence in support of the conclusion that man does not *choose* to believe, but is gifted with belief by God. If this were not the case, man could boast in his belief.]

Belief is reckoned for righteousness

ROMANS 4:1

Abraham is now presented as an example. *Abraham believes God, and it is reckoned to him for righteousness.* (4:3 ... from Genesis 15:6)

Abraham was “reckoned” righteous. He did not WORK for righteousness, thereby earning wages that were owed to him. He simply believed (apart from works), and this *belief* (same word in the Greek as *faith*) is *reckoned* by God as righteousness. *Yet to him who is not working, yet is believing on Him Who is justifying the irreverent, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.* (4:5)

David also spoke of “reckoned” righteousness. *Happy they whose lawlessnesses were pardoned and whose sins were covered over! Happy the man to whom the Lord by no means should be **reckoning** sin!* (4:7 ... from Psalm 32:1,2) This **reckoned righteousness applies to the Uncircumcision and the Circumcision** (4:9).

Circumcision was a “sign.” Abraham received *the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith...* (4:11) It was not the physical act of circumcision that made the Jews righteous. The act of circumcision was just a *sign* given to them by God, and a *seal* of righteousness that was forthcoming.

The promise to Abraham was not thru law ... but through faith's righteousness. (4:13) **The law produces indignation.** *Where no law is, neither is there transgression.* (4:15) **But the promise is of faith, in accord with grace.** (4:16) Works could bring righteousness if righteousness was in accord with the law. But law is powerless to provide righteousness. It only brings indignation. It is faith that brings righteousness, as it is in accord with grace. No works are required. Grace is all on God's part. And in this present age those who have faith are reckoned righteous.

Abraham believed God when God promised he would become a father of many nations (Genesis 17:5), even though the promise seemed to be *beyond expectation.* (4:17) This faith *invigorated* Abraham. (4:20) And **his belief is reckoned for righteousness.** (4:22) So God spoke to Abraham, making a promise that was beyond belief, yet Abraham believed ... and it was *reckoned* to Abraham as righteousness. Again I ask ... did this belief come from within Abraham himself, or was the ability to comprehend God's promise and believe

a gift from God? Remember the state of mankind apart from the grace of God. None are just. None are seeking out God.

When God spoke to Abraham, he *believed* what God told him. **What is it we are to believe?** [God] *rouses Jesus our Lord from among the dead, Who was given up because of our offenses, and was roused because of our justifying.* (4:25) Thru Christ's death we find forgiveness for our offenses. Christ paid the penalty for sin ... death. And because we are thereby justified, or *reckoned righteous*, Christ was resurrected (life). The penalty (death) was reversed!

This reckoned righteousness does not apply only to Abraham ... but because of us also, to whom it is about to be reckoned, who are believing on Him... (4:23)

Peace with God ... conciliated ... justified

ROMANS 5:1

When we are justified, we can have **peace with God**, and we can glory in **expectation** of God's glory (5:2). Even when things may appear quite dismal in this life, because of our expectation for what lies ahead we can glory ... even in our afflictions (5:3). Affliction produces endurance, which leads to testedness, which leads to expectation. Furthermore, the love of God has been poured out in our hearts, through **the holy spirit which he has given to us.** (5:5)

While we were sinners, Christ died for our sakes (5:6). We who believe after the pattern of Abraham are reckoned righteous and are **justified**. And we will be **saved from indignation** (5:9). [When we refer back to 2:5 we will see the reference to the day of indignation that is coming, from which the believer will be spared.]

Thru Christ's death **mankind was conciliated to God** (5:10). This conciliation (one half of reconciliation) is not just upon believers, but all humanity. It is a one-sided conciliation. God is not reckoning mankind's offenses to him (see 2 Corinthians 5:19). It is not conditioned upon man's acceptance, but is an unconditional statement of fact. And the message of Christ's Ambassadors is: *We are beseeching for Christ's sake, 'Be conciliated to God!' For the One not knowing sin, He makes to be a sin offering for our sakes that we may be becoming God's righteousness in Him.* (2 Corinthians 5:20) Those that believe have a two-way conciliation ... or reconciliation.

And beyond this conciliation that came through Christ's death, the believer is **saved** in His life (5:10). Saved from what? As stated previously in this context; the believer is saved from the coming day of indignation and judgment.

Adam and Christ compared

ROMANS 5:12

Observe closely the parallel Paul now makes between Adam and Christ. *Even as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned...* (5:12)

If, by the offense of the one, the many died, much rather the grace of God and the gratuity in grace, which is of the One Man, Jesus Christ, to the many superabounds. (5:15)

The judgment is out of one into condemnation, yet the grace is out of many offenses into a just award. (5:16)

If, by the offense of the one, death reigns through the one, much rather, those obtaining the superabundance of grace and the gratuity of righteousness shall be reigning in life through the One, Jesus Christ. (5:17)

Think about this. If Adam's one offense gave just the **opportunity** to sin, so that some become sinners while others not, then we could say that Christ's work brings justification only to some, conditioned upon man's acceptance. But we note that man has no choice as to becoming a sinner. All have sinned. In this parallel then, thus also is the case with ultimate salvation. It is not conditioned on man's acceptance. Belief is the *means* for man's receiving God's righteousness in this present age, but ultimately **all** will see, **all** will be subjected to God, **every** knee will bow. **Ultimately ALL will be justified thru Christ's death.**

*... as it was through one offense **for all mankind** for condemnation, thus also it is through one just award **for all mankind** for life's justifying.* (5:18)
*For even as, through the disobedience of the one man, **the many** were constituted sinners, thus also, through the obedience of the One, **the many** shall be constituted just.* (5:18-19)

Note that *the many* is a direct parallel to *all mankind*. *The many* is therefore used to figuratively represent *the all*. And note the global nature of these statements. Certainly *all mankind* is condemned as a consequence of Adam's offense. None make a **choice** to be included in this group, and nothing can be done thru man's will to be excluded. In the parallel, then, the same is true of *all mankind* who are justified thru Christ's obedience!

A side note: **We do not inherit Adam's sin, we inherit Adam's dying condition** (mortality). Because of Adam's sin, death entered the world, and it was death that was then passed to all mankind. Death (mortality) in all mankind then led to sin by all mankind (oh, the weakness of this flesh). At birth we inherit death. Because we have inherited this *death condition* (mortality), we sin. None are righteous!

We are under grace, not law

ROMANS 5:20

Yet law came in by the way, that the offense should be increasing. Yet where sin increases, grace superexceeds... (5:20) What, then, was the purpose of the law? **The law cannot justify ... but it has led to a superexceeding grace from God!**

One might ask ... If grace increases when we sin, should we not just continue sinning? Paul responds, *May it not be coming to that!* (6:2) Those who are baptized into Christ Jesus are baptized into His death ... so if we have died to sin how shall we still be living in sin? (6:2-3) And as Christ was roused from among the dead, so also we should be walking in newness of life. (6:4) As we were crucified with Him that the body of Sin may be nullified, justifying us, we are not to be slaving for Sin as we once did. (6:6)

*Thus you also, **be reckoning yourselves to be dead**, indeed, to Sin, yet living to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.* (6:11) Just as God *reckons* us righteous, even when our behaviors are not always righteous ... so also we are instructed to *reckon* our old selves to be dead ... even though our fleshly bodies may still be alive. Remember, when God spoke to Abraham He called that which was not as if it were. *Let not Sin, then, be reigning in your mortal body, for you to be obeying its lusts. Nor yet be presenting your members, as implements of injustice, to Sin, but present yourselves to God as if alive from among the dead, and your members as implements of righteousness to God.* (6:12)

Man could not save himself. The law cannot justify. None are seeking after God. Yet God, through Christ, has become conciliated to the world. And He has gifted a *part* of humanity with faith ... the ability to believe, and to thereby be reckoned righteous. Why? As we read others of Paul's writings we will see the reasons God has called His "church" (*ecclesia* in the Greek ... literally *called-out-ones*). But for now let us note that we who believe should reckon our old selves dead, and should offer ourselves to God as His implements. No longer should we slave for Sin as the rest of humanity, apart from God, does.

One might ask; **Since we are not under law, is it permissible to sin?** Paul replies, *May it not be coming to that!* (6:15) We are slaves to whoever we obey. There are only two options ... obeying Sin (for death), or Obedience (for righteousness). *Now, being freed from Sin, you are enslaved to Righteousness.* (6:18) This is stated as a fact! We who believe are freed from Sin, and we are now slaves to Righteousness. But while this is a fact, we make choices as we live that cause us to either be in harmony with our Master or in opposition to Him. Paul admonishes the believer: *present your members as slaves to Righteousness for holiness.* (6:19)

Paul reminds us of the time we were slaves of Sin, before God rescued us with His grace. *What fruit, then, had you then? – of which you are now ashamed, for, indeed, the consummation of those things is death.* (6:21) Paul is not saying to the believer that persisting in these wrong behaviors will lead to death, as opposed to eonian life. He is reminding the believers that these behaviors (fruit) found in mankind apart from grace are such that *would* lead to death ... and they are behaviors not appropriate for the one rescued. And they are behaviors that cause believers to be *ashamed* (6:21).

Yet now, being freed from Sin, yet enslaved to God, you have your fruit for holiness. Now the consummation is life eonian. For the ration of Sin is death, yet the gracious gift of God is life eonian, in Christ Jesus, our Lord. (6:22) Paul is not threatening those believers who stray in their behavior that they will lose their eonian life. Eonian life is a *gracious gift* from God. Paul is reminding the believers that because of this *gracious gift* they now produce fruit for holiness and righteousness, and their proper behavior in response to God's grace is to present themselves to God to be used as implements of righteousness.

We died to the law. Paul uses the example of a married woman, who is bound in wedlock only while her husband is living. If the man dies, the woman is *exempt from the law of the man.* (7:2)

That we should be bearing fruit to God. (7:4) Before, in the flesh, the passions of sins operated in our members, bearing fruit to death (7:5). But now we are exempt from the law, *so that it is for us to be **slaving in newness of spirit** and not in oldness of letter.* (7:6)

But sin I knew not except through law. For besides, I had not been aware of coveting except the law said, "You shall not be coveting." Now Sin, getting an incentive through the precept, produces in me all manner of coveting. (7:7) **The law has served the purpose of making us aware of sin.** And the law has also displayed to us the futility of seeking righteousness thru our own efforts. But the law, itself, is not sin: *the law, indeed, is holy, and the precept holy and just and good.* (7:12)

Man's struggle under the law

ROMANS 7:14

The problem is not the law, but man. *The law is spiritual, yet I am fleshly, having been disposed of under Sin. For what I am effecting I know not, for not what I will, this I am putting into practice, but what I am hating, this I am doing.* (7:14)

Without God's grace coming to the rescue, man faces a hopeless struggle as he seeks to gain righteousness thru the law. *For it is not the good that I will that I am doing, but the evil that I am not willing, this I am putting into practice.*

(7:19) The problem is that: *it is no longer I who am effecting it, but Sin which is making its home in me.* (7:19) Clearly Paul is not talking of a struggle he then faced, but is speaking of man under the law: *Consequently, I am finding the law that, at my willing to be doing the ideal, the evil is lying beside me.* (7:21)

The struggle exists because of a friction between spirit and flesh. *For I am gratified with the law of God as to the man within, yet I am observing a different law in my members, warring with the law of my mind, and leading me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.* (7:22)

All seems lost and hopeless. *A wretched man am I! What will rescue me out of this body of death?* (7:24)

Grace!

ROMANS 7:25

Most English Bible translations appear to leave the question in 7:24 unanswered. The Concordant Version provides the response: *Grace!* (7:25) Some ancient manuscripts omit the word *grace*, thereby leaving the question unanswered. But evidence seems to support those manuscripts which contain the response. *Grace* is what will rescue man in his hopeless state. *Grace* fits with Paul's line of thought throughout Romans, providing evidence that the manuscripts that include this response are the correct ones.

As for those who are "in Christ Jesus" there is **no condemnation**. *Nothing, consequently, is now condemnation to those in Christ Jesus. Not according to flesh are they walking, but according to spirit, for the spirit's law of life in Christ Jesus frees you from the law of sin and death.* (8:1) So nothing condemns those in Christ Jesus. And especially (based on the context) **the Law and its provisions cannot condemn the one in Christ Jesus**. But who exactly is *in Christ Jesus*? Is it just those who manifest acceptable behaviors? Or, upon believing as we are *reckoned righteous* does this place us *in Christ Jesus* as a matter of *fact* ... because of what God has accomplished thru His grace?

As we consider how Paul uses the phrase *in Christ Jesus* it appears quite clear that he refers to **all who believe**. At times he must admonish errant behaviors (as in the Corinthian church), but never does he condemn a believer so as to exclude him from the body of Christ because of behavior. Paul admonishes and encourages, but he does not hold condemnation as a threat to those who believe.

*For what was impossible to the law, in which it was infirm through the flesh, did God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sin's flesh and concerning sin, He condemns sin in the flesh, that the just requirements of the law may be fulfilled in **us, who are not walking in accord with flesh, but in***

accord with spirit. (8:3) Again, this is a statement of fact, not based on the believer's achievements. This is something God accomplished. We *are* walking in accord with the spirit. Christ condemns sin, having defeated it.

For those who are in accord with flesh are disposed to that which is of the flesh, yet those who are in accord with spirit to that which is of the spirit. (8:5) ... Now those who are in flesh are not able to please God. (8:8)

But then Paul tells the believers in Rome: *Yet you are not in flesh, but in spirit, if so be that God's spirit is making its home in you. Now if anyone has not Christ's spirit, this one is not His. Now if Christ is in you, the body, indeed, is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is life because of righteousness. (8:9)* Now we remember back to Romans 5:5, before any discussion of behavior took place, Paul told ALL of the believers: *... the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the holy spirit which is being given to us. (5:5)* It is a **FACT**, not dependent upon man's response, that those who believe have been given the holy spirit. Therefore it is a matter of **fact that ALL who believe are not in flesh, but in spirit** ... because God's spirit is making its home in them (8:9). Paul admonishes the believer to present himself to God and to walk worthily ... but he does not threaten a loss of position *in Christ* for those that are not exhibiting proper fruit. The solution to man's dilemma is 100% God, given to man freely thru His grace. Despite how we may appear in the flesh, God has justified us in Christ. And the future judgment has been delegated to Christ, the very One Who died for us and Who pleads for us at God's right hand.

Having been given the holy spirit, **what is the effect of God's spirit upon the believer?** *Now if the spirit of Him Who rouses Jesus from among the dead is making its home in you, He Who rouses Christ Jesus from among the dead will also be **vivifying** your mortal bodies because of His spirit making its home in you. (8:11)* This **vivifying** (bringing life) is not the same as *rousing* (resurrection). The holy spirit brings life within the believer even in this present age. The spirit generates within us the ability to be led by God's spirit, and not our fleshly nature. Vivified by the holy spirit, *... putting the practices of the body to death, you will be living. (8:13)*

And led by God's spirit, which has been given to believers: *these are **sons of God.** (8:14)* We know of the many references to Christ Jesus being the son of God. And through what Christ has accomplished we see now that we who believe are *sons of God!* God, thru His grace, has conciliated us, justified us, saved us, and given us His spirit ... and He now declares that we are sons of God! No longer burdened by slavery's spirit, causing us to fear... *you got the spirit of sonship, in which we are crying, 'Abba, Father!'* (8:15)

We await redemption

ROMANS 8:18

While we await the full effects of what God is accomplishing, we live in these mortal bodies. At times we suffer. But ... *the sufferings of the current era do not deserve the glory about to be revealed for us.* (8:18) We suffer, but have the expectation of what is coming. And the glory that lies ahead will far exceed these temporary afflictions.

All creation groans. *For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it, in expectation that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we are aware that the entire creation is groaning and travailing together until now.* (8:20)

And we also groan ... *we ourselves also, who have the firstfruit of the spirit, we ourselves also, are groaning in ourselves, awaiting the sonship, the deliverance of our body.* (8:23) While we have been given the spirit of sonship (8:15), in this present age we do not have the full realization of the sonship that will one day come. For now **we live in expectation** of what lies ahead (8:24)

When our bodies are delivered from this present bondage, when the Lord descends from heaven to snatch us away (1 Thessalonians 4:13), He will transfigure these bodies to conform to His glorious Body (see Philippians 3:21). In the meantime, that which we are not observing we are awaiting with endurance. (8:25) And as we await our expectation ... **the spirit also is aiding our infirmity**, *for what we should be praying for, to accord with what must be, we are not aware, but the spirit itself is pleading for us with inarticulate groanings.*

Paul provides **a model for prayer** in this present age! An examination of prayer during the days when the kingdom evangel was being proclaimed unto Israel, with its message of the kingdom to come upon the earth, will reveal a different model for prayer ... one of persistence, and belief without wavering as to the object of prayer. *If you should be having faith and not be doubting ... all, whatsoever you should be requesting in prayer, believing, you shall be getting.* (Matthew 21:21-22) But in the present age as the evangel of grace is proclaimed, with its message not in reference to this earth but the celestial realm (the heavens), we see a different model for prayer ... inconsistent with the kingdom model. Here we see weakness and ignorance, and total reliance upon the spirit of God in even knowing how to pray. We are not disposed to the *terrestrial things* (see Philippians 3:19). *Sufficient for you is My grace, for My power in infirmity is being perfected.* (2 Corinthians 12:9)

God is working all together for the good of those who are loving God, *who are called according to the purpose that, whom He foreknew, He designates beforehand also, to be conformed to the image of His Son...* (8:28)

Does this mean that God only works for the good of SOME of mankind? Clearly we see throughout this section that God is the acting agent ... not man. It is not men who choose God, but God who chooses men, to accomplish His purposes. *Now whom He designates beforehand, these He calls also, and whom He calls, these He justifies also; now whom He justifies, these He glorifies also.* (8:30) No man is just; and none are even seeking out God (2:11). God, knowing this to be the case, designates beforehand a group of mankind that He calls ... and justifies ... and glorifies. It is not that this group is more deserving than the remainder of mankind. God has made a choice in order that He can accomplish His purpose. In this current age God is working all together for the good of those He has called. Ultimately this will benefit all mankind. But for now God has a purpose for calling some. And nothing can condemn nor separate from His love those whom He has chosen. (8:31-38)

What about Israel?

ROMANS 9:1

At this point we might ask, what about Israel? Once God's chosen, has God now rejected Israel forever? Many today take Bible passages pertaining to Israel and claim these passages now refer to the Church. But has Israel been rejected permanently, with the Church now taking her place as Israel's substitute? Paul says of Israel ... *whose is the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the legislation and the divine service and the promises; whose are the fathers, and out of whom is the Christ according to the flesh...* (9:4) But not all born out of Israel are Israel ... *the children of the flesh, not these are the children of God, but the children of the promise is He reckoning for the seed.* (9:8)

God chose Jacob before he was born ... *that the purpose of God may be remaining as a choice, not out of acts, but of Him Who is calling ...* (9:11) And to **Moses** God said: *'I shall be merciful to whomever I may be merciful, and I shall be pitying whomever I may be pitying.'* Consequently, then, it is not of him who is willing, nor of him who is racing, but of God, the Merciful. (9:15) **God rose up Pharaoh to display His power** ... *so that I should be displaying in you My power, and so that My name should be published in the entire earth.'* Consequently, then, to whom He will, He is merciful, yet whom He will, He is hardening. (9:17) We clearly see **the sovereignty and the choices of God are in control, and not the choices and the will of man.** God chooses *one vessel, indeed, for honor, yet one for dishonor ... If God, wanting to display His indignation and to make His powerful doings known, carries with much patience, the vessels of indignation, adapted for destruction, it is that He should also be making known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy...* (9:21-22)

Since the time God chose Abraham as His instrument, His ultimate objective has been to bless all mankind. (see Genesis 12:3; 22:18; 26:5; 28:14) We must remember that this is His intent and His purpose as we

consider His interactions with man. Thru God's wisdom He chooses *vessels* of various kinds to accomplish His purpose. And even when some of His vessels appear to be working against Him (such as Pharoah, those that mistreated Joseph, or those that had a hand in crucifying Christ), they are actually playing a part in fulfilling God's ultimate purpose. Not all are chosen by God, or given the measure of faith, to be His vessels of honor ... His ecclesia ... the body of Christ. But all are vessels of some kind, all are serving a purpose, and all will one day be reconciled to God ... because from the time He chose Abraham His purpose was for all peoples to be blessed.

Having pursued righteousness thru the law, **Israel stumbles** (9:32). And as a result, **the nations overtook righteousness** ... a righteousness that is out of faith ... even though they were not pursuing righteousness (9:30). What wisdom! Israel sought to establish her own righteousness, rather than becoming subjected to God's righteousness (10:2). **Man's pride and shortcomings prevent him from finding righteousness, and in response God graciously gives righteousness where it is not even sought.**

Remember that the climax of history will be when all are subjected to God (see 1 Corinthians 15:28). Rather than becoming subject to God's righteousness, Israel sought to establish her own righteousness thru the law. Israel failed to recognize that *Christ is the consummation of law for righteousness to everyone who is believing.* (10:4) **Law was not the solution ... but faith, that it might accord with God's grace.**

... the declaration of faith which we are heralding that, if ever you should be avowing with your mouth the declaration that Jesus is Lord, and should be believing in your heart that God rouses Him from among the dead, you shall be saved. (10:9) Let us not turn this passage into a formula to achieve salvation. We are not commanded to present this as an **offer** to humanity ... that if they will believe and profess they can be saved. Instead, this is the response of those who are given the gift of faith in this present age.

Those believing man has a "free will" to make choices that determine his ultimate eternal destiny will here label me as a Calvinist ... a determinist. I was raised a Methodist and for many years interpreted Scripture thru a Methodist lens, including a belief that man has the *free will* to make his choices. Please do not label me based on what I am saying. I seek only to escape any bias or lens, and to objectively understand what God is revealing thru His Word. That which God reveals I will believe. There are many earnest believers who read Scripture and who believe it is saying different things. I am merely presenting to the reader how I understand Scripture as fitting together, one portion in relation to other portions, in order to understand what God is saying.

God's means for opening the eyes of believers is thru the commissioning of those who herald the evangel. *How, then, should they be invoking One in Whom they do not believe? Yet how should they be believing One of Whom*

they do not hear? Yet how should they be hearing apart from one heralding? Yet how should they be heralding if ever they should not be commissioned? (10:14) In this present age it is the body of Christ that has a commission to be Christ's ambassadors (see 2 Corinthians 5). But let us be sure we proclaim the correct message for this present age ... not a message that has been crafted by organized religion and that has been in error for centuries, a message it thinks to be biblically-based but is in actuality taken out of its Biblical context, having been directed to a different people group (Israel) and in a different age that has now passed.

So as Israel stumbles, the nations find God. *First Moses is saying, I shall be provoking you to jealousy over those not a nation... (10:19 ... from Deuteronomy 32:21) Yet Isaiah is very daring and is saying, 'I was found by those who are not seeking Me; I became disclosed to those who are not inquiring for Me. (10:20 ... from Isaiah 65:1) But Israel is a stubborn and contradicting people. (10:21) This is clearly referring to entire nations, and not to individuals within the nations. All within Israel did not stumble, and all within the nations did not have faith. The point is that God had once worked thru Israel as His instrument in dealing with mankind. Now God is working directly thru the Gentile nations.*

But Israel is not permanently discarded. As in Elijah's day there is a remnant (11:5). Some of Israel have faith. But the rest were calloused ... *God gives them a spirit of stupor, eyes not to be observing, and ears not to be hearing...* (11:8) And thru Israel's offense, the nations find salvation, provoking jealousy in Israel (11:11). Eventually Israel will be taken back by God: *For if their casting away is the conciliation of the world, what will the taking back be if not life from among the dead?* (11:15)

... callousness, in part, on Israel has come until *the complement of the nations may be entering. And thus all Israel shall be saved...* (11:25) So Israel's casting away is not permanent, but only **UNTIL** the complement of the nations enters the *ecclesia* (literally *called-out-ones* ... commonly translated *church*). And the temporary casting-away of Israel serves a grand purpose ... salvation to the nations.

There is stubbornness ... and then mercy. Even this stubbornness in man is used by God for the good of mankind. *For even as you once were stubborn toward God, yet now were shown mercy at their stubbornness, thus these also are now stubborn to this mercy of yours, that now they also may be shown mercy. For God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all.* (11:30)

God's ways are untraceable: *O the depths of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God. How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways!* (11:33) Man cannot "trace" the ways of God using his own reasoning or logic, but can only know that which God has revealed. [We note that God's judgments and ways may be inscrutable or untraceable, but

His overall objective to bless all mankind and to reconcile all of His creation to Himself is very clear in His Word.]

ALL is out of God. Not just some of creation, but: *Out of Him and through him and for Him is **all**...* (11:36) And one day, when the purpose of the eons has been achieved (Ephesians 3:11), God will be All in all (1 Corinthians 15:28).

How then shall we live?

ROMANS 12:1

Beginning here Paul speaks of the appropriate conduct for believers. *I am entreating you, then...* links Paul's discussion on behavior to that which he has previously said. It is as if he is saying, "In light of what God has done, live like this..."

Paul begins with a general principle to guide behavior... **present your bodies a sacrifice**, *living, holy, well pleasing to God, your logical divine service, and not to be configured to this eon, but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind, for you to be testing what is the will of God, good and well pleasing and perfect.* (12:1)

We are to **use the measure of faith given to us** ... *to be of a sane disposition, as God parts to each the measure of faith.* (12:3) Here we observe that believers may have different measures of faith, as given by God. Mature believers must be patient with those having a lesser measure of faith.

One body ... many members

ROMANS 12:4

All members in the body do not have the same function. Each are individually members of one another. We are to function *in accord with the grace which is given to us*. Some of the gracious gifts from God are itemized here: prophecy, dispensing, teaching, entreating, generosity, presiding and mercy.

Appropriate behavior within the body

ROMANS 12:9

Paul provides a series of instructions as to the behavior to be expected within the body.

- Let love be unfeigned
- Abhor what is wicked; cling to what is good
- Fond affection for one another ... brotherly fondness
- Deem one another first

- Have diligence
- Be fervent in spirit
- Be slaving for the Lord
- Be rejoicing in expectation
- Endure affliction
- Persevere in prayer
- Contribute to the needs of the saints
- Pursue hospitality
- Bless those persecuting you
- Rejoice with those rejoicing; lament with those lamenting
- Be mutually disposed to one another ... humility
- Don't hold yourself up as prudent
- Don't render evil for evil
- Make ideal provision in the sight of all men; if possible out of yourselves
- Be at peace with all mankind
- Be not avenging yourselves ... vengeance is the Lord's
- Treat your enemy with kindness
- Conquer evil with good

Be subject to authorities. Those in authority have been set under God. So to resist authority is to resist God's mandate. Authority is ... *God's servant for your good.* (13:4) In other words, God uses authority as His instrument ... *an avenger for indignation to him who is committing evil. Wherefore it is necessary to be subject, not only because of indignation, but also because of conscience.* (13:4) And **taxes** are *God's ministers, perpetuated for this self-same thing. Render to all their dues, to whom tax, tax, to whom tribute, tribute, to whom fear, fear, to whom honor, honor.* (13:6)

Love one another ... love is the fulfillment of law. *To no one owe anything, except to be loving one another, for he who is loving another has fulfilled law.* (13:8) When one considers the law concerning such things as adultery, murder, stealing... *it is summed up in this saying, in this: 'You shall love your associate as yourself.'* Love is not working evil to an associate. (13:9) *The complement, then, of law, is love.* (13:10)

Walk respectably. Being aware of the era in which we live ... *it is already the hour for us to be roused out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believe. The night progresses, yet the day is near.* (13:11) Therefore... *We, then, should be putting off the acts of darkness, yet should be putting on the implements of light. As in the day, respectably, should we be walking, not in revelries and drunkenness...* (13:12) ... *put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be making no provision for the lusts of the flesh.* (13:14)

As we deal with those who may have lesser faith than ourselves...we are to **receive the infirm in faith** ... *but not for discrimination of reasonings.*

(14:1) We bear with those weaker in faith, but we do not look to them for an understanding of spiritual things. *One, indeed, is believing to eat all things, yet the infirm one is eating greens. Let not him who is eating be scorning him who is not eating. Yet let not him who is not eating be judging him who is eating...* (14:2) ... *Who are you who are judging Another's domestic? To his own Master is he standing or falling.* (14:4) ... *One, indeed, is deciding for one day rather than another day, yet one is deciding for every day. Let each one be fully assured in his own mind.* (14:5)

The strong in faith are not to judge the weak in faith ... and the weak in faith should not judge those who are stronger in faith (concerning, for example, eating different foods or observing different days). We do not judge a brother on these issues, as each is responsible only to His Master. It is a matter of **conscience** ... *Let each one be fully assured in his own mind.* (14:5) Each of us is guided by our conscience, with the help of the holy spirit that has been given to us. We take responsibility for ourselves, as opposed to judging others.

Each will give an account directly to His Master: *For all of us shall be presented at the dais of God.* (14:11) ... *each of us shall be giving account concerning himself to God. By no means, then, should we still be judging one another...* (14:12)

A final note relative to *deciding for one day rather than another day.* (14:5) We note that **the Sabbath** was never given as a command to the Gentiles ... it was a part of the Law given to the Israelites. To keep the Sabbath as an observance of God's Law is to put ones-self under the Law. Furthermore, there is nowhere in Scripture a reference to a Sunday Sabbath for Christians! This is based purely on the traditions of men and not the Word of God. It is certainly not wrong for a Believer to set aside Sunday, or any other day, to the Lord ... if he chooses to do so. But God's Word should not be distorted in calling for any required observances on any particular day. Such mandatory observances may have been required for Israel in times past, but never for the body of Christ in this present age. To enforce a Sabbath day or any other portion of the Law would be to reject Christ (see Galatians).

Place no stumbling block before others. As we exercise the measure of faith given to us, a major consideration must be the possibility of causing others to stumble ... *decide this, not to place a stumbling block for a brother, or a snare.* (14:13) Again, that which is right or wrong is determined by our individual conscience: *nothing is contaminating of itself, except that the one reckoning anything to be contaminating, to that one it is contaminating.* (14:14) ... *Now he who is doubting if he should be eating is condemned, seeing that it is not out of faith. Now everything which is not out of faith is sin.* (14:23) But even when certain foods, for example, are not contaminating and would be acceptable for the believer to eat, we are to be guided by a higher principle: *For if, because of food, your brother is sorrowing, you are no longer walking according to love.* (14:15) We should seek to edify others: *Consequently, then, we are pursuing that which makes for peace and that*

*which is for the edification of one another. (14:19) It is ideal not to be eating meat, nor yet to be drinking wine, nor yet to do aught by which your brother is stumbling, or is being snared, or weakened. (14:21) ... Now we, the able, ought to **be bearing the infirmities of the impotent, and not to be pleasing ourselves**. Let each of us please his associate, for his good, toward his edification. For Christ also pleases not Himself... (15:1)*

Scripture is for our benefit: *For whatever was written before, was written for this teaching of ours, that through the endurance and the consolation of the scriptures we might have expectation. (15:4)*

As Paul concludes his presentation of the evangel, he makes the distinction between how God was dealing with Israel as compared to the Nations (15:8). *Christ has become the Servant of the Circumcision, for the sake of the truth of God, to confirm the patriarchal promises. Yet **the nations are to glorify God for His mercy**...* Confirmation of the patriarchal promises was the expectation of Israel. What was unanticipated prior to Paul's evangel was the mercy God was showing to the nations.

*May the God of expectation be filling you with all joy and peace in believing, for you to **be superabounding in expectation**, in the power of holy spirit. (15:13)*

Closing

ROMANS 15:14

Paul writes, at least in part, to **prompt** the Roman saints (15:15). He is ambitious to bring the evangel where Christ is not named (15:20). He takes a contribution to Jerusalem, for the poor of the saints there (15:26), after which he intends to pass thru Rome and to Spain. Paul asks the saints to struggle in prayer for him ... that he should be rescued from the stubborn in Judea, that his dispensation for Jerusalem is well received, and that he may be coming to the saints in Rome (15:30). He then commends 28 different people by name (16:1).

We receive a glimpse of the structure (or non-structure) of the church (*ecclesia*) in that day. Referring to Prisca and Aquila, Paul makes note of *the ecclesia at their house*. And Paul also passes along greetings from *all the ecclesias of Christ*.

Paul makes reference to Andronicus and Junias as *notable among the apostles*. So again we note that the apostles are no longer limited to the 12 in Jesus' day.

Two final notes relative to appropriate behavior ... *Avoid those making dissensions and snares (16:17), and be wise for good, yet artless for evil. (16:19)*

Paul's amanuenses, who has recorded Paul's letter, records his own greeting. *I, Tertius, the writer of the epistle, am greeting you in the Lord. (16:22)*

The letter concludes with a **benediction**. *Now to Him Who is able to establish you in accord with **my evangel**, and the heralding of Christ Jesus in accord with **the revelation of a secret hushed in times eonian, yet manifested now and through prophetic scriptures...** according to the injunction of the eonian God being made known to all nations for faith-obedience... (16:25-27)*. Truly Paul's writings are a revelation of things that had been a **secret** in times past, as God calls him to be a different kind of apostle ... commissioned to go directly to the Gentiles with a message Paul received directly from Christ Jesus.

EPILOGUE.

“The Roman Road” is an evangelism tool used by many churches today. It is an attempt to delineate how one can be saved, using Romans as a basis. The formula goes like this:

- All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)
- The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23a)
- But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23b)
- God demonstrates His own love for us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)
- Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:13)
- If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (Romans 10:9,10)

The problem is that the “Roman Road” as presented by most Christians today is an *offer* resulting in an *eternal destiny* of heaven for those who accept the terms, or hell for those who do not.

But the real “Roman Road” is far more glorious than that! None are righteous, and none are even seeking out God ... but God provides the solution entirely of Himself so that no man can boast. Salvation in this present age comes not by works of any kind, but through faith that it may accord with grace. Those able to believe in this age of faith recognize the grace and the love of God, and are a part of the *ecclesia* ... those *called-out* from humanity to serve a particular purpose in the plan of God. God has conciliated the world to Himself, not counting man’s sins against him ... and the message of Christ’s Ambassadors today is “*Be conciliated to God.*” (2 Corinthians 5)

We do not present an offer to mankind resulting in an eternal destiny of heaven or hell. We present a proclamation of what God has done, and what He is in the process of doing. Ultimately all will be saved, even those not recognizing God in this present age. All will be reconciled to God when He becomes All in all.

Visit our web site at www.GraceEvangel.org