



Romans More Than Conquerers

BY

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DEDICATED

To the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,
the Mighty Conqueror.

Also, to my own dear wife, Audrey,
who by His grace has been more than a
conqueror through all her years of suffering.

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Preface

This book is presented that you might better understand the complexities of the Book of Romans—the epistle that is called, “The Masterpiece of the New Testament.”

Each section is outlined at the beginning, and then there is a simple, but in-depth exposition of the epistle in an easy to read format.

We hope reading this book will be a blessing and that it will guide you through your further studies and perhaps even help you to teach this epistle to others. God bless you!

Brian J. Bailey

AUTHORSHIP AND BACKGROUND

This epistle to the Romans was written by the Apostle Paul from Corinth, Greece in the spring of A.D. 58 on his third missionary journey (Acts 20:2-3). It was during the short-lived Golden Age when Nero became emperor after the death of Claudius in A.D. 54. In the early years of his reign, Nero displayed considerable ability and many good qualities. He was noted for his liberality and clemency, and he ruled with moderation. But by A.D. 59 his vanity, selfishness and cruelty were apparent to all. He killed his mother, his chief advisers Seneca and Burrus, and many of the nobility to secure their fortunes. His step brother Britannica, the rightful heir before Nero to the throne, was murdered earlier. In 64, two-thirds of Rome was destroyed by fire as Nero fiddled. After being declared a public enemy, he fled Rome and committed suicide (June 9, A.D. 68).

The Spanish were influencing Roman history and literature at this time. This could account for the fact that Paul desired to visit Spain, after his anticipated journey to Rome (15:24-28).

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Upon Paul's completion of his third missionary journey (see Acts 18:23 - 21:16; A.D. 54-58), he made a final visit to Jerusalem in June of A.D. 58. After his rejection there, he remained under Roman guard in Caesarea from the summer of 58 to the autumn of A.D. 60. Then he made his voyage to Rome (fall 60 to spring 61), and was shipwrecked en route. Paul came to Rome as a prisoner, spending two years in his own rented house (A.D. 61-63). While in Rome he wrote Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians. Nero released him in early 63, but in A.D. 67, Paul was arrested again and executed under Nero (May-June 68).

Not only was Rome called, "The Glory of the Empire," it was also called, "The Sewer of the Nations." It was a city built on seven hills and was referred to as such in Revelation 17:9,18. Paul had often sought to go to Rome but was hindered until late in his life. That was a blessing to us, for had he gone earlier, it is possible we would not have had this "Masterpiece of the New Testament."

Introduction

THE PURPOSE OF THE MINISTRY

1:1 - 1:17

- 1.) 1:5 To bring men to the obedience of the faith.
- 2.) 1:11 To impart some spiritual gift.
- 3.) 1:13 To have fruit that abides (cf. Jn.15:16).

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- 4.) 1:14 To preach in an attitude of a debtor repaying a debt.
- 5.) 1:16a To preach as one who is not ashamed of the gospel.
- 6.) 1:16b To preach in God's power to save those who believe.
- 7.) 1:17 To emphasize “The just shall live by faith” (Hab. 2:4).

In New Testament times, it was very normal for the one writing a letter to announce his name at the very beginning. Unlike today, every one put his name at the introduction instead of at the end. That was the customary style in the New Testament Era.

1:1 - Paul always introduced himself that way: “*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ.*” The word “servant” can be misleading in our day because a servant has certain rights. However, “servant” in those days meant a *slave*. Paul was a *slave* of Jesus Christ. The Romans especially would understand this because there were approximately sixty million slaves in the Roman Empire in the days of the Apostle Paul. A slave had absolutely no rights at all. He belonged to his master. A master had the power of life or death over his slave. He could give him any form of punishment and the slave had no right of appeal whatsoever. The master had complete control over his slave.

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This is how Paul viewed his relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. He was Christ's slave and He held every right over him. We, too, must have that degree of consecration and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. Our rights should be surrendered to Him. We should no longer be on our own, making decisions independently of Him. We are called to give our lives completely to Christ, Who possesses all authority over us. Our lives, in actuality, belong to Christ (Rev. 4:11).

The next phrase Paul uses is, *"called to be an apostle."* We must also know our call, or ministry. The Apostle Paul makes it very clear that he knew his call. He was an apostle. He states in Second Corinthians 12:12 that, "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." It is important to understand exactly what our ministry is. An apostle is a founder of works, but he must manifest the power of God, too. A prophet is someone who hears from God and has visions and dreams. He has a certain authority to guide the destinies of people, churches, and nations. An evangelist is a person whose ministry is to win souls. A pastor is a shepherd, and his concern in life is to look after the sheep. A teacher is one who should seek to understand the mysteries of God and be able to explain them in a simple and orderly fashion. An

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apostle could embrace the other four ministries. However, the point remains, we must know our particular ministry.

Our call is often manifested at a very early age, and it is evident to others. I remember when I went to France for the first time at approximately age twenty-six. I was completely new to the mission field, and I did not speak French very well. Now, I had never thought of myself as a teacher but the other pastors just gathered around me and said, "Teach us." I could not believe it. Today it seems that our whole organization is a teaching fellowship. We have the privilege of teaching pastors around the world. That seems to be the hallmark of our Fellowship. Furthermore, the people who are drawn to us are teachers. Virtually every week we have seminars somewhere in the world teaching ministers.

Of course, a true teaching ministry leads to Zion. The theme of Zion is holiness, its theme is Christ, and consistently seeking God for fresh and new unfoldings of His mysteries. We must know our ministry, yet it is often very evident to others. Others have said to me, "Oh, you're a teacher." You will experience the same thing. Others will recognize your ministry, too. If you are called to be a pastor's wife, you will find that other women will flock to you with all their problems. I think being a pastor's

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wife is one of the most difficult ministries in the world. If you are an evangelist, you will find yourself automatically witnessing and winning souls. If you are a pastor, you will be like a mother hen. You will want to get people under your wings; it is something that is birthed in you.

Paul also said he was “*separated unto the gospel of God.*” Not only must we position ourselves as a slave, and understand our particular vocation and ministry, we must also be dedicated. Paul was wholehearted. However, many are not wholehearted; they are divided with many other interests. “Separated” signifies wholehearted dedication to the gospel. Paul had to be separated from previous teachings of the Pharisees. The ministry cannot be run by our natural mind. We must be separated from previous life-styles, teachings, and thought patterns. Looking back over the years, I can recall having seen many failures. So many have started out well in their Christian life, or in the ministry, but relatively few finish their course. Jesus said, “Many are called, but few are chosen.” Usually the reason for failure is in the three points we have discussed in 1:1. Let us review them once more.

Point one is assuming the position of a slave, one who has no rights. Many people ruin their lives by having a demanding spirit—“I need this and that! I *must* have better conditions.”

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Point two is understanding our ministry. We must know our ministry and what God has called us to do. Not only was Paul called to be an apostle, he was specifically called to propagate the gospel where Christ had not been preached. We have to know the place and the particular purpose for which God has called us. He does the choosing; we do not. And remember this, between the first pew and the pulpit is a gulf that no one can cross. Only God can put a person in the pulpit. It is very important to know the calling God has given us. We are only rewarded for that calling, and we will only receive grace for that calling—not another. If we try to take a ministry God has not given, there will be no grace or anointing for that, and we will fail miserably.

Point three is being fully committed to the call of God. It is being “separated unto the gospel of God.” We must be fully committed to the call, and not divided by other interests. This may require separation from our father's house in order to fulfill our call, even as Abraham was separated (Gen.12:1). A person may possess one or two of the three vital conditions: 1. having a servant heart attitude, 2. knowing our calling, and 3. being committed to the call. Yet to fulfill the call that God has placed upon our lives, we must experience *all three*.

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1:2 - Paul is now going to develop this gospel—“*Which [God] had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.*” The gospel originated with God. Everything that originates from God will endure the test of time. Therefore, it is good to check out the *origins* of everything to make sure they were started by God. Often people start works, but their works have not been birthed by God, and God does not bless them or carry them.

Throughout scripture, the gospel of Jesus Christ has been very clearly enunciated. In Genesis 3:21, the Lord Himself clothed Adam. “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” Here is the beginning of the gospel message. One would have to die to clothe us. The shedding of blood was necessary to provide skins to cover Adam and Eve. In Genesis 15:6, we have the thought of being counted righteous by faith. We shall also see this later on in Romans chapter 4. In Exodus 12:3 the blood of the passover lamb preserved the believers from death and judgment. Isaiah chapter 53 reveals the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God. In Jeremiah 33:8 and Ezekiel 11:19, 36:25-26, we have the promise of a new covenant which writes God’s laws upon the fleshly tables of our heart.

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We must remember the *entirety* of the gospel message. The gospel does not only consist of salvation. The gospel of God is to write the ten commandments (the laws of God) on the fleshly tables of our hearts so that we obey God's laws from our hearts, and so that we can be His sons and daughters. A son or a daughter has the characteristics of the parents. Therefore, we should have the characteristics of God. What is God like? God is a holy God. Therefore, we should be holy, and this involves having His laws written in our hearts (Jer. 31:33).

1:3 - *“Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”* The theme of the gospel is Jesus Christ. The goal of the gospel is “Christ in us.” Christ fully formed in us is the hope of the gospel. In the Old Testament, God's dwelling place was first the tabernacle of Moses, and later the temple of Solomon where God resided in a temple made of stone. Today the gospel is Christ residing in His living temples. We are the temples of the Holy Ghost. What comes to your mind when you think of a temple? A temple is a holy place; it is a place sanctified, separated, and set apart for the service of God. Therefore, what should our bodies be? Our bodies should be separated unto the service of God, hallowed, and filled with God. The purpose of a temple, or a tabernacle, was not just to have four

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walls and say, "This is devoted to God." Rather, it is that those four walls be the habitation of God and be filled with God and His glory.

"Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." Here we see the dual nature of Jesus. In His humanity He came from the seed of David. In other words, Jesus received His physical body from David's lineage. His body was made of Mary's substance, who herself was a descendant of David. His spirit, however, was divine and eternal. The miracle of the incarnation made Jesus both God and man simultaneously.

There is another point I want to bring out here. David had a revelation of the gospel of Christ during the Age of the Law. Psalm 40:6-8 makes that clear: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." David had a revelation of the gospel. The gospel is not outward rituals and sacrifices, it is a living sacrifice. It is to have the laws of God written in our heart. It is to have a soft, listening, responding heart to God.

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1:4 - *“And declared to be the Son of God with power.”* Not only was Christ the Son of Man of the seed of David, He was also the Son of God, which was confirmed by His resurrection from the dead. Jesus Christ was declared to be the Son of God *“according to the spirit of holiness.”* This little phrase, “the spirit of holiness,” occurs nowhere else in scripture. We should not make a doctrine out of this phrase “the spirit of holiness.” —It is simply the Holy Spirit. It is to emphasize that Christ is set apart; He is different; He is separate from sin; He is joined to God, Who alone is holy. How is He declared to be the Son of God? We are told, *“by the resurrection from the dead.”*

Paul wrote extensively on the importance of the resurrection in his first letter to the Corinthians. There was a problem in the New Testament Church which he mentions in First Corinthians 15:12.

“Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?” Some of the New Testament people said, “There is no resurrection.” They were like the Sadducees, who also did not believe in the resurrection. Yet, one of the basic truths of the Christian faith is the resurrection of Christ. “But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea,

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and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins” (1 Cor.15:13-17).

It is so important to understand that the resurrection of Christ is the central theme of the gospel. This is what sets Christianity apart from every other religion. No other religion can claim that their leader was resurrected, and that is the reason we have such confidence. Paul further develops the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ a little later in the book of Romans.

1:5 - *“By whom we have received grace.”* It is from Christ that we receive grace and apostleship, or any other ministry. Grace and the ministry go together. In Ephesians 4:7 Paul says, “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” Now, according to our ministry gift there is grace or divine enablement from God to enable us to function in that ministry. This is the reason we cannot go outside our ministry. Ministry only operates by the divine enablement (or mantle) of God. That is the reason we must know our ministry.

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We must also know what in particular we should be doing, because along with the calling, there is an anointing and grace from God to fulfill it. And what is the purpose of the ministry? It is to bring *“obedience to the faith among all nations.”*

There is only one gospel, and it is the same for everyone. There is only one Church, and God's laws are the same for every nation. There is not one standard for one country and another standard in another country. Paul's message was the same in every nation (1 Cor. 4:17, Ex.12:49). Therefore, we must differentiate between allowable custom differences, and a culture that is contrary to the laws of God. In some countries, there is a custom of having several wives. This is not an allowable Christian life-style difference, because it violates the moral law of God.

When the Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples to pray, He instructed them to say, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” In heaven we know that the will of God is done. On earth He desires His will to be done in our individual lives. The thought of “obedience to the faith among all nations” is that God wants the gospel preached in every nation, and every nation to come to the obedience of the gospel. The tendency is to think that the gospel of Jesus Christ is associated only with the Western

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world, when in actuality at the beginning it had its greatest impetus in the East—Turkey, Galatia, Greece and Rome.

1:6 - *“Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.”* Those who are called by God to be the elect are known by God before the foundation of the world. We should make a difference, however, between called, chosen and faithful (Matt. 20:16, Rev.17:14, Jn.15:16, Eph.1:4). Many are called or invited to a relationship and a ministry, but to be chosen we must qualify. Then we must continue to be faithful.

1:7 - *“To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints.”* The original Greek does not mean, “called to be saints;” it means we are “called saints.” This is a very important truth. The Greek word *hagios* means holy ones. We are called “holy ones.” This is instantaneous at our new birth, but it is also progressive. We have to understand the Word of God on this point.

Leviticus 27:28 helps us understand what the Apostle Paul was saying here. “Notwithstanding no devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the Lord of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of

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the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord.”

We must understand the meaning of holiness because it applies to so many other aspects of the gifts and graces of God. Holiness is both instantaneous and progressive. The thought of Leviticus 27:28 is that when the Israelite of old wanted to express his joy and reverence and thankfulness to God, he might express it by giving a gift to God.

Perhaps he would give a vase to God to express his thankfulness. He would present it to the priest. As soon as the priest accepted the vase, it became holy. It became holy because the priest received it on behalf of God. It became God’s vase. Therefore, anything that belongs to God automatically becomes holy. The vase does not change in any way. It does not suddenly put on an aura. It is not suddenly illuminated with gold. No, it is the same, but it is changed in the sense that it belongs to God, and therefore it has become holy.

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In the same way, when we give our lives to Christ, we automatically become holy because we belong to God. Of course, there is an outworking of His holiness to change us. We will develop this thought in more detail later.

The whole book of Romans depends on understanding one's position in Christ and how God looks at us. As soon as we accept Jesus as our Savior, we become saints (holy ones). This is because we are God's property and Christ dwells inside us. This is the reason we are called saints at conversion. Yet we must also have the outworking of that sainthood. Much of the doctrine of Romans is related to the understanding of this truth.

Paul continues in verse seven, *“Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”* This was a common greeting in the New Testament times. It was equivalent to saying, “God give you divine enablement and strength to bear up in all your adversities.” Paul's address is, *“to all that be at Rome.”* The church in Rome was a church of martyrs. The early Church in general experienced great tribulation, and if the early Church knew tribulation, we may be assured that the latter Church will know that same kind of tribulation. In fact, we do not need to move into the end

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times, for most of us are in some form of tribulation or pressure right now. One woman of God said, “Do you know anyone who is *not* going through a trial?” As I reflected for a moment, everyone I could think of was going through some major difficulty in his life. Thus, we are in need of enabling grace to triumph.

It does not matter what kind of trial you are going through, there is a perfectly matching grace to equal it. The Lord developed this thought and showed my wife this truth from the epistles of Peter. Peter speaks of manifold temptations but also of manifold grace (1 Pet.1:6, 4:10). “Manifold” is the thought of a variety of hues or colors. The Lord spoke to my wife and said, “For every different color of trial, I have the exact matching color of grace that will enable you to triumph in every trial.” Therefore, we should look with expectancy for an exact matching hue of grace for our particular trial, because we are called to absolute triumph.

As we look through the book of Romans, we will find that God has made provision for us to become “more than conquerors.” In every trial, God has ordained us to be the victor. Thus, we are not to quit, because we are called to triumph in our circumstances. David declared, “Rule thou in the midst of

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thine enemies” (Psa.110:2). How do we triumph? It is not by our own strength, but by the enabling grace of God. *“Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Not only is grace necessary for victory, but it is also necessary for peace. The Apostle Paul clarifies this in Romans 16:20. “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” Peace enables us not to be shaken by thoughts, words and fears. And the *God of peace* sanctifies us wholly—spirit, soul, and body (see 1 Thes. 5:23). God's peace enables us to have victory over Satan; and it is that peace that sanctifies our whole being..

1:8 - *“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all.”* This is a very important truth, especially for pastors and people in the congregation. Thanking God for all believers is a grace and hallmark of mature Christianity. A pastor should thank God for every member of his congregation, for they are handpicked by God. To appreciate what each individual believer contributes towards the effectiveness and development of the Body of Christ, compare Philipians 1:3, Colossians 1:3, and 1 Thessalonians 1:2. Thankfulness is a virtue that should be esteemed highly, and cultivated. We must have a personal victory concerning everyone in the church congregation (Phil.1:3)

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Years ago, we were in a certain place and everything was going so well. There were lovely people all around us—except for one person. We said to the Lord (as others were saying), “Lord, if only this person were not here, it would be like heaven upon earth. Lord, please remove him.” And the Lord said, “No, I want you to thank Me for that person because he is doing more for you than all the others.” I had to acknowledge that was true because I had to be in his office about twice a week, and I had to pray two or three hours before visiting him so that I had control over my spirit. In all kindness, he was a Saul. He was not a good man. He was filled with jealousy and envy, and he was constantly against me (and not only against me but against others).

I began to realize that this man was really helping me. He was perfecting my prayer life and was making sure that I was filled with the Spirit of God at least twice a week when I saw him. As pastors we must gain the victory by continually thanking God for every member in the congregation.

I remember one dear pastor who prayed, “Lord, I want you to develop love and bring love to perfection in our hearts.” We must be very careful about what we pray, for God hears our prayers. That prayer was on a Sunday morning. It sounded so good, so wonderful, so spiritual, and everybody

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said “amen.” The following week the pastor stood at the door of the sanctuary greeting the people as usual as they entered. Then he spotted him.

The pastor saw this strange creature coming down the street, and he thought, “Surely he must be going somewhere else.” Suddenly, to his horror, this individual started walking up the steps to the church: “Are you the pastor?” The reply came back quietly, “Yes, I am the pastor.” Then the strange man said, “I would like to come to your church.” Just as quickly the pastor countered, “Oh no, you do not need to come to our church. Do you see that church down the road? That is the church that you belong to, you will feel right at home there.”

The man said, “No, I want to come to your church.” The pastor was very small of stature and the visitor was very tall. He towered over the pastor, and the pastor was physically unable to forbid him to enter. And besides his insistence, the pastor was getting tired of the aroma that was flowing from his body. Again he said, “I assure you our church is not your type of church. You should go down the road. Look, you can see it from here.” The stranger responded, “Pastor, I feel led to come to your church.” And he just walked right into the church and sat down in the pew.

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The pastor thought, “What will happen to our church now? What did I ever do to deserve this?” This man was not only a freak in appearance, he was a freak spiritually and in every other possible way. Well, he started “freaking out” other members of the congregation until everybody felt it was time to pray the fellow out and down the road to where he belonged with the other freaks. He not only came and sat through the whole of that service, he came to the evening service, to the midweek service, and to the following Sunday service.

The pastor become desperate and enquired of the Lord, “Lord, what are You going to do about this?” And the Lord said, “Did you not ask Me to perfect you in love?” He said, “Yes, Lord. I was expecting a tremendous anointing.” The Lord said, “This man is going to develop My love in your heart because you are going to love him.” To cut a long story short, the pastor’s love did develop for this strange man, who incidentally did change because of love. In fact, he became an established member of the church.

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"I thank my God for you all." As a pastor and as a congregation, we must be thankful for everyone God places in our church. God not only chooses the pastor, He also handpicks the members for the pastor.

"That your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." Paul gave the church at Rome a tremendous vote of confidence. There was a great release of faith from that church. They were known throughout the whole Roman Empire; thus they must have been a church really on fire for God. They were a witnessing church, and they did not hide their light.

1:9 - *"For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers."* Paul was a man who prayed fervently and often. He knew a number of the members of the congregation. Also, he knew some of the church leaders because he had been responsible for their conversion in other parts of the world before they had found their way to Rome.

1:10 - *"Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you."* I do not think Paul knew *how* he was going to get to Rome, for he went to

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Rome as a prisoner several years later. God gets us to the places He wants us, but it is not always in the manner we would choose or expect. Paul was writing this from Corinth, but his “prosperous journey” was not as anticipated. Sometimes we feel we should go to a certain place and that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, whereas God's way may be entirely different. Also, when God calls us somewhere, He does not always mean to go *immediately*. All journeys should be taken in the will of God. Some ministers think that the only key is to travel, but we must travel with purpose and move only in God's time. May we not travel about like a chicken with its head cut off.

1:11 - *“For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established.”* The duty of a minister is to impart spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts establish and strengthen a church. They establish an individual, too. Spiritual gifts help a person to be rooted and grounded in God. A gift occupies one's focus, and it inspires him to seek God for the development of his gift. Pastors, leaders, and Sunday school teachers must seek to impart the spiritual gifts. The spiritual gifts are given to edify an individual and to edify the Church (1 Cor.12:7). It is very important to have a

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flow of tongues, a flow of interpretation, and a flow of the spirit of prophecy. As well as these, the other gifts (such as the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and discerning of spirits) are all extremely necessary.

1:12 - *“That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.”*

Expect that when you minister that you will also be ministered unto and be blessed (Prov.11:25). Not only will God use you to bless others, you will receive something from them in the realm of faith. Christians build up each other in the most holy faith when they meet together.

A man cannot live life alone by himself. A live coal that is removed from the other sizzling coals goes out and turns black. A Christian must fellowship where there are others on fire for Christ. We need one another in order to keep glowing with the fire of the Spirit. Do not get alone with dead pieces of wood, because you will end up dead. A tree that is alone will be blown over by the winds, but a tree in the forest is protected by all the others.

1:13 - *“Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was [hindered] hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other*

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Gentiles.” People assume, “If going to Rome was the will of God for Paul, the way would have opened up. If God sends you to a place there will be no problems.” This thinking is disproved here. Paul is a pattern to the Church, one whom God raised up to be the teacher of the Church. Next to Jesus and the Holy Spirit, Paul is the teacher of the Church. He established the pattern. Therefore, what we see in the life of Paul must be right. He tried several times to go to Rome but was hindered.

Yet we can thank God that Paul was hindered from going to Rome; otherwise we would not have had the Roman epistle. In being hindered from reaching Rome, Paul was allowed to fulfill his ministry effectively in other places. Rome was the center of the world in Paul's time. All roads led to Rome and Rome influenced the empire; so Paul naturally desired to go there. However, his motive was a preeminent desire to have fruit among the nations. Isaiah 32:20 says to “sow beside all waters.”

Paul said, *“that I might have some fruit among you also.”* Our desire must be for our branches to go over the wall, to have fruit not only in our local church but in other nations. Whether it be through giving, writing, raising up people in our church who have a call to the mission field, or actually going there ourselves, every pastor should desire to have fruit among the nations.

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PAUL RESCUED FROM THE MULTITUDE AT JERUSALEM

Paul's rejection at Jerusalem opened the door to go to Rome to appeal to Caesar, and to stand before many kings and dignitaries. See Acts 21 - 28.



PAUL SHIPWRECKED EN ROUTE TO ROME

Paul tried on several occasions to go to Rome, but was hindered. He knew he was supposed to be there, but he never expected to go as a prisoner.

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1:14 - *“I am a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.”*

Paul took the position of a debtor. He had a debt toward others that he must repay (1 Cor. 9:16). Paul received great truth and revelation from God, which had rescued his soul from destruction; therefore he felt indebted to share these lifesaving truths with others. As we also receive something from God, we are indebted to give what we know to others. This must be our attitude.

Perhaps we have attended Bible school and studied the Word of God far in advance of others. Well, that puts us in the position of being a debtor. We owe something to others. The more we have, the more we owe, and the more responsible we are to share it with others. We must never keep the knowledge or blessings we have, we must always give them away. One of the key qualities of the gospel of Christ is found in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.” If we have love then we must give. We must dispense in every realm—in the realm of finance, in the realm of witnessing. We must give in every aspect. We must give of ourselves to others.

1:15 - *“So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are in Rome also.”* Paul said he had been to many countries but he needed to go to Rome, too. He was willing to expend all of

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his strength to preach the gospel. Paul said, "I am ready." Compare this with *a ready mind* of Second Corinthians 8:12. God regards our intentions, our willingness to go, not necessarily our ability to go.

1:16 - *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."* Christians, young and old, have to overcome that sense of shame connected with the gospel. Truly there is reproach attached to the gospel. In fact, in every generation God causes there to be a reproach concerning one particular aspect of truth. When we go into some churches we are mocked and shamed if we believe in a holy life.

In other churches we are scorned if we believe in the spiritual gifts. If we stand for Christian family values, we are mocked by some. There is a certain shame of the gospel which we will not escape, but we must not be ashamed of what God has given us.

"For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." There is power associated with every truth. Every truth has the power to make people free in that particular area; but they must believe. The key is "to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

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1:17 - *“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”* I want to dwell on verse seventeen for a moment because there is a very important truth here, and that is the fact that righteousness and faith are both instantaneous and also progressive. Instantly we are counted righteous when we believe in the Lord Jesus as our Savior. However, there is a progressive righteousness that God not only wants to impute to us, but to impart to us. It comes by faith. Faith and righteousness are intrinsically joined together.

We cannot be counted righteous unless we believe the gospel. But each time God speaks to us and our attitude is one of faith, more of the righteousness of God is imputed to us. Righteousness must be one of the themes of our life. How are we going to be filled with God's righteousness? It is from faith to faith. First of all God asks, “Do you believe that Christ died for your sins?” We respond, “Yes.” And because of our response to the truth, God imputes His righteousness to us.

Also, there is a sense of righteousness concerning water baptism. John the Baptist did not want to baptize Jesus when he said, “I have need to be baptized of thee and comest thou to me?” The reply of Jesus in Matthew 3:15 is very important. He said, “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to

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fulfill *all* righteousness.” Submitting to water baptism is also an act and step of righteousness. By faith we believe that God wants us to be baptized in water; therefore, we obey.

Yielding to the baptism of the Holy Ghost is also an act of righteousness. Every *step* in our Christian life is an act of righteousness. Every time we believe for new experiences in God, it is an act of righteousness. When you are preparing for the ministry, some of your peers will mock you when you speak of the baptism in the Holy Ghost. I attended three Bible schools as a student. In one school they did not believe in the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and I had a very difficult time there. While I was there, the Lord gave me a warning from Exodus 23:1; “Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.” I knew where they stood and I knew where I had to stand. If we do not speak uprightly concerning any aspect of God’s Word, we will be an unrighteous witness. We must not put our hand with people who mock certain parts of God’s Word.

The situation became so tense at the Bible school that I was called into the principal’s office. Once there, the principal said to me, “I hear that you have been speaking about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We all believe in the baptism of the Spirit here, but we do not believe in speaking in tongues.”

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Here I was, a very new Christian, sitting across from the principal of the Bible school, who was a very well-known man in England at that time. Then, suddenly, I felt the anointing and I said, “Is speaking in tongues of God, or of Satan?” You should have seen that man—he was trapped. He was trapped, not by me, but by God Himself. He was caught. If he had said, “It is of God” then I would have said, “Why don’t you preach it?” However, that would have meant he had to deny what his denomination believed. If he denied what they believed, he would lose his position in the school. He knew the truth, because he had exchanged pulpits and

baptismal tanks with a very well-known Pentecostal pastor in England. So here he was caught, and you should have seen him. I have never seen anyone with a face like that. It was as though he was going to die. As he made his decision, his head went down, and he said, “Speaking in tongues is of the devil.” I realized that he knew at that moment that he had committed the unpardonable sin. He had blasphemed the Holy Spirit. I said, “Then I cannot stay here at this Bible school.” He said, “I understand.”

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I had been recommended by the head of the denomination to go to that school. The principal asked, "What am I going to say to the head? He has great confidence in you. He recommended you. You cannot leave." I replied, "Tell him what I told you. Tell him I believe that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He will understand. That will exonerate you with him, but not with God."

Thus, God will put us in positions, not only in the world but also in the Church. Sometimes we will be mocked for our stand, but we must not put our hand to be an unfaithful witness.

At this point Paul's introduction ceases. Verse seventeen is going to be the main theme. It is a quotation from Habakkuk 2:4. "The just shall live by his faith." This is the theme not only of Romans but of the whole gospel of Christ. It is the theme, also, of the whole Old Testament itself, because, as St. Augustine said, "The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed, and the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed." By the grace of God we are now going to see the Apostle Paul develop this truth again and again, that "the just shall live by faith."

Part One

THE WRATH OF GOD - 1:18 - 3:20

A. The Wrath of God Upon the Pagan World (1:18-32)

- 1.) The *revelation* of God's wrath (1:18), which is a positive continuous act of divine anger
- 2.) The *reason* for God's wrath (1:19-23), because when they knew God they glorified Him not
- 3.) The *result* of God's wrath (1:24-32), "given up" by God to:
 - a.) Immorality (1:24) - fornication and adultery
 - b.) Homosexuality and lesbianism (1:26)

c.) A reprobate mind (1:28), incapable of sound judgment

B. The Wrath of God Upon the Jew Because: (2:1 - 3:8)

- 1.) They judged others while practicing the same sins (2:1-9)
- 2.) There is no respect of persons with God (2:10-16)
- 3.) God was blasphemed by the Gentiles because of them (2:17-29)
- 4.) God could not be the judge of the world if He did not judge His own people (3:1-8, cf. 1 Pet. 4:17)

C. The Wrath of God Upon All the World Because: (3:9-20)

- 1.) There is none righteous, no, not one (3:10)
- 2.) All have sinned and come short of the glory of God (3:23)

1:18 - *“For the wrath of God is [being] revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.”* Paul is bringing out a very important truth. He is speaking of people who know the truth and yet do not walk uprightly. Of course, he is going to condemn the whole Jewish nation here, but this truth also applies to us in the Church of today. Many know the truth, but will not walk in the light of that truth. “Who hold the truth in

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unrighteousness” refers to Christians because it is only Christians who habitually read the Word of God and know it. We must practice what we preach.

1:19-20 - *“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.”* Paul is speaking to a certain extent to the whole of mankind because he says in verse twenty, *“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”*

The wrath of God is a positive, continuous outflowing of divine displeasure against all ungodliness. This means everything that is the opposite of divine nature, everything that is against the nature of God, incurs the displeasure and wrath of God. But the point Paul is making is that God can be known. Therefore, because eternal things can be understood by the visible things of creation, all of mankind is *without excuse*. God can be known by the things that He has created. This is brought out in Psalm 19:1-3, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language,

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where their voice is not heard.” The Psalmist is saying that the gospel is in the stars. The gospel is in every created thing.

There is a sense of complete order in the universe. There is nothing by chance. In everything is the work of an all-wise Creator. In everything God has created there is a revelation of God Himself. Day and night follow each other in perfect harmony. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west and the stars stay on their courses. Solomon spoke of trees, beasts, and fowls. All of these reveal divine truth (1 Kg. 4:33). In a certain sense, Job chapters 38 to 41 have the same connotation. God has put within us a conscience so that our conscience tells us what is right and wrong.

1:21 - *“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”* Romans 1:21-32 is entitled, “The downward plunge.” It is a dethroning of God and a setting up of self. This is what happens when men do not acknowledge God. They become proud, and darkness comes into their spirit. Their light goes out. These are “ever learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth.” Pontius Pilate asked, “What is truth?” Jesus replied, “I am truth.” He is the Light.

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“Because that when they knew God” suggests that from the time of Cain, and then from the time of Ham after the flood, all of these people knew God. At the tower of Babel, they all knew God but would not acknowledge Him. *“They glorified Him not as God.”* The sinner, instead of looking outward and upward to God and giving Him the honor and glory and thanks for the creation, looks to his own thoughts, opinions and speculations.

“Neither were thankful.” It is very important to produce thankful people. When we are thankful there is an atmosphere that causes our spirits to be open to receive from God. Thankfulness precedes praise. Therefore, by thanking God we create an atmosphere of praise. It is dangerous to start a praise service without a thankful heart, because it becomes mechanical. Thankfulness is an acknowledgment that we have received something from another. By thanking God, we are recognizing and acknowledging that all

our blessings are coming from Him, and it creates a dependency upon Him. *“Lord, everything I have or ever will have comes from You.”* When we are not thankful, pride enters in. With pride the heart becomes darkened with deception (Obad.1:3). Because the people mentioned in Romans 1:21 were

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not thankful, they fell into all kinds of foolishness and pride. We should remember that the first step to backsliding is *unthankfulness*. Many churches, instead of thanking God, proclaim that their blessings are the results of their works. Then they say that in themselves they are wise, but in reality they have become foolish.

1:22 - *“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.”* God said, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to naught the understanding of the prudent” (1 Cor.1:19, 20, 27). If you have ever talked to some of the professors of psychology and philosophy, you would be amazed at the foolish things they say about creation and how man just evolved. What folly! “Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools.”

1:23 - *“And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.”* Then, in the heathen world, we have the spirit of idolatry. Idolatry also comes because of a lack of thankfulness. I commend to you the reading of Isaiah. Isaiah 44:15-20 reprimands the foolishness of man for cutting down a tree, using half of it to make an image and the other half he uses for fuel in the fire. It is utter folly! He bows down to the one

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part of the tree and says, “Thou art my god, thou art my creator.” What foolishness! Yet we go into many areas of the world today and we see idols everywhere. How can those dumb idols possibly be gods? (See Psalm 96:5, 97:7, 1 Cor.10:20). Anyone who worships idols worships devils.

1:24 - *“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves.”* This verse is very important because it is repeated three times. “God gave them up.” When man brings God down, God brings man down. One thing that we find in heathen religions is that those who worship idols have been given over to immorality. This happens in the Church, too. God has at times given up whole churches to immorality. He gives the mockers over to immorality.

1:25-27 - *“Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections.”* The downward plunge continues. God gave them up a second time. God gave them up, not just to immorality and lusts but now to *“vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the man, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned*

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in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was [due].” It is God who gives people over to lesbianism and homosexuality. Sometimes you pray for a homosexual and he does not gain any deliverance. It is because the root of the problem has not been touched. And remember, there is a judgment in the body for this kind of sin. God has brought in AIDS. This is part of “the recompense of their error which was due.”

It is a terrible condition in America when the incoming president authenticates that way of life. God has given people who are homosexuals over to sodomy because their minds and their hearts are not for Him. Homosexuality is God’s judgment. Lesbianism is God’s judgment. It is not an alternate way of life, it is sin, and the sinner has no rights. There is no such thing as gay rights; it is sin. Here is what the brother of the Lord Jesus Christ says about it. “Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 1:7). This is the Lord’s own brother. He says to remember Sodom and Gomorrha. They are an example of suffering the

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vengeance of eternal fire to show us what God thinks of homosexuality and lesbianism. They end up in the lake of fire. To the homosexual I say this—first, acknowledge your sin. Then, go to church and the pastor will pray for you to be delivered.

1:28 - *“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.”* A reprobate mind is a mind that is incapable of sound judgment. This is the third time God gives people up. God gives people over to a reprobate mind after all the other warnings have gone unheeded. This is brought out very poignantly in Ezekiel 20:24, 25. “Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols. Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live.”

Where do false doctrines come from? They come from demons that God has sent. This is the reason some churches have horrible doctrines. The Lord has “given them up” to a reprobate mind because they have not kept the laws of God. It is a very, very serious thing to mock God. In the last days God will send strong delusion. People will believe a lie because they do not love the truth, but have

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pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thes. 2:11-12). In this case, the strong delusion (in the last days) is the antichrist. Here again are the three steps down. First, God gives people over to immorality. When men and woman continue to reject God, He gives them over to *vile affections* (lesbianism and homosexuality). When God is yet rejected, He gives them over to a reprobate mind, a mind incapable of sound judgment. The result is 1:29-32—the whole of their being becoming filled with the following:

1:29-32 - *“Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable [immovable, cannot be reasoned with], unmerciful [We see this today in many parts of the world in the terrible brutality and cruelty that is manifested.]: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death [Yet you speak to people that are doing these things and they say, “Yes, we know we are doing wrong and that we will be judged.”], not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”*

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So here we have the wrath of God giving people up. First of all to immorality, then to homosexuality, and then to a mind that is incapable of sound judgment. Therefore, may we cry out to God, “O God, grant that we have a holy life.”

Chapter Two

2:1 - *“Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.”* There is a comment I would like to make at the beginning here so that we can understand the theme that Paul is developing in chapter two. This concerns a peculiar aspect of the guilty. The guilty are very judgmental of the slightest imperfection, whether in thought, word, or attitude, of the righteous. It is very peculiar but it is a fact of life that those who are guilty are very judgmental and critical of the righteous. With that in mind, we come to verse one, “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.” This is a very interesting point, for people who are very judgmental of others

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are actually doing those very things themselves. We find that someone who judges or criticizes another in a certain area is almost always doing the same thing himself. This is the reason he is judgmental and he sees faults in people that no one else seems to see. Verse one is very important because this type of person can bring you into condemnation. He can see wrong in very innocent situations (cf. Mt. 7:1-5).

2:2 - *“But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.”* Paul is saying that the judgment of God is against the people who do those things. This is very important. God's judgments are according to truth. There is no partiality with God. He is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

2:3 - *“And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?”* This is something I have seen over and over again in the forty years that I have been in the ministry. The Christians who commit sin continuously are of the opinion that they will never be found out, and that they are in a different category. They believe God will treat them as “exceptions” and overlook their sinfulness. I have seen this with pastors time and

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time again. Pastors will preach that you should not do a certain thing, and yet they are doing it themselves. They think that they are in a different category. They believe that they are an exception.

I have been in situation after situation where I have said to them afterwards, “Did you think that you were going to get away with it?” And they said, “Yes! We did not think we would ever be found out. We thought it was going to be covered, that God would smile on it because, after all, we are pastors. We are special.” This is what Paul is developing in chapter two, especially with the Jewish nation.

2:4 - *“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”* I have rarely seen someone in high office in a church uncovered immediately. My experience has been that when a person sins, it goes undetected for a period of one to three years. All the time they are thinking everything is all right, but what is actually happening is verse four. God, in His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, is waiting for them to *repent*. I can think of several pastors in various countries who have committed adultery. It was not just one act, but a continuous way of life. Instead of coming back to God they continued on, and they thought it was going to be alright. But usually within three years it surfaces. All that time God

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was waiting for them to repent but they did not. I do wish that we would listen very carefully to verses one through four.

2:5 - *“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”* The reason people do not repent is because they think they are getting away with it, and also because they love what they are doing. I have found that in almost every situation the reason for adultery has been because the pastor’s wife has been guilty, not of adultery, but of a lack of affection, a lack of understanding. She has not been a true help-mate. As a result, her criticism has destroyed his affection for her. Because of this, the man has continued in his sin, preferring the other companion. All the while God has been seeking repentance. Yet, because of their hardness and unrepentant heart, they have reaped wrath and judgment as is brought out in verse six, “[He] will render to every man according to his deeds.”

2:6 - *“Who will render to every man according to his deeds.”* We must not forget that this truth flows throughout scripture. Here are a few: Gal. 6:7; 2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 4:12-13; Rev. 22:12. We are all going to be judged according to our works.

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2:7 - *“To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.”* Glory is the literal presence of God with which He will envelop us. Honor means to be recognized by God, to be lifted up by Him (Psa. 3:3, 113:7-8). Immortality is eternal life. These are given to those who continue patiently in well doing.

2:8-9 - *“But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.”* Even holiness preachers who go into sin become contentious and argue against the very standards they once held.

Many years ago I was an assistant pastor in France, and the pastor of the church was the spiritual leader of the country at that time. He was a godly, spiritual man. Then I departed to another country and he went to another town. I do not know all the details, but this man fell into sin. There lapsed a period of about three to four years, at which time God lifted the lid and everything was uncovered. His wife repented because she, to a certain extent, had sent him in that direction by her attitudes, although I am not condoning him. His discipline required that he leave the larger church and return to

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the church he had pastored when I was the assistant pastor there with him. He had to sit in the congregation, and he did so for a certain time.

Unlike King David, however, he never got back to God. There is a difference between being found out, and repenting and touching God. He never touched God. Instead, he committed suicide. When I was passing through that town many years later, I saw him there. (I saw his departed spirit there.) Those who commit suicide do not get away from the scene of their crime. Suicide is never an *out*. They often have to remain there for a period of years, and oh, the anguish I saw on his face.

I have had personal friends who have fallen into adultery. These have been very close to me at times in my life. It is such a heartache. I have seen these tragedies, therefore, I want everyone to avoid this temptation. I do not want you to flirt with temptation, because I know it has brought down many people, and even strong men as stated in Proverbs 7:25-27. And of course, women have fallen, too.

2:10 - *“But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.”* What wonderful peace God gives to those who work righteousness (Jn.14:27). Glory envelops the righteous, and God lifts them up on high with honour.

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2:11 - *“For there is no respect of persons with God.”* There is no respect of persons for those who walk in sin. The ministry does not save us, nor does a position. Even being a Christian does not save us (Mt. 7:21-23). Continuing to walk in the light is what saves us (1 Jn.1:7-9).

2:12 - *“For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.”* Whether pagan or Christian, both will perish if unrepentant.

2:13 - *“For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.”* It is not those who go to church and listen to the law who are justified, but those who obey the law. I want to emphasize what Jesus said in Matthew 5:19. “Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” Christ is not talking about the greatest commandments here, He is referring to the least. But I can tell you this, adultery is not one of the least

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commandments. It leaves a blemish that is never erased. This is the reason I want to warn of this sin. It is not to condemn, it is just that I have seen the results. I preach extensively concerning the life of David. Although David was restored, there was always the reproach that was never wiped away. How much better it is *not* to fall!

When I was a student in Bible school I visited a church that was filled with sinners. (I mean redeemed sinners). There was a glow on all their faces, as they jumped up and thanked God for redeeming them from sin. One in particular jumped up and said, "I thank God that He kept me from falling." That is the attitude of the Apostle Peter who said we are "kept by the power of God" (1 Pet.1:5). We are not kept by our own strength. People who are not protected by God fall into the pit of immorality when they are constantly grieving the Lord (Prov. 22:14, Ecc.7:26). "The mouth of strange women is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein."

2:14-15 - *"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness."* Not every nation knows the laws of God, but

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everyone has a conscience. Most people cannot recite the ten commandments but in their heart they know them. Every man knows the law. Why? Because they have a conscience that tells them right and wrong. Everyone knows that killing, stealing, lying, and committing adultery are wrong.

People without the law, without the scriptures, who live by the law of their conscience and do those things commanded by the law, will be more justified than those who know the law (the light, the scriptures) and do not keep it. This is not to say that living by the law of the conscience can save anyone. Paul is simply saying that man will be judged according to the amount of light he has.

Those who have the light but disobey the light will have greater judgment than those without the light who live by the law of their conscience.

There was a pastor's wife in New Zealand who had backslidden and was living with a hippie. She had led this hippie to the Lord, but also found herself pregnant. In their desperation, this couple went up and down the country asking pastors, "Should we marry?" Every pastor said, "Yes." Then they came to us and the fellow said, "I still want to hear from you whether it is right." The girl said to me, "Oh

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don't you go quoting the Bible because I know what you will say." So I felt to say, "Come back in three days." In the meanwhile I asked the Lord what to say, and He said, "Hand them over to Me."

Three days later we met with them and they said, "Well, have you heard from God?" I said, "God said that we were to hand you over to Him." Their faces became as white as sheets because they knew something was coming. We laid our hands on them and handed them over to God, and we said, "Remember, you told us that you would do whatever we said." This is what God did—He separated them. The young man could not stand her, and she could not stand him, and her pregnancy was broken by God.

A few years later I was at his installation ceremony. In fact, I had the honor of installing him as a pastor after he had married someone else in another country. He was doing very well. When I went back to New Zealand sometime later, this same girl came up to me and I asked, "How are you doing?" She replied, "I have gone back to my husband. I thought you would expect me to do that." I said, "Yes." But do you know what God did for her? She and her husband had a child of their own and

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she was wonderfully restored to the joy of her salvation. God also gave her many choruses, many of which we sing here today.

When you do right, there is fruit. You have to go back to God and do what God says is right. The point I am trying to bring out here is this. The hippie who had just become converted had his conscience renewed. He felt that it was not right to marry that girl, although she was trying to persuade him to do oppositely.

2:16 - *“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”* God will judge every one of us. We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. If you have ever seen the Lord, you know that His eyes look right through you. There is nothing hidden from Him (Heb. 4:13).

2:17-20 - *“Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness.”* The Apostle Paul is now dealing with the Jews. There were many Jews in the Church at Rome. They were

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teachers who affirmed that the law was right. They were confident that they were guides to the blind, and a light to them which sat in darkness. *“An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.”* Here they were teachers, guides, instructors, knowing the truth, teaching others the truth, but not practicing it.

2:21-23 - *“Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?”* Surely the one I should teach is myself. We should be real and *be* what we teach. I do not want to be one thing in the pulpit and something else outside. I could never live with myself. To me the most important thing is to have the truths I preach first worked out in my own life.

When you ask people what is right, they will tell you what is right. But when you further inquire of them if they are practicing what they know is right, they tell you they are *an exception* and that God understands. This is far more common than you might think. I believe we should be real in our home.

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I believe that we should be genuine. Our home should be a place of peace and a place of righteousness. We should flow with our husband or wife. We should have the presence of God and speak to each other and act toward each other as if we were in church.

This is not supposed to be a show or a pretense, it should be a way of life. Yet when I go to so many places and observe many pastors and their wives, they are one thing in church but another thing in their own homes. There is contention, dissension, and everything else which is not right. However, we must realize that God will not allow this to remain.

Now, in some cases I grant you that only *one* of the parties is the guilty person. John Wesley is one example. He was a saint if anyone ever was, and his wife was like a little imp. He was an exception. He did everything that he could. I am talking about the cases in which both are wrong. F. B. Meyers is another example. I happened to meet a lady who lived in their house. F.B. Meyers was a saint; his wife was on the other side. The point I am trying to make is that if you marry a pastor, you should be genuine, and so should the pastor. I know many a pastor's wife whose cross is her husband because

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he is one thing in the pulpit and something else outside, and they literally go through hell because of it.

I believe we should seek the Lord to have the one of His choice. John Wesley undoubtedly made a mistake. William Carey's wife was anything but saintly, too. I really believe that we should seek God earnestly. This is the reason we tend to make much of marriage and the family. We are not simply giving you rules and regulations. We are saying, "Get the right one."

One of the dreams of a girl is marriage. The wedding dress costs a fortune, but it is only used for an hour or two. Afterwards the reality sets in. I have had teary-eyed girls coming to me, even on the honeymoon, heartbroken because of incompatibility. This is why I say that the will of God is the all-important thing. It is to marry the one of God's choice, the one with the same vision. You think alike, talk alike, and you actually feel alike. When one feels thirsty, the other one feels thirsty, too. You are so alike that one starts a sentence the other finishes it. One is going to say something, and the other says it first. You are one. That is how God intended it. My heart goes out to marriages that are hypocritical.

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The thing that seriously concerns me is the fact that we reproduce like kind. There is a story of a certain Bible school that could not understand why they were producing atheists. No one preached it, but four of the faculty were atheists. Therefore, it is not what we say, but what we are. We reproduce what we are.

2:24 - *“For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.”* The fall of a prominent minister brings down tens of thousands of people. When a pastor falls, many hear about it. When David fell it caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme (2 Sam.12:14).

When one of the tele-evangelists fell, I knew a woman who gave up on the Church. She said, “I just cannot go on now after seeing such hypocrisy.” She was wrong, of course. The one who fell was wrong. But I will tell you this, it is amazing what happens. We do not live to ourselves and we do not die to ourselves. God’s name is blasphemed everywhere and the fallout is tremendous because of the hypocrisy.

2:25 - *“For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.”* Paul was saying to the Jews that circumcision is a token of the

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covenant with God; but if you break the law, circumcision is invalid. The rite of circumcision is only valid if one keeps the law. May I just say that church membership, new birth, and baptisms can all be invalidated if we do not keep God's commandments (Mt. 7:21-23). We will only maintain God's favor as we continue to walk in the light.

2:26 - *“Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?”* Paul is saying that if the uncircumcised (Gentiles) keep the law, then they are counted as circumcised. Thus, it is not outward form that counts.

2:27 - *“And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?”* The uncircumcised (Gentiles) who keep the law shall judge the circumcised (Jews) who do not keep the law. In the judgment, Sodom and Gomorrah will judge Capernaum (the Jews) who had much greater light. Nineveh also will be judging the Pharisees (Mt.12:38-41). This is not to say that Sodom and Nineveh are saved. We are simply saying that those with greater light have greater judgment when they disobey.

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2:28-29 - *“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”*

Here is the only kind of circumcision that profits. It is the circumcision in heart, in spirit. Physical circumcision accomplishes nothing. Spiritual circumcision is to cut away our natural, fallen nature. It deals with what we are born with, by God's Word. This is an ever-operative process of God's sword in our lives. We need our “naturalness” cut away. We must welcome the sword into our lives. We cannot resist the sword if we would be entirely freed from the fallen nature.

When we were in New Zealand several years ago, we were awakened by two angels standing at the foot of our bed at three o'clock in the morning. One was very tall and held a sword in his right hand, at the end of which was the word, “Circumcision.” The other, a smaller angel, had written on a sash worn over his shoulder and across his breast these words, “The Enforcer.”

The angels did not speak, but the Holy Spirit spoke in my heart, saying, “I have come to circumcise My people. Those who allow Me to do so shall enter into My further blessings. But those who refuse

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to allow Me to separate them from their sins, to them I will send the other angel who will enforce My will.”

The following morning, I spoke of that experience in the context of David and Bath-sheba. One could have heard a pin drop. Hundreds came forth to consecrate their lives afresh to God, baring their hearts before Him and asking Him to circumcise their hearts. Yet, some did not.

Only days later God began to move in judgment. A notable Christian who was relatively young and healthy, fell over dead. Another, whom we had often warned concerning his propensity to talk too much, was catapulted off his bike into the air. He landed upon, of all parts of his anatomy, his mouth. The Enforcer had made his point.

Beloved, let us heed the warning and seek the Lord diligently that He might perform His good promise when He said, “The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live” (Deut. 30:6). Why meet “The Enforcer?” Let us face circumcision of heart and obtain all His blessings.

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Chapter Three

3:1-2 - *“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?”* We have come to chapter three but we are still in Part One, “The Wrath of God.” Thus, we begin with a question. It is a very natural question to ask after chapter 2:28-29. *“What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision?”* The Apostle Paul replies, *“Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.”* Paul is saying that the advantage of being a Jew is that he has the whole history of the nation behind him. Unto his fathers, Moses and the prophets, have been given the oracles of God, the words of God. This is developed in detail in chapter 9.

3:3 - Paul continues, *“For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?”* Just because some did not believe does not annul the faith of God. In Second Kings 7:17-20, one of the king's lords did not believe God's message about the coming deliverance from famine. The lord's unbelief concerning the end of the famine did *not* prevent God's word from being accomplished! Paul is saying if some do not walk uprightly, does that destroy the message? The answer is no!

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This is something we must remember because during our lifetime we are going to be close to people who once walked uprightly and then turned aside. What effect is that going to have on you or me? Some people are destroyed by it, but if our life is Christ, then people do not affect us. When a person turns away who has mightily preached the Word, it does not nullify the message.

Many people have come to me confused, saying, “I heard a certain man preach, and prophesy, and saw him lay hands on the sick, and pray for others to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and yet he was living a life contrary to the Word. Does that nullify the healings, prophecies, and other works he performed?” No, because it is the Word of God that abides, not the messenger.

God is able to use and speak through all kinds of people. Be able to receive the Word of God through whatever channel God gives. At times, God has chosen to speak to me through people I had written off, and with a good reason. They were like “Balaams,” but they had the Word of the Lord for me.

3:4 - *“God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.”* Paul is quoting from Psalm

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51:4, which is a prayer of David. David acknowledged his sin so that God might be proved right when He spoke, and justified when He judged him.

3:5-6 - *“But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say?”* Sometimes when a man lives unrighteously, it actually commends the righteousness of God. It shows up the contrast. *“Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?”* If that person who lived unrighteously contrasts the righteousness of God, is God unfair when He judges that person? Oh no, certainly not. *“God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?”* Obviously, God must first judge the sinner in the household of faith. Otherwise, how would God be able to judge the world? Judgment must first begin in the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17).

We cannot ever impute unrighteousness to God. God is perfectly right and fair. Our lack of knowledge of His system sometimes creates questions, but this is because we do not see the whole picture as He does. By saying a situation is not fair, actually we are saying that God is not fair. Our natural mind says, “It’s not fair.” Therefore, we should ask God to show us the situation as He sees it. This will cause us to agree with God when we finally see it from His point of view. Otherwise, bitterness comes

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in and we will take sides against God. Remember, Hosea 4:6 says, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”

3:7 - *“For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my [falsehood] unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?”* By contrast, God's righteousness is established by our unrighteousness. His faithfulness is more clearly seen by our unfaithfulness. His truth accentuates man's falsehood. The truth of God does that. Sometimes a crooked man like Saul highlights a righteous man like David. Therefore, the question arises, why should Saul be judged as a sinner? After all, he was being used of God to do something in David. But wait, that is not the whole picture, is it? Saul was evil. Saul was judged for his transgressions, not because he was being used of God to work out something in David's life.

“For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my [falsehood].” This issue may be seen even in the Fall. The love of God was shown by the giving of His own dear Son. This would never have been manifested unless there was sin, yet this does not exonerate the sinner. John Calvin falsely asserted

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that God needs sin to manifest His wisdom. A problem allows God the *opportunity* to reveal His wisdom and truth; yet God does not need sin to do this. God is never the *author* of sin.

3:8 - *“And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? Whose [condemnation] is just.”* Paul was quoted by his opponents as saying, “Let us do evil that good may come.” Those who condemn that saying are correct in their condemnation.

Many people say that the end justifies the means. In other words, if we do evil, perhaps that will cause God to move. God might move, but it would be to our disaster. They try to put God into a corner, but it does not work because God is bigger than the corner.

3:9 - *“What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.”* This is what God wants us to understand; everyone, Jew and Gentile, is under sin. The Jews have no back door into heaven. Israel is apostate today, and God will yet judge them for crucifying the Lord of Glory. The land of Israel will be cleansed of shedding His

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innocent blood (Joel 3:21). There are always two sides to a coin. Currently the Jews are under judgment, but later they will return to be His beloved.

In 3:10-18, Paul is going to give a series of quotations from various parts of the Old Testament and only the general sense of the scripture is given. The quotations are basically out of the Septuagint (Greek version of the Old Testament), and sometimes Paul will enlarge them, alter them, abbreviate them, combine two or more passages, or adapt them to his good pleasure. Thus, we can only guess from where he is quoting at times.

3:10 - *“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.”* This is a quotation from Psalm 14:1,3.

3:11 - *“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.”* This is a quotation from Psalm 14:2.

3:12 - *“They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”* This is an adaptation from Isaiah 53:6 and Psalm 14:3.

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3:13 - *“Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips.”* This is from Psalm 5:9, 140:3.

3:14-16 - *“Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”* This is Psalm 10:7. *“Their feet are swift to shed blood.”* Isaiah 59:7,8. *“Destruction and misery are in their ways,”* from Psalm 36:1.

3:17 - *“And the way of peace have they not known.”* Isaiah 59:8.

3:18 - *“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”* This also comes from Psalm 36:1.

3:19 - *“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”* Paul is addressing the Jewish believers at Rome. This is the purpose of the law. Paul is going to give us two clear-cut definitions of the law. Here is one purpose of the law, “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” That is one of the purposes of the law. As we look at the law, we see that no one measures up. Everyone has sinned. Why did God give the law? So

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everyone would be found guilty! Therefore, we cannot please God by legalism. We may only please Him by inviting His grace into our lives to enable us to do what is right.

3:20 - *“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.”* No one has kept the law, but there is another purpose of the law. The purpose of the law is to reveal sin. *“For by the law is the knowledge of sin.”* The law gives us the knowledge of sin in our hearts. The law shows us our need (Rom. 4:15).

In summary, we could say this: The Jews had the law and they did not keep the law. The Gentiles did not have the law, they had the law of the conscience. They violated the law of the conscience. Therefore, all men, Jews and Gentiles, are guilty and under the law of sin. All men need a Savior. Not only do we need a Savior, we need to continue to walk in the light after we receive Jesus as our Savior.

Perhaps a little experience will help reinforce this truth. We were in Switzerland many years ago, and an elder of a church asked if he could bring one of the deacons to counsel with us. We readily consented, and when they came we were told the following story.

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The deacon had been seeking to justify his actions for being unfaithful to his wife, who was in a mental institution. He did so by misquoting Paul's words in his letter to the Corinthians. However, one night he had a vision. In this vision he was in a line of men who were appearing one by one before a throne, upon which sat an angel. Each man, when it was his turn to stand before the throne to give an account of his life, crashed to the floor and then was bound and cast into hell.

Eventually, the deacon was next in line except for the man in front of him who turned and said to him, "I do not need to worry, my life was all right." But when his turn came, he, too, went crashing down and was bound and thrown into hell. Then the vision ceased.

As the deacon finished recounting these events, both the elder and I gave solemn warnings to him to mend his ways. We said, "You are in the company of those who are pure in their own eyes, but not right before God." One year later I received a call from the elder. The deacon had suddenly died in the night. I asked of his spiritual state. The elder replied that for six months after our talk, the man had mended his ways, but then he had slipped back into his old sins. Both the elder and I knew that the

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vision had been completed and the deacon had arrived at the throne of judgment, and, as with the other men, had been found wanting.

Oh, beloved, please heed these warnings. One is not a Christian outwardly. Possessing a church office or having a former experience cannot save us. The only thing that saves us is consistently walking in the light as He is in the light. It is only then that the blood of Jesus Christ (continually) cleanses us from all unrighteousness (1 Jn.1:7). Being constantly washed in the blood of the Lamb is what will save us on the day of reckoning. “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27).

This concludes Part One, “The Wrath of God.” This section commands every mouth to be silenced. It has concluded the whole world guilty before God and without excuse. The next section, “The Righteousness of God” opens up for man a marvelous door of hope for pardon and forgiveness.

Part Two

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

I. OUR NEED FOR JUSTIFICATION

A. Divine Method of Justification (3:21-31). Verse 21 is the central theme of the book. In fact, it is the theme of the whole Bible. Verse 21 picks up the thought expressed in 1:17.

- 1.) *Justification is apart from the law* (3:21a). The righteousness of God that gives men right standing with Himself is in no way dependent upon the law and is not earned by the fulfillment of its requirements.

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- 2.) *Justification is through faith in Jesus Christ (3:22).* Faith is resting upon the finished work of Christ.
- 3.) *Justification is free (3:24).* It is at no cost to a believer.
- 4.) *Justification's price - the death of the Son of God.* Through the payment of Christ's dying in our place, we are redeemed or released from our sins.
- 5.) *Justification is because of God's love and kindness.* Christ is our propitiation. He removed our offenses (3:25).
- 6.) *Justification excludes boasting.* It is by faith, not works (3:27).
- 7.) *Justification is needed equally by Jews and Gentiles.* The whole world is guilty before God (3:28-30).

II. GOD'S PROVISION FOR OUR NEED

A. The law is established on the firm footing of a more excellent sacrifice than those of the Old Testament (3:31). (Heb.10:10, 8:6, 9:23,24,28, 10:14).

B. Old Testament examples:

- 1.) Abraham (Gen.15:6)
- 2.) Confirmation by David (Psa. 32:1). The joy of a sinner who has been forgiven.
- 3.) Abraham's justification, not confirmed by the rite of circumcision (4:9-12).

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- 4.) Abraham's justification apart from the law (4:13-17).
- 5.) Abraham's faith typical of a Christian's walk (4:17-25).

C. Fruit of being justified:

- 1.) Peace with God (5:1)
- 2.) Joy (5:2)
- 3.) Hope (5:2,4)
- 4.) Glory (5:2)
- 5.) Patience
- 6.) Steadfastness
- 7.) Love
- 8.) Certainty of being saved from wrath

D. Justification based entirely on Christ's work (5:12-21):

- 1.) Sin entered through Adam's disobedience (5:14).
- 2.) Death reigns because of sin (5:14).
- 3.) Grace and righteousness come through Christ (5:15-17).

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4.) This brings eternal life (5:18-21).

Now we come to God's remedy for a sinful and lost world. In Part One, Paul was seeking to prove that all have sinned. He repeats that in verse twenty-three. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Everyone, Jew or Gentile, needs a Savior. Now we come to God's remedy, which is God's provision and His way of justifying the lost because there is none righteous.

3:21 - *"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets."* God's righteousness is revealed, but not through the law. Yet it was foretold in the law and in the prophets. Now, this is a very important truth. There is only one gospel and it flows from the Old Testament into the New Testament, for it was in the days of the law that God declared justification by faith. Moses declared in Deuteronomy 30:11-14, "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it

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unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.”

This is something Paul will develop in Romans 10:10 when he says, “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Moses already said the same thing in Deuteronomy. There are other examples. In Isaiah 46:13, “I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.” God declared long ago, “I will bring my righteousness near unto thee.” Habakkuk 2:4 clearly states, “The just shall live by his faith.” (See also Jer. 23:6, Isa. 54:17b.)

3:22 - *“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.”* The righteousness that Paul is going to explain is by the faith of Jesus Christ. This is made very clear by Habakkuk, “The just shall live by his faith” (Hab. 2:4, Gal. 2:16, 3:22).

3:23 - *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”* What does it mean, “all have sinned?” It means everyone in Adam sinned, and this includes the entire human race. This is a truth

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that Paul is going to repeat. We must understand that in actual fact, we were in Adam when he sinned. Then, personally, we have sinned and come short of the glory of God. What does it mean to “come short of the glory of God?” I would like to suggest four things.

1.) It means, “to fail to *render* unto God the glory that is due His name in every circumstance; to fail to glorify Him or to do what brings praise to Him.” In Luke 17:15, 18, the leper returned to give God glory for His miracle of healing. (See also Acts 12:23, Rom. 4:20, 1 Cor.10:31, 2 Cor. 4:15, Phil.1:11, 2:11, 1 Thes.2:6, Rev. 4:9, 4:11, 11:13, 14:7, 16:9).

2.) Coming short of the glory of God means, “to fail to *receive* the glory, honor, or approbation which God bestows.” (See Jn. 5:41, 5:44, 8:50, 12:43, Rom. 2:7, 2:10, Heb. 3:3, 1 Pet.1:7, 2 Pet.1:17).

3.) Coming short of the glory of God means, “to come short of *reflecting* the glory of God, or when we fail to allow ourselves to come into maturity and unto the conformity of His image.” (See 1 Cor.11:7, 2 Cor. 3:18, 8:23).

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4.) Coming short of the glory of God means, “to fail to *partake of the consummated glory* that will be dispensed to the saints at Christ's coming. (Rom. 5:2, 8:18, 8:21, 1 Cor. 2:7, 15:43, 2 Cor. 3:18, 4:17, 2 Thes. 1:10, 2 Tim. 2:10, Heb. 2:10, 1 Pet. 5:1, 5:4).

3:24 - “*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*” Paul is now going to tell us how we who have sinned and come short of the glory of God may be justified. The law is by works. It is by our effort. But there is no salvation in the law because no one can keep the law. So what is God's remedy? It is to justify us by His grace (Eph. 2:8). We are justified by His favor. How? “Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” How can He redeem us through Christ? We must remember that God is a righteous God. He cannot do things unilaterally and just decide to do something, because He has to uphold righteousness. He is the judge. As the judge He cannot just forgive someone without having *grounds* to do so. Justification is to declare a man not guilty. He is declared righteous, in the negative sense, by being pronounced not guilty. Yet, a judge must have grounds whereby he can discharge a criminal of his guiltiness.

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3:25 - (Speaking of Jesus Christ), *“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation.”* (See 1 Jn. 2:2).

Propitiation is quite a big word; but we have to understand the meaning. Propitiation is really a sacrifice to placate or to appease an offended god. God, through the virtue of His holiness, must be offended by our conduct. He cannot just gloss over something. This is what we must watch as spiritual leaders. We cannot just pass over things. Issues have to be faced and dealt with.

Because of His holiness, God must be offended by our sin. He has to be appeased. However, the interesting thing is that He has given the sacrifice to appease Himself. That sacrifice is His own Son. Not only does Jesus placate God’s anger, He also has to remove the sin. Sin cannot remain there, because if it remains, God is going to be continually angry. It must be removed.

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission [or removal] of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” God has done it all. We have to present the gospel accurately. Some people portray an angry God and Christ’s appeasing Him. In one sense that is true, but in another sense it is God Who has given the sacrifice. We have to understand that. We have to present God as an angry God because He must, in fact, be

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angry against sin. Yet we have to present the other side of God Who, in His compassion, pays the price to appease Himself. After all, He paid a tremendous price; He gave His only Son.

The scene described by Isaiah is so wonderful as we hear God crying out, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Although it was addressed to Isaiah, it happened in heaven. All the angels stood there and though they were willing, none of the angels were able to go. It was the Son of God Who at that moment stood up, stripped Himself of His robes, and said, "Here am I, send Me." Then the Father said, "Go." The remarkable thing is that God knew all of this before He created man. He understood that when He created man, it was going to cost Him His own Son.

God created man because of His judgment upon Lucifer and his fallen angels. When Lucifer was dethroned and judged, he threw out an accusation against God, saying, "You are not merciful." Yet God could not be merciful to the angels because they had sinned while having such light. Therefore, God had to prove His mercy; and the way He proved His mercy was to create man, for whom His Son would have to die.

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We must remember that God knew all of this before He did it. Therefore, we see also the majesty of God when He said, “Whom shall I send, who shall go for us?” We also see the love of God, in that “God so loved the world.” We see the mercy of God, the graciousness of God, and the forbearance of God as He gave His only Son. The Father knew that the only one who could respond to that call was His Son.

Those who have children know the heartache of seeing them suffer. It is a heartache to see your loved ones suffer. It breaks you. Yet when our loved ones suffer, they do not suffer because we will them to suffer. But Christ suffered because God the Father willed Him to suffer (Isa. 53:10). We should not forget that this is an eternal suffering, because the Father always sees those hands and feet that He pierced. He always remembers that side that He pierced. Why did He pierce it? Because He loved us—that was the price of love.

3:26 - *“To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”* God wanted to justify, but He could not justify unless He had grounds for justification, which meant He would have to pay the price. Who was on the cross? Paul says that God

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was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. Who died on the cross? Certainly Jesus died on the cross, but in a certain sense the Father must have suffered terribly on that cross. Not that He was on the cross, but in the sense that He saw His Son on the cross.

3:27 - *“Where is boasting then? It is excluded.”* How can we boast when we see what the Father and the Son have provided? Salvation cannot be earned, yet man must respond to it. Joel 2:32 declares, “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” God is saying that if a man only calls upon the name of Jesus without doing anything, he can be saved. He is not saved by works. It is sufficient to say, “Lord, save me.” It is incredible that God accepts a simple, honest acknowledgment.

3:28 - *“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”* This is the only way that we can be saved. Otherwise, Christ would never have come (Gal. 2:21).

3:29 - *“Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also.”* God is the God of the circumcised and the uncircumcised. Abraham was declared righteous, even being uncircumcised, because he believed God.

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3:30 - *“Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision through faith.”* Both Jews and Gentiles have obtained justification the same way—through faith in Christ.

3:31- *“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”* We must never forget this. The whole purpose of the New Testament is to establish the law. It is established, not upon tables of stone, but written upon the fleshly tables of our heart. We must never forget that the sacrifice of Christ is to enable us to fulfill the law. We will see how that happens in chapter eight. We cannot be justified by the law, yet the law is not disannulled either. We are called to fulfill the law. However, the only person who can fulfill the law is someone who is born again. Jesus Himself said in Matthew 5:17, “I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it.”

Chapter Four

In chapter four, the Apostle Paul gives illustrations from the lives of Abraham and David to prove that the law is established on the firm footing of a more excellent sacrifice than those in the Old Testament.

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4:1 - *“What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?”* What are we to think that Abraham found in reference to the matter being discussed? Abraham now becomes our example for the understanding of the doctrine of justification by faith. Abraham is our father and according to scripture, we inherit the blessings of our father. How then was Abraham justified? Was he justified by works?

4:2 - *“For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.”*

4:3 - *“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”* What does the scripture say about the justification of Abraham? It simply says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” Paul is quoting from Genesis 15:6. Abraham simply believed what God told him. He believed in God's Word, His character. (Believing is an attitude, a condition of heart).

This brings us again to the subject of Romans 1:17, which says the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. Paul is saying there is a progressive revelation of God's righteousness to the believer. Each time God speaks to us and we respond in obedience and faith, there is a fresh

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impartation of His righteousness. This is the reason we must live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Mt. 4:4; Deut. 8:3). Our whole life must be a life of believing God's Word. As we continue to believe God's Word, it is accounted unto us for righteousness.

God might say to you, "I am going to make you a pastor in a certain city." When God speaks to us and we believe Him, He counts it for righteousness. It is a condition of heart, a relationship. The Israelites who came out of Egypt did oppositely. They did not believe God. God promised to give them the land of Canaan. They confessed, "We are not able, God is not able." They received no imputed righteousness.

What God is looking for is a response in our heart. When God speaks He wants us to agree with Him and say, "I believe You can do it." As we go on in life, the things God speaks to us are greater and more impossible. Righteousness is a life of taking God at His Word. God's righteousness flows into our lives each time we say "yes." This is the life of faith. The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.

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4:4 - *“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.”* If we are working for a man, he is in debt to pay us. Yet in doing it God's way, it is not by our works. We are justified by faith. A reward is given for something we do, but there is nothing done here. It is just grace. If Abraham had achieved justification by works, God would have been in debt.

4:5 - *“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”* Abraham was counted righteous by God because of his faith in what God said to him, not by his works. God simply is saying, “I don't want you to work for it, I want you to believe. If you believe, I will count you righteous.”

There are two sides of a coin in this matter. Side one is “no works, just faith alone.” Side two involves the point James makes when he says, “by works is faith made perfect” (Ja. 2:21-23). Martin Luther thought the epistle of James was not inspired. James was simply saying that if you believe God, you will do what He says. Our works make faith perfect. After believing God we must go the next step to get the key. Our faith is made perfect when we act on what God says—and that is *works*.

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4:6-7 - And now Paul quotes David: *“Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered”* (Psa. 32:1,2). David did not work for his forgiveness.

David was forgiven by the grace of God. How are a person's sins *covered*? By the sacrifice of blood. David wrote seven penitential psalms after his sin with Bath-sheba and murder of Uriah. His sins and iniquities were forgiven, and because his sins were forgiven, he is going to heaven. However, there were also fifteen consequential judgments in his earthly life that followed his sin.

4:8 - *“Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”* Blessed is the man against whom the Lord does not count sin. In other words, it means to wipe the slate clean.

4:9 - *“Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also?”* Paul reasons, “Is this faith of Abraham only for the circumcised?” In the New Testament there were two groups of people, Jews and Gentiles. The mentality was always that salvation belonged to the Jews. In fact, Jesus said that in John 4:22. Yet the Apostle Paul, in opening up the New Testament Era, had to consider the Gentiles. Therefore, he asks, “Cometh this blessedness then upon the

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circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.”

4:10 - *“How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.”* Abraham was counted righteous through faith. How was it then reckoned, when he was circumcised or uncircumcised? Was Abraham circumcised when he was counted righteous? No, he was not yet circumcised. Therefore, the Gentiles are included, because Abraham was not yet circumcised. Abraham's justification was apart from circumcision. Justification was not confined to the rite of circumcision. Abraham was uncircumcised when he was justified. Truly Abraham is a father to all those who walk in the steps of faith.

4:11 - *“And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.”* Circumcision is only a token or a seal of the righteousness of the faith. The Israelites circumcised their children because they believed in the covenant God made with Abraham. When a Jew was circumcised, it was because Abraham

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was circumcised. Abraham was circumcised because he believed what God had spoken unto him. Circumcision was a token of the righteousness that comes by faith. This is very important, spiritually speaking, because the thing that should follow our believing is a circumcised heart. We should allow God to cut away all those things that we were born with. Abraham believed God, and afterwards he was circumcised. So in actuality, every Christian should be led into heart circumcision.

4:12 - *“And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.”* Paul speaks in very verbose language. Even the Apostle Peter said, “Our dearly beloved brother Paul says things that are hard to understand.” (See 2 Pet. 3:16). I think he could speak a bit more simply, but what he is saying here is that Abraham is the father of the circumcised, and he is also the father of the uncircumcised who walk in the steps of the faith.

4:13 - *“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.”* God did not say to Abraham, “You keep this

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law and I will make you heir to the world.” Instead He said, “This is what I am going to do for you. Believe it and it will come to pass.”

The initial step of salvation is to believe. After that there is a walk of faith that keeps us in the light. But what else did Abraham have to do besides believe? He had to offer his son, Isaac; and that took another step of faith.

When the scripture affirms that, “Abraham believed God,” what actually did Abraham believe? The account is given in Genesis 15:1-6. Abraham was childless when the Lord took him outside his tent and showed him the stars and the universe and said, “So shall thy seed be in multitude.” Abraham believed what God told him, and it was accredited to him for righteousness. Thus, Abraham became heir of the world, for out of Abraham come all the faithful. Abraham's seed is Christ and everyone who belongs to Christ. Every believer becomes a son of Abraham when he is Christ's. This is brought out in Galatians 3:16. Abraham was the heir of the world. What a position to have! How did he obtain that position? By keeping the law? No, the law had not yet been given. He was heir of the world through the righteousness of faith.

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4:14 - *“For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.”* Paul is saying, if you are going to make people heirs because they keep the law, then faith is nullified.

4:15 - *“Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.”* What does the law do? It stirs up anger. It reveals how disobedient you are. The law makes you a transgressor with no power to change. “No Smoking” signs make smokers transgressors. The signs offer no power to stop smoking.

What happens when you come to Bible school and someone tells you that you must be in your room at 10:30? What does that stir up? It stirs up a little wrath. “I do not want to be in my room at 10:30. Why should I be in my room at 10:30? I am past the age of twenty-one; and even if I am not past twenty-one I still have my rights. I don't have to be in my room at 10:30. My parents never required me to be in my room at 10:30.” The students are told that it is for their good, although they may not believe it. However, that is the law. What does it do? It works deeply within. Does it stir up joy? Not a

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bit! It stirs up a little wrath, but then you quickly overcome that and return to sainthood immediately, I am sure.

“For where no law is, there is no transgression.” If there was no rule about being in your room at 10:30 and you were up until midnight, you would be free of transgression. Yet because there is a law, you become a little transgressor if you are not in your room at 10:30. Thus, the law is not really to be commended. Unfortunately, we need to have laws. When we started the Bible school, we were going to have it free of laws. This kind of system lasted barely a few weeks before we realized that the law had to be introduced. We thought that everyone was going to be saintly and walk in the Spirit, and that everyone would be where they should be. However, that did not work at all. Therefore, there has to be the law. *“Where no law is, there is no transgression.”* What does the law really produce? The law really produces anger. The law produces transgressors. It shows us what is in our heart.

4:16 - *“Therefore it is of faith, [obviously the law cannot do it.] that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.”* It is of faith. And the reason God elects to use faith as the means of salvation and of every other blessing is that it must depend uniquely upon the grace of God.

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Faith is a gift; therefore, it is by grace (Eph. 2:8). *“Not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all.”* Paul continues to emphasize that Abraham is the father of us all. He is our spiritual father. Abraham was justified by faith; therefore, we have to be justified by faith to be in God's kingdom.

4:17 - *“As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations.”* Abraham was not only the father of Israel, but the father of many nations. Every Christian is a son of Abraham. *“Before him whom he believed.”* Abraham believed what God said. *“Even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.”* Abraham had to believe that God was able to quicken the dead, because in actuality his body was as good as dead with respect to having children at his age. This is the way God works. God calls something into existence that is not there, and we must then believe God. God's Word is creative. As you speak the Word of God prophetically, it creates.

4:18 - *“Who against hope believed in hope.”* If we are the sons and daughters of Abraham, we are going to have to pass through circumstances like our father Abraham did. We are going to have to believe against hope. This is the reason we have to live by the promises of God, not by our

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circumstances. Righteousness comes by believing what God has promised to us. Some of those promises are going to seem impossible, and it will look as though nothing can make them come to pass except God. “Ah Lord God, thou hast made the heavens and earth by thy great power and there is nothing too hard for thee.”

Many times in your life you will be in that situation. I remember when we were around a stove in a little church house that we were pastoring. It looked as though things were going from bad to worse. My wife and I used to sit around this little stove, and as we prayed God would pour upon us the spirit of prophecy. God said, “You will go around the world.” In fact, He even told us the route we would travel. It looked impossible. We left that church and everything grew worse. But the day came when we went around the world just as God had said.

Our life has been up on the mountain tops and then down in the valleys. Some of the mountains have been very high and some of the valleys have been very low. In our valley experiences, however, God has continued to speak, saying, “I will do this and that for you.” Our reply has been, “Thank you Lord; we believe.”

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At another time, we passed through an experience when we had no money. The Lord started to speak, "I am going to send you to Australia." We were on the West coast and we did not know anyone in Australia. Yet by faith we got books about Australia and started seeking the Lord about it; and in God's good time, we went throughout Australia. I want to encourage you and remind you that this is the life of Abraham. God speaks to us, and what He tells us is an impossibility. He never speaks in a way that we can bring it to pass. It has to be a miracle. Here was Abraham, who against hope had to believe that his offspring would become a multitude, when he and his wife were too old to produce *any* children.

4:19-20 - *"And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead..."* We must not consider our own resources. Rather we must think of God's resources. Another thing we must *not* consider is circumstances because circumstances will drain our faith. If we start looking at circumstances, our faith will go. *"...When he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief."* Abraham was not overcome by the circumstances. He said, "I believe you, Lord. You said it and I believe it." God is

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honored by our faith. This quality of spirit delights the heart of God. Our attitudes in life are so important. The whole of our life, not only at conversion, must be a life of saying “yes” to God. We must live our lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

At the moment, God is speaking fresh and new promises to my wife and me. In the natural, however, it all looks impossible, with my wife's paralysis. Nonetheless, we believe God is going to do what He said. We cannot stagger at the promises of God through unbelief, but be *“strong in faith, giving glory to God.”* When are we to glorify God? Isaiah says to “glorify God in the fires.” On the mountain top it is easy to glorify God and say, “Hallelujah.” But in the darkness, in the furnace of affliction, is when God commands us to say, “Amen Lord, we believe.”

4:21 - *“And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.”* This is what God wants, a heart that is fully persuaded. If God speaks something to our hearts or gives us promises, He is well able to perform it, even though it looks impossible.

4:22 - *“And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.”* Abraham was counted righteous because he believed unflinchingly in what God had spoken to him. That is what I am trying to

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emphasize. Righteousness is instantaneous and progressive. We are counted righteous progressively as we continuously believe what God tells us. The righteousness of God is revealed “from faith to faith.”

4:23-24 - *“Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him.”* What God did for Abraham was inscribed, not for Abraham’s benefit alone, but for us. See verse twenty-four, *“But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed.”* What shall be imputed? God’s righteousness shall be imputed to us!

4:25 - What do we have to believe? Do we have to believe that we will have a child at one hundred years of age? No, that was unique to Abraham. For us, we have to believe initially, *“on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”* We have to believe that Jesus was delivered unto death by the pre-determinate will of God before the foundation of the world for our offenses, and raised again for our justification. We have to believe in the resurrection of Christ, and that Christ died for our sins. This is our initial step in the life of faith. This is what is required for the initial imputation of righteousness.

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Let us look at our father Abraham. He had to believe God in other matters, too. For example, when he offered his son Isaac for a burnt sacrifice, he had to believe that God would raise him again. We will also have to believe God for many things in our lives, but as we do, we glorify God. Our righteousness will be progressive. Our faith will be progressive. Romans 1:17 says, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." It is not just one initial act. It is a progressive revelation of the righteousness of God from faith to faith, and from experience to experience.

Chapter Five

We have already looked at the theme, "The Wrath of God." God has to be angry with sin because of the very nature of His holiness. Holiness must be angry against sin. Therefore, in order for God to receive us, He had to have a sacrifice. That sacrifice was the Lord Jesus who placated the righteous anger of a holy God. He not only placated sin, He also removed it. Therefore, the sacrifice of Christ, which was actually provided by God the Father Himself, placated His divine anger and also removed sin. The way that was accomplished is also enunciated for us in the last part of Romans chapter three and chapter four.

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God has provided a means of justification, and then access to Him, through the death of His own Son, Jesus Christ. He has granted this means of pardon and approach to both Jew and Gentile alike, by the act of faith. This faith is not of ourselves, it is a gift of God. It becomes very clear from Ephesians 2:8 that it is all of God. “For by grace are ye saved.” It is out of God’s abundant graciousness that He provided Christ and His sacrifice. It is out of His graciousness that He reveals His truths to us.

We are saved “through faith,” a faith that is not of ourselves. This faith does not come by any of our emotions. It does not come by our will; it is a gift of God. It is, “not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:9). Salvation comes through faith, and that faith is a gift of God that enables us to believe in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ upon Calvary.

5:1 - *“Therefore being justified by faith.”* Justified means being brought into right relationship or right standing with God. I must emphasize again that all spiritual experiences are instantaneous and progressive. There is an instantaneous act of salvation. There is an instantaneous act whereby we are justified by faith, but there is a progressive work of justification, bringing us into right standing with

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God. In the English language, the thought of being justified by faith can be illustrated by a typewriter. Progressive justification can be understood by the example of a printer. When we type with a typewriter, the left column of the paper is perfectly straight, but the right column is uneven and jagged. One line is way out, the next line is short, and so on. When we present it to the printer, he will straighten up the other side, line by line. He will not print it unevenly. He will straighten the right side to make it just as straight as the left side. In printing, this is called the act of *justifying*.

This illustration helps us understand the *process* of justifying that God works out in our lives. He justifies us instantaneously at new birth, but then there is a progressive work of justification whereby we are justified line upon line, as Isaiah 28:10 says. God wants to do a deeper work of redemption in us. He desires to straighten or justify us so that we become as straight as the Lord Jesus. His life is perfectly straight, therefore we can have no lesser goal than perfection. It would be incongruous to believe that God could be satisfied with anything less than perfection.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself said, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect.” Therefore, perfection must be our goal. Also, we are told in the Old Testament, and again

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in the New Testament by Peter, “Be ye holy, even as I am holy.” Holiness and perfection are goals. Holiness is separation from sin (the world, the flesh, and the devil), and being joined unto God Who alone is holy.

Perfection must also be understood in the light of the Greek word, *teleios*. Teleios (perfect) means to be mature and entirely fit for the task. Therefore, when Christ said to be perfect, He meant to be totally fit for the task for which we were sent into the world. This is the reason we must allow God to continue to straighten and adjust our lives. We must be perfect and *totally fit for our task*.

“Therefore being justified by faith.” This is a continual process, and it takes place as we continue to respond to what God is putting His finger on in our lives. Remember, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, from one experience to another. We must be willing to allow God to straighten us line by line, to address the things in our lives in order to straighten or justify us.

So often our heart cry after conversion is, “O God, deal with this area of my life.” We say, “Please Lord, I cannot go on unless You deal with this thing in my life. I want to be genuine, Lord, and how can I be genuine with this thing [or these things] in my life?” However, it is God, the divine Craftsman

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and Creator, Who chooses which line He starts with to justify us. He deals in His own order, *not ours*. He knows what will release the line below. Sometimes He starts with issues that we think are insignificant. Why does He bother with these? Because He has *His* program and He knows what He is doing.

"We have peace with God." When He puts His finger on something in our lives we should acknowledge, "Yes, Lord, that is so. I want to yield this area of my life to You. You can either lengthen it out or cut it off." In so doing, we have peace with God. Peace is contingent upon yielding to God line upon line. As long as we are yielding to this process we have peace with God. However, Christians do not have peace with God when they rebel, ignore, or refuse what God is addressing. When we receive Christ as our Savior, we have instantaneous justification and also instantaneous peace with God. Afterwards there is a progressive work of justification, and the consequence of that progressive yielding to God is an ever-deepening peace with God.

God has His order of dealing with things in our lives. He does not touch everything at once. Sometimes we have to bear with an evil in another, or even in ourselves, until God deals with it. This

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develops forbearance. Forbearance is to bear with the evil in a person's life until God deals with it. God has His order. This is very important in counseling. We cannot go out of God's order, or we could crush a person. It is important to have the spirit of counsel when we work with people so that we only tell them what God wants to tell them at that given moment. Deal with the line God wants to deal with. We cannot just quote the scriptures. We must ask God what He wants to say to the one being counseled. We can destroy a person, even if our counseling is in accordance with the Word of God.

5:2 - *“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.”* Not only do we need grace to believe on Jesus Christ as our Savior, we need grace to go through the trials that are necessary to purify and straighten us up. It is by faith that we have access to this grace. The Apostle Paul brings this out very poignantly in Hebrews 4:14-15. “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

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Jesus understands our battles, inward and outward, because God gave Him a human body so that He could be tempted. As the divine Son of God, He could *not* be tempted. God cannot be tempted. But He was also the Son of man, and as the Son of man He could be tempted. Jesus was tempted in every way that we are. Therefore, whatever our temptation, or personal battle, whether in the flesh, the soul, the emotions, or the spirit, Jesus has been through it all. Thus, Paul continues in Hebrews 4:16, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

Grace is not only divine favor, grace is also *divine enablement*. It is strength. As I have already said, God made it very real to my wife that there is manifold grace for manifold temptations. Manifold is a word that means “a variety of hues.” For every hue of temptation, there is an exactly matching hue of grace to equal it. It is through faith that we have access to this divine enablement and strength to overcome our need and our temptation.

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“And rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Our joy is in the hope set before us. What is the hope set before us? Our hope is that God will bring us to glory and that He will finish the total work of redemption in us.

5:3 - *“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience.”* Paul is seeing tribulation coming down the road and he is running out to embrace it, fully knowing the eternal qualities it will work in his being.

It is very difficult at the beginning of our Christian life. As soon as we have received Christ as our Savior, our impression is that life is going to be a bed of roses. Certainly, our lives are improved for the better. We have peace and assurance. We are being watched over by God. We are escaping judgment and hell and going to heaven. Also, we have the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, Who is walking beside us. However, tribulation is coming too, especially if we are called to high orders in the kingdom of God. He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives (Heb.12:6). The preparation required is tremendous. Therefore, there is tribulation. Tribulation means “pressure.”

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The Lord's earthly brother, James, brings it out very poignantly. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (Ja. 1:2-4). James had entered into the same spiritual position as Paul, where he could glory or rejoice in tribulation. We need to come to that place, too, because tribulations are going to work in us patience.

Patience, or endurance, has two sides to it. Patience is a quality that serenely accepts trials. The other side of patience is its ability to endure and not give up in a trial.

While I am on this subject, I want to say that major decisions and major choices should never be made when we are in dark trials.

In counseling, we have seen that those who make a major decision while in tribulation tend to make the wrong one. Invariably, when we are in a dark trial, our hearts faint, and we see that on the other side of the fence the grass is greener. In other words, it is better and easier in someone else's field than in the place that we are at the moment.

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Going somewhere else never works, because if we get out of God's corral and we quit, God may release us and let us go. I have known many people who have quit and removed themselves from God's trials. Suddenly, they feel as though the burden has been lifted and they come under the false impression that they are now enjoying a blessing they have never had before. In actuality, they are enjoying the blessing of that certain plateau in the mountain of God that they have chosen, and this is where they will remain for the rest of their lives.

We must allow God to bring us out in His own time, when He is finished with us. If we get out of God's chastisement, or out of God's tribulation in a wrong way, if we get released by our own efforts, we are sealing our position for all eternity. We are sealing for eternity the spiritual plateau upon which we will dwell.

This applies especially to the choice of a marriage partner. In marriage we make our choices; we establish our eternal plateaus. My wife and I were counseling someone in a Bible school—and you would be surprised that in Bible school the central focus of interest is marriage. In this particular Bible school, one of the students phoned me at about six o'clock in the morning, and he said, "I need to see

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you immediately. It is something very important.” Well, I thought it was some situation that was so urgent that it could not wait one single moment. So I said to him, “All right, you can come down and see me.” Mercifully, it did take him five to ten minutes before he could get down to see me, and during that time the Lord spoke. The Lord said, “He is coming because he wants to marry a certain girl and he is going to ask you if he can marry this girl. You are to tell him that he can marry this girl, but if he marries her he will be on the low road. But if he does not marry this girl and waits for the one I have chosen for him, then he will go on the high road.”

Moments later this bright, shiny little face appeared at the door, and I welcomed him into the apartment. I thought that I would be courteous and ask him why he came. And he said, “I feel that I should marry a certain girl. Is it all right? May I marry her?” You see, the idea was that if they got my approval, then everything was all right. So, I said, “Oh, yes.” His face just shone. But I said, “God spoke to me and said that if you take this girl, you will be on the low road, but if you wait for God’s girl, you will be on the high road.” His heart sank and he said, “But I still could marry her, couldn’t I?” I said, “Yes, you may marry this girl but you will be on the low road.”

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He left, and made his decision to marry this girl. He did not ask me to perform the ceremony, but he did marry the girl. This young man had the call of God to a very important ministry, but he ended up in a much lower ministry. Many years later I was preaching at a certain church and I gave this example, not knowing they were there in the church! I inquired afterwards what they were doing. All they were doing was just helping out in a church, when God had called him to be a pastor. Therefore, I want to make this point very clear that it is unwise to make major decisions hastily, especially when we are in a dark trial, and especially in the realm of marriage.

5:4 - *“And patience, experience; and experience, hope.”* Experience produces hope. Faith is based on hearing a word from God (Rom.10:17), but hope is developed when we have no word from God and we learn to trust in His character. Sometimes we have to pass through darkness and we have no light (Isa. 50:10-11). Still we have to trust in the character of Him who has no variableness or shadow of turning.

Nothing takes the place of experience. Notes cannot take the place of experience. We become rich through experience. Hope comes from experience. Seek, by the grace of God, to triumph in every

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situation. If we fail, we should ask God for forgiveness, put it right, and carry on. When a Christian has no hope, it is because of little experience. The older we grow, the more hope we have.

Past experiences give us hope for the future. Experience is very important, because when we have experience, we have at least two things in our favor. First, we have something we can share with others to bring life to them. Secondly, experience also gives us strength when we are passing through a trial, because we can look back and see God's hand of faithfulness.

Trials have a tendency to repeat themselves, but each time they go deeper. When we have had a trial, often it is repeated years later. The experience of the previous trial produces hope. Experience brings forth hope—a confidence that the God who brought me through the previous trial will also bring me through this one. Each trial is more difficult than the previous ones. In fact, when we pass through a trial victoriously, we are qualifying for a deeper trial. (See Job 1 - 2). Through it all, it is working out in our lives the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

5:5 - *“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”* Hope takes away the shame we sometimes feel in a trial. Also,

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the fruit of triumphing through our trial is an ever increasing awareness of the love of God in our hearts. As hope increases, so does the love of God increase in our lives. Love is our goal. Love is the bond of perfectness (Col. 3:14). We should remember the three steps in First Corinthians 13:13 which are faith, hope, and love. The greatest of these is love.

As Paul says, our objective is, "To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that [we] might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:19). Every believer should desire to be rooted and grounded in love in order to know the length, depth, height, and breadth of the love of God so that we might be filled with all the fullness of God. (See Eph. 3:17-18). This is the way to life.

These first five verses of Romans chapter five give us the keys to perfection. The process is painful and difficult. It is a time when we have to cry out constantly, "O God, give me grace." Yet what trials produce in our heart is fantastic. They produce love, and that love is so strong that it can overcome every adversity and attack of the enemy.

In the Christian life, and especially in the ministry, we are attacked constantly. We are attacked by those who hate us. We are attacked by those who are envious of us. We are attacked by those who

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are jealous of us. We are attacked, not only by those in the world, but by those in the Church. It would be easier if we were attacked only by those in the world. When you are a pastor, you are attacked by other pastors. How do we overcome and live above all of this? By guarding our hearts as commanded in Proverbs 4:23. “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” We overcome through love. Love overcomes hatred. Love overcomes jealousy. Love overcomes envy. Love overcomes fear. “For perfect love casteth out fear” (1 Jn. 4:18). When these attacks come they try to inspire fear, but perfect love will cast out all of that fear. Praise the Lord!

5:6 - *“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”* How do we know God loved us? Simply because when we were sinners, Christ died for us. When we were without strength, having no resources within ourselves to cast off the bondages of sins and evil habits, Christ rescued us. This is a beautiful thought. Christ died for us before we were born, before we had any concept of salvation. We had to be introduced to the fact that Christ already died for our sins.

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There was a good little church-going girl in England who became a very famous novelist in the last century, along with her sister. They were very good churchgoers and one of these sisters said, “Oh, if only I could take everybody’s sin upon me and jump in that lake over there and just take all of people’s sins with me. Oh, wouldn’t it be wonderful? I would be willing to do it.” Then another person in the group said, “ Oh, but someone has already done it, and that someone is Jesus Christ.” Although she had been raised as a small child in Sunday school and church, she did not know that Jesus had already accomplished that.

Christ has taken our sin and buried it in the sea of forgetfulness. I think it is so beautiful how the prophet Micah expresses this truth. “He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Mic. 7:19). This little girl wanted to jump into the lake and take everybody’s sin there, but look at what God has done. He has cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. We do not even know how deep the sea is in certain places. Metaphorically speaking, it is way, way down, and that is where our sins are.

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5:7 - *“For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.”* We are taught in the armed forces to lay down our lives for our friends. For example, if you have the machine gun and the enemy is approaching, you are expected to stay at your post until all your comrades can evacuate. In the air when one of the planes of your squadron is hit, you are to cover it and fly over it and receive all the attack of the enemy planes so that your friend can parachute to safety. It could cost you your life, but that is what you are taught. And so it is with us, that sometimes for a righteous man, or for your friends, you would die.

5:8 - *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* The loveliest One died for the unlovely. That is the way God demonstrated His love to us. He did not die for the righteous; He died for sinners like you and me.

5:9 - *“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”* If therefore, while we were yet sinners Christ died to deliver us from just retributions, how much more then shall we be saved from just retributions now that we are justified. We are justified by His blood.

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We are being brought into right standing by His blood. Therefore, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Christ.

We must never forget this. Christ spoke more about hell than He did about heaven. He spoke more about the torments of the wicked than He did about the delights of the righteous. John 3:16 says, “whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” *Should not perish* emphasizes the thought of being spared from eternal torment.

5:10 - *“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.”* We do not think of ourselves as enemies of God. Yet, if we sin we are at enmity with, (at variance with, in disagreement with, in contradiction to) a holy God. Thus, we were enemies—enemies who were reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Who did the reconciling? It is actually God the Father Who did the reconciling *through* His Son. We must see the deep love of God the Father Who would give His only Son.

“Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Paul continues his argument. If, when we were enemies we were justified and reconciled, how much more, now that we have been

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reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. Reconciliation is not only instantaneous, it is progressive. There are progressive acts of reconciliation, whereby every part of our nature is transformed so that we become fully reconciled to the divine nature.

5:11 - *“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”* We have the great privilege of rejoicing and having the joy of Jesus in the presence of God. This is the great contrast between the sinner in Romans 3:19—“whose mouth shall be stopped”— and those who are justified—who can show forth joy in the presence of the Father.

We have failed; we have all come short of the glory of God. But when we are redeemed we are not only brought into right standing with God, but we are also able to rejoice at the throne of judgment. Oh, what a difference there is between the saved and the unsaved. Jude 1:24 says, “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.” We must see where redemption ends. It ends presenting us faultless unto God, but it takes progression.

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“By whom we have now received the atonement.” Atonement means “satisfaction.” It is to fully cover the wrong done. There must be an atonement, or a covering, for our offenses. How can a just God declare us to be righteous? A holy God must have some basis on which He can declare us free from our debt or justified from our guilt. A judge cannot free a thief who has stolen \$10,000 unless someone replaces the \$10,000. Someone may say, “Here, I will pay the \$10,000.” That is precisely what Jesus did! He paid our debt. He atoned for and covered our debt. He “satisfied” the question of our debt and covered a multitude of our sins.

Now we are going to approach another great truth of the Word of God, but it is something that is difficult to understand. In 5:12-21, we are going to be presented with two men, the first Adam and the last Adam, Who is Christ (cf. 1 Cor.15:22, 45). These two men brought something into the world, and there is a tremendous blessing if we can rightly understand them.

The Two Men

5:12 - *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.”* Through his fall and disobedience, Adam brought sin into the world. He also brought death, because death can only reign

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through sin. We may then ask, “How could Christ have died if He were without sin?” He could not have died until He drank of the cup in Gethsemane. It was there that He requested, “Let this cup pass from Me if it is possible.” He knew what was in that cup. It was filled with the sins of the world. In drinking the cup of iniquity, He became sin Who knew no sin. That was the only way He could die, because death has no power unless there is sin.

“And so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” We must understand the doctrine of original sin. A baby has committed neither good or evil, yet he is subject to death. Why is this? A baby is a sinner by virtue of the fact that he is born with a nature of sin. King David brings this out in Psalm 51:5, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” David was a prophet and was speaking prophetically of original sin.

5:13 - *“For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.”* Prior to Moses, there was no law. From Adam to Moses there was no written law. Where there is no law, sin cannot be imputed. It is only when someone makes a law that sin can be imputed by breaking that

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law. How, then, could death reign? How could the people from Adam to Moses die if there was no law?

5:14 - *“Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.”* Why did death reign from Adam to Moses and until now? Because everyone is born a sinner. Adam is a figure, or a type, of another Adam who is to come, the last Adam—Christ. The fact that death has reigned since Adam proves that original sin has infected everyone since Adam. Although there was no law from Adam to Moses, everyone had the law of the conscience (2:12-15), and they have violated it.

5:15 - *“But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.”* One act of disobedience by one man, Adam, caused many to become sinners. Much more, then, did the obedience of One, the last Adam, make many righteous. If one man could bring sin into the world by an act of disobedience, much more can the righteous Man bring grace. Therefore, grace is more powerful than sin, good is more powerful than evil.

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This is confirmed by Paul again in First Corinthians 15:21-22. “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ [the last Adam] shall all be made alive.”

5:16 - *“And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.”* One act of disobedience brought sin and death into the world. However, the gift of Christ covers not one sin, but many sins. One cannot compare the free gift of the last Adam to the offense of the first Adam. The gift of God is not like the result of Adam's offense. The consequential judgment of that one sin was that condemnation came upon all. But the gift of the last Adam was justification from many sins and trespasses.

5:17 - *“For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one.”* One man’s offense was enough to allow death to reign over the whole human race. If that be true, the Apostle Paul is saying, *“Much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”* Why does it say, “they that receive *abundance* of grace?” Because we have an abundance of

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offenses that need to be covered. This is the reason it is so important to seek God to receive grace for every sin.

The key to reigning in life is receiving an abundance of grace. If a person receives grace *for salvation only*, he is not going to reign. The qualification for reigning is an abundance of grace that deals with every sin and bondage in our lives. We need a depth of grace that enables us to triumph in every trial in order that we may become “more than conquerors.”

“Abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness.” It is imperative to understand what Paul meant by “the gift of righteousness.” In Psalm 24:3,4, the question is asked, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? [Then it is answered] He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.”

Here is someone very needy who has knelt before God and sought Him with many tears and anguish of heart before having a clean heart created within him. To this man comes God's response in Psalm 24:5. “He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, *and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*” There is a vast difference between being *counted* righteous and being *made* righteous. The latter is

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granted to the one with a pure heart. The Lord Jesus Christ brings this out very clearly in Matthew 5:6 where He says, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” This kind of righteousness is given only to those who hunger and thirst for it. It is an actual garment of righteousness as shown in Revelation 19:7-8. It is one thing to be counted or imputed righteous, but quite another thing to be *made* righteous. To be *made* righteous requires time and many acts of obedience.

There are two sides to grace, too. There is grace that covers every iniquity, grace that deals singularly with every sin in our lives. But there is also the thought of an impartation of grace (divine enablement) to go through every trial God deems necessary for our purification. It requires imparted (not imputed) righteousness, and an abundance of grace to reign with Christ.

Reigning has a twofold aspect. There is a reigning in our present circumstances, but also there is a reigning as kings and priests with Christ in the millennial age. There is a reigning in life, as Isaiah brings out, “Thou shalt walk upon the high places of the earth.” God wants to bring us to that place where we reign in this life as He did. Yet, there is the thought of ruling and reigning in the millennium.

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In Revelation 20:6, it says, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” There is the other side of reigning, reigning in the millennium, and then reigning in eternity. What is the qualification? We must become holy!

The Present Truth of Romans 5:17

“They which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” The word *reign* is connected with a king. A king speaks of victory, power, dominion, and authority. We are called to reign in life as kings (1 Cor.15:57, 2 Cor. 2:14).

The Christian is expected to triumph and be victorious in every situation wherein God places him. It is an attitude of heart. He is to be as a king riding into battle. “And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth, meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things” (Psa. 45:4, cf.110:2).

The way to reign in life is to receive the gift of righteousness, and His grace. As we have already mentioned, *imparted* righteousness is greater than *imputed* righteousness. We are counted righteous

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immediately at conversion, although we are not righteous and we have many problems in our lives. As we allow God to work in our lives, we are *made* righteous.

To reign, we must receive an abundance of grace. There is grace for every particular bondage and sin in our life. Where sin abounds, grace can much more abound (Rom. 5:20-21). Also, we need grace to enable us to pass through the refining fires which God deems necessary for our purification and perfecting. The right attitude in trials enables us to receive the abundance of grace to endure and triumph in them.

My dear wife, Audrey, was in the recovery room at the hospital after eighteen hours of surgery. There she was treated very roughly by one of the nurses. When she was about to complain to the Lord, He spoke to her and said; "Recognize another opportunity for Me to show you My grace." The ability to see a trial as an opportunity or an ordeal will determine whether we become better or bitter. Opportunity opens the floodgates of grace. The key is seeing it as God's opportunity.

When we were in the Cameroons in West Africa, we were invited to a seminar on an island fishing village off the coast. To get there was truly an arduous journey. It meant travelling in heavily laden

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canoes in open seas. It was very dangerous during that particular time, since other canoes had capsized and many had drowned. The conditions in the village, too, were very difficult. However, the Lord spoke to Audrey and said, "I have provided bags of grace for every eventuality so that you may triumph in all situations."

On one occasion in the United States, a carload of illegal immigrants had caused considerable damage to our parked car. The Lord's response was this; "Ask Me to enable you to take the spoiling of your goods with joy." (See Hebrews 10:34).

If we fail to appropriate available grace, one danger is that an adverse situation becomes insurmountable. When that happens, bitterness comes into us, and we infect many others. Let us heed the warning against allowing the root of bitterness to spring up within the garden of our heart, thereby defiling many (Heb.12:15). Remember, we can never remain neutral in a situation. We will become better or bitter, depending on our response to the grace that has been made available by Christ Jesus (Heb. 4:16).

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5:18 - *“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”* Again we have the comparison of the two Adams. The first Adam brought judgment upon all through his offense. But Christ brought “the free gift upon all men unto justification of life.” The one brought death and condemnation, the Other brought glorious liberty and righteousness to all who receive Him.

5:19 - *“For as by one man's disobedience many [all] were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”* We were born sinners; we did not become sinners. This cannot be overemphasized; it is an essential truth. Why do we sin?—Because we are sinners. It is natural for us to sin because we are *born* sinners, and we are born with a nature of sin. We are not sinners because we sin.

The foregoing argument may be summed up as follows. We were in Adam when he sinned. Thus, we sinned in Adam and became sinners. Now we have accepted Christ (the last Adam), and now we are in Christ. We are born again, not of corruptible seed. Christ is in us, which is our *new man*. This part

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of us cannot sin (see 1 Jn. 3:9). We choose in every circumstance to release either the old man who sins, or the new man who triumphs.

5:20 - *“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.”* What is the purpose of the law? The purpose of the law is to reveal sin. We do not know what is in our hearts until the law comes. Until someone makes a rule, we do not know what is in our hearts. Until a circumstance comes, we do not know what is in our hearts. The purpose of the law is to reveal what is in our hearts. The purpose is that the offense may abound, so that we can *see and be convinced* of our sinful nature.

I remember one pastor who did something wrong, and he said to the Lord, “This is so unlike me.” The Lord replied, “This is very much like you. The reason you did it is because it is in your heart.”

“But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” By one act, sin came into the world, and all were made sinners. However, the Lord Jesus Christ brought in far more grace than the sinner brought in sin. Therefore, Paul could say, “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

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One may reason, “But pastor, you do not know what kind of family I have come from, what background I have come from, and what circumstances I have come from.” A number of years ago I was challenged by this in another country. They claimed, “You are English, you have a Protestant background, you have lived a different life. We do not want you to preach the same gospel you preached in England. You cannot expect us to live that kind of a gospel.” They said, “You have an evangelical background. It is normal for you to think that way, but we do not have that background. Our background is atheistic. Our nation rejected God centuries ago, and you cannot expect us to receive that kind of gospel. We just want to preach salvation by faith and that Jesus heals. We want to preach water baptism and baptism in the Holy Ghost, but we cannot preach holiness.”

I was very young at that time and very confused. I was the only one of my nation in that country at the time, and I can tell you that I felt very much alone. (When you feel alone, go find a place where you can talk to God.) So I said, “Lord, what is this all about?” God said, “There is only one gospel. It does not matter what nationality you are, the message is the same.” No one can say before the throne of God, “I have come from a certain nation; therefore you have to accept my standard as lower.” God

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said, “No! I have one gospel” (see Exodus 12:49). Admittedly, their background is different, but where sin abounds, grace does much more abound. There will be no excuses before the throne of God. Perfection and holiness are required of all men everywhere.

5:21 - *“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”* Grace and righteousness are joined together. It is imperative that we understand this. First, the grace of God is extended to us and we are counted righteous. Secondly, grace makes us righteous progressively. We are justified progressively, even as the right margin of a paper is justified by a printer. We are to be as straight as our Lord Jesus Christ. Line upon line, He wants to straighten us so that we are straight like the Son of God. Does this seem impossible? The Word of God says that it is very much possible to be presented *faultless* before the throne of God.

If we have any other standard, we are denying the power of the blood of Christ. If we have any other standard, we are denying the power of God the Father. If we have any other standard, we are actually denying the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel has the power to present us faultless before the

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throne of glory with exceeding joy. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith (1 Jn. 5:4).

Part Three

THE LIFE OF GOD - 6:1 - 8:39

A. A Life of Holiness. (Governed by three words)

- 1.) *Knowing* (6:6), by experience that our old man was crucified with Christ, leading to a declaration of Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ."
- 2.) *Reckoning* (6:11), to take a stand on the fact of this experience of "knowing."
- 3.) *Yielding* (6:13-19), yielding one's members to righteousness, not to sin—achieved by mortifying the deeds of the body (6:13).

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For mortifying fornication (Col. 3:5):

Let not sin go on reigning in your mortal body. Stop letting sin reign. Stop presenting your members to sin. For sin shall not have dominion over you because you are not under the *powerless law* but under “grace” which means *divine enablement* (6:14).

To serve sin we receive as our wages, *death*; but to serve holiness and righteousness, *everlasting life* (6:23).

Chapter 6 explains our freedom from sin, but chapter 7 explains our freedom from the powerless law.

B. Freedom from the Law. (Chapter 7)

1.) *Example of marriage*

A wife is free from her husband when he dies. In Christ, we died to the law and are joined to Christ, our new husband. (We cannot be married to old and new covenants simultaneously.)

2.) *Purpose of the Law*

a.) *To reveal sin* (7:7)

b.) *To awaken sin* (7:8-11) Prohibitions tend to awaken a desire to do the thing that is forbidden.

3.) *The Intense Battle for Holiness*

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1 Cor. 9:27 - "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

C. Walking in the Spirit. (Chapter 8)

- 1.) (8:1-13). Here is a life of victory. The law could not produce righteousness because it had to depend upon sinful flesh. Christ broke the power of sin; and those who walk in the Spirit and are led by the Spirit now fulfill the righteousness of the law, being led and guided by the mind of Christ. Thus, we are enabled to fulfill the good works in which God has before ordained that we should walk (Eph. 2:10).
- 2.) (8:14-18). This walk produces mature sons who inherit glory. See also Hebrews 2:10.
- 3.) (8:19-27). The creation and the creatures await release from the bondage of corruption, for which release the Holy Spirit travails through us.
- 4.) (8:28-39). This life in the Spirit causes us to be "more than conquerors" in every circumstance, even in death.

Chapter Six

As we come to Romans six we are going to continue on the same theme—that God is not satisfied with just forgiving someone. He wants the sinner totally transformed into His own image. Chapter six starts with a question that has been asked throughout all the generations of the Church Age.

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6:1 - *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?”* The tendency of the Church as a whole is to say, “Well, we are saved, justified, forgiven, we are counted righteous, and that is as far as we can go. We will have mountain top experiences, and then we will fail. Then we are going to go up again, and then we are going to fail again.” I have known whole churches who believe that this is all that is possible. Paul says something very different in Romans 6:2.

6:2 - *“God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”* We are going to develop this thought of being “dead to sin.” In type, the thought of “dead to sin” originates in the waters of baptism. Paul is going to explain this in verses 3-4.

6:3-4 - *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”* Water baptism has this connotation, that as we go into the waters of baptism and those waters immerse and cover us, we are buried with Christ. Therefore, we die to ourselves. Our coming up out of the waters signifies that we are going to walk in newness of life with Christ. The act of water baptism is

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figuratively saying that we are identifying with the burial of Christ. As we go into the waters of baptism we are being buried with Christ. Then, of course, we must remember that we must come up out of the water.

6:5 - *“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”* Thus, we see that water baptism is a type.

Something happens when one is baptized in water. Water baptism is powerful! It breaks many bondages. It severs many denominational and traditional ties.

Water baptism should be understood and entered into by an act of faith, as we believe God to break the ties with Egypt, or the world. Water baptism is an act of good conscience (1 Pet. 3:21). It does not put away the filth of the flesh, but rather it declares our intentions to leave Egypt and follow the Lord.

Water baptism is a type of passing through the Red Sea. It severed God's people from Egypt. It also destroyed the outward forces that were trying to pull them back into Egypt. When we come up out of the waters of baptism, we are very much like the children of Israel when they crossed the Red Sea.

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They were out of Egypt, but Egypt was not out of them. Water baptism has this connotation: that we are out of the world, but the world is not out of us. Water baptism brings a certain release from past ties and sins. It also deals to a certain extent with outer forces that are trying to pull us back into the world. However, water baptism is only *part* of the answer. It is a type of something much greater. Therefore, we must see, by the grace of God, how we can enter into this experience of victory over sin. I believe the answer is in verse 6.

6:6 - *“Knowing this, that our old man (or old nature) [was] crucified with him, that the body of sin might be [rendered powerless], that henceforth we should not serve sin.”* This word “knowing” in the Greek, means, “To know by experience.” It is not an academic knowledge but “a thorough knowledge from firsthand experience.” *“Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him.”* In the original Greek, *is* was translated *was*.

Romans 6:6 is a very important verse. A teacher often teaches from personal experiences, and earlier in my life the Lord gave me a wonderful experience of Romans 6:6.

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When I was a pastor many years ago, the Lord started to deal with me from chapter six and verse one, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.” Then the Lord started speaking specifically about certain things in my life, “Would you give this up? Would you give that up?” Some things were very simple; but other things required a lot of grace to give them up. Finally, God said, “Would you give Me your wife? Would you give your wife to Me?” That I could not do, because I realized there was something involved there.

I said, “Lord, I am unable.” God was very gracious. He just smiled. A few days later we were in a revival meeting. After the meeting I went up to be prayed for, and as I was being prayed for, I was slain in the Spirit. I could not move. I was on the floor and everyone was looking at me and again the Lord said, “Are you willing to release your wife? Who loves her more—you or Me?” I said, “You do, Lord.” Then He said, “Who has the greater power to look after her—you or Me?” I could not move on the floor and I said, “Well, You do.” He said, “Release her to Me, let her be Mine.” At that moment I had the grace to do so. This decision has been very costly, because since then God has taken my

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wife through many difficult times. The point is, I was able to release her to God because of an impartation of grace.

A few days later, at about ten o'clock in the morning, I was in my office in the parsonage. The Spirit of God entered the room. In a vision I saw Christ on the cross, but I was looking at Him from behind. Then I was caught up in the Spirit and I hung with Christ on the cross. I was *in Christ*, looking through His eyes down at the multitudes. At that moment I had new appreciation of the verse that says, "Knowing that our old man was crucified with him."

I understood then, that when Christ was on the cross, our old man (or old nature) was upon the cross with Him. When Adam sinned, we were all in Adam and sinned also. Conversely, when Christ was on the cross, we were in Christ upon the cross with Him.

In the vision I saw the people down below. They were mocking Him, but it had no impact whatsoever. I was in Christ on the cross. The vision ceased and I was back in my office, standing. Then I saw the veil. It was rent from top to bottom. I knew at that moment what the veil represented. The veil, His flesh, is the crucified life. Being crucified with Christ brings us within the veil (Heb.10:20).

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At that moment I felt a tremendous roll of the Spirit within my innermost being and it rolled and it rolled and it rolled. Suddenly, out from my mouth came the words from Galatians 2:20. "I am crucified with Christ." The peace and release that came to my soul was indescribable.

That was my Romans 6:6 experience. Obviously, your experience and my experience are not alike. Nonetheless, it is essential to meet God and know, in fact, that our old man was crucified with Christ. This has to be a revelation, an experiential knowledge. You do not need to have something like I did, but we need to "know" by experience or by revelation, that our old man was crucified with Him. Christ has made a provision on the cross for our old nature. Our old nature was crucified with Him. Yet, we must have, in one form or another, a revelation of that in order to receive the benefit of it.

The reason God has given me vivid experiences and visions is simply because a person with an experience is not at the mercy of someone with a theory. Thus, I am able to appreciate and teach what the crucified life is. From that instantaneous experience, and Romans 6:6 is an instantaneous experience, we then have to move on to a progressive experience.

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6:7-8 - *“For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.”* We must understand that water baptism is a *type*, but this experience of “knowing” is something different. The way we could illustrate this is from the journey of the children of Israel. On Israel's journey there were two bodies of water, the Red Sea and the Jordan River. Both opened up supernaturally for Israel's passage.

The Red Sea is a type of water baptism. Israel was redeemed by the blood of the lamb and came out of Egypt. They came through the Red Sea (water baptism), but throughout the wilderness journey they wanted to go back into Egypt every time there was a trial. They were out of Egypt, but Egypt was not out of them. Then they came to the Jordan, and in the Jordan the waters parted exactly like the waters of the Red Sea. This time they put twelve stones into the waters, and took twelve other stones out.

Many years ago I was in Israel, and there is a part of the Jordan where both sides belong to Israel. The Lord spoke to me and said, “I want you to physically walk across the Jordan.” In obedience to the Lord, I did what He asked me to do. Then He said, “This is heart circumcision, this is the crucified

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life.” Thus, the crossing of Jordan is a type of knowing that our old man was crucified with Christ. The crossing of Jordan is the experience of Romans 6:6.

6:9-10 - *“Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.”* The thought here is that we also will walk in newness of life, after our experience of “knowing” that we are crucified with Christ is accomplished.

6:11 - *“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* Every time we face temptation, we can reckon that we are dead to sin. However, we cannot reckon unless we “know” first. We can only reckon upon a fact. When we reckon, then we have power. Thus, there must be a daily reckoning in the face of temptations to reaffirm our position that we are crucified with Christ. There is a “daily dying” mentioned in First Corinthians 15:31. Yet, we must first experience the “knowing” in order to reckon, or count it done.

Regretfully, some have the tendency to tell people who are battling with a problem just to reckon themselves to be dead to sin. However, we cannot reckon it done unless we have first had the

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experience of “knowing” in 6:6. It is the same with money. We cannot sign a check and reckon we have the money in the bank unless we know we have the money in the bank.

6:12 - *“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.”*

Therefore, every time there is a temptation, I know that I am dead, and I count that I am dead so that I do not have to yield. “Let not sin reign.” It becomes a choice—our choice. Before “knowing” and “reckoning,” we almost did not have a choice; but now we have the power to make the choice for holiness.

6:13 - *“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”* There is a new power available here. When you “know,” then you can “reckon,” and then there is a choice as to what you will “yield” to.

Even when Christ was on the cross, they cried out to Him, “Come down from the cross.” He had the power to come down. We can come off the cross. The all-important thing is that we do not yield our

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members to unrighteousness, but that we yield them to God. In other words, we must allow Christ to take over in our lives.

Now, as I have already stated, we must, by the grace of God, be brought to our own personal Jordan. For a moment, let us continue with the thought of the journey of the children of Israel. After they crossed Jordan they came to Gilgal. Gilgal was a place of circumcision, where the knife cut away the flesh. What did God say at that moment in Joshua 5:9? "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day."

At that moment in Gilgal, when they exposed themselves to circumcision, they no longer had any desire to go back to Egypt. The desire was taken away from them. They were never the same. Now, in the same way, God desires us to make our passage through Jordan and come to circumcision of heart. God wants to bring us to our own Jordan. He wants to bring us to the experience of Romans 6:6. That is an instantaneous experience; but then He wants to dissect the interior parts of our life progressively.

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Circumcision is the way to victory. Yet this process is totally of God, because He alone does the circumcision, not us. It is made very clear in Deuteronomy 30:6 that only God can perform this operation. “And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.”

6:14 - *“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”* We are not under the powerless law. The law had no power. We are not under a system of *do's* and *do not's*. Grace is reigning, not the law. Grace is giving us power. Where does sin get its power? This is something we brought out in Romans five. Sin only has power because of the law. Where there is no law, there is no sin. So therefore, we need to be freed from the law. Obviously, the only person who is freed from the law is a dead person. Thus, we have to die spiritually so that we are free from the law of *do's* and *do not's*.

6:15 - *“What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?”* Many churches have gone into that error. They say, “We are not under the law; we are under grace. Therefore, it

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does not matter how we live. Grace covers everything.” Oh, how erroneous that is! The whole purpose of being crucified is that we fulfill the righteousness of the law (8:4).

6:16 - *“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”* What did the Lord Jesus Christ say concerning this? “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (Jn. 8:34). Let us be solemnly warned that if we deliberately live in sin, when God has made such a provision to give us victory over sin, we will not abide in His house forever. Jesus continues in John 8:35, “And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.”

After God confronts us with these truths, and we deliberately choose to sin rather than to receive grace, there comes a time when God creates a stumblingblock if we continue in sin (Ezek. 3:20). Something may happen in the church, circumstances are created, and something offends us—and the purpose is to turn us out of the house. May I commend to you the study of Ezekiel chapter three because this is an awesome truth. We are dealing with the living God, and God tells us exactly what He does.

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“Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered.” Make no mistake, God does raise up stumbling- blocks in His Church! The purpose is to offend, as God gives someone an excuse to leave. “The servant of sin shall not continue in the house for ever.” This is a very solemn thing. It can apply to a person, to a church, or to a fellowship, where people are put away from the main stream. A “stumblingblock” can also mean of course, in its ultimate point of view, that a person can miss heaven.

6:17 - *“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”* We must obey “from the heart” this form of doctrine that is enunciated for us in chapters five and six.

The Lord Jesus Christ spoke concerning the issue of doctrine in John 7:16-17. How can we know if a doctrine is right? Jesus showed us the way to determine truth and error. “Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the

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doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.” Therefore, if we are willing to do God’s will, we shall know if the doctrine is right or wrong. Then the Lord continues in John 8:32, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” The truth that God commits to us works in us and makes us free.

6:18 - *“Being then made free from sin [and the thought of “made” is a process], ye became the servants of righteousness.”* God must “make” us free from sin so that we can be servants of righteousness.

6:19 - *“I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.”* When we were sinners in the world, we yielded our members to anger and we became more and more angry. We must die to anger, and yield our members to righteousness, unto holiness. Righteousness leads to holiness. We must be filled with the righteousness of God, and from righteousness we must be led to holiness. There is a difference between righteousness and holiness. Lot was a righteous man, but he was not a holy man. He was

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not separated from the world. His heart went toward Sodom and Gomorrah, even though he disagreed with them. A holy man would *separate* himself. It is important that we understand the difference between righteousness and holiness. A righteous man will not approve of the things that are evil, but so often he will fellowship with them. He will not separate from them, but a holy man will.

6:20 - *“For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.”* The sinner is not concerned with righteousness.

6:21 - *“What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.”* The end of sin is death. We will perish if we continue in sin.

6:22 - *“But now being made free from sin.”* Paul repeats it, and repeats it, and repeats it. “Free from sin.” Free from sin means free from sin. We cannot argue any other way. When he says free from sin, we are free from sin. One cannot say that he is free from anger if he is still angry. Paul says that we can be free. Smoking is another example. Either we are bound by smoking, or we are free. The same applies to alcohol, and all the other sins.

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We must understand that there is freedom from each individual sin. Every bondage can be broken. We cannot say that God just gives us freedom from smoking, or freedom from anger. No, we can find freedom from every single sin. “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” Do you see how many times Paul mentions holiness. That is the goal, isn’t it?

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

If we continue in sin, then the wages are death; but God's gift is eternal life through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter Seven

In chapter seven Paul emphasizes this thought of being “free from the law.” It is so important that we understand this, because sin is energized by the law. If there is no rule or law, there is no sin. However, as soon as we bring a rule in, it reveals what is in our hearts. We might be sitting down on the outside, but still standing up on the inside. As we have already mentioned, the purpose of the law

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is to reveal sin. Without the law there is no sin because there is no question as to whether we obey or not.

7:1 - *“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?”* This is very clear. We live in society, and society has laws. We have to obey these laws. All natural laws apply; all government laws apply. However, as soon as a person is dead he is freed from that law.

7:2 - *“For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth.”* Now this is very clear, is it not? When the husband says, “We will go to the right,” the wife goes to the right. When the husband says, “We will go to the left,” the wife goes to the left. If the husband says, “We will live in Kentucky,” the wife lives in Kentucky. Why? Because she is bound by the law of her husband. When the husband says, “Please wear this,” the wife wears it. I am not trying to dissuade some of you who are not married from getting married, but what I am trying to emphasize is that a woman is bound by the law of her husband as long as he lives. *“But if the husband be dead,*

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she is loosed from the law of her husband.” No longer does she have to obey her husband because her husband is dead.

7:3 - *“So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress.”* A woman cannot be married to two people simultaneously. *“But if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.”* Paul gives a simple illustration of marriage to develop a very important spiritual truth.

7:4 - *“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ.”* When we passed through the waters of baptism, it was a type. When we were in Christ on the cross, it was a reality. We have to reckon that we are dead to the law. We are dead to the spiritual laws, *“that [we] should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead.”* This is important, because so many people try to perfect themselves through the law and be married to the law, and we cannot do that. In the reality of being crucified with Christ, we have to die to the law, then turn to Christ, and be married to Him, *“that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”*

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7:5 - *“For when we were in the flesh, the motions [or desires] of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members.”* Look at this very carefully. *“The motions of sin, which were by the law [Sin is made alive by the law] did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.”* We can see very clearly that the purpose of the law is to reveal sin.

7:6 - *“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.”* The theme here is that we are not under the law. We are dead to all the ceremonial laws. We will see in Romans eight that we fulfill the righteousness of the law as we walk in the Spirit. The law only reveals sin. If we are still under the law, all that is happening is a revelation and a creation of sin.

“That we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” Some denominations are ruled by the letter. They have their rules and regulations to try to produce holiness, but all it produces is more sin and bondage.

7:7 - *“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? [No, the law is not sin] God forbid. [The law is perfectly good] Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law.”* Our natural logic might deduce that the law is wicked.

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Paul wants to correct this. The law is essential. Without the law, we do not know that we are sinners. We do not know the extent of our sinful nature. The law reveals sin. This is the reason it is essential to have the law. *“For I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”* The Apostle Paul is giving an illustration from his own life. He had a problem with covetousness, and he did not realize it until he came to the law and the law said, “Thou shalt not covet.”

7:8 - *“But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence [sinfulness]. For without the law sin was dead.”* There is no sin without the law. Sin comes alive through the law. Our old nature arises because of the law. Without the law, sin is dead; it is dormant. Everything is fine before a law or rule. A law accentuates our rebellion and sinfulness. A little boy taking a cookie out of the cookie jar is not sinning until his mother says, “Thou shalt not take.” The commandment does not take away his desire to get into the cookie jar, all it does is make him a little sinner.

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7:9 - *“For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.”* This does not mean that Paul was not a sinner before. We are all born sinners. However, sin revives when the law comes, and it brings death.

7:10 - *“And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.”* The purpose of the ten commandments and the ceremonial law was to bring life. However, the law cannot bring life, because it only awakens sin in our lives. The ten commandments are good and can bring life if we keep them; but they produce death in the unregenerate soul, because no one has the power to keep them.

7:11 - *“For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.”* Sin uses the law to reassert itself. Sin gets its power from the law. The more rules and regulations in your church, the more sinful your church members will be. The law actually creates sin.

Many girls will do anything to be married to the person they want. Yet, after being married, a young lady suddenly finds that things are different. The husband says, “We will do this,” and the girl does not want to do it. Suddenly, she realizes what is inside, and all kinds of attitudes arise. If she is a

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Christian, she knows she has to obey her husband, but the problem is that she has all these things going on inside that cause her not to want to obey. Therefore, she covers that with some form of spirituality, saying, “Oh, I must submit,” or something like that.

Often, one finds out who they really are after they get married. Wisdom is to find out *before!* This is the reason there is contention in households. The husband simply says, “I don’t like that dress.” Usually, when the husband says that, the wife does not want to wear the dress. However, sometimes she does want to wear it, and that creates all kinds of explosions. But before, everything was all right, because there was no law.

7:12 - *“Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.”* The law, if kept, would produce holiness. The problem is that the law offers no power to keep it. In marriage, the husband might not be right and that situation is a real cross. I have had ladies come to me and say, “I want to obey my husband but he is wrong every time.” Sometimes in counseling I have had to acknowledge that the husband is wrong, and I have had to say to him, “You are wrong. Listen to your wife, she might be hearing from God.” The ideal situation in marriage is to have the concept of the

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isosceles triangle. The head is Christ at the top, and the husband and wife are at the bottom. The closer the husband and wife come to Christ, the closer they come to each other. Wisdom in marriage is to be three, (God, husband, and wife) not two. Before a husband makes a decision, he should make sure his decision is in God; otherwise it will cause unnecessary sin to arise in the wife.

7:13 - *“Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.”* What is the purpose of the law? The purpose of the law is to reveal what is really in our inner nature. As I have already said, this happens in marriage. Suddenly the girl realizes what is inside when she has to submit to the law of her husband.

7:14-15 - *“For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not.”* Here is the problem: the law is spiritual, but we are carnal. This is the tremendous conflict. We want to do what is right, but there is another law within that wants to do something else. People often say, “I don’t want to be as I am.” And herein is the conflict.

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7:16 - *“If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.”* Paul is acknowledging that the law is good, that the problem is located in a sinful nature. Sin can be so powerful that, even though we know a thing is wrong, we still do it because it has such power. This is what the Apostle Paul is saying here.

7:17 - *“Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”* Who is doing the wrong? It is not I, but sin. Even when it is against our will, we do certain things. Paul is saying, “I do not want to be like I am; I do not want to do what I am doing.”

Here is Paul's position: “I acknowledge that the law is good and holy. I want to fulfill the law, but find within myself something that wants to do evil. It is not me but the sin nature that is doing it.” The will of the Apostle Paul wants to do good. The problem is in the body, the sinful nature in his members. Another problem is this—if the will is controlled by someone else, then there has to be a deliverance. Some people will to do evil. Sometimes someone else is controlling their will. Paul is talking about someone who wants to do good, but finds that he cannot.

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7:18 - *“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.”* We have to acknowledge that in our flesh dwells no good thing. Our flesh is in revolt. *“But how to perform that which is good I find not.”* In Philemon 1:6 we are told “to acknowledge the good things that are in us.” There is good in us because Christ is in us. Evil is also present because of the sinful nature.

7:19 - *“For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.”* There is the conflict. “I do not want to be like I am. I want to do that which is right, and what I want to do, I cannot because of this sinful nature.”

7:20 - *“Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”* We have to realize that sin is very powerful. It can take over and it can force a person to do what he does not want to do.

7:21 - *“I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.”* Paul is saying there are two laws, two natures. He brings this out in verse twenty-three, *“But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.”* In my mind, I want to do a certain thing, I want to do

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what God wants me to do. But I find another law, another power in my body that wants to do contrary things.

7:22 - *“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.”* Paul is saying, “The Christ that is within me, the spiritual man, wants to do that which is right, but then this other law in my flesh wants to do something else.”

7:23 - *“But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”* Here again are the two natures. The law of sin can be so powerful that it can overcome the law in our minds.

7:24 - *“O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”* This is the problem we have in our bodies, in our members. The very act of being born of Adam's fallen race makes us sinners with a sinful nature. We must have deliverance; this is the only way to freedom. There are the two men, the two Adams. There is the old man and there is the new man. There is the old Adam and the last Adam, and the two are in combat. Paul asks, “Who shall deliver me?” Who

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shall deliver us from our natural body of this death? Then comes the cry of victory. “God shall do it through Christ Jesus.”

7:25 - *“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”* Victory comes through knowing, reckoning, and yielding to righteousness, which process is facilitated through walking in the Spirit. Therefore, the key is found in Romans 8:1. It is to walk in the Spirit so that we do not fulfill the desires of the flesh.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Here is the key—by knowing, reckoning, and yielding our members to righteousness by the grace of God. It is a process. In Romans 8:13, we have to *mortify*, or put to death, the deeds of our body. Mortify means to deprive. It comes from the French word that means to put to death, but it means to do so by deprivation. There are many ways that one can die. One can die by decapitation, or by other means. But another way of dying is by depriving our bodies of food and exercise. When we do that our bodies weaken and die.

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Spiritually, this is the key to putting to death the deeds of the flesh. This is what it means to mortify the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit. It means not to feed them. How do we feed sin? We can feed sin in five ways, through five gates (or through our five senses). We can *look* at things that stimulate sin. We can *listen* to things that stimulate sin. We can even *smell* things that stimulate sin. We can *touch* things that stimulate sin. We can *taste* things that stimulate sin. In addition, we can speak of things and meditate on things that stimulate sin.

Also, the more one exercises the natural body, the stronger the members become. The more we pick up weights, the stronger our muscles become. The less we exercise, the weaker they become. Therefore, the key is to put to death by knowing, by reckoning, and by yielding, so that sin becomes weaker and weaker.

Paul differentiates between two groups of sins in Colossians chapter three. In Colossians 3:5, Paul says, concerning one group of sins, “*Mortify* therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” These things are very powerful, and they must be put to death, as I have already explained.

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However, there is another group of sins in verse eight that can be *put off*. In the original language, “put off” signified the taking off of a garment. “But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.” These can be “put off” by the power of God. The other things are mortified or put slowly to death. They are battles.

We come now to chapter eight, where we are going to see new life in the Spirit. We are going to see victory over sin in the fullest sense. We are going to see the will of God and the righteousness of the law.

Chapter Eight

In chapter eight we have what is called, “The life in the Spirit.” It is based on the knowing, reckoning, and yielding in chapters six and seven. *Knowing* (by experience, by revelation) means that we are crucified with Christ, and that our old man is on the cross. *Reckoning* is to count it done. It keeps the old man on the cross. We have to reckon it done because that body of sin is still vibrant on the cross. *Yielding*—each time we reckon our old man to be upon the cross and allow grace to reign so that we

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yield our members to righteousness, our old man is weakened. We now come into that life of victory in chapter eight.

8:1 - *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”* The key is not only to be filled with the Spirit, but to walk in the Spirit. It is to be clothed upon by the Holy Ghost, so that the Holy Ghost leads and guides us in every detail of our lives.

8:2 - *“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”* Emphasizing life expels death. We should major on life. As we are clothed upon with the Spirit of God, He will lead us into all truth. He will make that truth a reality to us and also, He will guide us into the paths of righteousness so we will not yield to sin.

8:3 - *“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh.”* We must never downgrade the law because the law of God is good and it is holy. The law could not produce holiness, however, because of the weakness of our flesh.

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“God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”

Christ came in the flesh to put the flesh upon the cross. This is very important. This is why the humanity of Christ is essential. He came in the flesh to put that flesh on the cross. We are in Christ, and that means that our flesh was put on the cross. If Christ had not gone to the cross, that would not have been possible. But we were “in Him” on the cross. Christ put flesh upon the cross. This is the greatness of the crucifixion of Christ. Many things were accomplished by the cross, but this is one of the greatest things accomplished at Calvary. The cross condemned sin in the flesh.

8:4 - *“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”* The whole purpose of teaching is that the law will be fulfilled. But how is the law fulfilled? It is not fulfilled through the flesh, but by walking in the Spirit. The righteousness of the law has to be fulfilled. The law cannot be defamed. The law is good, and it is holy.

The difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament is simply this—in the Old Testament the law was external, but in the New Testament the law is to be written on the fleshly tables of our hearts. From our hearts we fulfill the law of God by being clothed upon with the Holy

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Spirit and guided and directed by Him at all times, even in little things. I believe it is important to bring God into every detail of our lives. It is a process. We are not successful all the time because it takes time to know the voice of God. He did not say, "My lambs know My voice." He said, "My *sheep* do." There is a certain maturing that must take place; but as we learn to walk in the Spirit we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

8:5 - "*For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.*" If we choose to remain in the flesh, we shall fulfill the things of the flesh. "*But they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*" If we seek to be led and directed of the Spirit, we shall fulfill the things of the Spirit. The theme of verses 5-6 is walking. One has the power to walk in the Spirit by virtue of "knowing."

8:6 - "*For to be carnally minded is death.*" As we will see in 12:2, the key is in our minds. We are transformed by the renewing of our minds. "*But to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*" Most of the battles are in the mind. Many battles are won or lost in the mind. This is where most things originate.

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8:7 - *“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”* Therefore, as Paul says, it is necessary to have the mind of Christ. We have to be clothed upon with His mind.

8:8 - *“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”* If we walk and think in the flesh, we cannot please God. The man or woman who is led by a carnal mind cannot please God.

8:9 - *“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”* We all have the potential, as Christians, of walking in the Spirit, because we have the Spirit of God within us.

When we consider this expression—“walking in the Spirit”—remember, the Holy Spirit leads, but Satan *controls*. The discipleship movement of recent decades was wrong. The Spirit is very gentle; He leads. Satan controls and dominates. Domination and control are not of God. The Spirit leads gently (Psa. 23:2, Isa. 63:13, Isa. 40:11).

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8:10 - *“And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”* We must never forget the two, the old man and the new. It is very important to understand that we always have the flesh. On the cross the flesh was present, but it grew weaker and weaker and weaker. Yet it is always present. It is important to understand that the flesh is not done away with; it is rendered *inactive*. It can always be brought back. Regretfully, this is the reason why some have allowed “dead works” to spring up again. In every decision we face, we have the choice of who is going to manifest himself, the old man or the new man. When the old man is not manifested and exercised, he becomes weaker and weaker until he does not have the strength to do anything.

8:11 - *“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”* Our bodies can be quickened by the Holy Spirit. They are energized by the Holy Spirit to obey the Holy Spirit.

8:12 - *“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.”* We are not obligated to live in the flesh.

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8:13 - *“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”* We always have this choice to make. Are we going to live after the flesh? Are we going to let the flesh manifest itself? Or, are we going to determine that we shall live in the Spirit, be clothed upon by the Spirit, and be guided by the Spirit, by God's grace? As we choose to walk in the Spirit, we are mortifying the deeds of the flesh by the power of the Spirit (Col. 3:5).

8:14 - *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”* The original Greek brings out the thought of the *mature* sons of God in this verse. That is what we all want to enter into as we are led by the Spirit. The mature sons of God (v14-18) are those who inherit glory (Heb. 2:10). There is a maturity gained when we walk in the Spirit. They that walk in the Spirit are the real sons of God. In the Spirit-led life we are walking with openness in our hearts toward the Lord. We are conscious that we are walking in obedience to Him and we are heeding His little promptings.

8:15 - *“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.”* Sometimes we need deliverance from spirits of bondage. *“But ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”* What is the “spirit of adoption?” In New Testament times, adoption was simple to understand because

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it was often practiced in the Roman Empire. The reason we must understand adoption as it was practiced then, is because the context of the New Testament was in Roman times.

Adoption was practiced principally by very rich people. It was the householder or the master who would make the decision to adopt because his lands were so extensive and his holdings were so great. Perhaps he had one son, but he could see that the one son needed help in running his estate. Therefore, he would send his servants through the outlying villages to select young boys, perhaps from the age of twelve onwards, who had abilities that would enable them to govern. The servants would come back and tell the householder that in a certain village there was a boy with potential. The master would then go to have a look at him. If he thought the boy suitable, he would make a contract with his father.

The master would say to the father, "I can offer your son a better life than you ever could. Are you willing to sell him to me, so that he ceases to be your son and becomes my son?" The father has to contemplate and think, "It is true. I could never give my son that kind of life. I would be depriving him of something if I did not let him go." So, generally speaking, the fathers would agree. They would sell

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their sons to a rich man, and the agreement was sealed, customarily with seven witnesses. A sum of money was paid, generally in gold. Then the son became the adopted son of the rich man.

Roman Emperors were accustomed to that practice. Nero was the adopted son of Claudius. That is why he became emperor. That is what we are; we are adopted sons. There is only one Son of God, the one who came from the Father. But we are adopted. We did very well for ourselves didn't we? We were adopted by a good Father and look at what we are going to inherit.

However, there is something else we have to remember about adoption, and if we miss this point, we will lose one of the cardinal truths concerning adoption.

The young boy was brought in at whatever age the master decided. When he was brought into the household, he died to his old household and became alive to his new household. He called the master "father." Then he underwent extensive training for the new post of becoming a joint-heir with the first son. Not every adopted son would succeed, and these would be given lesser positions. Yet when the master thought that this adopted son was capable, he then became a joint-heir with his true

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son. Then there was a feast to celebrate his sonship, his coming of age, that need not necessarily have been at age twenty. It could have been at thirty, or even older. And so it is with us, too.

8:16-17 - *“The Spirit [Himself] beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”* I would like to emphasize that we are only joint-heirs to the degree that we have qualified for the position. The Romans would have understood this very easily. However, we cannot understand this so easily because our system of adoption is so different. Here it is brought out, *“heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if.”* There is a condition here. What is the condition? *“If so be that we suffer with him.”* To the degree that we suffer, to the same degree we shall reign. If we qualify for deep valley experiences, it is for the purpose of being prepared for a very high rank in the kingdom. The key lies in suffering. I want to repeat this. We are *“joint-heirs. . .if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”* To the degree that the sufferings of Christ are worked out in us, to that same degree we shall reign with Christ.

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8:18 - *“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”* The degree of sufferings determines the degree of glory. Paul said that the degree of glory, the eternal rewards that are at stake, are far greater than the sufferings we experience here.

8:19 - *“For the earnest expectation of the [creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.”* There is going to be a time when the mature “placed sons” shall be manifested and the whole of creation shall be released from her bondage.

8:20 - *“For the [creation] was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.”* This is a very interesting truth. All the birds sing in a minor key. Israel’s music is all minor. So who would want to copy the Israelites? In what key is the Church? It is in a *major* key. So do not get all caught up with the Israeli music because we do not want to be in their bondage, we want to be free.

When Adam fell, the whole of God's creation was then subject to the fall and to bondage, especially after the flood. The creation as we know it is nothing compared to what it was prior to the flood, or

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when Adam was on the earth. The whole creation is suffering because of the sin of man. Yet all of this is going to be changed. Now if we look at this very carefully, we see that the “manifestation of the sons of God” can only take place when Christ returns and sets up His millennial reign. Then the whole creation will change, too. Unfortunately, there has been so much emphasis on the “manifestation of the sons of God,” but if we look carefully, it is clear that the whole creation will change at that time, too. Therefore, this can only be at the second coming of the Lord. The creation we know will not be changed until the millennium.

8:21-22 - *“Because the [creation] itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.”* There is a groaning in creation. You can almost hear it as you walk in the woods and are near to nature. You can almost hear that groaning to be released.

8:23 - *“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit.”* Do not forget, all we have is the “firstfruits.” Therefore, there is the fullness to be inherited.

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“Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” The time is going to come when our whole body is going to be renewed. I have literally watched angels when they walk, and they walk with liberty that we do not know. Those who die experience in their spiritual bodies that beautiful movement and freedom. The time is going to come when God is going to redeem our bodies. The redemption of our bodies takes place at the coming of the Lord. Full redemption is not complete until we receive our new bodies.

8:24 - *“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?”* We do not see these things with our physical eyes. In fact, everything is getting worse, but because of hope we know things will change.

8:25 - *“But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”* We have to exercise patience until God has accomplished everything that He has purposed. Then everything that is written will surely come to pass. There will be the [restoration] of all things spoken of by the prophets (Acts 3:21).

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8:26 - *“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit [Himself] maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”*

This is intercessory prayer. Intercessory prayer is very similar to travailing birth. The Apostle Paul brings this out in Galatians 4:19, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.” Speaking in tongues is not intercession. Intercession is like a woman's travailing and groaning as she is bringing forth a child. When you go into intercession, groanings come upon you, and there are no words that can express the cry of the Spirit. Sometimes this kind of travail comes upon us. Travail comes upon a woman at the time when the baby is ready to be delivered. It must not come upon the woman *before* the baby is formed because it will bring to birth that which is not ready.

The travail of the Spirit comes when everything is ready, and that which is to be birthed is perfect. Sometimes we say, “Oh Lord, I want to travail in the Spirit.” Yet we cannot travail until what is to be birthed is ready. So many times over the years, we have seen things that were “birthed” before they were ready, and oh, the sadness and the heartaches. Churches, works, fellowships, or anything new

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we are going to do, must be prepared carefully before the travail of the Spirit comes and it is brought forth.

8:27 - *“And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”* The thought of intercession here can mean “pleadings.” We should allow the Holy Spirit to pray through us more often, because the Spirit of God prays according to the will of God and He will be heard. This is the reason we need to worship the Lord and get into the Spirit, even in our private devotions. It is then that we can pray according to the Spirit. We should pray prophetically because those things will come to pass.

8:28 - *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”* At the death of my father-in-law, my wife had her father cradled in her arms because he had collapsed. She asked, “Why Lord?” The Lord replied, “Romans 8:28 works all the time or it never works!”

There are two qualifications for all things working together for good. The qualifications are so important. This promise is made to those who love God, and to them who are the called.

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We could also use the analogy of a cake here. There are many ingredients in a cake. You even put salt in a cake, but salt by itself is not pleasant. Some of the ingredients God mixes into our life may be very painful, but it is as they all “work together” that something marvelous comes forth.

8:29 - *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate.”* Whole denominations have gone astray over the issue of predestination. God does not predestinate one to eternal life and another to eternal judgment. In no way, shape, or form does this verse suggest that He predestinates some to hell and some to heaven.

Predestination is rooted in God's foreknowledge. Foreknowledge comes first. The order here is important. The Presbyterian church was founded around this verse. When you study predestination, it is the foreknowledge of God that comes first. God knows who will do what. God knows who will respond to salvation. Therefore, those He knows will respond to salvation, He predestinates. And what are they predestined unto? They are predestined to “be conformed to the image of His Son.” According to God's knowledge of how we will respond, trials are ordained for us so that it will bring a greater degree of the character of Christ within us.

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8:30 - *“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called.”* The call of God is based upon God’s foreknowledge. Jesus said, “Many are called, but few are chosen.” Those that are called have the ability to respond, but not everyone that is called does respond. Also, some who do respond, give up later. That is the reason some are called to do certain things and others are called to do something else. It is not a question of favorites. God does not have favorites. God simply foreknows who is able or willing to respond. The older you grow, the more you realize that it is all God. So therefore, our calling is based upon God’s foreknowledge.

“And whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” The call comes first. After He calls, then He justifies. He then glorifies and clothes us with His Spirit.

Let us try to summarize this. Foreknowledge comes first. God knows beforehand what man will do and who will respond to Him. Upon foreknowledge comes predestination, or the plan of God. Then He gives the call. The call is not the first step. The foreknowledge of God comes first, then the plan of God, or predestination. Then comes the call. Now with the call, which is to salvation, He then proceeds to justify or straighten us in order to bring us to glory.



THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

“He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.” Romans 8:32

8:31 - *“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”* This verse is speaking to those who are called according to His plan. We are called to victory, we are ordained to victory. With God, we cannot fail.

8:32 - *“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”* God will provide everything we need for life and Godliness. He will provide everything we need to overcome

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and to fulfill what He has planned for our lives. Nothing can be compared to what He has already given us, which is His own Son. Christ cannot be compared with things. So if God has already given us Christ, He will certainly give us all things that we need.

8:33 - *“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.”* There is a beautiful scripture that goes along with this in Isaiah 54:17. *“Every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.”*

8:34 - *“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”* Not only do we have the Holy Spirit making intercession for us, we also have Christ, Who prays for us. Christ is interceding for us to bring us to perfection.

8:35, 38-39 - *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other [created thing], shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in*

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Christ Jesus our Lord." Here is a list of seventeen things that cannot separate us from the love of Christ. The life of Christ within us makes us buoyant as a buoy in a troubled stormy sea. We always bounce back and remain upright because of His life within. However, Galatians 5:19-21 contains another list of seventeen sins that will separate us from the love of God.

MORE THAN CONQUERORS

God will give us the ascendancy over our circumstances, and over the Wicked One if we continue to do His will, and will not lose heart and give up.



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8:36 - *“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”* We go through terrible things as Christians, but we must always cry out for grace to go through them. This is the key. Psalm 84:6 speaks of passing through the valley of Baca, or the valley of tears. It is there that we should make it into streams of life where we bring life into the valley of sorrow. Every situation that we come into, every sorrow we pass through, is for the purpose of making us “more than conquerors.” God wants to turn around dark situations that appear to be impossible and cause life to come forth.

Part Four

THE ELECTION OF GOD - (9:1 - 11:36)

I. Israel's privileges are transferred to the Church. (9:4-5)

- A. The adoption
- B. The glory
- C. The covenants
- D. The giving of the law
- E. The service of God

F. The promises

G. The fathers

The election of God and His eternal destiny of people and of nations depends upon His foreknowledge (Rom. 8:29).

II. The Jews forfeited their election.

The Jews forfeited their election because they sought it not by faith. They were ignorant of God's righteousness, and sought to establish their own righteousness (Rom. 9:32 -10:3).

III. Righteousness of a believer is manifested through faith.

The righteousness of the believer is manifested through belief of the heart and confession of the mouth. This alone brings salvation (Rom.10:10,13).

IV. The importance of witnessing and preaching.

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God—hence the importance of witnessing and preaching (10:13-21).

V. All of Israel's remnant will be saved.

Israel's remnant will be saved when Christ comes (11:1-36).

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Chapter Nine

9:1-3 - *“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.”* In chapter nine, the Apostle Paul bares his heart to us. This great heartache, which grew out of Paul's great love for his own people, is really the love that a leader has for those he is responsible for.

We find the same thought again in Exodus 32:31, 32, when Moses was entreating God's mercy for the children of Israel though they had sinned grievously. “And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.” There is a perfect example of the great love a leader has for his people.

This truth is seen in the lives of Moses, David, Paul, and Jesus. Jesus laid down His life for His people. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down His life for His friends” (Jn.15:13). There is a sense of love that a shepherd has for his sheep, that he will hazard his life for the sheep.

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David went out after the lion and after the bear, hazarding his life for the sake of the sheep. This is the true love of God for His people. Of course, the love of God is seen when Jesus laid down His life for us. We should ask God for that same love which makes us willing to lay down our lives for our congregations, or for the other members of the Church.

9:4-5 - *“Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers.”* In verse four we have what are called “seven privileges that were given to Israel.” These privileges we will only scan because just by themselves, they could form a whole course.

1. *The Adoption.* First of all, there is the adoption which we have already mentioned a little earlier in chapter eight. Israel was God's adopted nation. They were sons by adoption. There is only one true Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, but Israel was adopted. They looked upon themselves as the sons of God because God had adopted them.

Adoption was understood very well in the Roman empire. The purpose of adoption was not just to transfer a child from one family to another, to give him a better life. It was to take a boy from another

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family and train him so that he would qualify to become a joint-heir with a true son of the father. We must never forget this truth of adoption. We are adopted by God for a very important purpose. We are adopted in order to rule and reign with Jesus Christ and to have responsibilities in His kingdom—not only here upon earth, but for all eternity.

Therefore, adoption is associated with authority and responsibility. No one should ever be given a position or responsibilities unless he has first been proven to be competent and faithful. This is the reason Paul said to Timothy that elders and deacons must first be proven (1 Tim. 3:10). Thus, we must be careful to understand that we have been adopted. However, from that moment onwards, there is a period of instruction, discipline, and adversity to see if we will qualify to be joint-heirs with Christ.

2. The Glory. The second privilege Israel inherited was the glory of God. The glory of God, as we see especially at the time of the journey of Israel from Egypt to the promised land, was manifested as light. The glory of God is in fact, the literal presence of God. It resided over the tabernacle of Moses, and then in a very peculiar sense, it was manifested in the life of Moses—so much so that the

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children of Israel could not look upon his face. The glory Moses experienced is for the Church in the last days. Paul refers to this glory, saying: "...If the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious" (2 Cor. 3:7-8)?

Paul is saying that the last day Church is going to know the glory of God in visible manifestations, not only in the congregation as Israel knew it, but also as Moses personally knew it. I believe we are going to literally see the faces of God's people shining with the glory of God in these last days. We are told in Isaiah 60:1-2, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." This is very clear cut. As darkness increases in the world, culminating with the antichrist, we should anticipate that the glory of the Lord will be visibly manifested in the congregations.

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This is confirmed in Isaiah 4:5. “And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.” In times past we have known of brief instances of this glory covering certain congregations. I believe in the last days that this cloud of glory will cover the congregations who ascend Mount Zion. I also believe from Isaiah 60:1-3 and from Second Corinthians 3:7-8, that we can believe that the *visible* glory of God will be manifested upon the faces of God's people in these last days. When will that be? It will be when great darkness comes upon the earth. We are like stars. Stars appear when it is night. The darker the night, the brighter the stars glow. As the night is approaching so also is the glory. Praise the Lord!

3. *The Covenants*. The third blessing and privilege Israel enjoyed was the covenants. There were the covenants of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. These were the covenants in the Old Testament that were given to the children of Israel. God bound himself by covenants. He made wonderful promises to Israel. In the Old Testament, God made a promise of a new covenant which would enable Him to write His laws upon the fleshly tables of our hearts. These covenants, with all

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the other privileges, were forfeited by Israel, and they have now been given to the Church. However, when Israel turns back to the Lord in the last days, her blessings and promises will be restored.

4. The Giving of the Law. Another privilege Israel had was that they were given the law. Unto them were committed the oracles of God. They had access to God's wisdom and ways because they had the light of the Word of God. In Deuteronomy 4:6, we are told that the keeping of the law was their wisdom. "Keep therefore and do them [that is, the covenants and laws of God]; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." This is the privilege of the Church—to have wisdom and understanding by the laws of God being written on the fleshly tables of our hearts. Wisdom comes from the law and the keeping of the statutes. Wisdom was manifested, not only through Moses, but also through Solomon. Solomon's wisdom was so great that all nations came to hear the wisdom of God through Solomon.

I believe in the last days the Church will teach the nations, and give direction to the nations. This is confirmed in Daniel 11:33. "And they that understand among the people shall instruct many." Even

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today this is being fulfilled to a certain extent. Many of the leaders of nations go to the ministers for counsel. Likewise, Isaiah 60:3 says, “And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”

5. *The Service of God.* The “service of God” was the fifth privilege that God gave to Israel. In Exodus 19:6, God promised Israel as they were going through the wilderness and coming to Mount Zion, “And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” God’s purpose was that they would be a kingdom of priests, yet the nation as a whole lost the priesthood through their disobedience. Only the tribe of Levi became priests, and the tribe of Judah inherited the kingship.

However, as with all these privileges, God, in His graciousness, has reinstated them to the Church. Thus, we read in First Peter 2:5, “Ye also, as [living] stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” Again in verse nine Peter tells us, “But ye are a chosen generation, a *royal* priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

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Revelation 5:10 reemphasizes this truth. “[Thou] hast made us unto our God kings and priests.” (See also Rev.1:6). Again it is mentioned in Revelation 20:6. “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” In the New Testament, our priesthood is not according to the order of Levi, but is after the order of Melchisedec. Our priesthood does not cease at death as did Levi's. Our priesthood is everlasting. The service of God for a New Testament believer is a *royal* priesthood.

6. *The Promises.* There were so many promises given to Israel, but I will just select one as a point of reference, and it is in Deuteronomy 28:1-14. “And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee” (Deut. 28:1-2). God’s purpose is to bless His Church. He yearned to bless Israel. In fact, He wanted to bless them in such a way that the blessings would overtake them and overwhelm them. Here are some of the blessings:

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“Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep” (Deut. 28:3-4). Verse five is for those who love shopping: “Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.” For me, shopping is a cross. The Lord obviously created shoppers, because here He pronounces a blessing upon them. What is a cross for some men is a delight to the ladies. One minister made this statement; “Without the ladies, commerce would cease.”

7. *The Fathers.* Privilege number seven was that Israel had the fathers. They had Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as their fathers, and they were heirs of all their blessings and promises. First of all, however, Israel understood that God was their father. The image portrayed in scripture of a father is that he takes care of his children. A father should adopt the attitude that children are going to make mistakes and that he has to live with those mistakes. A father has to remedy the mistakes of his children, and also forget them. This is very important. A father must have holy forgetfulness. He cannot constantly be recounting all the idiosyncrasies and failures of his children. Forgetfulness is the way into blessing, as seen in the life of Joseph.

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This is a very important truth, and it is so essential when it comes to fatherhood. In Genesis 41:51, Joseph called the name of his first born Manasseh, saying, “[God] hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father’s house.” Manasseh means, “forgetfulness.” Joseph forgot all that his brethren had done against him. A father must have this holy forgetfulness.

In a very true sense, God was a father to Israel. God was looked upon as a loving father, a merciful father, and a forgetful father. This is brought out in Micah 7:19b. “Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” Therefore, when Israel thought of their fathers, they thought immediately of God as their father. We need to think, not only of Jesus Christ as our Elder Brother, but of God as our father. I believe God the Father is hurt if we ignore Him and do not think of Him.

Some people have great difficulty in thinking of God as their father because they have had problems with their earthly father. What kind of image do we have of our father? If it is a good image, then our image of God is also good. If the image of our father is one who was cross, violent, angry, and intemperate, that is how we look at God the Father. This is something we must overcome. Our mind

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must be washed from evil remembrances of our fathers and we must look upon God the Father as the perfect father.

Not only was God Israel's father, Abraham was their father, too. In fact, they called him Father Abraham. As a son inherits what belongs to his father, in the same way we inherit what belongs to our heavenly Father. By His grace, we inherit His kingdom. Also, we inherit Abraham's inheritance because we are his spiritual sons. I want to summarize this in just a few words. The promise to Abraham was this, "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply [thee]" (Gen. 22:17). This is the promise we inherit. God will bless us because Abraham is our father, and He will multiply us. As we are the obedient and faithful sons of Abraham, then in blessing, God will bless us, and in multiplying, God will multiply us. These are the blessings that Israel lost and the Church inherited.

9:5 - *"Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."* Christ descended from Israel. Christ the King was to be the ultimate blessing of Israel, but Israel rejected Him and He became the Light to the Gentiles. We inherit all of these blessings because Israel was cut off, but will later be restored.

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9:6 - *“Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.”* Here we are going to develop a very important truth. We are going to look into the life of Abraham. Abraham had many children, the exact number of which we are not sure. We might think he just had two children, but he had many others as well. His firstborn son was Ishmael who was born of Hagar. Later, he had Isaac. Then he had at least six other sons by Keturah, who was his third wife. But he had other concubines and multitudes of children through them. Therefore, Abraham had many children, but in verse seven the Apostle Paul makes a very important point.

9:7 - *“Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.”* In the Middle East today, many of the Arabic countries look upon Abraham as their father and rightly so. They are indeed his physical seed. However, they are not his spiritual seed because God singled out Isaac and said, *“In Isaac shall thy seed be called”* (Gen. 21:12).

9:8 - *“That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”* This is a very important truth here—*“the children of the promise.”* Who was the child of promise? It was Isaac! It was not Ishmael or any of the other sons.

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9:9 - *“For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.”* God visited Sarah as He had promised. She brought forth a miraculous birth. Sarah was unable to have a child, but God gave her a child in her old age through a miracle. Why did God wait until Abraham and Sarah were too old to have a child? Because Isaac is a type of Christ and His seed. The seeds of Christ are *all* “born” miraculously by the Spirit of God. We are born again by the Spirit. This is what makes us children of God and of the promised seed. Isaac's birth required faith; it required a miracle. Isaac could not be produced by works or human effort.

9:9-12 - *“For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac. (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.”*

The Apostle Paul is making reference to Genesis 25:22-23. Rebecca had in her womb two children and they started warring against one another, even before they were born. With this struggle taking

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place in her womb, she enquired of the Lord, “Why am I thus?” He replied, “Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.” To put it in other words, God was saying to Rebecca—“There are twins in your womb, but the older one [the one who comes out first] shall serve the younger one.”

One might say, “Was that just? After all, before they were born their destinies were determined, and therefore the older boy had no hope.” Yet, that is not true at all. God can make statements like this because of His foreknowledge. God knew exactly what Jacob, the younger, would do. God knew beforehand that Jacob would cleave to the promises and covenant of Abraham. God also knew beforehand that Esau would despise it. Therefore, God declared, “The elder shall serve the younger.” God determined that Jacob would rule over his older brother Esau, and later on over Edom (Edom is comprised of the descendants of Esau). Also, God could say, “Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.”

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9:13 - *“As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”* Paul is quoting from Malachi 1:2-3.

The question arises: How could God say such a thing? Is God partial; does He have favorites? Certainly not! God had not predestined Esau to be evil and Jacob to be good. No! He simply *foreknew* the decisions of these two brothers. Because of God's foreknowledge, He can declare a thing before it has happened because He sees it as though it has already happened. This is the reason God can prophesy and declare things that are not as though they were.

Because of His foreknowledge, He knows exactly what is going to happen. The doctrine of election by grace is rooted in Romans 8:29, “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate.” For the following reasons, the Lord's foreknowledge of Esau brought about his rejection:

- a.) He cast off all pity (Amos 1:11).
- b.) His anger burned continually against his brother.
- c.) He was a fornicator (Heb.12:16).
- d.) He was a profane person. For one morsel of food he sold his birthright. He despised the promises of God.
- e.) Because of unforgiveness toward Jacob, he could find no place of repentance (Mt.18:35).

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Jacob was a man with a heart inclined toward God, in spite of the carnality of his youth. *Jacob* was a man who said to God, “I will not let thee go except thou bless me” (Gen. 32:26). He became *Israel*, “a prince with God.” Finally, at his death he became *Jeshurun*, or “straightened one” (Deut. 33:5, 26, Isa. 44:2).

9:14 - *“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.”* Many people look at these verses and say, “This is not fair. God is unrighteous.” But when we understand the Word of God and the reasons God said what He did, it is clear that God is simply declaring things by His *foreknowledge*.

9:15-16 - *“For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”* Paul says it is through God's mercy that His purposes for our lives are fulfilled. It is not through the strenuous effort of our will. Therefore, we live by the grace of God, the mercy of God, and the compassion of God.

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9:17 - *“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”* Paul is quoting from Exodus 9:16. There are people who say, “Poor Pharaoh, he did not have any option.” People think that men like Pharaoh, Pilate, or Judas were mere pawns, controlled and subjected to the will of another. “Poor Pontius Pilate, poor Judas, poor Pharaoh.” Yet, in order to have the full truth, we have to study the lives of these men. What were they like?

Pharaoh and his father committed genocide. One of the most terrible genocides ever recorded in the history of man was the slaying of the male children by Pharaoh. Pharaoh was also a very hard and cruel taskmaster. Therefore, God had every right to raise him up and make his heart obstinate so that He could execute upon Egypt the ten plagues. How natural that God should raise up such a wicked man who refused to let God's people go in order that God could bring upon Egypt the judgment they deserved.

What about Pontius Pilate? It is taught by some that Pontius Pilate did not have any option but to command that Jesus be crucified. But what kind of man was Pontius Pilate? He was a very cruel and

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unjust judge. He mingled the blood of the Galileans with the sacrifices (Lk.13:1). He committed sacrilege and murder. As you study the life of Pontius Pilate, the committal of Christ to the cross was only the end of a long line of atrocities that he had already done.

Then people say, "Poor Judas." Psalm 109:6-15 is a judgment prophesied by King David against Judas. He was a thief, and one who loved cursing. He did not appreciate the anointing that came upon him and the power that was given to him. Judas did not show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart (Psa.109:16-17). Judas was a wicked man. His whole life was a life of wickedness. His father and mother were not good people either (Psa.109:14). He was given opportunities that very few people have ever had. Judas was given the privilege of walking with Jesus, hearing firsthand His teaching, and seeing His glory and miracles. The Lord said to Capernaum, if Sodom and Gomorrah had seen the miracles which you have seen, they would have repented. Yet, Judas saw all of it. He even performed miracles, but he did not appreciate the blessing of the Lord.

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9:18 - *“Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.”*

Remember, God never hardens good men. When God declares that a man or woman is a vessel of wrath and another is a vessel of mercy, there is a very important reason for it. There is a life pattern behind it all. King David brought this out very beautifully in Psalm 18:25-26, and he gives us an understanding of why God is merciful to some but not to others. “With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright; With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.” According to the leanings or disposition of our hearts, so God will deal with us. If we are merciful, God will show us mercy. The Lord Jesus Christ said, “Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.” There is a reason some do not receive mercy.

As we study the Word of God, we can easily see that God is justified in His statements concerning Esau, and Pharaoh, and the others. Why? Because these people were very wicked people. Esau was a fornicator. He was one who despised the things of God. Therefore, God said, “I hated him.” Although Jacob was a deceiver, deep within his heart he respected the things of God. Therefore, God

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loved him. And whom the Lord loves He chastens. Thus, God passed him through trials and tribulations and sent him down to Uncle Laban's house to straighten him out.

Why does God have mercy on some, but others He hardens? David said in Psalm 18:26, "With the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward." To say it in other words, "How we act is how God will act toward us." This is what we have been trying to emphasize. As we put our feet in the pathway of righteousness, then God will cause us to walk in His ways (Ezek. 36:27). As we cry out to God, "Change me! Lord, make me upright," we will find that God will cause us to walk in His paths. But if we become deceitful, and if we become companions of the wicked, God will confirm us in that direction. When God warns, and warns, and warns, eventually He confirms a man in the choice he has made.

We have seen many who have crossed a line and then there is no turning back. God has confirmed them in their decisions. This is the reason we must make right choices. We should have as our goal—love, wisdom, and holiness. Perhaps we are like Jacob. Perhaps we have come from a very deceitful background and we have numerous problems in our lives. Our past does not matter if we determine

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to be different and we cry out to God, “Lord, change me from who I am.” We may have a life full of tribulations and trials, but the end of the matter will be good.

9:19 - *“Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?”* Paul was anticipating what some people would say when they heard his teachings on election in Romans chapter nine. The problem was that they really did not have a knowledge of God's ways. When we understand God's ways we know that God has good reasons for all His actions.

9:20 - *“Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?”* The wicked cannot complain because they have made their own choice about how they wish to be formed.

9:21 - *“Hath not the potter power over the clay; of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?”* With Esau and Jacob, God formed each one according to what his heart desired.

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9:22-23 - *“What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy.”* Vessels of wrath are used by God to perfect vessels of mercy. God has predetermined before creation, to use both vessels. Vessels of wrath are needed in order to perfect the vessels of mercy. God needed a vessel of wrath like Pharaoh. He needed a man who would make his heart obstinate and not let the people go, so that God could execute the ten plagues and show His great grace and goodness unto the vessels of mercy, the Israelites.

In our lifetime, we will be placed at times alongside vessels of wrath. The whole purpose of making us to dwell alongside a vessel of wrath is so that God can pour special grace into our lives. Thus, we will be enabled to receive blessings we ordinarily could not have received. Every vessel of mercy has his own vessel of wrath to help perfect him. Jacob had Esau and Laban to perfect him. David had Saul, Ahithophel and Absalom to perfect him. Hannah had Peninnah, and Sarah had Hagar to work out a depth of grace in their lives.

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All of us want to see miracles and healings. Beloved, how can we have a miracle unless we have a need? How can we have healing unless we are sick? In order to see the hand of God move, we must have a need created. That is what the vessels of wrath are for. Ultimately, vessels of wrath are fitted to destruction, for they *willingly* do these things. Unfortunately, the vessels of wrath are not only in the world, some of them are in the Church.

We never see anyone just *fall* into sin. There is this little phrase, “Someone just fell into sin.” God spoke to my wife so clearly and said, “No, that is not true at all. There is a pathway that I have chosen for every person, and it is a pathway of righteousness. If they start getting off this pathway onto another one, I put up roadblock, after roadblock, after roadblock. If they willfully push through every roadblock and pass over all the checks, they will be confirmed in the way they have chosen. Then they cannot get out of it.” Do you see my point? People do not just fall into sin, they have determined to do it. They have walked foolishly and deliberately. They have passed over every warning from the Word of God, every warning from the Holy Spirit, and every warning God has given through other people.

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9:23 - *“That he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.”* Here we see the glory God brings upon the righteous by using the wicked to perfect them. The vessels of wrath get fuller and fuller, and the vessels of mercy get fuller and fuller. When both are overflowing, then God intervenes. The vessel of wrath is cut off, and the vessel of mercy is promoted.

9:24-25 - *“Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in [Hosea], I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.”* This was prophesied in Hosea 1:10. It is bringing out the fact that God will save the Gentiles.

A former archbishop of Canterbury, head of the Anglican church, made this statement in his enthronement speech, “ I had a dream, and in this dream I saw a maze. I saw people in this maze trying to find their way to the center. They were looking this way and that way, but they could not get to the center. Then, suddenly I saw some on the outside rushing in and they went straight to the center.”

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The archbishop did not give the interpretation, but the interpretation is very clear. Many in the Church cannot find the way because their hearts are not right, but when revival comes those on the outside go straight to the center. This is exactly what happened in the first century. Israel was fumbling around in the maze and they were unable to recognize Christ, but when the gospel was offered to the Gentiles, they went straight to Christ. Israel rejected Him, but the Gentiles accepted Him.

9:26 - *“And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.”* This is speaking of the restoration of Israel. Israel is cut off, but Israel will be restored again when the Lord returns.

9:27 - *“[Isaiah] also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved”* (Isa.10:22). A remnant of Israel has always been saved throughout the Gentile period. God always has a remnant. Israel is cut off as a nation, but when you go around the world, and even in Israel today, there are churches who worship Jesus as the Messiah. It is interesting that when you ask them, “How did you come to know Jesus as the Messiah?” so many of them say, “He appeared to me.”

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9:28 - *“For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.”* What is “short” to God is long to us. But nonetheless, God is going to do a relatively short work when we think of eternity.

9:29 - *“And as [Isaiah] said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha”* (Isa.1:9).

Certainly, Israel was worthy of rejection. Yet in Hosea 11:9, there is one of the most beautiful scriptures in the Word of God concerning the love and compassion of God for Israel. Throughout the book of Hosea is an enumeration of all the sins of Israel. Israel was guilty of every possible sin. “And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him” (Hos.11:7). Yet in verses 8-9, God gives the lamest, but greatest excuse for not giving up Israel completely, saying, “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? [two little cities at the time of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha.] mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim.

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[Lord, why don't You destroy Israel after all their sins? All God can say is,] *for I am God, and not man.*"

Man would have destroyed Israel, but God could not because He is God. He is a God of mercy, "the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I would not enter into the city [to destroy it.]" Why does God not give up Israel? Because He is God, not man.

9:30-32 - *"What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone."* Israel did not obey the rules. They had their own rules and their own mind. They came to God on their own terms, not His, and God did not accept it.

God's rules were this—righteousness comes by faith, by relationship. Israel said, "We will have our own rules, we will come to God our own way, and we say that righteousness comes by the law." God has ordained faith to be the means of our justification, not works, so that no flesh may glory.

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Therefore, Israel's coming to God on their own terms was pride. Pride always brings us down. It was Israel's unbelief, in failing to receive God's righteousness by faith in Christ, that caused God to cut them off. In Deuteronomy 32:21, Moses had already forewarned them that they would be cut off.

Therefore, God raised up Christ to be a stumblingblock to Israel, as He declared in Isaiah 8:14. The purpose of a stumblingblock is to turn the wicked out of the way of the Lord as mentioned in Ezekiel 3:20. Who was the stumblingblock? It was Jesus Christ! Because they would not obey God, because they would not run according to the rules, God turned them out of the way by placing a stumblingblock before them.

Christ came as a stumblingblock. They were expecting a great captain, one who would be the leader of armies, the general of generals, the captain of the Lord's host. This was the one they were expecting. Unfortunately, they are going to receive the wrong one when he appears in our generation. There is one who is going to come in his own name, and he will be "the king of the north,"—the antichrist. This is the one whom Israel will look to for their deliverance. Yet the only one who could really deliver them was the Lamb of God, the One whom they rejected and crucified.

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9:33 - *“As it is written, behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”* Jesus was sent in part to turn the wicked of Israel out of the way, and to become a light to the Gentiles (Isa. 49:6). Those who believe on Him shall never be ashamed.

Chapter Ten

10:1-3 - *“Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”* The Apostle Paul continues his refrain that he started in chapter nine, when he speaks of his great love and desire for Israel to be saved. He says in verse two, *“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.”*

We can have a zeal to do things for God, but if it is not done according to His rules and according to His will, it is null and void. Israel had a tremendous zeal for the law, but it was not according to God's righteousness. They were ignorant of God's righteousness which came through faith in Christ. They

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were trying to establish their own righteousness. This is not a problem unique to Israel, it is also a problem everywhere in the Church world.

Many in the Church seek to establish their own righteousness, and because of that, they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. I cannot overemphasize the importance of this, because many Christians fall into this snare. We have to submit to the will of God in order to be approved by God. God might say to us, "My will for you is to do such and such a thing." We cannot reply, "No, I want to do something else for You." In doing so we would find at the end of our lives that all our works would be void, and there would be no reward awaiting us. People want to work for God and do something for God, but on their own terms. We cannot choose the kind of ministry we want, or decide *where* we want to serve Him. We have to play by God's rules, not our own. Otherwise we will lose in the game of life.

Israel tried to come to God in their own way. They were ignorant of God's righteousness. Israel was destroyed through the lack of knowledge (Hos. 4:6). This is a problem in the Church today. We must have a knowledge of God's ways in order to please Him.

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10:4 - *“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”* Christ has fulfilled the law of righteousness. He is the righteousness that comes by faith, which we read about in verse six. Paul is showing the difference between Israel and the Gentiles. Israel did not submit themselves to God's righteousness, the righteousness that comes by faith in Christ. The Gentiles accepted Christ, which enabled them to become righteous.

Paul's whole contention is that man cannot establish righteousness by the law. Christ is the end of the law. He alone fulfilled the law, and enables those who accept Him to fulfill the law. This righteousness, therefore, comes by faith in Christ. The righteousness of God comes to us through faith in Jesus Christ. It is by grace. The flesh cannot produce God's righteousness. We are getting at the very heart of the problem, the problem of pride. God has ordained that no flesh shall glory in His presence (1 Cor.1:29).

Abraham was not justified by works. If he had been justified by works he would have had something to boast of. Therefore, God has ordained that justification would be by grace through faith. Thus, no one has anything in which to glory. We can only glory in the cross. Even after salvation we cannot

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fulfill the law. We may only fulfill the law by faith, by relationship, by being joined to the One who fulfilled the law and by receiving His power. It is by walking in the Spirit that we fulfill the law and do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. We cannot fulfill the law by creating our own rules and regulations.

The whole crux of the problem dates back, before the foundation of the world, to an issue between God and Satan. It is the problem of pride. Satan said, "I can do it better than God." Satan wanted to usurp the throne and be as the Most High. He wanted to take charge of the universe, and God had to demote Satan for his folly. Therefore, before the world began we have the battle of pride, which believes it can *do it better* than God. This is the problem with mankind, too. Man believes his way is better than God's. He does not submit himself to God's righteousness, but seeks to establish his own righteousness. This was Israel's problem.

Thus, God dismissed Satan from his lofty position because of pride. Yet, in the last days of this Church Age, God is going to give Satan an opportunity to run the world for three and a half years. The Father's reasoning is this: "My Son submitted to Me, and by My Spirit He fulfilled My will for three and a half years. Satan, you are going to have equal opportunity to come in the form of a man for three

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and a half years, and We will see what you do.” Of course, we already know what he will do. Isaiah 14:17 tells us that he will make “the world as a wilderness, and destroy the cities thereof.” Satan, through his man, the antichrist, will bring the world to chaos and destruction. This is because no one, man or angel, can run God's kingdom by their own wisdom or effort. It may only be run by the enabling grace of God and the Spirit of God. This is the very heart of the matter. The choice is between God's way and man's way. Therefore, we must be very clear on the matter of holiness, because holiness is only attained by coming God's prescribed way, not our own.

When Christ went to the cross, it was the very opposite of pride. It was total humiliation. The Humble One destroyed the Proud One. The Surrendered One destroyed the Self-willed One. The Lamb submitted Himself to the will of the Father, and at that moment, Christ destroyed all the pride of Satan. All the demons know it, too. One demon spoke out and said, “If we had won at the cross, we would have won everything.” All the demons know what happened at the cross. The idea that Satan does not know is nonsense. Satan was seated next to God in the heavens. He knew everything about this creation and he did everything in his power to spoil it. He triumphed in Adam, but failed in the

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Last Adam. He failed with the Bridegroom, so now he wants the Bride, and he will fail in that, too. God will succeed in having a people who love Him uniquely out of their own free will.

10:5 - *“For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.”* This is a quote from Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 6:25. The problem with the law was that no one was able to keep it because of the weakness of the flesh.

10:6-8 - *“But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.”* Paul is quoting from Moses in Deuteronomy 30:12-14. Christ is the Word. That is one of His titles, and He is in our hearts and in our mouths as we confess Him before men. This comes out in Romans 10: 9-10.

10:9-10 - *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* Two things are necessary for

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salvation—confession with the mouth, and belief with the heart. To believe in the heart is not enough. It is a confession with our mouths that seals our salvation experience. One must not be a secret believer like Nicodemus (Jn. 3:2, 12:42, 19:39). We should be witnessing openly for Christ with a heart full of faith, and without shame.

10:11 - *“For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”* Again and again God emphasizes that salvation is by faith in Christ, not by works. Therefore, Christ can say in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” He is the door to the sheep fold. There is no other way into the kingdom of heaven (see Jn. 10:1-9, Acts 4:11-12).

10:12 - *“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.”* The Jews and the Gentiles have all come the same way. Christ, and Christ alone, is the Savior of the world. The only way we can be justified from sin is by heart belief in the Savior, and declaring that belief from our mouths.

10:13 - *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* Paul is quoting from Joel 2:32. Let us look back into Joel 2:28-32 to see the context. “And it shall come to pass afterward,

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that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that *whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered*: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.”

The thought in Joel 2:28-32, particularly for the last days, is that in the time of calamity God says, “Just call upon Me and I will save you.” These verses are for people on the brink of eternity. It is not that we desire deathbed conversions; we would rather have a life lived for God. Yet, we are so thankful when people lay hold of eternal life in their last breath.

I remember a well known brother in South Africa whom we loved very dearly. He was a senior civil servant in the South African government, and has since gone on to be with the Lord. He was, as I recall, the chairman of the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship. He had a farm, as so many

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Afrikaans do, where he built a huge barn and held meetings every Thursday. We had the privilege of going there and seeing the Spirit of God poured out in a very gracious way. We had a wonderful time with them.

This dear man had a son, but his son would not follow in the ways of the Lord. The father travailed and prayed and pleaded with God repeatedly for the salvation of his son. Then, his son went through a terrible divorce. It was very sad. After that he contracted cancer, went very, very low, and had to be confined to a hospital bed. On one occasion his father went to visit him and said, “Son, won’t you turn back to the Lord?” The young man had known the Lord when he was young. With all his father’s pleadings and prayers, he did turn back to the Lord on his death bed.

What he then told his father was very awesome. He said, “Father, the Lord has shown me I shall go to heaven, but there is nothing waiting for me there. You are going to have a wonderful inheritance in heaven because you have lived for God.”

We are so thankful when people make their peace with God on their death bed, and find eternal life. My point, however, is this: what will be awaiting us when we get to heaven? The son we have just

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mentioned had no inheritance. He barely made it in. He had no fruit to show for his life. He had little or no reward. God is only able to say, “Well done good and faithful servant,” to those who have lived their lives doing the will of God.

10:14 - *“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”*

Here we see the necessity of preaching. People need a preacher. Someone has to tell them and point them to the way of life. It is so important to give everyone the opportunity of hearing the gospel, so that from an early age they can embrace Christ and all the life-transforming truths of the Word of God. This will give them the opportunity to live a godly life, so that by the grace of God, they can have a goodly inheritance throughout all eternity.

10:15 - *“And how shall they preach, except they be sent?”* We all must witness, but some are sovereignly called to preach the gospel. The Apostle Paul said, “Woe to me if I preach not the gospel.” Paul was separated by God to preach the gospel of Christ. We can only preach if we are sent of God. The Lord said in Isaiah 6:8, “Whom shall we send, and who will go for us?” And Isaiah

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said, “Here am I, send me.” *Send me.* We cannot go unless God sends us. It is so important to understand that it is God’s sovereignty that sends us.

Perhaps we can see a desperate need, and we would like to go to a certain place. Yet, we must have the humility to place ourselves before God and say, “Lord, if this is Your will, send me.” He might say, “Go.” He might say, “No, I have chosen another place for you,” or “I have selected someone else for this task.”

“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” In Ephesians 6:15, Paul said we should have our feet shod with the gospel of peace. Our feet should tread only where God sends us, whether it be to Africa, Indonesia, Philippines, India, Europe, or wherever we go. How glorious our feet will be when we bring the gospel of Jesus Christ. The message we deliver will bring peace.

10:16 - *“But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For [Isaiah] saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?”* The remarkable thing is that in some countries the gospel has been preached for years and years, decades and decades, centuries and centuries. Some have heard the gospel since the time of

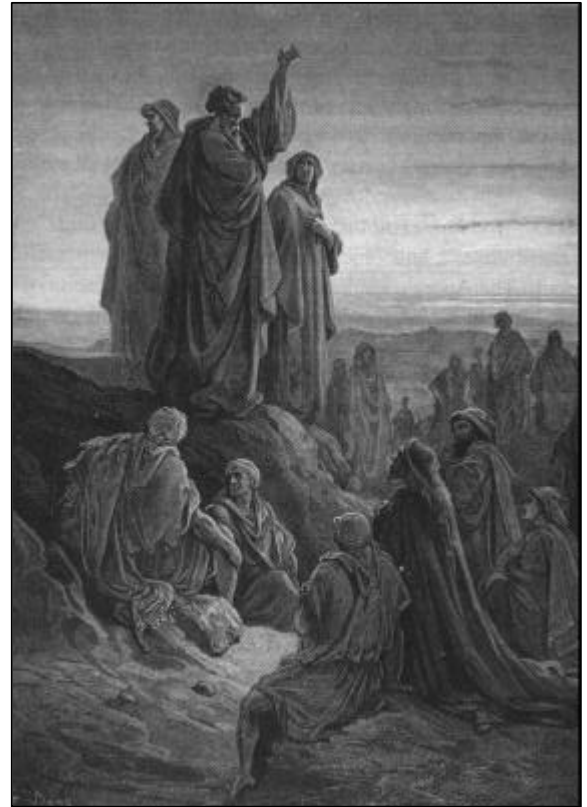
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Christ, but they have not responded. We see the willingness of God that none should perish but that all should come to repentance, yet man has his own free will to make his choice. Some accept the gospel message, and others do not (Acts 28:24).

PAUL PREACHING THE GOSPEL

“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear with a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?” (Romans 10:14-15)

10:17 - *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* We have to understand that it is by faith that we are saved, and faith is generated by the hearing of



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God's Word. This is the reason we must consistently preach God's Word because in so doing we are allowing faith to be generated in the hearts of our listeners.

10:18 - *"But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."* The gospel has been plainly given to Israel and to the world. Paul is coming back to what he said in Romans 1:19, 20. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; [that is, in their conscience] for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." In a certain sense the gospel is hidden in nature; it is everywhere. One's eyes have to be opened to it. Solomon brought out the truths that are hidden in nature (1 Kings 4:32, 33). Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God." The gospel message is interwoven with the creation. There is divine truth in everything God has created.

10:19 - *"But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation will I anger you."* Israel was told through Moses before they

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entered the promised land that God would turn to another people, the Gentile Church, to provoke them to jealousy (Deut. 32:21). But for all that, they did not believe. The interesting thing is that the people who support Israel the most today are the Christian nations. The people who are responsible for undergirding the tourist industry in Israel today are the Christians.

“Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.” God warned Israel that He would raise up another nation. Who is the other nation? We are that nation, the Church. Peter calls us “a holy nation, a peculiar [or treasured] people,” because the Church is formed by a people in every nation under heaven. (See First Peter 2:9.)

10:20 - *“But [Isaiah] is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not.”* This is very true; God came to the Gentiles who were not seeking Him. It is also very true that in times of revival, people are drawn into the Church who never sought God. *“I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.”* Paul is quoting from Isaiah 65:1-2 here.

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10:21 - *“But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”* God stretched out His hands to Israel, sending His prophets and righteous men to them, but Israel would not hearken. Though they were the elect of God they would not hearken. Eventually a stumblingblock was placed before them in the person of Christ. They stumbled over Him and they rejected Him. Therefore, Israel was cut off, and the gospel has spread abroad to the Gentiles, a people who sought not after Him. This is the sense of chapter ten.

Beforehand God warned Israel that He was going to cut them off and provoke them to jealousy. The whole purpose of provoking them to jealousy was simply to make them turn back to God. This they will do when Christ returns, as seen in chapter eleven.

Chapter Eleven

11:1-2 - *“I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.”* In chapter eleven, we come again to the theme of election through foreknowledge. We must put foreknowledge at the beginning of all doctrine. Foreknowledge precedes doctrine. When we grasp

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this, then everything else will slot in easily and become clear. If we do not put God's foreknowledge first, then all the other doctrines become bizarre. God's foreknowledge has determined everything.

We have said before that God cut off Israel as a nation and replaced them by that "peculiar nation" made up of many nations, which is the Church. However, we must remember that the twelve apostles of the Lamb were all Jews. The initial outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost came upon all Jews, not Gentiles. Paul is saying that God has not cast away the people He foreknew, and He is making reference to faithful Israelites. Foreknowledge helps us understand predestination and election.

God has always had a faithful remnant of Jewish believers, even though the nation as a whole rejected Him. By His foreknowledge He knew that the twelve apostles would embrace Christ. He knew that multitudes out of Israel would receive Christ, so that those who accepted Christ were not cast away. Then we have the classic example of Paul himself. While he was a Pharisee of Pharisees and was mightily opposing the Church, God knew that when Paul had his eyes opened he would

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wholeheartedly embrace the gospel. The Lord knew that the same zeal Paul had for the law, he would use for the propagation of the gospel.

The foreknowledge of God is extremely important. His foreknowledge is seen extensively in scripture. He uses it also to declare what will happen on the day of judgment. When speaking to Capernaum, he said, "If Sodom and Gomorrha had seen the miracles you have seen, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes. Therefore they will judge you on the day of judgment." Eternal judgment is also based on God's foreknowledge of what we would have done with greater light. So in all senses, judgment, whether it is upon this earth or whether it is eternal, is perfect.

Sodom and Gomorrha were not counted worthy to have more light because they rejected the truth presented to them in the person of righteous Lot. Sodom and Gomorrha were judged and sent into hell, but Capernaum was in a worse state because they had more light. They rejected the Light of the world, the Messiah.

It is very important to understand these truths. Why does God not give greater light to some? It is simply because He knows what we have done with what we have already received. For some it would

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be better not to ever know the way. Some who have known the way go back. It is like a dog returning to his vomit. God, in His mercy, sometimes veils truth from people. If they received the truth they would only continue for a time, and then backslide. As a result their eternity would be worse (2 Pet. 2:20-22).

We see the greatness of God when we study these truths. We see how perfect is His knowledge and how perfect is His judgment, and it fills us with awe and wonder. Yet, at the same time it fills us with love, because we know that everything is so very right.

11:2a-4 - *“[Know] ye not what the scripture saith of [Elijah]? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.”* (See 1 Kings 19:10,14,18). The first doctrine that Paul addresses in chapter eleven is that of the remnant. It is a truth that flows through the Word of God. When God judges His people, He always leaves a few faithful ones. These are the ones who pass the message on to the next generation. God is saying, in

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other words, "I always give grace to some so that there will always be a remnant. There will always be some who wholeheartedly follow Me."

Paul is saying that although Israel was cut off as a nation because of her rejection of Christ, yet God did not cut off the people that He foreknew would accept the message. Likewise, in the time of Elijah, when Elijah thought he was the only one serving God, God said He had preserved seven thousand who had remained faithful.

Seven thousand is the number of years from Adam to the end of the millennium. Seven thousand is not only an actual figure but it is symbolic of the entire seven thousand years of man upon the earth. God is saying, "I have always preserved a few faithful witnesses in every generation during man's span upon earth."

11:5 - *"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."*

Paul is speaking of a remnant of Israel, but we could go on to say that throughout the Church Age there was always a remnant that had the truth. In studying Church history, we find that there was

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always a remnant who were faithful to God. There has always been a faithful remnant that have been preserved by grace. This is the “election of grace.”

A number of years ago the Lord brought me up in visions into heaven. There, sitting upon a knoll in heaven, upon a grassy bank was the Lord Himself, and I was sitting at His feet. All He said to me was one word, “Grace, grace, grace.” The vision came on and off for many days, but the Lord always had one word to say, “Grace.” God wanted to emphasize that everything is by grace. We are saved by grace, we are kept by grace, and every advancement in the Christian life is by grace. Whatever God does with us, or how ever He uses us, is by grace. It is only by His grace that we can be preserved to be faithful in this generation, when iniquity abounds and the love of many shall wax cold.

Abraham experienced a “horror of great darkness” as God made a covenant with him to give him the land of Canaan (Gen.15:12-21). I have literally had the horror of great darkness settle upon me at certain times in my life. Before God does something fresh in our lives, or branches us out into something new, we experience the horror of great darkness. This “darkness” makes us aware of our nothingness. We feel totally helpless. We realize our utter dependence upon God to bring any of His

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promises to pass. The purpose of the horror of great darkness is to convince us that we are unable to do anything, but that it is God Who is going to do it. As we look back on our lives we see that it is God Who has done it all. We would have gone in one way, but God in His grace forced us to go in another way, a way that led to life and happiness.

11:6 - *“And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more of grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”* The ability to see truth, the ability to be kept from going astray, depends uniquely upon God's grace. I want to emphasize this because our lives are so dependent on grace. It is so important to cry out to God for grace in every situation we are going to face. We should pray, “Lord, give me grace so that what You have purposed will be fulfilled.”

11:7 - *“What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.”* We have to pause here a moment. Israel did not obtain that for which they were seeking. They were seeking for salvation. They were seeking for the righteousness of God, but they were not seeking it according to the rules which said, “The just shall live by his faith.”

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Therefore, the elect have obtained it. Those who did not attain unto the election of grace were spiritually blinded by God, as were the scribes and Pharisees in the time of Jesus. They were given a spiritual stupor because they honored God with their lips, but their hearts were removed far from Him (Isa. 29:10). The “election” are those Gentiles who have been selected by God to enter into the place where Israel should have been. Therefore, in order that the gospel be preached to those whom God knew would receive it, the others were blinded. God blinds people. God blinded the whole nation of Israel, except for “a remnant” who received and responded to the new covenant.

The thing that makes this so awesome is that it applies to the Church. The Church is awaiting a new move of God, but in every revival we face the same situation. There are those who accept it (the elect receive it) and the rest are *blinded*, though they all hear the same message. The Lord Jesus Christ was questioned about this very point when He was upon earth. He was asked, “Why do You speak in parables?” His reply made it very clear why He spoke in parables. He said, “It is given to you [the elect, the disciples] to understand, but to [the others] it is not.”

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Thus, we see the awesomeness of God. God either gives grace or He does not; yet there is always a reason. It comes back to Psalm 18:25 where David said, “With an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright.” This is the reason it is imperative that we allow God to work in every area of our lives. It is of utmost importance that we do those things that are upright, in order to find grace in God's sight. This is the way we qualify for advancement in the kingdom of God. Otherwise, we shall be blinded, and we shall not be able to accept further truth. We will be discarded and put into churches that have no intention of going on. God will place us into groups of people and congregations who will think like we do, and we will reject further light. It is an awesome thing.

11:8 - *“(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.”* Paul is quoting from Isaiah 6:10.

The thought of slumber here does not mean natural sleep, but spiritual sleep so that one's spirit is not awakened or quickened to the things of God. “Eyes that they should not see” refers to the eyes of our understanding not being able to behold the truths in God’s Word. “Ears that they should not hear” are ears that hear the same words as everyone else, but they do not comprehend the meaning.

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I have been in churches that have transgressed against God, and they have come under the judgment of Isaiah 59:9-10. In these churches your head just reels and swoons. Sometimes God opens your eyes and you can see a spirit of mental blindness over the people. This is precisely what happened to Israel. Israel was blinded because of their iniquity. God judges with blindness, churches and believers who do not walk uprightly. He gives them statutes that do not profit (Eze. 20:25). False doctrines, therefore, can be judgments sent from God upon the disobedient.

11:9-10 - *“And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.”* Paul is quoting the words of David from Psalm 69:22-23, using it to prove the fruits of divine hardening.

David knew the heart of God. In Psalm 40:6 he declared, “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire.” Everyone was doing it; and even God had ordained it to be practiced. Yet David said, “I know this is not what You want.” How did David know that this was not what God wanted? Here is the key, “Mine ears hast thou opened.” God opened David’s ears to hear what He *really* wanted.

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How we need to cry out, “Lord, open my ears, open my heart that I might truly hear and know what You are desiring, and what You really want me to do, and what You really want the church to do, or the fellowship to do.”

The interesting thing is this, when God gives a vision and God speaks afresh, those who have not walked uprightly or have compromised are the ones who oppose it the most. Their eyes are blinded and their ears are shut and they go backwards. Not only do they reject the new message, they are tenacious in opposing those who receive it and are going on. The Israelites were not content just to disregard the Christian message, they were antagonistic toward anyone who accepted it and found life.

When people have rejected the truth, they will not let the ones who have accepted it alone. They are vehemently opposed to them. What is the reason for this? The answer is in Romans 10:19. God curses them with the spirit of jealousy. God told Israel before they crossed over the Jordan, “*I will provoke you to jealousy.*”

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God did not let the Israelites alone and say, “I have blinded you, I have shut your ears that you cannot see the truth; you cannot receive truth because of your wicked ways.” No, God did something in addition to this. He judged them with a spirit of jealousy so that they were vehement against those who accepted the truth.

We have the classic example of this with Saul and David. Saul did not obey God, and we would think that he would just leave David alone. Oh, that is never the case! When the anointing left Saul, it was replaced by the spirit of jealousy. That spirit of jealousy refused to give Saul any peace. Saul had to be antagonistic against David. Thus, we see that the judgment is not just that a person is blinded and unable to see. No! The anointing and the light that they once had are replaced by a spirit of jealousy, and they absolutely *attack* those who want to go on with God.

11:12 - *“Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?”* There has always been “a believing remnant” from Israel, but as a nation they have been blinded. Israel has been blinded but not to their total destruction—rather to open the door so that God can send the gospel to the Gentiles. The fall of

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Israel enabled the Gentiles to participate in the blessings, in order to provoke Israel to jealousy, to return to the Lord. The Jews' return to the Lord at the second coming of Christ will be a tremendous blessing to the world. Now the Apostle Paul is going to speak, as did all the prophets before him, of the restoration of Israel.

11:13-14 - *“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: if by any means I may provoke to [jealousy] them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.”* Jealousy is the key. Although Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles, he has a longing in his heart for his own people, Israel. Paul wants to provoke the Israelites to jealousy and envy so that some would return to the Lord and be saved.

11:15 - *“For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?”* Paul is saying; “The casting away, or rejection of Israel, enabled God to show forth the light of the gospel to the Gentiles. However, when they return to the Lord and are restored at the second coming of Christ, what a glorious blessing it will be for this world.” It will be like life from the dead.

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Through Israel's rejection of the gospel, Christ became a light to the Gentiles. He had been sent by His Father to gather together the house of Israel. Yet, Isaiah predicted that Christ would fail in His initial task of bringing Israel back to God. The Father understood this beforehand and said to His Son, "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." (See Isaiah 49:5-6).

11:16 - *"For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches."*

Paul now develops the thought of the olive tree and its branches.

11:17 - *"And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and the fatness of the olive tree..."* This olive tree is Israel. Some of the branches were broken off by God, the divine Husbandman, and in their place He grafted in the Gentiles as branches of a wild olive tree. Therefore, we now partake of the fullness and blessings of Israel (see Eph. 2:19). This is contrary to nature. You graft a good branch into a poor tree and seek to produce good fruit. But this is in reverse. Here are wild branches from a wild olive tree

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(the Gentiles). Some of the natural branches of Israel have been cut off, and in their place God has grafted in the Gentiles.

We have been grafted into Israel. Paul goes so far as to entitle the Church the “Israel of God” in Galatians 6:16. In Ephesians 2:19, Paul makes it very clear that we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, of the household of God. We have been brought into the household of Israel. This can be seen in the book of Revelation where the gates of the holy city are named after the twelve tribes of Israel. In order to enter into the city, each believer must pass through one of these Israelite gates.

We have become grafted into spiritual Israel. We are branches. Some of the branches have been broken off. Our spiritual father is not a Gentile; our spiritual father is Abraham. Paul brings this out very clearly in Galatians 3:29, “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Because Abraham is our spiritual father, we preach the Old Testament because the Old Testament is ours. We are grafted into the promises of God. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are all our fathers. All the prophets prophesied concerning what would come upon us, the Gentiles. Also in

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the Acts of the Apostles, Stephen mentions the “Church in the wilderness.” Truly, all things written aforetime were written for us. We are the Israel of God.

11:18 - *“Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.”* We are one with Israel, but still we must be careful. We must not have a boastful attitude against Israel. We are not carrying Israel, Israel is carrying us. We have been grafted into Israel.

11:19 - *“Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.”* Yes, some of the branches were broken off, but not all of them. The New Testament is written chiefly by Jewish writers. Matthew was a Jew. Mark was certainly a Jew. John was Jewish. Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews. James and Jude were brothers of the Lord. Peter never ate anything common or unclean from his youth. He was a Jew. Luke is the only one we are not absolutely sure about. Virtually the whole New Testament is Jewish. We are embracing the blessings of Israel. We are grafted into Israel. The Book upon which we stand was written by Jews. Therefore, we thank God for Israel. As the prophecy of Noah has said, we have come like Japheth to dwell in the tents of Shem, which is Israel (Gen. 9:27).

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11:20 - *“Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear.”* We stand only by faith, and even our faith is a gift of God. Paul warns, “Be not high-minded, but fear.” We are unable to keep ourselves; we are kept by the power of God. Paul tells us in First Corinthians 15:10 that we are what we are by the grace of God. Oh, how we should magnify this grace, how we should magnify His faith. How we should thank our heavenly Father for being so kind from the foundation of the world to behold us, and to call us, and to give us grace to respond to His beckoning, to be the elect of God.

11:21 - *“For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.”* Paul exhorts the Gentiles to walk in humility, for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare us if we cease to walk in His goodness by faith.

In John 15:1,2, the Lord made it very clear that He Himself is the Vine and His Father is the Husbandman. “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.” Why did God take Israel away? It was a nation that did not bear fruit. Do you remember how He cursed the fig tree just before His crucifixion? The fig tree is a type of Israel, and when He found it without fruit, He cursed it. In

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cursing the fig tree, He was cursing Israel for their fruitlessness. The whole purpose of a branch is to bring forth fruit. Oh, may Jesus give us grace to bring forth fruit that is thirty fold, sixty fold, and one hundred fold. We glorify Him by being fruitful.

Let us be very careful. Anyone who says, "Once you are saved, you are always saved," has not read the Word of God correctly. Israel was cut off because they did not produce fruit. Why, therefore, did God graft us into Israel? Because God wanted fruit. We have been grafted in for one sole purpose and that is to bring forth fruit. If we do not bring forth fruit, we shall suffer the same fate as Israel. Thus, we must be fruitful branches. Otherwise we will be pruned off as dead boughs, and cast into the fire.

11:22 - *"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, [and then he adds this], if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."* Jesus makes it very clear that the unfruitful branches will be "cut off." The same thought made by Paul in Romans 11 is brought out by Jesus in John 15:1-9. "Abide in me and I in you. . .for without me ye can do nothing." The branch absolutely cannot bear fruit unless it abides in the vine.

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Unless we abide in Christ and the life of Christ abides in us, we cannot bear fruit. What does he mean by “abiding in Christ?” It means for the branch to abide in the Vine, and that is maintained by obedience. Christ said, “If ye keep my commandments, ye abide in my love” (Jn.15:10). Therefore, we must keep the ten commandments; we must abide in Him. How, then, does Christ abide in us? It is as His Word abides in us.

11:23 - *“And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.”* There will be a national repentance in Israel, and God will graft back in the repentant natural branches. Paul is saying that if Israel returns to God, they will be grafted back in again.

11:24 - *“For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?”* Obviously, God is going to bring Israel back to Himself and give them the spirit of repentance. There is going to be a restoration of the Israelite nation. The condition required is a believing heart, coming to God His way.

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11:25 - *“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits.”* What God is doing in the world today is a mystery. He has already brought Israel back to their own land in accordance with Jeremiah chapter thirty. He has brought them back in preparation for the tribulation, and in preparation for the Lord’s coming, when they shall turn back to Him. Thus, we can see that the time is growing short.

“That blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” It says, “blindness in part.” It is only in part because there are many Jews who do believe. How long is Israel as a nation going to be blinded? Until the time of the Gentiles be completed—until every Gentile, according to the election of grace, has been brought in. The curse upon Israel will continue until all the Gentiles who have been foreordained unto eternal life have been brought in. There is a number to be brought in. This number is known only to God, of course, but when that number is full, then things will change. The *times of the Gentiles* ceases at Christ's return. Jerusalem is yet to be overrun by the Gentiles for the last 42 months of the Church Age (Rev.11:2).

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11:26 - *“And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of [Zion] the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”* Paul is referring back to Isaiah 59:20. (See also Isaiah 45:25, Psalm 14:7). Israel as a nation will turn back to God as one man at the second coming of Christ.

Jesus will come upon the Mount of Olives and say, “See now that I, even I, am he” (Deut. 32:39). This conversation is very clearly enunciated in God’s Word. The defenders of Jerusalem will reply, “We have waited for thee,” and they will accept Him (Isa. 25:9). Then, they will look at His hands and say, “What are these wounds in thine hands?” And He will reply, “Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends” (Zech.13:6). Then God will pour out upon the defenders of Israel and upon the Jews all over the world who will be returning at that point, the spirit of grace and supplications, and they will weep with bitterness as one weepeth for the death of his only son (Zech.12:10, 14:4).

11:27 - *“For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”* God will remove their sins in a day, as it says in Zechariah 3:9, 13:1.

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11:28 - *“As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes.”* Israel's rejection of God has been used to bless us. It enabled God to bring revival to the Gentiles. The Church is going to experience the greatest revival the world has ever seen. She is going to be brought to fullness, to glory, to purity, and be without spot or wrinkle (Eph. 5:25-27). This is going to happen prior to Christ's appearing on Mount Olivet, prior to Israel's being turned back to God. Thus, presently they are enemies for our sakes.

“But as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.” This is something that God made very clear to my wife and me a number of years ago. We were in Jordan where we had seen a small revival and were so blessed. The anointing was so precious there. Then it was time for us to go to Israel. We crossed over the Allenby bridge and came to the custom booths. The customs soldiers were very abrupt and unfriendly. They started emptying out our suitcases, but when they said that my flashlight was a bomb, my sanctification level fell to an all-time low. That was enough for me. I said, “Bring an officer over here; this is a lot of nonsense.” I was very unhappy with the Israelis, and my thoughts for the moment were not sympathetic.

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However, when we came to the Mount of Olives and checked in at the motel that night, the presence of God came, and He started thundering these words in my heart, “I love Israel. I love Israel. I love Israel.” This is my point. Because of the election, they are loved. It is always wisdom to promptly agree with God when He speaks. Therefore, I said, “I love Israel too Lord.” Then the Lord started to show me the things that are going to happen to Israel in these last days. Some of them have since come to pass.

“But as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes.” Therefore, every nation that joins with Israel at this time will be blessed, because they come under the Abrahamic covenant. God said to Abraham, “They that bless thee, I will bless. They that curse thee, I will curse.” Every nation that is against Israel today will be cursed, because Israel (although it is in a state of rejection at this time) is beloved of God, because of election. Christ is going to turn them back to Himself. Why? (v29)

11:29 - *“For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”* The gifts and callings of God always remain. This means that God's ultimate purpose for Israel will be fulfilled. What God has

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predetermined for Israel will happen because of His foreknowledge. They will be mightily restored and blessed.

11:30 - *“For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief.”* Formerly, the Gentiles were disobedient and unbelieving, but now through Israel's disobedience, God has shown us His great salvation and mercy. We have been able to receive the gospel because they have rejected it.

11:31 - *“Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.”* Through the mercy of the Church, Israel will be restored. It is very interesting that every Christian nation seeks to help Israel. Billions of dollars a year are underwritten, principally by the United States. Israel could not survive without being underwritten by a coalition. This is an example of the Christians showing mercy to Israel, and truly we owe everything to Israel. They have given us the light.

11:32 - *“For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.”* God, in His graciousness, has allowed Israel to continue in its chosen path of unbelief that He might have mercy

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upon all the other nations of the world. Because of Israel's chosen path of unbelief, God could then turn to the Gentiles. However, His original calling remains upon Israel. Truly, Israel will be restored at the second coming of Christ.

However, we must be very careful on this point of Israel's restoration. There are all these teachings going around saying that Israel shall be restored, and Israel shall triumph. Yes, Israel shall be restored, but not until the Lord comes. Today they are in unbelief, and as a nation God has cast them off. There is no other way for Israel other than the way of faith. There are not two doors into heaven. There is only one door, and that is Christ (Jn.10:9).

Do not be more Jewish than the Jews. There are many Christians today who are trying to become Jews, rather than making the Jews, Christians. Remember, the Jews are under judgment. As a nation, they are out of the kingdom at the moment, not in.

11:33 - *“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”* God's ways are so much higher than our ways (Isa.

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55:8-9). The goodness of God is demonstrated in allowing Israel to continue in its chosen path of unbelief until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

11:34-35 - Paul says, *“For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?”* (cf. Isa. 40:13-14). Paul is saying, in other words, that all these things have been done through the good counsel of God, at the will of God—and who can tell God what to do?

11:36 - *“For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”* Paul finishes this position on the election of grace by saying that all things were created by God and for His good pleasure, as the Apostle John declares in Revelation 4:11. The more you study the Word of God, and the more God opens up His truth to you, the more you marvel and you cry out as in Revelation 4:11, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

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We were created and elected for God's good pleasure. For this reason we must be totally committed to God in everything we do. Oh, the goodness of God in grafting us into the root of Israel that we might be partakers of the blessings of Abraham.

Of Abraham He said, "I will make you the father of many nations." Therefore, of every nation father Abraham has children. We are the children of Israel, we are the children of Isaac, we are the children of Abraham. Let us thank God for His goodness in opening up our eyes to His truth, and to Himself. May we walk worthy of the grace that He has given to us. Amen.

Part Five

THE SERVICE OF GOD - 12:1-21

I. The Foundation of Service (12:1-3)

A. Personal Consecration

- a. The body - sanctified
- b. The mind - renewed (cf. Psa.1:2. Heb. 5:14)

B. The Humble Spirit (Phi. 2:3-8)

II. The Many-Membered Body (12:4-5) (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

III. The Gifts and Callings of God (12:6-8)

- A. Gifts - given by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.12:7-11)
- B. Callings, ministries - given by Christ (Eph. 4:11)

IV. The Exhortation to Serve with Love (12:9-21)

- A. To those within (12:9-13)
- B. To those without (12:14-21)

Chapter Twelve

12:1 - *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”* The word *beseech* is a very, very strong word in the original language. It is a word of desperation. It is used of a slave who is being beaten to death, and he is pleading with his master for mercy, to spare his life. Paul is using such a word to urge us to present our bodies *a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.*

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We have entitled this section, "The Service of God." In chapter nine, one of the privileges that Israel had and forfeited was that they should perform the service of God. This meant they had the privilege of being priests and kings.

In the Old Testament, the priests offered up sacrifices that had been ceremonially washed, but the sacrifices were the bodies of bulls and goats. In the New Testament we are not under Levitical law. Our priesthood does not come from Levi, but from Melchisedec. Our priesthood is a higher order. *We* become a sacrifice.

The Lord Jesus Christ was a priest after the order of Melchisedec. The sacrifice that Melchisedec offered up when he met Abraham in Genesis chapter fourteen, was bread and wine (Gen.14:17-20). The bread and wine is a type of the communion service; it was symbolic of offering the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was written of Christ in Hebrews 10:5, "A body thou hast prepared for me." Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ offered up His body. He presented His body a living sacrifice unto His Father.

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This thought is very important, because as the high priest offered up his body, so we should offer up our bodies. It is a total consecration, a total offering of ourself. The Apostle Paul cautions us that we are only able to accomplish this by the mercy of God. In Hebrews 9:14, Paul stated that Christ offered Himself [by the power of] the eternal Spirit to God. Christ was enveloped with the Holy Spirit, and through the power and mercy of the Holy Spirit He was enabled to offer up His body without spot unto God. It is only through the mercy of God that we can do likewise.

There is one point that we must be very clear on. Jesus Christ, as the Head of the body, the Head of the Church, offered Himself as a spotless sacrifice. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners (Heb. 7:26). As the Head was, so should be His Body. It is absolutely possible for us to become a spotless sacrifice, too. Paul gives ample proof of this—“And the very *God of peace* sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thes. 5:23). This is total sanctification.

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What, therefore, is our reasonable service? The service of God is the execution of the priestly office. The service of God is for a man or woman to be a priest who is made into a spotless sacrifice, who then also leads others unto a sanctified spirit, soul, and body.

The Apostle Peter says we are “to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2:5). This includes a living sacrifice of our bodies that are disciplined and free of moral impurity of any kind (1 Thes. 4:3).

The Lord Jesus Christ also brings out the theme of spiritual sacrifices when He says, “The true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” Therefore, by the mercies of God, we must present our whole spirit, soul, and body to Him, to offer up those spiritual sacrifices which are a sweet savor unto Him. From many verses throughout the Word of God, it is evident that we are to be as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God which is our reasonable service. This is the *norm* required of every child of God.

12:2 - *“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”* The Lord Jesus Christ was

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holy, harmless, and separate from sinners. There must be a separation from this world, and we must be transformed. This transformation starts with the renewing of our minds, through changed thinking. Our minds control our spiritual lives. Peter tells us to gird up the loins of our mind (1 Pet.I:13). The renewing of our mind is a very important truth, and Psalm one is most helpful on this subject. Let's read Psalm 1:1.

“Blessed is the man that *walketh* not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor *standeth* in the way of sinners, nor *sitteth* in the seat of the scornful.” Here is a man who is separate from sinners. This is the negative side. Verse two is the positive side. “But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psa.1:2). God promised not only to write His laws in our hearts, but also in our minds. We are transformed as the Word of God renews our minds. Remember, an idea produces a life-style, and it takes you somewhere. Thus, the importance of a changed mind.

We should examine our meditations to see whether they are pure, just, and of good report. Philippians 4:8 gives us eight ways to test our thought life. I once had a vision of a pathway into an ear. There were little demons at the end of the path but there were eight gates on the path that they had to pass

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through. We have to check our thoughts at each of these eight gates. If it gets through all eight gates it will become a part of us. These gates are in accordance to Philippians 4:8. The first gate is, “Whatsoever things are *true*.” Is the thought true. The second gate is, “Whatsoever things are *honest*,” and so on.

We need a seeking mind. We must set our affections and thoughts on things above (Col. 3:2). We must have a mind that we can set. The mind is like a search light. In Second Timothy 2:15, we are exhorted to study. “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” Therefore, it is not just meditating in the Word of God, but also studying God’s Word. Through study and exercising our spiritual senses (Heb. 5:14), we are able to rightly divide the Word of truth, and, by the grace of God, we are able to “*prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God.*”

Therefore, the whole of our bodies and our minds must be devoted to God. God is able to present us faultless as we become that living sacrifice. A *living sacrifice* offers up spiritual praises unto God, and our whole life should be a praise unto the Lord.

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12:3 - *“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”* In verse three, there is another step. Another prerequisite in the service of God is humility. One of the main reasons for disunity is pride. Everyone has a high opinion of himself. Humility is the key for unity.

I would like to think about a piano just for a moment. Piano keys represent a very beautiful truth concerning the service of God in the realm of humility. Each of these piano keys is able to give off a note, but the keys remain dormant and do absolutely nothing until the pianist sits down and strikes a note. That one note gives off its sound, and together with the other notes there is harmony. But how discordant it would be if every note suddenly played at once. It would be terrible. So it is with the Body of Christ.

The Body of Christ, at times, is very discordant because everyone is trying to do something at the same time. How essential it is to know our place and be led by the Spirit in order that there can be perfect harmony. This is what the Apostle Paul is going to develop in verse four. We are members of

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one Body, and God's people must have the humility to wait until God desires to move upon each of us. Otherwise we will have chaos.

12:4-5 - *“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”* (Cf. 1 Cor.12:14-31). Therefore, we need one another. In the natural, it is essential that every part of our human body be controlled by the mind, or by the head. There are bodies, unfortunately, that are not controlled by the head. When we were in South Africa the Lord gave my wife a vision of a spastic child. A spastic child has plenty of movement in his members, but they are not controlled by the mind. The result is that there is much activity, but nothing is accomplished.

As corporate members of the Body of Christ, we have purposed to accomplish the will of God upon the earth. This is only possible as we are under the control of the mind of Christ. We must move in unison according to His mind, not ours. We understand this truth from the human body. We cannot have one leg deciding to go to the right, and the other to the left. One leg cannot be going forward

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and the other going backward. The body would get nowhere. The members must be controlled by the mind.

In giving this vision of the spastic child to my wife, the Lord said, “This is like My Church at the moment. There is plenty of activity, but no productivity. ” We must be very careful that we are under the control of the Holy Spirit, so that we are *productive* and not just active. God said to my wife, “Activity is not productivity.”

Another important point about the human body which the Apostle Paul emphasizes in First Corinthians chapter twelve, is that every member has its own particular function. Not every member has the same office. The eye is able to see, as Paul brings out in First Corinthians 12:17, but it is not able to hear. If the whole body were an eye, and every member could only see, the body would not be very useful. Every member is needed. Some of the most important members in the body are not even seen—they are covered.

It is very important that we know who we are in the Body of Christ. We must know our ministry, and we must know our place. It is essential that we do not try to be something we are not. Every member

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has an important function in the Body of Christ. The all-important thing is that each member functions in his own office. What is true of the human body is true also of the Body of Christ. For the Body to be edified, each member must perform his own special function.

A mother and father had two sons. The boys were given assignments as the parents went off to town. One boy was told to make the beds; the other boy was to clean up the leaves in the garden. The second boy, who was supposed to clean up the leaves, helped the other boy make the beds. The parents rewarded the first son for making the beds. The other boy was given no reward, because he was not asked to make the beds, but to rake the leaves. Spiritually it is the same. God will not reward us for doing the task of someone else. Let us be sure we are fulfilling *our own work*.

Also, we must learn to have acceptance of ourselves. God has made us and chosen us to be what we are. He has given each of us certain abilities. In creation there is no similarity between a bird and a deer. Oranges and potatoes have nothing in common. God, in His infinite wisdom, has made variety. The problem in the Church is *self-acceptance*. People look at others and want to be like them. Let us flow in what God has ordained for our lives and not try to be like anyone else.

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In verse six Paul lists some of the various aspects of the offices and functions of the Body of Christ. First of all he speaks on the gifts of the Spirit.

12:6 - *“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith.”* Paul brings out in First Corinthians chapter fourteen, that we should all seek to have a flow of prophecy. Yet, when you have the gift of prophecy, there is an instantaneous impartation and also a progressive development of that gift. Prophecy is developed according to faith. As faith increases, so does the quality and depth of prophecy increase.

We have to seek God and wait upon Him so that the gift of prophecy is developed. With a depth of prophecy, people's hearts are revealed as it says in First Corinthians 14:22-25, and they will declare that God is truly in your midst.

12:7 - *“Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching.”* It is our responsibility to wait upon God and study in order to fulfill the ministry God has given us. We have to spend time in the presence of God to develop our ministry. Beginning a ministry is like being born. We are born as an infant, but then we have to grow and develop. Likewise, in the realm of ministry we

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must develop. Our objective is to grow into maturity; for we do not want to remain in the childhood stage of ministry.

“Or he that teacheth, on teaching.” Teaching is one of the most difficult ministries, because it takes the longest to develop. A teacher must be studying constantly. An evangelist might get away with ten sermons, assuming he only stays ten nights in a certain place, but a teacher could never get away with that. In my own life, I have to study virtually every day because there is so much to learn.

Our teacher is the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ said the Spirit would lead us into all truth. “For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:10). This is the thought of a *progressive searching*. The Holy Spirit is progressively searching out the things that belong to God to reveal them unto us. Christ promised that the Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth. Yet, Ephesians 2:7 suggests that we will need all eternity to understand the truth of God. Paul says, “In the ages to come” God will be unfolding the riches of His grace unto the saints.

Daniel prophesied of our days, saying, “Knowledge shall increase.” Knowledge is taking staggering leaps today. When I went to school, I was taught that the atom is the smallest indivisible part of

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nature. When we were asked that question in the examination, that is what I had to write. Now the atom has been split. I saw the first generation of computers. When I started out, they literally filled the whole room, and it took ages to do one mathematical equation. Today we have computers that are very, very tiny, yet they can do the work far more rapidly.

The Apostle Paul said, “First the natural, then the spiritual.” In the natural life, we have to study constantly. For example, in the field of computers you constantly have to upgrade your knowledge in that realm. In the realm of the Spirit, it is just the same. The man who understands computers is the one who has *applied himself* to the study of electronics and computerization.

It is the same in the spiritual, for David says, “In thy light, we shall see light.” As we apply our hearts to the study of the Word of God, we shall increase in understanding, and more and more knowledge shall be given unto us. The Lord Jesus Christ made this very clear. The laws of the kingdom of God are enunciated in His parables. He said, “To him that hath shall more be given.”

The more you study a certain science, the more your mind is enlarged, and the more your mind is capable of fathoming the depths of that particular discipline of study. This is true also in the realm of

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the Spirit. In whatever discipline of the Spirit we apply ourselves, that area is developed. If we give ourselves to prophecy, prophecy is enlarged and developed in our lives. By practicing speaking in tongues, more languages are given. In exercising the gift of healing, there is a greater release of healing. So it is in teaching. "To him that hath, shall more be given." If we use what God has given to us, He will give us more.

In the realm of teaching, the prophet Moses brought out a very important point in Deuteronomy 29:29. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever." There are some areas of knowledge where God has set limits. This is the reason King David adapted an attitude of humility, saying, "I do not exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me." There are some things that God does not want us to know. Paul said that when he was in the third heaven he saw things that were not lawful for him to utter upon earth. God has limited our knowledge, to an extent, upon earth. However, we certainly have not exhausted the knowledge that God has made available to us upon earth.

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When you go to heaven there is a constant learning, a constant increasing of your knowledge of God. Thus, we are never going to “know it all.” In fact, the more we know, the more we realize we do not know. I was passing through Singapore a couple of years ago, and I had to have my suitcases inspected by a girl who was a customs official. When she had to lift one of my suitcases up to the desk and she could hardly move it, she asked, “Whatever do you have in there?” I said, “These are my books.” She looked at my white hair and she said, “What? You are still studying at your age?” And I replied, “Oh yes, and for ever and ever.”

12:8 - “*Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation.*” The word *exhort* means “encourage.” Here is a wonderful ministry—to encourage others. This ministry is the same as the Holy Spirit's ministry. He is a Comforter and Encourager of God's people. We have to wait on that ministry to develop it.

“*He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity.*” The Apostle Paul offers a spiritual law about giving in Second Corinthians 8:5. The churches of Macedonia in Greece had given and sacrificed out of their poverty. Paul said they “first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.” First they gave themselves to God, and then to the ministry from whom they were nourished.

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Here are three steps in giving which are pleasing to God. We first have to give ourselves unto God, joyfully and cheerfully, because God loves a cheerful giver. Secondly, we should give ourselves to our pastor and local church. Thirdly, our offering of money should be channeled through our local church to the mission field or work to which God has indicated. These three steps are very important for offering up a sacrifice that is agreeable to God in the realm of giving. We are to do it with *simplicity* or guilelessness, not letting the right hand know what the left hand is doing.

“He that ruleth, with diligence.” “Rule” means administration. King David said at the end of his life, “The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God” (2 Sam. 23:2-3). A shepherd has to know the state of his flock. A pastor must diligently find out how all of his people are doing. He must organize his church into groups so that everyone is looked after and accounted for.

“He that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.” Mercy is not only in the realm of forgiveness. More than that, it is always associated with good works. Sometimes in a church, we are constantly helping one

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particular person who is sick all the time, or one who is down all the time, or one who is in need all the time, but we have to do it with *cheerfulness*. God wants a sacrifice with joy.

12:9 - *“Let love be without dissimulation [without partiality]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.”* Love and hate go together. If we love God, we must hate evil. We must separate ourselves from everything that is evil. (See Psalm 45:7).

12:10 - *“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.”* It is so important for there to be an atmosphere of love in our churches. When people come into the church they need to feel that they are loved, that they are wanted, and that they are at home.

“In honour preferring one another.” Let us learn to give place to others, and esteem others better than ourselves (Phil.2:3). Not only is this a remedy for envy, it is also a key for unity. Let us give way to others. For example, we should make room for others to prophesy. We do not have to do it all the time. Let us prefer others.

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Obviously, we can overdo anything. I remember a certain convention for foreign missions secretaries. There were fifty of us walking down a pathway, and at the end of the pathway there was a door. It was very amusing, the first one there opened the door and beckoned the other one in. The other one stood on the other side and beckoned the third one in. The third one stood on the other side and beckoned the fourth one in. And no one could go through that door. They were all pastors, and everyone was geared to letting someone else go before himself. Finally, we came to the conclusion that someone had to go in. The shepherds are accustomed to getting the sheep to go in first. That can be overdone at times, but that is the heart of a pastor. He prefers and honors others before himself.

12:11 - *“Not slothful in business.”* There is business attached to the church. Therefore, we need to have good businessmen in the church, and we need to have good administrators. A lot of hard work is required so that all the books are up-to-date and the budget is set forth in an orderly fashion, so that the pastor just has to have a look and he can see the bottom line and make the decisions.

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Ministers waste a lot of time. A pastor should block off his whole morning to spend time with God. Unless he spends time with God, he will find that when he comes to the pulpit he has nothing from God for the people. God must take priority. The purpose of spending time with God is to hear what God wants to say to the people. A pastor should not give his mornings away. He should try to get up early in the mornings and spend that first time in devotion to God. Then when He speaks, things are accomplished. A minister should have a *time block* for God. He must come from God to the people. He must not sit in his office and daydream.

If you have a small church and you have to work, be diligent at work. Do not run about after people. Have a well-disciplined church. The deacons can take care of the people's physical needs; the elders can take care of their spiritual needs. The pastor must take care of the questions no one else can answer.

“Fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.” Our spirits must not be like the Ephesians. The Ephesians were busy doing everything, but they had left their first love (Rev. 2:2-4). We must be fervent in spirit toward the Lord, serving the Lord.

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12:12 - *“Rejoicing in hope.”* Hope creates a rejoicing spirit. Therefore, we should rehearse often to ourselves those things for which the Lord has caused us to hope. This will produce joy within our souls. Let us cry out to God for endurance in trials so that we can pass through them triumphantly. When patience has done its perfect work, we will be perfect and entire, lacking nothing.

We must always maintain a rejoicing spirit. We must always have hope of something down the road. Hope comes through obtaining promises. We must be a people who are constantly obtaining promises from God. In looking back at what God has already done, we have a bright hope of future promises being fulfilled.

“Patient in tribulation.” This means a tranquil spirit, accepting tribulation in a peaceful way.

“Continuing instant in prayer.” Charles Spurgeon was once asked, “Pastor Spurgeon, how long do you pray?” He said, “I don’t pray any longer than ten minutes, but ten minutes doesn’t pass until I am praying again.” Our spiritual life depends upon a continual life of prayer. Whatever we are doing, our spirits should be in communication with God, praying and worshipping Him.

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12:13 - *“Distributing to the necessity of [the] saints.”* It is so important to understand that the early Church considered meeting the needs of the poor one of its greatest duties and ministries.

“Given to hospitality.” We should pray, “O Lord, let me have an extra room in the house, or an extra room in the church, so that we can always have open arms to receive those who are passing by or have need of shelter.” Peter tells us to show hospitality *without grudging* (1 Pet. 4:9). Hospitality should be done cheerfully.

12:14 - *“Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.”* This should be our attitude toward those that persecute us. Jesus said, “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Mt. 5:10-12).

Maintaining this attitude when we are persecuted and slandered does something good in us. Right attitudes in the midst of adversity produce a rejoicing spirit. Our hearts are filled with thankfulness and

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we have a bubbling heart. It causes us to forget what people have said against us, and it lifts us up higher in the kingdom. Let us, therefore, have the right attitudes.

Let us be triumphant over our enemies by blessing them. They are used by God to perfect us. Thus, we should be grateful for them.

12:15 - *“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.”* Paul tells us to encourage everyone on whatever plateau they are presently dwelling. If someone is in a place of rejoicing, we should encourage them and help the fire burn more brightly and rejoice with them. For example, when someone is going to get married, everyone rushes around them and rejoices with them. It also says, *“weep with them that weep.”* We should stand beside those who are going through dark valleys by being a holy mourner with them. However, we can only show them comfort to the extent we have received comfort and consolation from God in our own lives. God puts us through painful situations that we might draw on the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Then with that comfort we are able to comfort others (2 Cor.1:3-4).

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12:16 - *“Be of the same mind one toward another.”* It is very important for everyone to have the mind of Christ. Every man cannot go each in his own direction. We are a body and we must have the same vision and the same mind. This applies in the home, too. In many homes, the husbands and wives are in conflict with one another. The husband says one thing and the wife contradicts; or the wife says one thing and the husband contradicts. We just cannot live like that. When my wife and I have to make decisions, if we are not in agreement, then we go to the Lord and we pray until the three of us are in unity. Even though the husband is the head of the home, there is always the possibility that the husband could be wrong and the wife could be right.

“Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.” We must remember that God can speak through anyone. Therefore, we must possess spiritual condescension to listen to those who are of low estate. Paul exhorts, *“Be not wise in your own conceits.”* Remember, God spoke through an ass and Balaam did not listen.

12:17 - *“Recompense to no man evil for evil. [cf. Prov. 24:29] Provide things honest in the sight of all men.”* If people do evil to us, we must not respond in the same manner. We must always do good to

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every person. God has dealt with me time and time again on this point. When someone comes before me, I must only think of the ultimate goodness of that person.

“Provide things honest in the sight of all men.” Not only must we be honest in the sight of God, but everything has to be right in the sight of men, too.

12:18 - *“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”* Paul exhorts us in Hebrews 12:14 to follow peace, and to pursue it. In Ephesians 4:2-3, he repeats this same thought. *“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”* Paul is saying that with all the strength that lies within us, we should seek to be at peace with all men. This requires effort.

12:19 - *“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”* When enemies rise up against us, those around us say, “Why don’t you do something?” But no, we must not. It is God's prerogative alone to take vengeance.

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12:20 - *“Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.”* Always return good for evil. Major on goodness. When we show goodness it opens up the way for God to deal with them.

12:21 - *“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”* What is the key to being victorious when people are coming against us?—The key is to do good to them. Truly, the service of God involves a body and mind that are wholly consecrated to God. It is to be a priest, to be a living sacrifice after the order of Melchisedec.

Part Six

THE KINGDOM OF GOD - 13:1 - 14:23

I. The Command to Honor Authority 13:1-7

- A. The State—a divinely ordained institution 13:1-2
- B. Its ministry of justice 13:3-4 (cf. 1 Pet. 2:14, Tit. 3:1)
- C. Submission to it for conscience sake 13:5-7

II. Loving Uprightness (a manner of life) 13:8-10

- A. Paying debts 13:8

B. Commandments toward our fellow man 13:9

C. The command to love fulfilling the law 13:10 (cf. Mt. 22:40)

III. Preparing for the King's Soon Return 13:11-14

A. Knowing the time 13:11

B. Casting off sins 13:12 (cf. Col. 3:8)

C. Putting on the armor (cf. Eph. 6:12)

D. Walking honestly 13:13 (Mt. 24:49, Prov. 29:18)

E. What to “put on” 13:14 (cf. Col. 3:10-15)

F. What to “put off” (the lusts of the flesh, Col. 3:5-9)

IV. Problems Between Strong and Weak Believers 14:1-16

A. Warnings against judging and using one's knowledge to offend a weaker brother 14:1-14 (cf. 1 Cor. 8:9)

B. Plea to walk charitably 14:15-16 (cf. 1 Cor. 10:23-31)

V. The Fruits of the Kingdom 14:17-23

Righteousness, peace, joy, and faith

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Chapter Thirteen

The theme of Romans chapter thirteen and fourteen is, “The Kingdom of God.” First of all, Paul introduces us to our obligations to the state. We are taught to honor all authorities. We must recognize that God puts up the rulers in every nation. Ministers must honor whoever is in power, and this applies to every president.

13:1 - *“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.”* Therefore, in any state, we must conclude from Romans 13:1, that it is God who places into positions of authority the people of His choosing. God is sovereign and always has the final word on everything.

King Nebuchadnezzar's heart was full of pride. He thought that his power and glory originated from within himself (Dan. 4:30). God humiliated Nebuchadnezzar by turning him into an animal for seven years. He was deposed of his royal throne and became like the beasts of the field for seven years until he understood something. Nebuchadnezzar learned that the most High ruleth in the kingdoms of

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men, and that he gives it to whosoever he will, and sets up over it the basest of men (Dan. 4:17, 25, 32, 37). The basest of men, he learned, was himself.

When the Apostle Paul was writing this epistle to the Church at Rome, there were emperors on the throne. In fact, out of the first ten or eleven emperors, only one was *not* a homosexual. They were the vilest of men. At the time of the writing of this epistle, Nero was the emperor. Yet the Apostle Paul (reiterating what the holy watchers decreed in Daniel) stated clearly that it is God who chooses all the leaders of this world. We think in a democracy, that it is our vote that chooses, but it is God Who determines which man will be in office.

When God wants it to change course, He changes the administration. This does not necessarily mean that He puts in a better man, because Daniel 4:17 says, “He raises up the basest of men.”

As we study the history of Israel, we find that God gave them *Jeroboam* as their first king. He was the worst of all the kings. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, was the first king of the ten rebellious tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel. God said to him, “I have lifted you up.” In His wisdom, God places into power the ones of His choice, for His purpose, and for what He wants to accomplish. The awesome

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thing is this, people get the rulers they deserve. *A head of state is indicative of the condition of the people.*

A number of years ago we were in California. We had just come back from Africa. While we were in Sacramento, God gave me a vision at night. Before I was to speak at a conference, I saw a dark cloud over Sacramento, and the dark cloud was filled with demons. I understood in the vision that these demons were about to be unleashed upon the state of California. I did not know what had happened, but then I was told that the governor had just signed a declaration permitting homosexuality. Actually, he had released that spirit throughout the state. What do you think will happen in America now that the president has signed a proclamation allowing homosexuality in the armed services?

The one in authority has the power to release the Spirit of God for good, or the spirit of Satan for evil. God gave me a message that night and I declared it in Sacramento. He said, "The governor is reprehensible and answerable to Me for what he has done." Rulers have greater condemnation if they do evil than the other people. Yet, we have to respect them because of their position.

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Paul said, "There is no power but of God." (See Psalm 47:8.) Over some countries there is an evil ruler (Lk. 4:5-6), but above that there is the throne of God. God is in control.

Many years ago I wanted to have a visa to a communist country, but I was refused. Coming out of the embassy, the Lord showed the dark power that was ruling the country, but above it was the throne of God. God then said, "Appeal to my throne." I did so. Then he told me to go to another consulate, and I was given the visa. Praise the Lord, our God reigns.

God controls leaders. He has authority over all the evil spirits. His throne is above everything. Therefore, because God is over all, we must submit to authorities. In doing so, we are submitting to God. The Apostle Peter said to "honour the king," and yet the emperor at that time was a very wicked man.

The sole exception to this rule is when the ordinance of man contravenes the Word of God. Again, our example is taken from Daniel, who disobeyed the king's commandment not to pray. He openly prayed to God against the king's ordinance.

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13:2 - *“Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves [condemnation].”* This must be clearly understood. We have to obey the laws of the country or state. Yet, as Daniel brought out, when the law of man transgresses the law of God, we are to obey the higher law.

Darius the king signed a declaration forbidding any to make prayer or petition to any god. The motive of the promoters of this legislation was to imprison Daniel and throw him to the lions' den. When Daniel heard that prayer was forbidden to be offered up, he openly prayed toward Jerusalem, declaring his faith. The law of God comes before the law of man. Still, we are to uphold the laws of the country, provided they do not negate the ordinances of God. *“Whoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves [condemnation].”*

13:3 - *“For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.”* It is an interesting fact that

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even people who are evil respect the good down deep inside. Even the demons, who have given themselves over to evil, nonetheless respect good and righteous men.

13:4 - *“For he is the minister of God to thee for good, But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.”* Therefore, we have to obey the laws of the nation.

13:5 - *“Wherefore, ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.”* I would like to make reference to what the Apostle Peter says about this. In First Peter chapter two, he speaks quite extensively of the realm of authority. The Apostle Peter repeats the theme of Paul, saying; “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Pet. 2:13-15).

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The Church must obey the laws of the nation. Nero was the emperor at the time Peter wrote his first epistle, and Peter says to “Honour the king” (1 Pet. 2:17). Thus, it is very clear that we should not speak evil of rulers. Instead, we should pray for them.

“Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.” Our conscience can only remain clear as we keep the laws of the nation. In some nations the laws are different than in other nations. For example, in America one drives on the right side of the road and in England, on the left side. Obviously, you have to obey the rules or a calamity will occur.

It is important to understand that we must obey the laws of each particular nation. It is often very confusing as we travel from nation to nation, because what is legal in one nation is not legal in another nation. Especially in the areas of finance, it is very conflicting and confusing. Yet, we have to obey the particular laws of each nation.

13:6 - *“For this cause, pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.”* In other words, we must pay our taxes. Even Jesus paid taxes (Mt. 22:21).

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13:7 - *“Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.”* We are commanded to honor *the position* that leaders occupy.

13:8 - *“Owe no man anything.”* This is something Christians must learn. The world is filled with little “plastic cards,” and they encourage people to run up huge debts. It is wrong to be in debt unless God is passing us through a trial. In some cases, God does pass us through trials, and we have to trust Him. As a principle, however, we should stay out of debt. Debts are like millstones around our neck. Churches and fellowships must seek the Lord to be out of debt, because debts have a tremendous impact upon the spiritual life. Churches with heavy debts have a dark cloud over them. So often, all that is preached from their pulpits is—give, give, give.

I believe that we can come to that place in God where there is a free flow of finance when we need it. Whenever God says to do something, though we may not have it presently, as we obey Him, He supplies the finance. Our organization bought this land and buildings with virtually nothing. We did not

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have anything at the time, but God said, “Sign.” Since then we have had the money for every payment. Then God paid everything off in a year.

Before we entered that year, God told me to build additions, even when the main building was not yet paid for. That was another hundred thousand dollars. Had I not obeyed God first, He would not have provided the finance. We finished the new building, and then God paid everything. Sometimes we face tests of faith. Yet we must be very careful that we have heard from God correctly.

“Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” In the negative, we are to stay out of debt. In the positive, we should love one another. He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. Paul is going to develop an important truth in verse nine on *real* love.

13:9 - *“For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”*

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It is clear that Christ and all the New Testament writers upheld the ten commandments (Mt.19:16-19). The first four concern our duty towards God; the last six involve our duty to our neighbor. Paul says that it is all comprehended in this one saying—“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” All the commandments explain love.

13:10 - *“Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”* Love gives no offense. The Apostle John said, “he that loveth is not a stumblingblock to his neighbor.” Some people take this too far and say, “Love covers everything.” But real love does not commit adultery, steal, kill, lie, covet, or bear false witness. All of these are hate. Real love is defined by Paul in First Corinthians 13. Of the fifteen points Paul uses to describe love, *eight* are negative points, and *seven* are positive. Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments.”

13:11 - *“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep.”* (cf. Eph. 5:14-17, 1 Thes. 5:6-8.) It is easy to live in a stupor and be dulled to what is going on all around us. We must shake off nonessentials, and major in true love.

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I would like to commend unto you Ephesians 3:17-19. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded *in love*." We must seek to be rooted and grounded *in love*, that everything we do comes forth out of the motive of love. Paul continues in verse eighteen, "...may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the *love* of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." Growing in divine love is the key to being filled with the fullness of God. Love is the bond of perfectness (Col. 3:14).

"For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." "Today is the first day of the rest of your life." We have all heard that saying here in America. How many of us know how long we have to live? There are many seemingly healthy people who have died at a very young age. Life is like a race. In the Olympics, there are races of various lengths. There is the 100-meter, which is very short. You have to give everything you have to run that race. The next one is the 400-meter; you have to pace yourself, but it is a short race. Then there is the 1,500-meter. There you have to pace yourself, but it is still relatively short and it is finished in quite a short time. Then there is the mile. A mile is a fair

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distance, but in this generation it is over in less than four minutes. Then there is the grueling marathon of twenty-six miles.

These are like the races of life. For some of us, our life's race might be very short. We had such a Bible school student in Switzerland, just twenty-two years of age, whose race was short. She had a call to the mission field, and then she became critically ill. Then God gave me a vision of her clothed in white. We took her to the doctor where she was diagnosed with Leukemia. Shortly after, God took her home. At just twenty-two years of age God took her home and someone else took her call. Looking at the obituaries, to my amazement many are relatively young at death. We do not know how long we have left upon this earth. Therefore, we must make the most of our time and opportunities.

13:12 - *“The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.”* Before the Lord comes, the Church has much to do, and there is not much time left in this dispensation. Revival must come to the Church in order for her to be brought into maturity and into glory. The Church must perform “greater works” than did the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn.14:12).

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In some countries trains are running at over 150 miles per hour. Airliners are going over 600 miles per hour. Everything has increased in speed, and this is because we are in the last days. Daniel says that people will “run to and fro.” If *rapidness of movement* in the natural is a hallmark of the last days, then spiritually the Church needs to start moving.

“Let us put on the armour of light.” We must remember that until Jesus comes there will always be a tremendous battle between principalities and powers in heavenly places. Therefore, we will always need to wear the armor of God that is laid out for us in Ephesians 6:12-17. Our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. “Wherefore take unto you *the whole armour of God*, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

So many people give up because of the tremendous pressures and temptations. I can look back over my forty years of ministry and think of numerous friends in the ministry, and in the churches, who have started off so well, but many of them have fallen. Our churches would be overflowing today if everyone who was born again stayed in the race. So many have heard the gospel; they responded

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when they were younger. But now they are in their thirties, forties, fifties, sixties, and seventies, and they are hardened, out of fellowship with God, and on their way to judgment.

So many start well, but few finish the race. There are many casualties. Therefore, we have to put on the whole armor of God so that we can stand. The armor is listed in Ephesians 6:14-17. Paul mentions the importance of truth, that we should have our loins girt about with truth. David said God desires truth in the inward parts. May I plead with you not just to study the Word, but to let the truth and the wisdom of God get into your innermost being so that it becomes a part of you. It is then that you will stand.

13:13 - *“Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.”* We might say, “Those things are in the world.” Yes, but they are also in the Church. How often do we find church members living like the devil for six days and then trying to live like a saint on Sunday? What about “strife and envying”? Is there strife and envying in our home, or drunkenness? I have known many preachers who have succumbed to drunkenness. I

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am not condemning them; I am just stating a fact. We would do well to remember the words of Saint Augustine who said, “Abstinence is easier than temperance.” The key is not to touch it.

13:14 - *“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.”* (Col. 3:12). Here is the thought of being clothed upon with Christ. This is the way to live—feeling Him around us and over us. *“And make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”* Many people walk with God for a time and then fail. They are like Solomon, who gave his heart to every pleasure and at the end of his life was a dismal old man filled with bitterness, grief, and anguish.

John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* has become the second best-selling book in the world next to the Bible. Bunyan was given a remarkable series of visions depicting the earthly walk of a believer.

In those visions, the interpreter showed him things that were very important for him to understand as he started his new life as a Christian. The interpreter took him into one room and in that room he saw an iron cage. In the iron cage there was a young man, and John Bunyan turned to the interpreter and asked, “What does this mean?” The interpreter replied, “Ask him, he will tell you.”

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Bunyan enquired, "Sir, why are you in this iron cage? Why are you so miserable?" The young man in the iron cage replied thusly:

"Once I was an ardent witness for Jesus Christ and I believed that my eternity was going to be filled with rich rewards. Others around me commended me and also felt that I would have great rewards in heaven for my life and my witnessing. But, I became slack. I did not pay attention. I allowed little things, little sins to get ahold of me. I indulged in little things and eventually they became big things and they overcame me. I became a sinner and I did not get back to the Lord before I died."

Oh, how we must remember this! How we must embrace the cross and cry out for hunger and thirst for righteousness all the days of our life. We must not indulge in pleasures of this world.

Neither must we tempt the devil. If we do not separate ourselves from evildoers, they will bring us down, and we will lose that great reward that God has for us. These are the admonitions of Paul in chapter thirteen.

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Chapter Fourteen

Chapter fourteen continues our theme of the kingdom of God. In this chapter there are very important truths that we have to look at carefully. Perhaps we might sum them up by saying that they concern one's personal beliefs or convictions about food. This chapter concerns what one might eat, and what one cannot eat. Paul starts off in verse one saying:

14:1 - *“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.”* There are some things that do not greatly interfere with our faith in Jesus Christ, but can become stumblingblocks if we are not careful. Do not get into arguments about foods and drinks because weak believers could be destroyed.

One of the problems in the time of the Apostle Paul was food sacrificed to idols. The question arises, can we eat what is sacrificed to the idols? First Corinthians 8:1-13 goes along with this. In countries like Thailand and India, everything has been offered to idols. Paul tells us that the earth is the Lord's and that prayer over the food in His name sanctifies it.

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14:2 - *“For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.”* Paul recognizes there are differing beliefs in the area of foods. Some people eat herbs because they think it is more healthy than eating meat. Some meats, such as pork, are not that good for you. Others only eat herbs because of a belief that they are pleasing God by not eating meat (1 Cor.10:23-24).

14:3 - *“Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.”* Some believe you should not eat meat, some believe you can eat meat. Paul is not giving an opinion here. He is telling us how to deal with people of differing beliefs. Whenever one occupies himself with *do*'s and *do not*'s on nonessentials instead of the real doctrines of Christ, it produces criticism, judging, despising, and spiritual pride. When one cumbers himself with a *do* or a *do not*, then the law genders sin; it works wrath. The great danger is that when we deny ourselves something, we must be very careful that it is God who is requiring it. If is not God, we can get into criticism, bitterness, jealousy, hypocrisy, and a hardened heart.

14:4 - *“Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.”* Paul is dealing with the question of

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judging one another. Paul does not want us to get into the rut of judging. Being judgmental is sin. We must remember that with Christians, everyone is a servant of God. It is God's responsibility to deal with His servants, not ours. It is God Who is able to cause him to stand.

14:5 - *“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.”* Paul is now making reference to the observance of days. He is giving a lot of latitude here. Remember, Paul is the teacher of the Church and this word is inspired by God. Some believe in keeping Saturday as the sabbath day. This is in regard to the fourth commandment which says, “Remember the sabbath day.”

14:6 - *“He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.”* In verse six, the Apostle Paul does not contend or argue about which day to observe. Some feel perfectly free in not keeping Saturday as the sabbath because they feel that Sunday is the Lord's day. Sunday is observed by most because it was the morning of the Savior's resurrection. Others, however, have different opinions. Surely, the important thing is that our relationship with the Lord is not marred because of those beliefs.

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Concerning foods, Paul continues, *“He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.”* It is a question of individual conscience here. Some feel that they should not eat a particular thing, others feel that they are free to eat everything. Paul is saying, “It is a matter of personal conscience. In each case they are giving thanks to the Lord.”

We should never go against our conscience at any time, for that would be sin. We should not be overly concerned about food and drink because the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The only foods forbidden are blood, and things that die of themselves (Acts 15:20).

14:7 - *“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.”* This is where we have to be careful. Our own beliefs have an impact on other people. We have to be careful that what we believe, or what we do not believe, does not stumble or offend another Christian brother.

Obviously, our lives have an impact on people. It is estimated conservatively that a pastor in his lifetime will have an impact on 10,000 people. Even in a remote area, his influence is far greater than people realize. His influence is like a pebble that is dropped into a lake, and there is virtually no end

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to the ripples. A minister's judgments and decisions will have an influence on far more people than those he addresses in his sermons.

14:8 - *“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.”* While we are living on this earth we belong to God; and when we die we belong to the Lord.

14:9 - *“For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.”* Whatever state we are in, whether in heaven or upon earth, we should be enveloped and clothed upon with the Lord Jesus Christ, and live unto Him.

14:10 - *“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”* (cf. 2 Cor. 5:10.) Paul is saying that it is very unwise to get into these vain janglings, because they are going to engender strife.

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14:11-12 - *“For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”* Everyone has to give an account of his own actions to the Lord.

14:13 - *“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.”* Therefore, our conduct concerning the observance of days and our conduct regarding foods should be governed not so much by what we believe, but by what *another* believes.

14:14 - *“I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself.”* Paul is referring to foods. Spiritually, Paul had broken through to the point where he could say, “God created everything, and if I return thanks to God, then whatever I eat is sanctified and blessed by Him.”

This was a real problem in the New Testament Church because those things that were sold in the marketplaces were offered up to idols. The question was and is, “Can one eat those things that have been offered up to idols?” When you go to some countries, you have to blow away the incense before you can get into the restaurant because all the food has been offered up to idols. Are we going to say,

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“This has been offered up to an idol, therefore, I cannot eat it.” Paul addresses this issue clearly. “As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God” (1 Cor. 8:4-6). Paul takes all focus off idols, and brings it to God.

Paul is saying, whether we eat it or don't eat it, it does not make us any better before God. But if there is a brother present who knows that the food has been offered up to an idol and would be offended if we ate it, then we should not eat it. Really, in some countries you would starve if you did not eat things that were offered up to idols. So what do you do? You simply pray over the food and sanctify it unto the true and living God. At that moment the food has been cleansed in the eyes of God and man.

“For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?” (1 Cor. 8:10-11).

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If we partake of this food knowing it is right, and a weak brother feels that it is not right, and eats, believing it is wrong, then we have damaged his conscience. We must be very careful to avoid this. This is what Paul is developing in Romans 14:14. "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Paul is saying, according to your faith, be it unto you. If you believe that you should not eat something and then you go and eat it, then it is sin.

14:15 - *"But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died."* Suppose you were in a certain restaurant with a brother who does not believe that you should eat a certain food. Perhaps you feel perfectly free to eat it. You are free before God, but you are not free before your brother. You would destroy him by your actions. In certain situations we might feel perfectly free before God to do something, but it would offend someone else. Thus, we must be charitable and considerate of our brethren.

I want to explain to what degree this can go. I have a fountain pen. If I put this fountain pen in my *outside* pocket and I went to a certain country, I would offend people because they feel that is not

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holy. They believe we should always have our pens in our *inside* pockets. I am fully persuaded that putting my fountain pen on the outside does not change my relationship with God. I have perfect liberty before God to wear my pen like that. It certainly does not affect my conscience; and it certainly does not affect my standing before God. I don't feel anything different in the Spirit whether I put my pen outside or inside. But in some countries if I put it outside, I would be declared unholy in the eyes of some. Where, then, do I put it? On the inside.

It is an especially exciting situation for the ladies when they travel. In one church they believe that ladies should dress a certain way. Holiness always revolves around what the women wear you know! It is quite a performance for the ladies. I cannot go into it all because it gets so complicated. In some areas the women have to wear certain clothes and if they do, they are considered holy. When you go to the next church, they have a different dress code. It is all outward ordinances. But if you do not adjust your dress for each church, you are going to offend them. It is very important that you do what they want you to do.

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In some countries, you are not supposed to wear shoes when you preach. I find that very difficult because my feet ache if I stand for any great length of time with bare feet trying to preach.

I have to preach with aching feet because if I preach with my shoes on then I am going to offend everyone. Others insist that everyone must put his shoes outside the church, and there is a whole pile of shoes outside the church.

Can you see my point? If we do not conform to what others believe, we offend them and we hurt their conscience. They are tempted to do what we do, but they do not believe what we believe, and therefore we are grieving those for whom Christ died. In fact, the Apostle Paul even goes so far as to say in verse fifteen that we could destroy another by our “freedom.”

14:15 - *“But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.”* If I wore shoes in some of these churches, I would actually be destroying some of the younger Christians. Likewise, by eating I would do the same. In some countries they think nothing of eating ice cream on a Sunday, but in another country you have broken all their rules and regulations and have almost committed sacrilege. So you have to find out when you

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can and when you cannot eat ice cream. I am presenting these things because, though it may seem silly, it is very solemn, because you can destroy the faith of a brother or sister.

14:16 - *“Let not then your good be evil spoken of.”* Believing that you can eat what you want on Sunday is fine. But, if you go to a place where they believe that you cannot eat certain things on a Sunday, or on a church day, then at that point what is good to you is evil spoken of. They will speak evil of you if you do it. Do not let your good be evil spoken of. Just do as they do.

14:17 - Here is how Paul sums it up. *“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”* Let us not become entangled with arguing whether one can or cannot do something. Rather, we should just conform to what the church or country believes in. The thing that really matters is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. These are the things that matter, not the others.

14:18-19 - *“For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and the things wherewith one may edify another.”* Let us concentrate on the gospel of Jesus Christ, and not be overly involved in these other

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things. If, however, you are in a church that has certain customs, please conform to their customs, otherwise, you will destroy the Christians there.

14:20 - *“For meat destroy not the work of God.”* You may say, “I have an open conscience; I am perfectly clear in my conscience if I eat meat.” But if the brother sitting next to you believes that you cannot eat meat, you will destroy the work of God in him if you eat meat. Therefore, you should not eat meat or use your liberty in his presence.

“All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.” Let us be very careful that we do not offend any one else’s beliefs. We are not to please ourselves, even as Christ did not please Himself (15:3). I believe this affects the area of dress. In fact, it affects everything we do.

14:21 - *“It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.”* Therefore, whatever we eat or drink, let us be very sure that we are not offending anyone else at the table.

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14:22 - *“Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.”* You might say, “I have faith that I can do this and I know that I am accepted by God, and it does not matter to God if I do it.” That is fine. But Paul says, “Keep that to yourself; think of the other.”

“Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.” An onlooker seeing you do that, and then copying you, would be condemned. Though *you* are eating with a clear conscience, he is not, and falls under condemnation.

14:23 - *“And he that doubteth is [condemned] if he eat.”* If we are eating something and we are doubting whether or not it is right before God, we are damning ourselves because we are not eating by faith. Therefore, he says, *“for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”* This is very important. With *everything* we do, we must believe that we are doing right. Therefore, we must eat with a clear conscience. If there is something we are not sure about in our heart, even if someone else is doing it, we must not do it because it would damage our conscience.

We must understand that chapter fourteen is only speaking about eating and drinking, and observance of days and customs. It is not speaking about God's moral laws. With customs and

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convictions about food and observance of days, there is latitude. God allows for differences. But when we get into God's *moral laws*, there is no latitude. His moral laws are the same for everyone in every nation. On moral issues there can be no tolerance whatsoever. In Romans chapter fourteen the Apostle Paul is not speaking of the ten commandments. He is making reference to outward ordinances and traditions of men that we must adhere to in order not to offend or destroy another brother or sister in Christ.

In the New Testament we have the privilege of eating everything. However, some wisdom should be shown here, because what we eat affects our nature and disposition. In some countries people eat a huge amount of pork and a lot of blood, and the temperament of those people is borish. People who eat the scavengers of the sea, have problems with their nature, too. There is always a reason for every commandment in the Word of God. Strong drink, too, engages the passions. Therefore, let us exercise temperance.

Part Seven

THE PATIENCE, HOPE, AND POWER OF GOD 15:1 - 16:27

I. PATIENCE - Endurance

A. To Produce Unity

1. By bearing the infirmities of the weak (15:1)

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2. By not pleasing ourselves (15:1)

3. By being likeminded (15:5-6)

4. By accepting one another (15:7)

B. To Admonish One Another

1. By being filled with goodness (15:14)

2. By being filled with all knowledge (15:14)

II. HOPE

A. Three Main Sources of Hope

1. Past experiences

2. The promises of God

3. The scriptures

B. Results of Receiving Hope

1. Being filled with joy (15:13)

2. Being filled with peace (15:13)

III. POWER

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- A. To Impart Spiritual Gifts to His Church (cf. 1:11)
- B. To Make the People Obedient by Word and Deed Through Mighty Signs and Wonders (15:18-19)
- C. To Minister in the Full Blessing of the Gospel (15:29)
- D. To Bruise Satan by the Enablement of God's Peace (16:20)

Chapter Fifteen

15:1-2 - With the subject of chapter fourteen in mind, the Apostle Paul continues, *“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”* This is very important. We who are strong in faith believe that eating certain foods is not going to affect our relationship with God. We believe that by praying over meat that has been offered up to idols it is sanctified and we can partake of it with a pure conscience. We might be strong in faith, but we have to bear the infirmities of those who are weak in the faith. It is our duty to please them and not ourselves. So he says, *“Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.”* It is our moral responsibility to build up our neighbors.

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We have to build up the other members of the Body of Christ and not destroy them by the liberty God has given to us. We should be strong like a father who pities his child (Psa.103:13), and as a father who defers to the wishes of a child. So should we be toward those who are weak in the faith. By the grace of God, we should seek to eliminate disputes by submitting one to another, and sometimes this means submitting to some of these nonessentials.

15:3 - *“For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.”* In the daily life of Christ, He unselfishly deferred to His Father's will. He always thought of others first and laid aside His own desires.

15:4 - *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”* The Apostle Paul is referring now to the things which were written in the Old Testament. The New Testament books were not gathered together and canonized until A.D. 400. But what he is saying includes *all* scripture, of course. He says the scriptures are written to comfort us and give us hope. Hope is extremely important. I want to

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emphasize that we must have hope. Hope is predicated mainly on three things: on past experience, on the promises of God, and on the scriptures.

Past experiences of being in difficulties and having God bringing us out gives us hope when we are in a new difficulty, trial, or tribulation. We look back and say, “The God who delivered me then is able to deliver me now.”

Hebrews 11:33 speaks of those who *obtained promises*. I would beseech you to touch God for promises in your life because promises from God produce hope. Hope brings such strength to your spirit, your soul, and your body. It brings health to your whole being. It produces joy and a merry heart which doeth good like a medicine. When God gives you a promise and you embrace that promise, it produces hope, but it also produces joy, which is your strength. It is important to remember these three main sources of hope: the scriptures, our past experiences, and obtaining promises.

15:5 - *“Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus.”* I would like to dwell for a moment on several of God's titles. Here He is

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called “the God of patience, and the God of consolation.” Also, in Second Corinthians 1:3 He is called, “The God of all comfort.”

What is patience? Patience can be broken down into two main points. Patience comes from a Greek word which means, “endurance with joy.” Patience has this connotation, that it does not give up. God does not give up. We need to have this aspect of the patience of God worked out in our hearts so that we do not give up. World leaders are often asked, “What is the most important quality for you as a leader?” William Pitt, a very famous prime minister of Great Britain in the eighteenth century, was asked this question. He replied, “Patience, endurance.” You must never give up. Winston Churchill gave a powerful speech, and all he did was repeat three words; “Never give up; never give up; never give up.” You would have to be Winston Churchill to give a speech composed of only three words. He could do it in every intonation and inflection possible in the human voice. He said, “Never give up; never give up; never give up.” After the fifth time the audience was mightily stirred and stood to their feet, cheering.

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This is one aspect of patience. The other aspect of patience could be defined as “tranquility or serenity in tribulation.” It is to be calm, and to have a holy acceptance of circumstances. It concerns one who is not agitated in a trial. The God of patience is a God of serenity. These are the two aspects of patience.

He is also the God of all comfort and consolation (2 Cor.1:3). Paul continues in verse four, “Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” One of the most important things in the ministry is counseling. As a counselor one not only has to seek to give direction, but also to bring comfort to those who are going through difficult circumstances. There is a maxim in life that you can only give what you yourself have. You can only give one hundred dollars if you have one hundred dollars. If you only have ten dollars, you cannot meet the need of someone who needs more.

How, then, can we comfort someone else unless we ourselves have been comforted? Sometimes the purpose for going through trials is to receive comfort from God, that in turn we can give that comfort

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to others. Verse five, “For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.”

Consolation sometimes has the connotation of rewards, of blessings. When a child studies for an examination and the parent sees that he has put in many hours of study, and then he passes that examination, the father invariably rewards his son for his efforts. Likewise, when running a race, there is a lot of training to do, but there is a reward for coming in first. And so it is with God. God consoles us when we have successfully passed through the sufferings He has ordained. He brings us out into a wealthy place as it says in Psalm 66:12. There is always a consolation with God.

We have a saying in English for one who may not have received first prize. They are awarded what we call a “consolation prize.” I am amazed in ladies' meetings how that everyone receives a prize, a door prize or whatever kind of prize. Perhaps it is because they need a lot of consolation! They are consoled for coming, or they are consoled for not receiving first prize.

There is always consolation with God. He is the God of patience and consolation. Because of His patience and consolation to us, He grants us the ability to *“be likeminded one toward another*

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according to Christ Jesus.” As God is patient with us, as God is a God of consolation to us, so we should be patient with one another and we should console one another. This is the reason it is so important to know the names of God, for the names of God open up the riches of His grace unto us. When we know the God of patience, then it opens up the door of the treasure house of patience and we have the treasures of patience. It is like this with consolation, mercy, hope, peace, and all the other names of the Lord. When we know His names by experience and by revelation, we enter into His treasures and we are able to give them to others.

15:6 - *“That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* The whole thought here is that we must be likeminded because we are members of one body. So often we find the Apostle Paul exhorting all the believers to be of the same mind, even as he did to the two ladies in Philippians 4:2. In a household it is so important to have unity. In a church we have to be of the same mind, otherwise there is dissension and the people cannot move on in God. Unity is where God is glorified and where God commands His blessing (Psa. 133:1-3). In the early chapters of Acts the Holy Ghost was poured out upon all those who were of one mind and one accord.

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15:7 - *“Wherefore [accept] ye one another, as Christ also [accepted] us to the glory of God.”* The ability to accept people is one of the highest marks of spirituality. Whom Christ has accepted, we should also accept. So often our tendency is to put barriers up against other Christians, but if Christ has received them, we, too, must receive them. This is one of the grave dangers in the Church which must be overcome. Let us allow God to enlarge our hearts so that we will have a place in our hearts for every believer.

15:8 - *“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.”* Because He was circumcised, Christ was able to release the promises made to the Jews. He confirmed the promises made to the fathers, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. Most importantly, *He* was circumcised in heart. In fact, He is entitled, the Word of God. His words circumcise the hearts of willing believers so that they are able to enter into all the promises made to our spiritual fathers in the Old Testament. Israel of old could not enter the land of Canaan, their inheritance, without being circumcised (Josh. 5:2-7). The believer cannot enter into

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the promises of God or into his inheritance without allowing God to circumcise him in heart and in spirit (Rom. 2:28-29).

15:9 - *“And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.”* This is so very beautiful. He is quoting from Psalm 18:49. One of the great promises in Isaiah was that Jesus would be a light unto the Gentiles (Isa. 49:6, 42:6). What did He release to the Gentiles? He released all the promises made to the fathers, unto the Gentiles. One of those promises was to Abraham when God said, “In blessing, I will bless thee.” Therefore, the blessings of Abraham come upon the Gentiles. Study the many promises made to the fathers in the Old Testament, because they become our promises as we allow God to circumcise us in heart.

15:10 - *“And again he saith, Rejoice ye Gentiles, with his people.”* Because God has brought the Gentiles into the promises of God, we are at one with the *believing* saints of Israel. Paul reemphasizes the theme that the Gentiles will worship the Lord with believing Israel, using Deuteronomy 32:43 as his authority.

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15:11 - *“And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.”* Why? Because God, through Christ, has brought the Gentiles into the promises of Israel. Paul now quotes from Psalm 117:1 that all nations will worship the Lord.

15:12 - *“And again, [Isaiah] saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.”* Paul now cites Isaiah 11:1 where the scripture declares that a root of Jesse, signifying David's greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, would reign over the Gentiles and in Him they would put their trust. Here again were the promises that the Gentiles would enter into the promises of Israel.

15:13 - *“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy.”* Here is another title of God—The God of hope. When we think of God, we think of His holiness and power. Yet, another aspect of God is *abundance*. The God of hope actually means, “the One that is abundant in hope.” Hope is based on the character of God, on the nature of God. We are relying on Who He is—His faithfulness, kindness, goodness, and mercy. We must be people of hope, filled with peace and joy.

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“Fill you with all joy and peace in believing.” Joy and peace are the fruit of hope. Hope brings joy and peace. How does hope bring joy? Hope is the contemplation that things are going to change for the better; it is anticipation of what is coming. How does hope bring peace? By an inward confidence and calm. In spite of the difficulties we are in, we know that God is going to work everything out. Hope produces this in us as we believe His promises.

“That ye may abound in hope.” It is not just to have hope for one or two little things, but hope that abounds in us. We must think of God as a God of an abundance of hope, and that hope must abound in us. As hope abounds in us, joy and peace abound in us, too. They flow like a river. God wants us to be a rejoicing people, but how do we become a rejoicing people? We rejoice because of the abundance of hope that we have—hope that God is going to bring us out of our difficulties, and that He is going to bring us into a large and wealthy place as He says in Psalm 66:12.

I remember when I was a young man in Bible school how God made so many promises to me. These promises seemed so impossible, yet they were so real. Now they have started to come to pass. You must remember the promises God has given to you and not let them slip out as through leaking

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vessels. I assure you that the promises God gives you, He will bring to pass as you believe Him. The promises give you such hope, they give you such peace, they give you such joy.

15:14 - *“And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.”* Another thing we should seek is to be filled with all goodness. When God descended upon Mount Sinai and spoke to Moses, He declared, “I am the Lord, merciful, gracious, longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth.” He is filled with goodness and wants us to be filled with His goodness. Goodness means, “incapable of doing any evil.” When we are counseling people, our thoughts must be filled with what is the ultimate eternal good for that person. Every time we are in contact with people, whether we are talking to them or caring for them, our words and actions must be for their ultimate good.

We must also be filled with knowledge. Paul says, “filled with all knowledge.” Knowledge is so important. “You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (Jn. 8:32). The more truth or knowledge we have, the more freedom and liberty we have, and the more understanding we have. Then we are able to help one another.

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15:15 - *“Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God.”* Paul was given special grace to minister, and special ability to rightly divide the Word of God. As ministers of God (pastors, pastors wives, missionaries, elders, or deacons), we should remember that we have been given grace to help others. The purpose of this grace is not for ourselves, but it is for others. There must be a flow of the Spirit through us to help others.

15:16 - *“That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.”* The graces and anointings of God that flow through us are given to us for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-12). Whatever gift God has given to us should flow out to others for the sole purpose of bringing them into maturity. The joy of the Apostle Paul was going to be the offering up of the Gentiles. The joy of a pastor is being able to offer up a congregation to the Lord that is mature, healthy, and full of goodness, love, joy and peace. This

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is the joy of a pastor. The joy is his people (Phil.4:1, 1 Thes. 2:19-20). What kind of church are we going to offer to the Lord?

One time we had a friend to whom the Lord said, "I want you to offer your wife to me." He said, "I can't Lord. She is full of bitterness, jealousy, and envy." He had a whole list of things that were wrong with his wife. And the Lord said, "I will give you one year to minister unto her so that you can offer her up to Me as a pleasing sacrifice."

One very famous leader who is now with the Lord, said, "I intend to keep my people as babies so that they will always be dependent on me and come to me for counsel." I know of another very well-known minister who was told by God, "All you are producing is babies." This must not be! We must produce mature saints so that the offering of our churches is acceptable and a sweet savor unto the Lord.

What is the joy of a minister? What is our joy? It is bringing others to maturity. It is seeing the joy and pleasure on the face of the Lord Jesus Christ as He contemplates those to whom we have ministered by His grace and brought to an acceptable standard of maturity in Christ. Let us always remember this.

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15:17-18 - *"I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. [Paul said he would glory in Jesus Christ in his service to God.] For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed."* There is a danger in the Church of boasting and taking credit for works that are not ours. Many churches claim the same missionary, and many missionaries claim the same church. Preachers give reports of other people's work as if it were their own. (cf. 2 Cor.10:16.)

Paul is not taking credit for what someone else has done. The point is *honesty*. When people manipulate sheep to get them to come to them, in the end the reward goes to the man to whom the sheep were originally entrusted.

15:19-20- *"Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum [which is Yugoslavia today], I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation."* We need a breakthrough in the realm of the supernatural. There should be healings in our churches and signs following. The Word of God should

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be confirmed by the supernatural. Paul founded his churches upon the demonstration of the supernatural.

Paul emphasized that it was his policy to preach where Christ had not been known. In Psalm 2:8, we are commanded to ask the Lord for the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for our possession. Paul did not boast in what other men had prepared for him (2 Cor.10:16).

However, we need to balance the subject a little because this does not suggest that we have to go out and start a new work. Paul is not saying we have to go into virgin territory and start up a new work, or it does not count. That is not true at all (1 Cor. 3:5-11).

15:21 - *“But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand”* (cf. Isa. 52:15). Paul was a pioneer who went to those that did not have knowledge of Christ, and he established churches among them.

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15:22 - *“For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.”* Paul was buffeted by Satan on numerous occasions because he was making such advances into the kingdom of darkness. Paul had wanted to come to Rome many times before, but he had been hindered.

15:23 - *“But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you.”* Paul obviously felt in his spirit that he had a call to go to Rome. There was a sense of time, however. He had fulfilled his ministry in Macedonia and he knew his time was up there. Likewise, for us there is also a time for everything. It is important, not only to go to a place in God's timing, but to leave in God's timing. Paul knew his time in Macedonia was up.

15:24 - *“Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you.”* Many of the leaders of the Roman empire at that time were Spanish. Many of the great teachers and the philosophers in Rome, like Seneca, were Spanish. Paul wanted to bring the gospel of Christ to Spain, which we believe he did after he was released by Nero from his first imprisonment.

“I will come to you [at Rome] for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you.” He did not realize, of course, that he was going to be brought to Rome as a

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prisoner, but during that time in Rome he wrote all those prison epistles, and it was a very fruitful time.

15:25 - *“But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.”* After Paul's third missionary journey, he returned with money for the poor people in Jerusalem from the offerings of the various churches he had established.

15:26 - *“For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia [which is Greece] to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.”* Paul was elected to deliver it.

15:27 - *“It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in [natural] things.”* Paul is saying that the Gentiles were enriched spiritually by the Jews. Therefore, they should minister to the Jews in natural things. In our day, it means a church should look after their pastor.

15:28 - *“When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.”* Paul's plan was to go to Jerusalem with aid for the poor saints. Then he wanted to come

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to Rome, and then go on to Spain. Paul was warned by the prophet Agabus, and by the Spirit everywhere, not to go to Jerusalem, but he persisted in going anyway (Acts 21:10-13). He should have sent someone else to Jerusalem and should not have gone into the city, for when he entered the city, he was imprisoned. From there he was sent to Rome as a prisoner.

PAUL PREACHING AT ROME

Paul had a fruitful ministry, even as a prisoner in Rome, “Preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.” Acts 28:31

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15:29 - *“And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.”* When we are invited to any church, let us first spend time seeking God’s blessing so that we are able to go with the fullness of His blessing and bring the overflow of blessing to the people. How important it is for us to be anointed when we minister, and to bring God’s message in the demonstration of the power of the Spirit.

15:30 - *“Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.”* Paul was very conscious of the fact that he needed the prayers of the churches to see him through. It is very important for a minister to ask others to pray for him, because the minister is at the forefront of the battle. Zechariah 13:7 says, “Smite the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.” Therefore, the sheep should pray often for the shepherd not to be smitten and destroyed, so that the flock will not be scattered.

15:31 - *“That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints.”* Paul was very conscious that he was going to face danger in Jerusalem and in Judea. He should not have gone; he was warned on numerous

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occasions. Paul was a little hardheaded at times, but who could criticize a man who had done so much?

15:32 - *“That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.”* Paul was very aware that wherever he went, he was not only going to bring a blessing, but in turn, he was going to be refreshed by the people. I think we should expect this when we minister.

15:33 - *“Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.”* Paul concludes the main body of the epistle with a benediction that the God of peace will be with them. The greetings in the New Testament times always started with, “Grace and peace unto you.” Paul mentions the peace that surpasses all understanding. The Lord Jesus Christ said, “My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you.”

The world's concept of peace is that everything is organized and at rest, but the concept of God's peace is very different. God's peace is that beautiful tranquility and calmness of spirit which is not affected by trouble and turmoil all around. It is inward serenity.

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Chapter Sixteen

We have now come to the last chapter in the book of Romans, chapter sixteen, and there are numerous little truths of interest in this chapter. It is a chapter that basically is filled with greetings, but we can learn much from them. First of all, he starts off with verse one:

16:1 - *“I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea.”*

Cenchrea was one of the ports of Corinth. Church history tells us that the early Church used women extensively in ministry, especially in the role of deaconess. Phebe was entrusted with this very important epistle of Romans to deliver it to the church at Rome.

16:2 - *“That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.”* This was a very high commendation of this lady, and the Apostle Paul wanted to make sure that the church of Rome cared for her properly and provided everything she needed.

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Letters of commendation were common in olden times for people going to strange towns. Paul writes to introduce Phebe of Cenchrea of the port of Corinth, noted for succouring others, including himself. In Paul's other epistles he mentions "letters of commendation." There are many people who travel and minister from church to church. Obviously, if we don't know a person, but we know the pastor or the man of God who is recommending him, it is a safeguard for us. The Apostle Paul was quite well-known in Rome. His good report of Phebe helped her to be accepted there. It is essential that unknown travelling speakers be commended by those who are known. This is a safeguard against giving hospitality to the speakers and ministers we should not invite to the church.

There are many hirelings that go from church to church, who try to live off the Church. The Apostle Paul had to address this problem in his letter to Timothy, saying that only certain people were to be supported by the Church. There is a tendency for some who have never really worked in their lives, after they become Christians, to think the Church is a benevolence society to look after their needs. This is not the case. The Church ought to look after those who are worthy, those who are genuinely in need.

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16:3 - *“Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus.”* Priscilla and Aquila were teachers. They were a husband and wife team who were very dear to the Apostle Paul. In the good sense, the wife is mentioned first, suggesting that Priscilla had the dominant ministry. We should be open when God gives a woman a ministry. However, we want to keep the relationship between a husband and wife in its proper order. Husband and wife relationships must be kept healthy. We want neither competitiveness, nor legalism. They were responsible for putting the Apostle Apollos in the right direction and teaching him deeper truth (see Acts 18:24-26). Priscilla and Aquila were very well-known in the New Testament days. Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians from the home of Aquila and Priscilla. In verse four Paul gives them this commendation:

16:4 - *“Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.”* This husband and wife travelled everywhere. It is believed that their main residence was in Rome. They had been expelled from Rome in the days of Claudius Caesar with all the other Jews, and therefore, they had met Paul in other places (Acts 18:1-3). They were a delightful couple; a beautiful husband and wife team. It is very rare to find a husband and wife

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recognized together in the Word of God. Obviously, they flowed together and everyone looked on them as one. Phebe's husband is not mentioned and so we do not know what her situation was.

16:5-6 - *“Likewise greet the church that is in their house.”* The church at Rome was not just one congregation. It was made up of many congregations, and they met in various houses. Paul was greeting a congregation that was assembling in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. At times, all the congregations would come and meet together.

Paul then gives a list of others he wishes to be remembered to. *“Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.”* Epaenetus is an interesting one. Paul calls him “the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.” He was Paul's first convert in Greece. Then Epaenetus came to Rome. I think it is quite interesting that in the New Testament days the Church travelled quite a lot. I believe we are coming back to those days when the churches and the congregations will be travelling extensively. This is good, because congregations are enriched as they receive members from other congregations.

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16:7 - Paul continues by saluting others. *“Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellowprisoners [in other words Jews], who are of note among the apostles.”* We must remember that the apostles in the New Testament times were not just the original twelve and Paul and Silas and Apollos. There were many other apostles, but some were notable apostles. As today, there are many ministers, but some achieve more prominence than others, because they have waited more diligently upon their ministry and calling.

16:8-10 - Paul then continues by saluting others who were beloved in the Lord and were his helpers. *“Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household.”* The various phrases he uses for each one are very interesting. In verse ten, he says, *“Salute Apelles approved in Christ.”* This is a beautiful commendation. Apelles was one who had proved himself and had been approved by Christ. And then he says, *“Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household.”* Here was another congregation that met in the household of Aristobulus.

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16:11 - Again, Paul greets other kinsmen, other Jews. *“Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.”* Thus, we see again that there were many churches in the houses.

16:12 - *“Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.”* Paul attributed to various people different commendations. Some were “beloved” like Luke the beloved physician, whereas others were looked upon as “laborers.”

16:13 - *“Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.”* The mother of Rufus was like a spiritual mother to Paul. When we have to forsake houses, lands, friends and family for Christ's sake, we are rewarded one hundredfold (Mk.10:28-30).

Though Paul had never been to Rome, he knew an amazing number of people there. How can this be accounted for? It is because in the New Testament times, travel was very safe. Rome governed the known world. There were no custom barriers. People could travel freely. The roads were in good condition and they were safe. Travel was constant because of commerce. Many Christians travelled

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from church to church, and all of these people at Rome already knew the Apostle Paul. Obviously, there were numerous households (or churches) there who had already imbibed his teachings.

16:16 - *“Salute one another with an holy kiss.”* I commend the practice of men embracing men, and women embracing women. It is not wisdom to cross the lines of gender, because serious problems can occur with those more vulnerable to temptation.

“The churches of Christ salute you.” Paul wrote to the Romans from Corinth. Cenchrea was a port city on the eastern harbor of

Corinth. All the numerous local churches of that area were sending their greetings to the church at Rome. Phebe, the bearer of the Roman epistle, was from Cenchrea.

There were numerous other congregations in and around Corinth. They did not all come together into one large building. It is estimated that during Paul's time at Corinth, sixty thousand came to the Lord. That is about ten percent of the city. They did not meet in one place, but they went to various

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households. They split up into various congregations. Therefore, he meant literally the “churches” of Christ salute you.

16:17 - *“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”* There is a difference between chapter fourteen and the command here for clear-cut separation from disorderly believers. Paul expresses tolerance with other believers in chapter fourteen, but here it is different and it is much more serious.

When the Israelites came into Canaan land, there were seven enemy nations to be driven out, and the last enemy to be overcome was the Jebusites. From Proverbs 6:16-17, the interpretation of the seven enemies are the “seven things which the Lord hates.” The seventh enemy is the sowing of discord and division among the brethren. The Lord has a special hatred against the sowing of discord, and we are commanded to avoid discord sowers because there is an evil spirit involved. Discord sets one against another, and the whole thought of the Church is that it should be unified. Therefore, we have to avoid and put out those that cause division. There is no other way. The New Testament Church was plagued with those that caused division, and the apostles had to be very firm

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on this issue. Even the Apostle John, the apostle of love, was very straightforward concerning this in his three epistles.

16:18 - *“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”* It is amazing that those who cause division have a great capacity to speak well. They try to make black look white, and white look black. Beloved, if one day you become a pastor, or an elder in a church, I will tell you that you will see this run in cycles. Every few years you will see an epidemic of those who cause division, and the *gullible* get all caught up with these people and cause turmoil in the church.

These who cause division do not come with horns and a pitchfork. They come as angels of light, as Paul says. We need to press into the Lord and receive discernment so that we know who is who. The people that cause division are concerned with *themselves*. There is a quest for power. Usually they want to promote themselves; they want to be the leaders instead of those whom God has appointed. Or perhaps they do it to try to get money or other benefits from people. They are serving their own

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belly. It is all something for *self*. Their motives are corrupt. Solomon said, "There is nothing new under the sun." This was a problem in New Testament days, and it is a problem in our days.

16:19 - *"For your obedience is come abroad unto all men."* It is so wonderful to be known for obedience. The Roman centurion was known for his obedience (Mt. 8:9). Rome was the center of the empire and headquarters of the Roman army. Rome instilled obedience to authority, and the Roman Christians were known for obedience, too. Earlier in chapter one Paul spoke of the fact that the faith of the Roman church was known throughout the whole empire. It was a wonderful church, but still it needed Paul.

"I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." Rome was the glory of the empire, but also the sewer of the nations. It was a terrible place. It had magnificent buildings, but every vice known to mankind was rampant in the streets. And so Paul said, "I want you wise concerning good, and simple concerning evil." Saint Augustine was against the gladiatorial sports in which men fought until one killed the other. Rome had a lust for blood.

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We should always major on the positive. Do not give yourself to the study of false religions. Just dwell on the light. People who study evil and the ways of Satan always get into trouble. Even with people who have major problems, stay positive. There are two ways to handle problems in a church. We may focus on what is negative and on everything that is going wrong, or we can get a positive word from God for the church that uplifts them. The first way keeps them in the pit. The second way sets them on a new course. We must encourage people; especially in marriage.

16:20 - *“And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”* This is not only speaking of the end times when Satan is bound in Revelation 20. It refers to a personal triumph over Satan that God wants each of us to enter into. It is not the God of war, but the God of peace who will bruise Satan under our feet. Peace is very powerful! Satan has no rest. In Job 1:7, the Lord asked Satan, “Where have you come from?” He answered, “From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.” This signifies his tormented and restless nature. What enables one to triumph over him? It is peace!

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Do you remember the gospel account of the storm at sea? The disciples were terrified, and frantically awakened the Lord. They charged Him foolishly, “Don't You care that we perish?” The Prince of Peace stood up and spoke to the storm and raging sea, saying “Peace! Be still.” It is the peace of God that destroys Satan. The peace of God is a divine calm, which Satan's fears and accusations cannot disturb. As God's peace envelops us, our whole spirit, soul, and body are sanctified. They are sanctified by the God of peace (1 Thes. 5:23). It is God's peace that overcomes the wicked one and bruises Satan under our feet.

In verses 21-23, Paul lists those who have joined with him in sending their greetings to the Christians in Rome.

16:21-23 - *“Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.”* In verse twenty-two, Paul gives the name of the secretary who penned for him the epistle to the Romans. In those days it was common to employ secretaries. This is also seen in First Peter 5:12.

“I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.” The manner in which these epistles were written is very interesting. Jeremiah also had his own personal secretary, Baruch. We find this in

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Jeremiah 36:4, 32. The prophetic word would flow from Jeremiah, and Baruch would write it down. In the Old and New Testament days they had secretaries, or scribes, who wrote down, word for word, what the writers pronounced by the Spirit.

Prophetic unction and revelation flowed forth from the Apostle Paul. No one could have written like this. The sentences in the Greek New Testament and in the Hebrew Old Testament have mathematical formations that man could never construct. No one could write like that; it had to be through the divine utterance of the Spirit. The anointing came upon the writers, and as they spoke prophetically, their secretaries inscribed every word.

16:23 - *“Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.”* A number of influential people sent their greetings from Corinth to the Romans. Erastus the chamberlain would be the town clerk; he would be the chief officer of the city. Erastus had been converted there at Corinth.

16:24-25 - *“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. [In verse twenty-five, Paul takes over again.] Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the*

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preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.”

Paul was the supreme interpreter of the New Covenant. He had the privilege of understanding and releasing all of the gospel truths to the Church. They had been entrusted to him by the Holy Ghost to deliver unto us (Eph. 3:1-10). These mysteries and truths had been promised beforehand by the Old Testament prophets. Within these concealed truths, which now have been opened, lay the secrets of full redemption.

The old prophets longed to see and know the mysteries of full redemption. Even to them it was not revealed, but hidden in the Old Testament. Peter tells us that it is a redemption that even the angels desire to look into (1 Pet.1:10-12). The pious and devout men and women of old times could see that God was going to reveal something fresh, and they all desired to see it (Lu. 2:38).

The Lord Jesus Christ said, “Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear ... many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen

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them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them” (Mt.13:16-17). It was not their privilege to know.

What a privilege it is for us who are living in the New Testament days to have the mysteries of Christ opened up and revealed to us. The mysteries of redemption, kept secret since the world began, and hidden from man four thousand years, were released through the tongue of the Apostle Paul by divine inspiration, and Tertius wrote them down.

16:26 - *“But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.”* Before Christ came, Israel alone had the law, though there were proselytes from other countries who adopted the Jewish faith. At that time, God only worked through the Jewish nation. Yet, their prophets were prophesying that the Gentiles were going to glorify and worship God for His goodness to them. And it was through the Apostle Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, that these blessings and truths of God were released unto them.

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16:27 - *“To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.”* The only wise God has glorified and magnified His truths and His nature through one channel alone, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, in turn, has revealed them to His people. How do we know about God? He revealed Himself through His only Son, Jesus Christ, Who in turn revealed these marvelous truths concerning Himself, through His apostles.

Now we come to the final “Amen” of the Apostle Paul. What a wonderful book and how we thank God for it. I commend that each and every one of us will not just be satisfied with this study of the epistle of Romans, but that we will go into it many times during our lifetime because it is so very rich. Presented within this epistle are so many treasures that will enable us to be wise and obedient to the faith and to be fervent witnesses of the gospel of Jesus Christ wherever He sends us. Amen!