

THE BIBLE NOTEBOOK

© 2005 Johnny L. Sanders

Verse By Verse Bible Studies

LIVING BY FAITH

Studies in Romans

by

Johnny L. Sanders, D. Min

DEDICATION

To

Sam Gore

Ambassador for Christ

And

Mississippi College

Head of Art Department for 42 years

*Thousands enjoy your work, including
The Student Nurse sculpture (Baptist Med. Center, Jackson, MS)
The American Farmer sculpture (MS AG Museum*

Still "Pop" Gore to Me!

INTRODUCTION

THE AUTHOR: The Holy Spirit was the divine author of this superb doctrinal epistle. The human author was Paul, the great missionary of the early church. Paul, the thirteenth apostle, may have lived the Gospel and preached the Gospel as no other person from Pentecost until this day. He had been a strict Pharisee who persecuted the church without mercy until he met the Saviour on the road to Damascus. Jesus called him to be an apostle to the Gentiles. He never turned his back on the Jews. During his missionary journeys he always sought out the Jews first in every city which had a Jewish population. He only turned to the Gentiles after the Jews rejected Christ and forced him out of the synagogues.

Paul manifested a deep concern for all true churches, even those he had never visited. The Epistle to the Romans is a case in point. He had never been in Rome but he had wanted to preach the Gospel there for a long time, and had always been hindered from going to the great capital city. At the time he wrote this letter he seems to have sensed that his work in Asia and Greece was complete and now he turns his attention to his long cherished dream to preach the Gospel in Rome and then in Spain. He wants to minister to the church in Rome and to solicit their support in his efforts to carry the good news to Spain.

THE RECIPIENTS: This epistle was written to the church in Rome, a Greek-speaking church was firmly established when Paul wrote. Later tradition tried to establish an apostolic origin for the church. The Roman Catholic Church claims that Peter came to Rome early in the reign of Claudius (A.D. 41-54) and established the church. This is the conservative view in Roman Catholicism. However many Roman Catholic scholars now doubt this claim. "It is the growing consensus of scholarship, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, that Hellenistic Jewish converts from Palestine and Syria brought the gospel to Rome at a very early date, possibly by A.D. 30 (cf. Acts 2:10)" [19: 154].

THE DATE. Various dates, from A. D. 53 to 59 are suggested by different writers. Allen claims the letter was written in the spring of 57 or 58. Moody likes A.D. 57. Many others seem to favor this general time. From Romans 15:25-29 we see that Romans was written shortly before Paul's departure for Jerusalem with the relief offering from the Gentile churches for the saints in Jerusalem. Moody wrote:

It is just possible, under circumstances that Paul did not fully anticipate, that he not only reached Rome but preached also in Gaul and Spain. On his return to Rome he along with Peter perished at some time during the persecution of A.D. 64-68.

THE OCCASION: The general occasion for this epistle was Paul's planned visit to the church in Rome and regions beyond. This is unlike many of the other epistles of Paul in that no particular crisis seemed to demand his attention as in Corinth or Galatia. R. E. Glaze, Jr. suggests, however, that the problem underlying those controversies may have been on Paul's mind as he wrote. He

suggests that a major factor may have been "Paul's conviction that the future well-being of the churches demanded a better understanding of God's righteousness as expressed in both grace and judgment and men's righteousness imparted through faith" [29: 75].

OBSERVATIONS: Romans has been called "The Gospel According to Paul." In this book we find added insight into some of our basic Christian doctrines. There must be a basis for our beliefs that is true and real, or really true. God is reality and His sacred Word reveals Him to us that we might believe, and in turn, He makes His Word come alive in our lives. Every Christian would do well to study Romans frequently. Such a study, accompanied by a genuine acceptance of the message proclaimed, could spark an awakening in our day as it did in the days of Augustine and Martin Luther.

Romans has on many occasions been the instrument used by God for the renewal of His people. It helped settle some early controversies in the church. Augustine was converted after reading Romans 13:13. In his "Confessions," (VIII. 29), he said, "No further would I read, nor had I any need; instantly, at the end of this sentence, a clear light flooded my heart and all the darkness of doubt vanished away" (quoted by Moody, BBC, vol. 10, p. 159).

Moody mentions some outstanding commentaries on Romans and then adds this interesting observation: "There will never be a definitive commentary on Romans, for the well is too deep to run dry, so all may still come to this fountain to renew faith" [19: 160].

OUTLINE WITH NOTES

INTRODUCTION, 1:1-17

1. THE SALUTATION, 1:1-7.

Greek letters usually began with the address that referred to both the writer and the recipient as well as a greeting.

1:1 - PAUL. This is Saul of Tarsus, the young Pharisee who so fanatically persecuted believers before his encounter with the ascended Christ on the road to Damascus. There he who would later be accused of trying to turn the world up-side down for Christ had his world turned up-side down by Jesus Christ. He was commissioned the Apostle to the Gentiles. The account of his Three Missionary Journeys, as recorded in the Book of Acts, will challenge every believer of every age to die to self and live for Christ. His philosophy of life was, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21).

SERVANT. This all inclusive term denotes in a general way how Paul viewed his relationship to Christ. The word properly rendered "servant" and should not be translated "slave" (which excludes

the element of free will). There are two basic ideas in the term servant (or bondservant): (1) the servant is purchased, and (2) he is self-surrendered. The Christian, being purchased by Christ feels an obligation to Him which can never be fully discharged. He has a personal debt that can never be forgotten.

The second idea reveals the bondservant to be in perfect freedom of will. His surrender is not forced; it is of his own choice. "It is the knowledge that we have been bought with a price that makes us cease to be our own man and live for Him who purchased us with His blood" [17: 19-20].

A servant is not one who passively forfeits his own will but "one who has made another's interest the all-including and determining factor in his own personal interest" [17: 20]. Accordingly, being a servant is not surrendering arms; it is taking up arms. It is not surrendering conviction; but executing a higher conviction which has become the very essence of one's being. No one will ever become an effective servant of the Lord until God's will becomes his own. How does one reach this point? When the individual is born again (John 3:3) he receives a new nature. The will of the Master is the nature of the servant.

CALLED APOSTLE. Most writers follow the KJV, "called to be an apostle." McBeth makes a good case for rejecting this in favor of "called apostle." This term denotes what kind of apostle he is; "one by divine and eternal summons" [17: 21].

SEPARATED. Or, "having been separated" (passive perfect participle). "When God acts in a perfect participle, His action is characterized by eternity. Therefore, the dedication of Paul has always been in the mind of God, and has stood as an eternal fact" [17: 21]. This does not violate one's free will.

Paul not only had been called, but God had ordained him in eternity to preach the Gospel of salvation. His ministry was pre-ordained, but not pre-determined. While it is not easy to explain, it is the conviction of most believers that God's foreordination and man's freedom of choice will never conflict.

UNTO THE GOSPEL OF GOD. Or, "into a divine Gospel." The Greek word is a noun and refers to the message itself rather than the act of preaching the Gospel. The literal translation (divine Gospel) "denotes the gospel as having divine quality; that it is characterized by God Himself; and is the very essence of God" [17: 22]. This statement is too strong for some people. The subject of the inerrancy of the Scripture is widely disputed. But this does not deal with inerrancy. The subject is the divine Gospel every called preacher is to preach and the divine Gospel to which every genuine believer is a witness.

It follows that if Paul's life is dedicated to the divine Gospel he would naturally carry the Gospel wherever he went. You may not be dedicated to the active preaching of the Gospel, but you should be personally dedicated to the divine Gospel.

1:2 - PROMISED AFORE. Or, which He preannounced or promised before the promise was

fulfilled (beforehand). The Gospel is not something new; neither is it a revision of an old religion. It is the fulfillment of the promise announced by the prophets. The fulfillment of the Old Covenant is in the New Gospel. It is not a new Gospel but the heart of the old covenant. In the Old Testament God's message was a promised Messiah; now it is "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

HIS PROPHETS IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. The Old Testament as a whole is prophetic of the New Testament. In the sacrificial system we see a picture (and promise) of what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross. Every Old Testament prophecy finds its "highest fulfillment, ultimate purpose, and end, in the Christ of the New Testament" [17: 24]. "Holy" stresses the divine character of the Old Testament Scripture.

1:3 - CONCERNING HIS SON. God's Son, Jesus Christ, is the object of the divine promise and the subject of the Gospel of God. The article with "Son" denotes personality. The Gospel heads up in a Person. That Person is our living Saviour. McBeth wrote:

Accepting the gospel is not subscribing to a book of dogmas, but the acceptance of a Person. Christianity is not a religion; it is a revelation. It is a revelation, not of a system of theology, but of a Person. Becoming a Christian is not living up to a new set of rules; but it is letting a New Person live in you, till it is no longer you that liveth, but Christ that liveth in you (Gal.2:20) [17: 25].

It follows then that to refuse the Gospel is to refuse a Person, and to sin is rebellion against that Person. Jesus is the Person of the Gospel message. Whether the Gospel is accepted or rejected, He is forever on His throne.

BORN OF THE SEED OF DAVID. According to the flesh, Jesus was a descendant of David, and therefore, a legal heir to his throne. This descent was a prerequisite for the Messiah (Matthew 1).

1:4 - DECLARED TO BE THE SON OF GOD. Jesus has a divine Father and therefore a divine nature. He sits upon His father David's throne and more: it shall be God's eternal throne. John stresses that Jesus was both Son of Man and Son of God.

WITH POWER. He was manifested with power. The genealogical record established Jesus as the Son of David. Now the resurrection of His body from death is a powerful declaration that Jesus, as to His divine nature, is the Son of God. The word "declared (manifested)" means to mark off, to place a monument as permanent evidence of an established boundary. The resurrection of Jesus is a monument to His deity. The resurrection of Jesus is a monument raised over the territory of death, claiming all those who die in Him.

1:5 - BY WHOM. The Lord is the One bestowing grace and appointing apostleship. He is the

source of power.

WE HAVE RECEIVED. Paul does not say he earned God's grace. He received the unmerited favor of God as a free gift through faith. Paul never lost sight of this fact, and the modern believer would do well to remind himself of this truth daily.

GRACE. The root meaning is unmerited favor. In the New Testament it is seen as the only means of salvation. It has been observed that the accumulated merit of all who ever lived is not enough to save one soul.

APOSTLESHIP. Paul is not an apostle by chance or personal choice, but by divine providence. "And" connects grace with apostleship. If you have received the grace of God, you must be a witness to it. The experience of grace makes one a missionary of the Gospel, fulfilling the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 and the great prediction of Acts 1:8.

FOR OBEDIENCE TO THE FAITH. The purpose of Paul's grace and apostleship is seen here; the salvation of all the nations. Today we need to understand that we are not simply saved and left on earth for a position of honor or prestige. There is no isolation policy for the believer. We are saved because God loves us and provide for our salvation. We are also saved because God loves others and expects us to seek their salvation. He saves us that we might love and glorify Him. If we love Him we will serve Him and witness for Him.

FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE. The immediate purpose for Paul's grace and apostleship was the redemption of the nations. The final purpose was that Jesus' Name might be glorified above every name. The glory of Christ is the ultimate purpose of the salvation of the nations.

1:6 - THE CALLED. Or, "called ones." The saved of God are called ones and they belong to Him.

1:7 - ALL THOSE THAT ARE IN ROME. That is, the immediate recipients of this epistle - not all residence of the city of Rome. Paul is writing to the church at Rome. Remember that Paul is in a sense introducing himself to the believers in Rome. He seeks points of identification and makes a genuine effort to relate to them in the Spirit.

When Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians from a prison in Rome, (several years after the writing of this letter) there were elements in the Roman church bitterly antagonistic to the apostle (Phil. 1:15ff). The church had known difficulty and would know persecution from Rome in the future as Rome tried to force Christians to worship the emperor.

BELOVED OF GOD. The called ones of Jesus are the loved ones of God. The Lord loved the world enough to send His Son to die on the cross that all might have life in and through Him. But only those who receive Jesus lived in a special relationship of love with the Father.

CALLED SERVANTS. Believers are "called saints" just as Paul was called apostle. It is not up to you to decide if you want to be His servant. You are a called servant - either a faithful one or an unfaithful one.

2. THANKSGIVING AND HOPE, 1:8-15.

1:8 - Their faith was an occasion for thanksgiving. Paul assured his readers he was praying for them. This mutual prayer, one in behalf of the other, constituted a bond that exceeds anything that ordinary friendship (outside of Christ) can offer.

1:9 - Paul's interest in the church at Rome is an evidence of his love for God. Our interest in God's church throughout the world is a barometer of our love for God. The person who takes delight in the trouble of another church (or the one to which he belongs) will find it difficult to defend his claim to love the Lord.

1:10 - Paul earnestly desired to visit the church at Rome. The journey had been long delayed but he still hopes to go to Rome.

1:11-15 - These verses deal with Paul's desire to visit Rome. He had longed to visit the church there for a long time but his plans had been thwarted. He felt a need to minister to them and sensed that they could be of comfort and help to him. This may be another of the keys to Paul's greatness. He felt a genuine need for their fellowship and comfort as well as financial aid in his work.

1:14 - I AM DEBTOR. Paul's sense of debtorship does not stem from anything they were doing or had done for him, but out of a sense of debt to the saviour. "His debt to Christ can only be discharged to fallen humanity. Need is the genesis of responsibility. Ability is the measure of responsibility. Christian possibilities are Christian responsibilities." J. W. McGorman writes, "Would that our churches staggered under this form of indebtedness" [18: 13].

TO GREEKS AND TO THE BARBARIANS. The term includes all Gentiles in their diversity of languages. The reference is to Greek culture rather than nationality. "Barbarians" - Those whose speech is rude or rough as if repeating the syllable: bar, bar. It referred to one who spoke a foreign or strange language.

3. THE THESIS OF THE EPISTLE - 1:16-17

1:16. I AM NOT ASHAMED. This is negative proof of Paul's eagerness to preach to the church in Rome. Paul had experienced intense persecution and abuse because of the gospel but there

was nothing anyone could do to make the cross offensive to him. He was in fact, proud of the gospel and preached it at every opportunity. His statement here is the understatement of the Christian era, intended to have the opposite effect. The opposite of shame is glory!

THE GOSPEL. Is the gospel message itself, and not the act of preaching or carrying the gospel? "For us who believe, the gospel is God's power at work. It sets men free, no matter when or where they live. It centers in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It breaks the thralldom of sin's awesome sway and robs death of its triumph" [18: 9].

1:16. THE POWER OF GOD. The word used here for power refers to the source of power. This power is inherent in the nature of God. The Law was never called power, but Grace is the "power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." The gospel had demonstrated its power wherever Paul had preached it. It had brought salvation to everyone who believed. "It is a message of power, the gift it offers is a gift of power. The men it produces are men of power" [24: 32].

TO EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES. Absence of the article in the original text denotes individuality among the whole. "The power of God is manifested to each separately and individually, not to a group, tribe, or nation; and that only as the individual believers" [17: 42].

1:17 - A DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS. This may be a better translation than the KJV. McBeth says, "This does not mean a righteousness from God, though it is from Him, but the righteousness is God's essence, His character, God gives Himself to make sinners righteous. Man is acceptable, being clothed in God's righteousness." Man has no righteousness, and yet he cannot be saved without it. Man cannot produce righteousness himself. Man is not saved by his own righteousness, for he has none. He must be saved by the "divine work of grace in God's righteousness." Salvation is of the Lord. He does the saving and He does it with His own righteousness. Thus, a person, though he is sinful, is given right standing with God. Allen quotes Nygren: "the righteousness of God is a righteousness originating in God, prepared by God, revealed in the gospel and therein offered to us" [2: 17].

OUT OF FAITH UNTO FAITH. This shows a growing faith. The exercise of faith leads to greater faith.

FAITH. Faith is our only response that is compatible with God's Grace. Is it not it amazing that the one thing everyone can do is the only thing anyone is required to do to be saved? "There are always those who seek to unite grace and legalism in unholy wedlock. Legalism in any age seeks to downgrade the work of Jesus Christ on the cross (Gal. 2:21). It is forever placing a sign above the cross with the inscription, "Necessary but Not Enough." A friend, the late Dr. H. R. Herrington, who was for many years pastor of the First Baptist Church Rayville, Louisiana stressed that "the most important thing God expects of anyone He saves is the one thing everyone can do, and that is to love Him."

McBeth has a good discussion on faith. "Out of faith unto faith" denotes the means whereby

a man obtains the righteousness of God for himself. This means a faith- righteousness, not a works-righteousness, "Faith is the only way God's righteousness can be had, and faith is the only way salvation can be to "whosoever will."

DOCTRINAL SECTION, 1:18-8:39

I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN, 1:18 - 3:20.

A. Gentiles Are Condemned Without the Law, 1:18-23.

Verse 16 declares the Gospel to be "the power of God unto salvation." Verse 17 explains that power to be God's righteousness which may be appropriated by unrighteous people only by faith. Paul's purpose in the remainder of this chapter and through 3:20 is to prove that man has no righteousness and is incapable of producing righteousness. The only way he can receive righteousness is for it to be imputed unto him by the Lord and he will only receive it by faith.

The remainder of chapter one deals with the condemned Gentiles. Chapter two focuses on the guilt and judgment of Jews. Chapter three, verses 1-20 relate to universal corruption and condemnation of man. In this passage Paul stresses the depravity of man. Allen says: "Total depravity means that the core of man's being is selfish, that he is morally impotent because his will is enslaved and that he is utterly helpless to achieve salvation in and through himself [2: 20]. This does not mean that man is depraved to the point that he is incapable of human good (good as the world interprets it). Nor is he deprived to the point that he is not the object of the Father's love.

THE WRATH OF GOD IS REVEALED. Or, "There is a wrath of God revealed." There is the revelation of the righteousness of God (1:17) and there is the counterpart, the revelation of the wrath of God. There is no article in the Greek, denoting the nature of the wrath. The wrath of God is not to be confused with the ugly, hateful destructive nature manifested in human anger. The wrath of God is the reaction of a holy God in the presence of sin. The holiness of God must always react to sin evil. It is His nature to unleash His wrath against sin, an essential characteristic of His holiness.

Allen says, "The wrath of God never means that God becomes mad with rage. He never acts with uncontrolled anger. He never burns with a desire to get revenge. God hates sin, but he loves the sinner" [2: 21]. There is a distinct difference between this godly wrath and man's rage. One may think he can react the same way God does, but when his family is threatened or harmed, his inclination is to strike back. This is both good and natural to a point, but there is always the danger that human beings will react without full knowledge or self-control. God acts with full knowledge and He is always in control of His mind and emotions/

It is fortunate for all of us that we have such a merciful Judge. We cannot react the way He does. This does not justify some of the weak judgments handed down by some of the courts today. We are not expected to protect criminals at the expense of their victims. Vance Havner once said, "It used to be that criminals were locked behind bars and citizens could walk the streets. Now the criminals are walking the streets and law abiding citizens are hiding behind locked doors and barred windows." There may be a miscarriage of justice in human courts, but there will never be a miscarriage of justice with God. He punishes sin; He disciplines His children, but not for the purpose of revenge.

FROM HEAVEN. This points to the godly nature of the wrath. Heaven is the source of this wrath. All heaven is in unity in God's wrath against sin. This is disturbing, and it should be, for it tells us that all citizens of heaven will be in full agreement with the judgment of God. That means that if your son or daughter, your parents or your spouse rejects Jesus Christ and is sentenced to hell for eternity, you will say "Amen, so be it." If you are in heaven you will be in full agreement with God's judgment.

UNGODLINESS AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS OF MEN. Or, "ungodliness and immorality." Ungodliness (or irreverence) denotes the lack of reverence toward God. This involves ungodliness in both thought and deed. Immorality is injustice or immorality in heart and life. The first word has no fear for the Lord; the second no standard for man. "The first denies God's character; the second destroys man character" [17: 50].

HOLD. Literally, Holding down (Participle shows continuous action). They were consistent in their sins; they persevered in immorality. They continually held down the truth of God by their wicked lives, suppressing the truth with their immorality.

1:19 - THE REVEALED KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IS WITHIN THEM.

This is McBeth's translation. The King James has, "that which may be known of God..." Some translate it, "that which is known..." McBeth rejects both in favor of "revealed knowledge." The article with "God" denotes personality. They had revealed knowledge of the Personal God within them. Allen prefers Williams: "what can be known of God is clear to their moral senses." What can be known of God is that which God reveals of Himself. This knowledge is revealed by God. The Lord takes the initiative. It is not left up to man to discover God. The Gentiles had not had the law but they had not been without revelation. God saw to it that they had the revealed knowledge of Himself.

"Within them" shows the realm of God's revelation. It is within them, in their hearts, upon the consciousness. The truth of God is revealed, not among them, or before them, but within them. "This revelation came from the personality of God to the inner consciousness of man. What more could God do? How much more guilty could man be? Man revolted against God from the very seat of his being" [17: 51]. In essence, God wrote Himself into human consciousness and upon the table of their hearts. He stamped the knowledge of himself on the human heart. He did it once for all. No human has been left out. "That is why man must worship and why the heathen do worship - something" [17: 52]. McGorman writes, "God reveals enough of Himself through the medium of

nature to lead men to honor Him as God. Enough revelation of God can be experienced to make gratitude an appropriate response. Thus God's revelation of himself through nature establishes the minimal grounds of every man's responsibility before God. Nobody has ever had less than this ground as his basis for knowing God" ([18: 27].

1:20 - FOR THE INVISIBLE THINGS OF HIM. God has revealed Himself both subjectively (vs. 19) and objectively (20). Here Paul appeals to creation as proof of God's revelation of Himself. Pagans everywhere stand condemned because they have shut their eyes against the light they have.

Creation is still a subject to which Christian people can appeal in witnessing for the Lord and in teaching believers. The problem today is that many church members; in fact, many Christian leaders, have accepted evolution or some form of compromise with evolution as an established fact. Evolutionists tell the world that evolution is fact and creation is fantasy. The news media accepts evolution as fact. "The National Geographic" and numerous other publications preach the religion of evolution in regular publications. It is taught in public schools and in colleges, including many Christian colleges, throughout the world. They may teach a compromise position, but very few teach creation as the Bible presents it.

Many evangelical Christians claim to believe the entire Bible is inspired and seem to believe it is infallible, once you get past the first eleven chapters of Genesis. The Institute for Creation Research has gone on record as declaring that neither creation nor evolution can be proved scientifically (neither can be tested by experiment in the lab). But they hold that the overwhelming majority of scientific evidence is on the side of creation.

In his book, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, Dr. Henry Morris points out the evolution we have seen in the field of science [20: 29-30]. The founders of many key scientific disciplines were Christians and they believed in creation. Morris makes a strong case against evolution by simply letting one evolutionist answer another. While one may not agree with all the Creationists are teaching, they may be doing more than the preachers in the pulpit and the professors in Christian colleges and seminaries to awaken many to the wonders of creation. So, don't hesitate to point to creation as a way God reveals Himself to all people.

Anyone who rejects God does so against the revelation that is "clearly seen" in creation. There is no excuse for anyone who rejects the Lord. Obviously, no universalism is taught in the Scripture.

1:21 - WHEN THEY KNEW GOD. Or, "Because that knowing God..." "The strongest inferential participle denotes the permanency of the knowledge of the person of God. No depth of moral degradation at any time in the future can wholly blot out the knowledge of God. The heathen are responsible now" [17: 54]. They were faced with the fact of God, but they refused to give Him glory or to trust Him as God. If they are without excuse, what excuse does anyone have who lives his entire life where the Gospel is proclaimed in every community, by radio and television and numerous publications on a regular basis?

They neither glorified Him nor were thankful. This shows progression in their rejection of God. They rejected Him decisively and with determination. The same progressive rejection of God is seen clearly in several movements today. Evolution is a good example. Humanism is a secular religion which is based on evolution. Norman L. Geisler (*Is Man the Measure*) discusses "Humanist Manifesto I" and "Humanist Manifesto II" in a chapter on secular humanism. A study of the progressive impact of the teachings of humanists like John Dewey and B. F. Skinner on education in America illustrates how man can progressively and decisively reject God with arrogant determination. Geisler quotes Skinner as saying, "to compare man with a dog is a step forward from comparing him with a god" [12: 111f]. Carl Sagan has often been quoted as saying that the universe is all there is or ever has been.

These humanists are not content to hold a secular view that parallels Christian morality and social goals. Many have declared themselves to be the enemy of Christianity. Some have proclaimed their intentions to rid the world of Christianity.

The New Age Movements seeks to take secular humanism and move it on to another level. Douglas R. Groothuis sees secular humanism yielding to "Cosmic Humanism" (*Unmasking the New Age Movement*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill., 1986 [14: 52]. The naturalistic humanism that rejects the supernatural is yielding to a cosmic humanism that seeks to introduce something beyond the natural element in human existence. Watch for the influence of eastern mysticism, shamanism, satanism, witchcraft, monism and pantheism as this movement seeks to establish a one world order.

The thing to remember is that while these people are seducing millions, the only truth is the revealed truth of Almighty God, revealed through creation, through Scripture and revealed within each individual by the Holy Spirit. Reality begins and ends with God. Man has the freedom to reject Him, but he will be held accountable.

BUT. This strong conjunction denotes the great contrast between what they should have done (glorify and thank Him) and what they actually did (reject Him.).

BECAME VAIN. Actually, "were made vain" (passive voice). Should we see in the passive voice an implication of the activity of Satan? If they were made vain, who made them vain? It could not have been the Lord. It must have been Satan. Any time anyone chooses to reject God, he will find that Satan will be cooperating with him. Allen comments, "Nothing is so empty as vanity. The sure way to be left in darkness is unwillingness to learn" [17: 23].

THEIR FOOLISH HEART WAS DARKENED. Heart is the center of the emotions, the center of the will, or volition. It is the seat of spiritual understanding and moral activity. The heart of the person who rejects God is foolish, and it has been and is being darkened by sin and by Satan.

1:22 - PROFESSING. This profession is growing out of a false conceit of wisdom and a

depraved mind and heart. They professed wisdom. McGorman says, "Paul's keen insight into the nature of human sinfulness was man as a rebel against his creaturehood. He is engaged in a desperate effort to wrest the rights of deity out of the hands of God. This is the meaning of Eden and Babel" [18: 28]. This is true, but fortunately we are not dependent upon Paul's insight. This is the Word of God. It is God-breathed and not limited to the insight of the human author.

Followers of false religions of all ages claim a special wisdom, whether Gnosticism of the first and second centuries, the Gnosticism of today, or Mormonism or Islam. This wisdom is rejected as foolish or senseless.

THEY WERE MADE FOOLS. KJV has "they became fools." But as they were made vain, they were made fools. The more of their wisdom they practiced the bigger fools they were made. Does this imply that Satan is making fools of all those who reject Jesus? Man always makes a fool of himself, or has Satan make a fool of him when he tries to devise a substitute for God.

1:23 - CHANGED. The idea is to alter or imitate. This increases their guilt. What this means is that they did not turn to idolatry through ignorance, or because they had no conception of God. They deliberately, or willfully, became idolaters as they imitated their deities and their worship after the true God. McBeth is right:

Idolatry is not the religion of an ignorant people; it is the religion of a wicked people. They are responsible, and therefore guilty without excuse" [17: 55].

Wise people of every generation have observed that man does not become irreligious. He simply creates a religion to suit himself.

A study of one of the religious cults popular with many people today would support that observation. Norman Geisler (*False Gods of Our Time*, Harvest House, Eugene, Oregon, 1985) shows how this process works. He quotes New Ager Benjamin Creme who teaches that the Christian church proclaims a Christ which is impossible for modern man to accept. He also deals with Alice Bailey, Creme's mentor and founder of Lucis Trust (the largest offshoot of Theosophy) who says, "the church today is the tomb of Christ and the stone of theology has been rolled to the door of the sepulchre" [11: 64].

On the same page Geisler quotes guru Bhagwan Shree (Sir God) Rajneesh, whose pantheism is the basis for his Yoga philosophy:

Not only is LSD a drug, Christianity is also, and a far more complex and subtle drug which gives you a sort of blindness. You cannot see what is happening, you cannot feel how you are wasting your life. I don't want you to become a Christian - that is a lie [11: 64].

Man is going to worship, even if he has to invent his own god or gods. And these religions are based on an imitation of the true God Whom they reject

B. The Wrath of God Revealed By His Giving up the Gentiles, 1:24-32.

1:24 - GAVE UP. The word rendered "gave up" is used three times (vv. 24, 26, 28). God gave them up for (1) wrong loving, (2) wrong living and (3) wrong thinking (1:28-32). McGorman asks, "Is it not ironic that the media constantly ascribes the term "liberated" to these pathetic persons who are the most enslaved to their baser appetites?" [18: 30].

These Gentiles persisted in rejecting God in favor of their imitation gods, and in the life-style that accompanied their religion. They chose the uncleanness (filth) of the most horrible sins. They made a determined commitment to that way of life, and God is giving them over to that kind of life and to the consequences of it.

1:25 - WHO CHANGED THE TRUTH OF GOD INTO A LIE. Or, "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie." When one exchanges the truth for a lie, immorality and indecency will accompany that choice. You cannot reject a holy God and remain holy. You cannot choose a religion based on a lie and live on a high moral plain.

WORSHIPED AND SERVED THE CREATURE. The first word suggests reverence or worship. The second word denotes the offering of sacrifices. These pagan people exchanged the truth for a lie and committed themselves to that lie with the reverence and devotion which only God deserves.

Groothuis reports seeing cars with bumper stickers proclaiming, "Pagan and Proud," and "I'm a Born-Again Pagan" in Oregon. A student at the University of Oregon in Eugene handed Groothuis a tract entitled "A Pledge to Pagan Spirituality," in which the following was printed:

I am a pagan and I dedicate myself to channeling the Spiritual Energy of my Inner Self to help and to heal myself and others.

I know that I am a part of the Whole of Nature... May I always be mindful that the Goddess and God in all their forms dwell within me... (unsigned) [14: 133].

Pagans today are in the same position before the Lord as those of the first century. They usually profess a commitment to peace and prosperity for all, but if they persist in rejecting God, they may find Him cooperating with them just as He cooperated with Pharaoh in hardening his heart.

RATHER THAN. KJV has "more than." This points to the other side, or the wrong side as opposed to the right side. They passed up the Creator in order to worship and serve the creature.

WHO IS BLESSED. The contrast draws a note of praise at a most unlikely time. In a world filled with paganism, occult and humanistic attacks of Christianity, never lose sight of the fact that the Lord is worthy of praise and should be praised.

1:26 - Paul had seen enough of life in Corinth and Ephesus, as well as many other places, to understand how far sin will go. He uses chaste words but paints a picture of indescribable wickedness and corruption. This verse describes their wrong living which grew out of their wrong loving (1:24-25). The abhorrence of idolatry is not so much in its ignorance as in its sin. Those who reject God and choose paganism are not just ignorant, they are guilty of the sin of rebellion against God.

VILE AFFECTION. This has an application for the world today. Barclay points out that this was a time when people did not have normal affection for members of their own family. A father could keep or throw out a new born baby on impulse. Divorce, unknown in Rome for generations, was now common-place. But in this passage we see something still worse, if possible. This is a clear reference to homosexuality.

Homosexuality is clearly seen as a defilement of the body. Sex may be good or bad. "It is good if it is between a man and a woman completely committed to each other in marriage" [19: 171]. Outside of marriage, it is sinful and ugly. Homosexuality is a perversion of normal sexual drives and it is always wrong. It violates God's purpose for the individual and for the race.

There are two forms of homosexuality mentioned here (men with men and women with women), but perverted acts between members of the opposite sex are just as bad. See the list of the forms of unrighteousness in I Corinthians 6:9f. Homosexuality is not new. It was a common practice in the ancient world. Most of the early Caesars were homosexual or bisexual. Suetonius said of Julius Caesar: "He was every woman's man and every man's woman" [19: 171].

For a long time psychologists defined homosexuality as a mental or psychological disorder. It was listed as deviant behavior. Now it has been dropped from that list. It is seen, not as deviant behavior, but an alternate life-style. No longer are they homosexuals. They are gay. There are many homosexuals in America and they have a strong political lobby. Donald Wildmon, founder of the American Family Association, says they exercise a lot of influence with the entertainment industry. Television may show Christians in the worst possible light, but they are very careful in the way they portray homosexuals.

The church needs to be very clear on the subject. Homosexuality is not just an alternate life-style. It is a perversion of the God given sex drive. It is sinful and it is degrading. God hates homosexuality, because He hates sin, but He loves sinners and that includes homosexuals. God will forgive and restore the homosexual who trusts Jesus Christ.

McGorman lists specified things this passage points out about homosexuality:

1. Homosexuality is an abandonment to "dishonorable passions." It dishonors God's purpose for men and women.
2. Homosexuality is "unnatural" (v. 26). It is contrary to the plan of God and if universally practiced would lead to the extinction of the human race.
3. Homosexuality involves "shameless acts." The capacity for shame is "an index of moral sensitivity."
4. Homosexuality is sexual perversion, and leads to a serious breakdown for those involved [19: 171f].

There are people today who advocate homosexuality because it will not increase the population and many humanists see the population problem as one of the most critical problem facing us in the future. They actively promote homosexuality and abortion as a means of controlling the population growth. We do face serious population problems, but such sins against God and humanity must not be seen as answers to the problem.

1:27 - The Greek words used by Paul in condemning homosexuality are not those for "men" and "women," but for "males" and "females." Thus they sink to the animal level, or actually lower.

1:28 - THEY DID NOT LIKE TO RETAIN GOD IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE. Literally, they "refused to retain God in their knowledge." The word means to think, consider, value. They did not consider (value) God worth retaining in their knowledge, so He gave them up to degenerate thinking.

GOD GAVE THEM OVER TO A REPROBATE MIND. A. T. Robertson says "These people already willfully deserted God who merely left them to their own self-determination and self-destruction, part of the price of man's moral freedom" [21: 331].

1:29-31 - Catalog of Sins. SOURCES:

Vines, W. E., *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Fleming H. Revell, Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1940.

Robertson, A.T., *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Broadman, Nashville,

The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible, KJV, edited by Spiros Zodhiates, with Zodhiates' Bible study helps.

Computerized Bible programs, commentaries and dictionaries were used. Barclay will be quoted frequently in the definition of sins.

HAVING BEEN FILLED. The Perfect participle denotes present possession of past accomplishments. The significance is that the vices had become hard and permanent traits of character. Therefore, the sins in these verses are not deeds of impulse, but the sins of long practice and long established character.

1. **EVIL (Adikia).** This is the direct opposite of the word for justice. In the Greek justice was defined as "giving to God and to men their due." The evil man robs both God and man of their rights. "He has so erected an altar to himself in the center of things that he worships himself to the exclusion of God and man" [3: 26].

2. **VILLAINY (poneria).** In the Greek this word means more than just being bad. There is a kind of badness or evil which primarily hurts the one responsible for it. When it hurts other people, as all evil must, it not intended. "It may be thoughtlessly cruel, but it is not callously cruel. But the Greek defines ponia as the desire of doing harm. It is the active, deliberate will to corrupt and to inflict injury" [3: 26].

In the Greek one of the most common titles for Satan is "ho porneros," the evil one. He is the one who deliberately assaults, attacks and aims to destroy all men. This word describes one who is destructively evil. He is not only evil, but he wants to make everyone else as bad as he is. He seeks to pull every one else down to his level.

3. **THE LUST TO GET (pleonexia).** This comes from two words which mean "to have more." The Greeks defined it as "the accursed love of having." It is an aggressive vice. It describes the spirit which will pursue its own interest with utter disregard for the rights of others. It knows no limits, no law, no reason. It is never satisfied, but continually reaches out for more.

4. **VICIOUSNESS (kakia).** This is the most general Greek word for evil. It describes the case of a man who is destitute of every quality which would make him good. Viciousness includes all vice. It is the forerunner of all other sins. It is the degeneracy out of which all sins grow and in which all sins grow and flourish.

5. **ENVY (phthonos).** "Envy is the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others" (Vines). It is essentially a grudging attitude that looks at an outstanding person and rather than being challenged to live on that level, he resents that person for what he has accomplished in his life. Barclay calls envy "the most warped and twisted of human emotions."

6. **MURDER (phonos).** Jesus widened the scope of this sin to include not only the violent act, but also the spirit of anger and hatred. Not only is the act of murder to be eliminated, but also the hatred, anger and envy which might lead to it. One might take pride in having never killed another person, but who can say that he has never been tempted to strike out against another person? Anger and hatred are progressive and may well lead to murder if permitted to go unchecked.

7. **STRIFE (eris).** This points to the contention which is born of envy, ambition, the desire for

prestige, and place, and office of prominence. It comes from the heart in which there is jealousy. If the heart is cleansed of jealousy, the individual had gone a long way toward being cleansed of all that which arouses contention and strife. One way to test yourself is to observe how you feel about the success or failure of others. The Christian should feel as good about the success of others as he does his own. Too many people who can weep with those who weep cannot rejoice with those who rejoice.

8. DECEIT (dolos). This describes the quality of the man who has a warped and a twisted mind, who stoops to devious and underhanded methods to get his own way, the man who never does anything except with some kind of ulterior motive. It describes the cunning, shrewd, crafty person found in every community and every society who uses deception and intrigue to get what he wants. He may not be a con artist in the eyes of the law, but in reality he is.

9. EVIL-NATURED (kakoetheia). This is the spirit which puts the worst construction on everything. In its widest meaning, malignity. Aristotle said it was, "the spirit which always supposes the worst about other people." Pliny called it "malignity of interpretation." Jeremy Taylor said that it is "a baseness of nature by which we take things by the wrong handle, and expound things always in the worse sense." Barclay suggests that this may be the most common of all sins. He said:

If there are two possible constructions to be put upon the action of any man, human nature will choose the worse. It is terrifying to think how many reputations have been murdered in gossip over teacups, when people maliciously put a wrong interpretation upon a completely innocent action. When we are tempted to do so we ought to be reminded that God hears and remembers every word we speak" [3: 29].

10,11. WHISPERERS AND SLANDERERS (pisthuristes and katalalos). These two words describe people with a vicious, slanderous tongue, but there is a difference between them. The word translated "slanderers" describes people who broadcast their venomous gossip abroad for everyone to hear it. They openly tell their tales and make their charges. The other word describes those who whisper their malicious stories to the listener's ear. They take a person aside and whisper their deleterious story. A man can at least defend himself against open slander, but he is helpless against the whisperer who delights in destroying reputations.

A few whisperers in a church can destroy the fellowship of the church, rob the church of its evangelistic zeal and blind it to its field of ministry. They can, and often have, destroyed the ministry of a God-called pastor. He is defenseless against them unless the saints stand beside him.

12. HATERS OF GOD (theostugeis). This describes the person who hates God because he knows he is in rebellion against God. He hates God because he is defying Him in his daily life. To him, God is a barrier between him and his pleasures. God is like a chain that keeps him from doing everything he would like to do. He has a consciousness of God. He is not an atheist. He fears God and would like to eliminate Him if he could. For him a godless world would be a world where he could have, not liberty but license.

13. **INSOLENT MEN** (hubristes). This was to the Greek the one vice which supremely courted destruction at the hands of the gods. It has two main lines of thought in it. (1) It describes the spirit of the man who is so proud that he defies God. It is forgetting that he is the creature and God is the Creator. It is the spirit of the man who is so confident of his wealth, his power, his influence that he can live his life alone. He does not think he needs anyone. (2) The word also describes the man who is wantonly and sadistically cruel and insulting. "Aristotle described it as the spirit which hurts, and harms and grieves someone else, not for the sake of revenge, but simply for the sheer pleasure of hurting."

There are some people who seem to get pleasure out of inflicting mental and physical torture on others. It is the sadism which finds delight in hurting others simply for the sake of hurting them.

14. **ARROGANT MEN** (huperephanos). "This is the word which is three times used in scripture when it is said that God resists the proud (James 4:6; I Peter 5:5; Proverbs 3:24)" [3: 30]. It has been called the summit of all sins. A Greek writer defined it as a "certain contempt for everyone except oneself." This describes a snob who seems to look through others without seeing them. It describes the person who is only interested in a vertical relationship with another person, never a horizontal relationship with them.

15. **BRAGGARTS** (alazon). The word literally means "one who wanders about." It referred to those who wandered about boasting of the things they had done, or boasting that their wares were better than they were. It describes a man who always brags that he is richer than he is, or braver than he is, or people who promise to do things they know they can never do. He boasts of deals that exist only in his own mind. He always has a "get rich quick" scheme to share with others. The braggart is out to impress others. They are not on any endangered species today.

16. **INVENTORS OF EVIL** (epheuretes kakon). This describes one who is not content with the usual ways of sinning, but who seek out new and unusual vices, because he has grown tired of the old ones and is always seeking some new thrill in some new sin. This is common today. People are trying as never before in America to invent new ways of committing the same old sins or to come up with some new ones. This is especially true with reference to sexual immorality, homosexuality, crimes of violence, theft and deceit. Add drugs to the picture and you discover just how low humanity can sink. Any pastor, or other counselor who has listen to a young person pour out her heart about drugs, witchcraft and orgies can appreciate just how debased human behavior can become. You actually see progression in the practice of some of these sins.

17. **DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS**. Both Jews and Romans set obedience to parents very high on the scale of virtues. It was one of the Ten Commandments. It was very important to the Romans. In the early days of the Roman Republic the father's power was so absolute that he had the power of life and death over his family. The real reason for including this sin in this list is that once the bonds of the family are loosened wholesale degeneracy will follow.

18. **SENSELESS** (asunetos). This describes the man who is a fool, the man who cannot, or will not

learn from experience. This man is guilty of incredible folly. He seemingly never learns from his failures, or from punishment.

The chaplain at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman once told me about a man who was sentenced to two years in Parchman. He was illiterate when he began serving his time, but learned to read and write enough to sign his name. He was released, but within a year he was back - this time for forgery!

19. COVENANT BREAKERS (asunthetos). This word would come with special force to the Roman. In early days of Rome, Roman honesty was a wonderful thing. A man's word was his bond. That was one of the great differences between the Roman and the Greek.

The Greek was a born pilferer. The Greeks used to say that if a governor or official was entrusted with one talent, even if there were ten clerks and accountants to check on him, he was certain to succeed in embezzling some of it; while the Roman, whether as a magistrate in the office or a general on a campaign, could deal with thousands of talents on his bare word alone, and never a farthing went astray" [3: 32].

By using this word, Paul was recalling the Romans not only to the Christian ethic, but to their own standards of honor in their greatest days.

20. WITHOUT NATURAL AFFECTION (astorgos). "Storgos" was the special Greek word for family love. In Paul's day when a baby was born the child was taken and laid at the feet of the father. If the father picked up the child it meant that he acknowledged it. If he turned away and left it, the child was literally thrown out. There was never a night when there were not thirty or forty abandoned children left in the Roman forum. Every night babies were thrown away. The natural bond of affection had been destroyed.

For decades there has been a problem in America with fathers abandoning wife and children. In recent years, we have seen a modern phenomena. Wives and mothers are walking off and leaving their husbands and children with no more reason than they just don't want to be married any more. During the Christmas season of 1988 there were numerous reports of child abuse in one area in a two or three day period. It was disturbing to see that the majority of those charged with the abuse were the mothers of the abused children. That is not natural affection.

There was another area in which the natural bond of affection was broken. Homosexuality (discussed earlier) was wide spread. "Society from top to bottom was riddled with unnatural vice. Fourteen out of the first fifteen Roman Emperors were homosexuals" [3: 25].

21. PITILESS (aneleemon). This was a time when human life was so cheap. The slave could be killed or tortured by his master, for the slave was only a possession. It is told that in a wealthy household a slave stumbled and broke a glass while carrying in a tray of crystal. There and then his master had him thrown alive into the fish pond in the courtyard where savage lampreys tore him

limb from limb and devoured his flesh. This was the age of the infamous gladiatorial games where people found their delight in seeing men kill each other. Recreation involved watching men slaughtered by wild animals. There was no mercy in Rome, or very little at best.

This was an age when people committed all manner of vile acts and approved them in others. They encouraged others to sin.

1:32. This verse summarizes 1:18-31, and provide a transition into the next division of thought. The Gentiles reveled in all the sins listed in verses 29-31, and approved the same depravity in others. This marked the death of the capacity for shame. It is interesting that reprobates of every age boldly proclaim this as enlightenment. This is particularly true in America with reference to adultery, abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering, and homosexuality. The unregenerate person is worthy of death. He is guilty of sin and the sentence of death has already been handed down (John 3:18-20).

IS GOD FAIR?

Before leaving this section it would be appropriate to consider the often repeated question(s): Is it fair for God to condemn those who have not heard the Gospel? How can a loving God condemn those who have never heard the truth? How can a loving God cast the poor ignorant heathen into an eternal hell? Roy B. Zuck deals with this issue in an article published in the *Kindred Spirit* (Dallas Theological Seminary, Winter, 1994) [33: 14f]. He asks:

How can a loving God let people go to hell if they have never heard of Christ and therefore cannot consciously turn to Him? Isn't it unfair to bar people from heaven if they are living up to the light they have?

It is imperative that all Christians, and missionaries in particular, understand this. Evangelical missionaries operate under the Scriptural principle that people without Christ are lost and that there is "no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12 NIV). Zuck deals with the basic principles regarding this doctrine as they appear in the Book of Romans.

1. People are lost not because they haven't heard of Christ or haven't received Him but because they are sinners [33: 14]. Of course, this is the point of this section - to prove that all people are sinners. "Jews and Gentiles are all under sin" (Rom. 3:9), and all the world...accountable to God" (3:10). "Death spread to all men because all sinned" (5:12b). With these verses before him Zuck concludes:

Therefore any person who goes to hell does so because he is a sinner. Whether he has heard of Jesus has absolutely nothing to do with his lost condition! Granted, if God condemned a person to hell simply because he hadn't heard of Christ, that would be the height of

injustice. But that is not the basis of eternal judgment.

Also if a person is lost only after he has rejected Christ, then it follows that those who have never heard of Him and therefore have never rejected Him would not be lost! In fact they would be better off if missionaries never came and told them of Christ [33: 14].

Following his line of logic we would be forced to conclude that it would be grossly unfair of God to send missionaries to them (which would be an illogical conclusion).

2. No one lives up to the light he has, and even if he did that wouldn't save him [33: 14]. In the Old Testament a person's faith was to be in Yahweh (Jehovah); and since the coming of Christ his faith must be in Him. "Faith in Yahweh-Christ is the only way any person can ever be saved in any period in history" [33: 14].

As Vernon Mortenson, former general director of The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM), wrote in his tract, "Lostness": "Experience in TEAM is that no one has ever reported finding anyone in any tribe or nation who has given evidence of being God's child apart from receiving the Gospel. Yes, some are conscious of spiritual hunger, and some have been convinced of the error of their heathen religion, even as Socrates rejected the validity of the Greek deities, but such knowledge has fallen far short of that which is the minimum requirement for salvation" [33: 14].

Zuck anticipates the follow-up question: Can't people who have not heard of Christ be saved by living up the light of natural revelation? He answers:

No. Natural revelation gives people knowledge of God's presence, eternal power, deity, and goodness. People know these things by creation (Rom. 1:19, 21; Acts 14:17) and by their conscience (Rom. 2:14-15). But natural revelation is not enough to save; it is enough to show people that God exists and is powerful and that they must turn to Him [33: 14].

3. People suppress the knowledge of God which they have through natural revelation. "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness" (Rom: 12:18 NIV). Everyone refuses natural revelation and chooses sin. "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away... there is no one who does good, not even one" (Rom. 3:10-12 NIV).

The justice and judgment of God are fully equitable when seen against the light of man's rejection of God (1:21-22), and his sin and pleasure in it (1:24-32) [33: 15].

Zuck also considers the question, "Isn't the worship of pagans an evidence of their seeking after God?" He responds:

An affirmative answer to this question would clearly contradict Romans 3:11 "No one...seeks God" (NIV). Actually worship in the world's religions is evidence that people are afraid of God. Their worship, rituals, and man-made religions represent an effort to appease Him and to offset His anger [33: 1].

Some will object by saying: "The heathen are ignorant and don't know any difference, therefore God is unfair to hold them responsible." However, the unsaved are willingly ignorant of God. They suppress the knowledge of God (Rom. 1:18) and abandon Him from their knowledge (1:28) [33: 15].

So, how lost are the heathen? Totally lost. Is there any possibility that they can be saved without Christ? No. Is God unfair. Never. God is love. He is the God of grace and mercy and He sent His only begotten Son to die a horrible death on the Cross for our salvation. That is more than fair. Yet, He is a holy God and the holiness of God demands punishment of sin. Instead of complaining that God is unfair for condemning sinners who reject His salvation, we should rejoice in His love and thank Him that He loved us enough to offer us so glorious a salvation.

C. The Jews Condemned with the Law, 2:1-29.

1. God judges according to truth, 2:1-5.

2:1 - WITHOUT EXCUSE. The 21 vices Paul listed in 1:29-31 spell out in large enough letters for all to see the depravity of the pagan society. The Jew felt that a part of his righteousness was in condemning others (Luke 18:11; Gal. 2:15). He set himself up as a qualified judge on moral behavior. He learned to hate what God hates without learning to love what God loves. He knows what is right and what is wrong and condemns Gentiles for doing wrong. He would never approve the sins of the Gentiles. In fact, he condemned them vehemently. But he did not keep the law of which he boasted and in which he took great pride. The average Jew could not imagine a Gentile being saved, or a Jew perishing. The Jew believed that everyone was destined for judgment except himself.

MAN (in the generic sense). The term is inclusive of all Jews. This singular word personalizes all

the Jews as one man, showing them as united in one voice in their condemnation of Gentiles.

THOU CONDEMNEST THYSELF. He who condemns any sin in anyone must condemn it is everyone, including himself. To condemn stealing one must condemn theft in everyone. In condemning Gentile sins, he sentences himself because he commits the same sin. In approving God's wrath upon Gentiles he sentences himself to the same divine judgment. This tendency on the part of the Jews to applaud God's judgment upon others while expecting favored treatment for themselves had a long history (see Amos).

PRACTICE THE SAME THING. Paul does not mean that the sins of the Jews were exactly the same as the sins of the Gentiles, but that they were guilty of many of the most vile sins of the Gentiles. The Gentile is without excuse according to 1:18-32. The Jew is much more without excuse because he commits the same sins, sinning against the greater light.

2:2 - WE KNOW. The word used for "know" here means to perceive with the eyes and denotes eye witness in contrast to knowledge imparted from others. We may know from personal observation that God's judgment is according to truth. Anyone with eyes can see this.

A man in a former pastorate had one glass eye. His name was Billy Mack. His father was in St. Francis Medical Center in Monroe, Louisiana, and he and his brother, Woody, were visiting him. The father was under the influence of medication imagined he saw things which he could not point out to anyone else. He asked Woody, "Do you see those little concrete men walking on top of that building over there?" Woody tactfully assured him that he did not see them. Billy Mack was just standing there, listening to the conversation as his father continued insisting that there were concrete men walking around on the roof of another building.

Frustration was beginning to show as the patient pressed the issue. Finally, with greater intensity, he said, "Woody, anybody with one eye and half sense can see that!" Woody turned to his brother and asked, "Billy Mack, do you see them." Billy Mack told me the story. He saw humor in it but realized that someone else might have been offended.

Some time later, for the first and only time in my life I heard myself (from the pulpit) say, "now anybody with one eye and half sense can see that." Out of the corner of my eye I could see Billy Mack smile and I knew that if I looked at him we both would laugh and that others who knew the story would, too.

Paul does not go that far, but he does say that anyone with eyes can see that God judges according to truth. Since Paul is so positive, the student of the Word should pause to ask himself if he has observed the judgment of God according to truth.

THE JUDGMENT OF GOD. His judgment is according to truth in contrast to man's judgment which is inconsistent and faulty. The time of wrath (1:18) is both present and indefinite. The presence of the article here stresses something definite. "The Judgment" is a special and final occasion for the pouring out of God's wrath in all its fullness. This judgment is future, full, and

final" [17: 63]. This is the Great Judgment Day (see Matt. 25:34=41).

The absence of the article in 1:18 shows the nature of the wrath. The presence of the article here stresses the personality of the Judge. The Judge is a Person. "The personal sinner shall be tried personally before the Personal Judge - the great Jehovah, fearful as a lion, loving as a father, judging according to truth" [17 - 64].

ACCORDING TO TRUTH. "Truth" in 1:25 referred to God (the reality of God). Here it refers to man (Jews in particular). In this verse truth refers to the actual condition or inner reality of the man judged. God will judge according to inner reality, not some hypocritical profession. He will judge according to reality, not formality. In the Great Judgment Day no sentence will be passed on the basis of anything external or outward. Salvation will not rest upon ceremonies, form, ritual, church membership, baptism, race or national origin. "Formal sanctity cannot hide secret sins from His all seeing eye" [17: 64].

For further study on the subject of what God will consider in His judgment, see I Samuel 16:7ff. For further study on the subject of reality, spend some time studying the work of Francis Shaeffer, one of the great conservative theologians of the Twentieth Century.

2:3 - AND REASONETH THOU THIS. Verse 2 states that God's judgment will be according to truth. This verse asks, "Do you think you who know right and practice evil can escape God's one and only method of judgment, which is according to truth?" God had dealt with the Jews with unusual mercy, but this had placed them under greater obligation.

2:4 - OR. This little word holds the question of verse 3 in mind and then introduces another question. "This little word blockades every avenue of escape and brushes away every excuse, and demands a confession to one question or the other as the only alternative for the Jews" [17: 66].

DESPISETH. Literally, to think down. The important thing is that they thought. They did not despise God's mercy through ignorance. Their action grew out of moral reasoning. The sin of the Jews is rebellion against God's plan and purpose for them. They did not despise God's favor, but they did despise the purpose in His favors.

God had a special plan for the Jews. He wanted to lead them to salvation in Himself and to use them to reach others for Him. They rejected His purpose for them. Jews, with some notable exceptions, still reject His claim on their lives. The Jews were clearly taught what God wanted them to do, but they despised His plan. They were to be a light to the Gentiles, but they hated the Gentiles.

This has an application for today. Millions despise the mercy and grace of God. They might never admit that they despise God or His favors, but they refuse to trust Jesus and follow Him. They reject His church, mock His ministers, grieve His Spirit and ridicule His Word. They cannot plead innocence or ignorance. Their attitude might be that they were negligent or that they didn't know

any better. But God sees it differently. They despise (think down upon Him and His favors).

Men breath His air and despise His Spirit. They eat food He had given them and reject the Bread of Life. They drink water He had made available and rejected the One Who offers "rivers of living water." They enjoy the benefits of the rain He sends on the just and the unjust, and then violate His Day and profane His name. They take the life He has given and squander it on things that dishonor Him. They are not ignorant, they are wicked and rebellious.

THE RICHES OF HIS GOODNESS...FORBEARANCE. Forbearance shows the magnitude of God's goodness toward man. Goodness refers to God's special beneficent favor in contrast to penal justice. "Forbearance" show delay in punishment. "Long-suffering" denotes the patient duration of time in the forbearance, and further reveals God as suffering rather than punishing [17: 67].

God is not an insensitive judge who simply sits back and dishes out justice. He is a loving Father who suffers when His people sin. His judgment is not simply an impulsive reaction. He suffers for His people, but sin must be punished. It is His very nature to react with wrath against sin. The mercy of God means that He suffers with His people. The holiness of God demands punishment of sin. He finds no pleasure in the death or punishment of human beings.

I remember once trying to explain to my older son why I had to punish him for breaking some rule (I do not remember what he had done, and I have no desire to remember). I said, "Son, if I did not love you so much I would not care what kind of person you are and I would not care what kind of person you become. But because I do care, I must punish you. I love you too much to ignore this." After I spanked him I know it bothered me more than it did him. He never knew how much it hurt me. We are insensitive to God's feelings. He suffers when we sin and when we are punished.

UNTO. Here we see the purpose of His goodness and forbearance - to induce people to repentance and salvation.

2:5 - ACCORDING TO ... This shows cause. Hardness and impenitent is the cause of the wrath of God. Judgment will be just, because it will be according to, or in proportion to, the hardness of their hearts. Scarcely any truth in the Bible needs more emphasis today than the certain fact of divine judgment. The day of wrath is coming in which judgment will be meted out in keeping with truth and reality.

BUT. The conjunction shows contrast between what God desired and what actually happened. He wanted to save them but their rejection demanded wrath and judgment.

HARDNESS AND IMPENITENT HEART. This shows not just the practice of the heart but the nature of the heart. God's bounty hardened their hearts when it should have softened them. "Impenitence" is the source of the "hardness." Sin is serious, but it is impenitence that hardens the heart (or, better, the sin of impenitence).

"Heart" is the center of all moral and spiritual understanding, emotion, will and activity.

TREASUREST UP. The accumulated wrath stands in contrast to His "goodness" in verse 4. They refused His goodness, and now they have to face His wrath. The Jews are to be condemned for accumulated sins. Accumulated sins bring accumulated wrath.

Lost people today are accumulating the wrath against the Day of Judgment. If they continue to refuse His Grace, there is nothing left for them but face His wrath. Their hearts are hardened by their impenitence. As they persist in impenitence, they accumulate for themselves the wrath of God. Hell may not be a popular subject. It is a neglected subject, but it is still a reality (Rev. 20-21).

TO THYSELF. This points to man as the party responsible for the wrath. It is not God Who sends men to hell. He takes the initiative in trying to save people and any person who goes to hell is going to have to stumble over God's blessings and climb over His favors all the way. An American, especially in the so-called Bible Belt, will have to trample under foot the Bible, the Holy Spirit's work on his behalf, the church, the lives and testimonies of Christian people, all of God's creation, scientific discoveries, and common sense in order to go to hell. Man must assume responsible for his action.

God takes the initiative in salvation, but man takes the initiative in wrath. In fact, salvation grows out of what God is in Himself, and the judgment grows out of what man is in himself.

2. God judges according to works, 2:6-10.

2:6 - ACCORDING TO WORKS. "According to truth" denotes the presence of sin. "According to works" points the practice of sin. "Works" does not contradict 'truth.' Truth shows the nature and works stem from the nature. The Jew wanted to be judged on the basis of privilege, when God "will render to every man according to his works."

2:8 - CONTENTIONS. Factions. The verb form means to engage in strife or to disturb harmony. Some things in our society demand that someone make some waves, but what does this verse tell us about those who "make waves" just because they like to see people in rough water? Which news commentator is rewarded by the network today, the one who tries to promote harmony or the one who rocks the boat?

OBEY NOT THE TRUTH. They would not be persuaded. They were not persuaded by truth, but they were easily persuaded by immorality. Today this is called "cool," or "really living" today. All God's blessings were received, but He was rejected. He could do nothing to win them, but it did not take much persuasion to get them to be immoral.

INDIGNATION AND WRATH. "Wrath" is God's anger held in subjection to some degree. "Indignation" is the occasional outburst in execution. Wrath is His anger somewhat at rest.

Indignation (thumos) is an outburst of anger. Wrath (ogre) is anger within and indignation is anger boiling over [Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible].

2:9 - TRIBULATION AND ANGUISH. The first word stresses punishment and the second, suffering. Indignation and wrath are the divine side of judgment, while tribulation and anguish are the human side. The first two words show cause and the last two show effect.

UPON EVERY SOUL OF MAN. Anguish of the soul is much more serious than anything the body can feel. All the suffering that can be imposed is not to be compared with the torment of the soul when it is exposed to the wrath and indignation of a holy and righteous God.

One might assume that if this truth could be conveyed to people today, there would be a great awakening as the masses repented of sin and turned to Jesus Christ in faith. If such a movement should happen it would turn this world up side down. Factories would stop, manufacturers would have machinery running wild (or closed down), traffic would suddenly come to a halt, and the printing presses would all stop. But when they all started back up this would be a different world - economically, politically, socially, physically and emotionally.

The simple fact is, they have received the word. They do know. It is clearly stated in the book that has outsold all other books in the history of mankind. God has done everything that is necessary to warn people of the tribulation and anguish they face if they do not repent. He has called pastors, missionaries and evangelists to proclaim the warning. Those who continue in sin are not sinning through ignorance. They have been warned and they stubbornly resist God and cling to sin and false religion. This compounds their sin and it intensifies the judgment they face.

Since we cannot imagine the despair of the soul exposed to the wrath of God here and now (we have no way to measure its depth), it is difficult to try to imagine what hell is like. A lot of old time evangelists and many modern preachers have been accused of misrepresenting the Bible in reference to hell. Many explanations of hell may well be too shallow or off target, but to the man who goes to hell, no description could be sufficient to convey the anguish. Ray P. Rust, former Executive Director of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, and former pastor of First Baptist Church, Bastrop, Louisiana made a statement at an associational meeting this writer has never forgotten. He said, "Whatever hell is, it is man's rejecting God and having his wish granted forever."

DOETH EVIL. Literally, working down, exhausting. They carried evil to its consummation. They pushed it to its limits, they exhausted themselves in their sins.

TO THE JEW FIRST. The Gentile will have his place in the judgment, but the Jew will precede him.

2:10 - ALSO TO THE GENTILE. This whole thought must have been shocking to the Jew. The thought that first place in reward of glory, honor and peace will just as easily go to the Gentile

when he surpasses the Jew in righteousness must have been disturbing. The suggestion that they (Jews) would be first in judgment was too much for the Jew who had been led to believe that every circumcised Jew would be spared eternal judgment.

3. God judges without respect of persons, 2:11-15.

2:11. God makes no distinction between nations or ethnic groups. The general meaning here is that God does not have judicial regard for any of the characteristics that aid men in distinguishing one man from another. There is a realm of thought and a perspective beyond human comprehension. God sees the heart. The very best we can do is try to read a few of the signs indicating what the heart is like. Nationality or race, social position, wealth, or power will not even enter the picture.

2:12 - AS MANY AS. This does not teach universalism. It does not apply universally, but to individual cases. Possession of the law will not help in the judgment.

2:13 - NOT THE HEARERS. The mere hearing of the law affords no protection in the judgment. There is no virtue in hearing the law if the hearer is not going to live by it. "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only" (James 1:22).

There were potential advantages to the Jew but Paul made it clear that no benefits accrue to the Jews through possessing the law apart from obedience to it. Later, he will deal with the advantages the Jew had. Having the law was an advantage, but only if they made a faith commitment to the God Who gave the law.

THE DOERS OF THE LAW ARE JUST. This does not deny the principle of grace or the theme of this Epistle, which is a faith righteousness ("A man shall live by faith," 1:17b). If a man had never sinned he would be justified by the law, but man is a sinner both by nature and practice. Neither the Jew with the written law, nor the Gentile without it measures up.

The whole of Jewish religion was based on the conviction that the Jews held a special position of privilege and favor in the eyes of God. Here in one stroke, he is abolishing the very foundation of Jewish hope.

2:14 - GENTILES. Absence of the article in Greek suggests an indefinite number. The statement is not universally true of all Gentiles. This is one of the many difficult verses in Paul's writings. He is pointing out that if a Gentile, by nature, keeps the law, even if he does not possess the law, it is a law unto him.

LAW. The word "law" might be used in any of several ways. might refer to the written law as given by Moses, to the oral law, to Torah (the first five books of the Bible) or to the scribal law.

NATURE. This denotes the person as acting from what is natural to him without possessing the written law.

ARE A LAW UNTO THEMSELVES. McBeth claims that the absence of the article holds this law inferior to the written law; but never the less, law. There is but one law from God. Gentiles had a limited knowledge revealed inwardly, but the Jews had it in writing as well as special instruction in the law.

2:15 - THE WORK. The singular indicates individual cases rather than a universal rule.

HEART. This is the seat of man's nature and therefore the source of his conduct. Paul is not saying that the law in the hearts will save the Gentiles. He is saying that it will not save them. But he says it will come just as near saving them as the Mosaic law will to saving the Jews.

CONSCIENCE. Paul points to the conscience as proof of the inner law of the Gentiles but he does not claim that the conscience will save. This does not mean that the "conscience is an accurate guide as to what is right and wrong, but it means that every man has an inborn moral capacity, so that he has moral responsibility" [2: 31].

Man's conscience can be dulled by sin. It can be so programmed as to call good evil and evil good (Isaiah 5:20f). You can put some rocks with sharp corners and rough edges into a tumbler with grinding compound and tumble them for several days and take them out and the rocks will be smooth. The corners and the rough places will have been worn away by the action of the tumbler and the grinding (or polishing) compound. The conscience can be shaped by one's environment and by one's peers. The conscience, like a tape recorder, may say only what it has been programmed to say.

The conscience may or may not be a good guide, but it will never take the place of the Holy Spirit as our guide. You can depend on the Holy Spirit but you cannot depend on your conscience unless it echoes the voice of the Holy Spirit. Some people say, "Let your conscience be your guide." That is not always the best advice, even for the unsaved, because if his conscience is out of focus with the laws of his society, he can get into a lot of trouble following his conscience. The conscience is certainly not the best guide for the Christian. The conscience is not infallible, but the Word of God is.

WITNESS TOGETHER WITH. Corroboration between inner testimony and external evidence is the idea.

4. God judges according to the Gospel, 2:16.

There is a day set when God will "judge the secrets of men," and when that time comes He will judge each person by Jesus Christ "according to the Gospel."

5. God judges according to the Light, 2:17-25.

Men are judged according to the light they have. The Gentiles are subject to the judgment even though they did not have the law.

2:17 - THOU. This identifies the Jew as the defenseless man of 2:1 and the condemned man facing judgment in 2:3. The Jew relies upon the law but does not practice it. "The law was given to them, but they have not kept it. They hide behind it rather than demonstrate it" [2: 31].

JEW. This was the national name for God's people. This title denotes a people whose history is a record of God's dealings with man. The Jews derived their name from their ancestor, Judah (Heb. Yehudah), whose name is associated in the Old Testament with the word "yadah," meaning "praise." [19: 178].

BEAREST A NAME. This indicates that their name was superior to any other national name.

RESTETH UPON. The Jew rests, (leans, reclines) upon the law for the assurance of salvation. "The verb part means to restrain, to cease, to leave off. Their rest was not a peaceful trust in the law, but a cessation which was equivalent to violation" [17: 80].

A lot of people seem to be resting in a name. "I'm a Baptist." "I'm a Catholic." "I belong to the Church of Christ." Any witness hears these claims on a regular basis. Ask someone if he is a Christian and he responds, "I go to the Church of God." Leonard Ravenhill said in a taped message, "I have stopped asking people, 'are you a Christian?' and started asking, 'Does Jesus live in your heart?'" [31: Video Dynamics, BE16).

Many people are trusting in some ritual or ordinance rather than trusting in Jesus Christ. They will point to Baptism, church membership, or identify themselves with a Christian home to prove their salvation. I led a BSU mission trip from Mississippi College to the Hinds County jail in Jackson every Thursday for about two and one-half years. Many experiences are still very clear in my mind. One concerns a twelve year old boy named Rocky. When I asked Rocky if he had ever trusted Jesus for salvation, he responded, "Yeah, I was baptized when I was a baby. No matter how I approached it, that was the answer I got, "I'm a Christian. I was baptized when I was a baby." I have heard that many times since then, but that was the first time anyone ever said that to me. I will never forget my burden for Rocky.

What pastor, or other witness, has not visited a person who never attends worship services anywhere, but will tell anyone that he is a Christian? On what does he base his hope? "I was baptized in old Mount Pisgah Baptist Church when I was just a boy. When asked why he did not

move his membership when he moved from there sixty years ago and he will say something like, "My mother and daddy are buried there and my grand parents helped that little church. That's where my heart is and I could never move my membership. That's where I want to be buried."

BOASTETH IN GOD. The word is used in such a way as to show selfish boasting rather than glorifying God. This boasting grew out of pride and not out of gratitude. Some people act and speak in such a way that you know they love the Lord. There are others who boast about what they do or boast about their church in such a way that causes one to fear for their soul's salvation. Some brag about their local church, their pastor, their budget, their baptisms. They seem to find special pleasure in doing this when they are talking with someone from a much smaller church.

As a Baptist, the writer will speak of Baptists. Baptists can be very big on nickels and noses. Both nickels and noses are important because they represent people who are reached for the Lord and trained for His services and the resources for carrying out the Lord's Great Commission. But it is possible for a pastor or layperson to boast of these things rather than giving the Lord the credit. If one acknowledges God as the source of all these things, it will produce humility, not pride.

When I was still young in the ministry, I visited in our many homes in one small city. On a number of occasions, the people I visited had company and I still remember the condescending tone and the understanding smile when some "little old lady" would say, "You have such a nice little church. We go to First Church." Her expression said it all. I also remember that you never heard the "r" in either first of church!

Being a member of a small church does not make you a small Christian. Being a member of a big church does not make one a big Christian. Let me add that I have often seen more pride in small churches than in many with larger memberships. Many people today, like these ancient Jews, boast of a special relationship with God based on secondary things. They boasted of their special relationship with Him on the basis of the law.

2:18 - THE WILL. His will. God's will is clearly revealed and easily understood. His sovereign will is our guidepost. No human will has authority over another in spiritual matters. No human can serve as mediator between the will of man and the will of God.

In Romans 2:17-29, Paul says there are Jews whose conduct makes the name of God offensive to Gentiles. They spoke of the God of the Jews in uncomplimentary terms because of the conduct of the Jews. Barclay says, "It is simply a fact of history that the Jews were, and often still are, the best hated and most unpopular people in the world" [3: 42f]. He points to some of the attitudes of the Gentiles in New Testament times toward the Jews. "The Gentiles regarded Judaism as a 'barbarous superstition.' They regarded the Jews as 'the most disgusting of races,' and as 'a most contemptible company of slaves' [3: 43].

The origins of the Jewish race were twisted with a malicious ignorance by the Gentiles. Some thought they came from a company of lepers who had been sent to Egypt to work in the sand quarries; and that Moses led the leperous slaves in a revolt and led them through the desert to Palestine.

Some of the Jewish customs were mocked by the Gentiles. Their abstinence from pork was a subject of many jokes by the Gentiles. Certain things which the Jews enjoyed infuriated the Gentiles. But as unpopular as the Jews were, they still received some extraordinary privileges from the Roman government. They were allowed to send temple taxes to Jerusalem each year. The Jews took the temple tax so seriously in Asia that about 60 B.C. the export of currency was prohibited and, according to some historians, no less than twenty tons of contraband gold was seized which the Jews were preparing to send to Jerusalem.

The Jews were allowed a certain amount of self government, especially in Palestine. They also received some concessions about their Sabbath.

There were two special things of which the Jews were accused. (1) They were accused of atheism. "It was the odd fact that the ancient world had great difficulty in conceiving of the possibility of any religion without any visible images of worship" [3 - 44f). Pliny called them "a race distinguished by their contempt for all deities," Tacitus said, "The Jews conceive of their deity as one, by the mind alone... Hence no images are erected in their cities or even in their temples. This reverence is not paid to kings, nor this honor to the Caesars" [3: 45].

(2) They were accused of hatred of their fellow men and complete unsociability. Tacitus said, "Among themselves their honesty is inflexible, their compassion quick to move, but to all other persons they show the hatred of antagonism" [3: 45]. They told all sorts of stories to support their opinion of the Jews. From what Paul writes and from history, we know that the Jews did little to dispel popular Gentile opinions. The Gentiles were of no consequence unless they first accepted the Jewish religion and submitted to circumcision.

Instead of the Jew trying to win the Gentiles to faith in God, they made the name of their God odious to the Gentiles. The Gentiles were prejudiced against the great Jehovah by those who claimed to love Him and abide by His laws. They had to ask, "Are these people really like their God?" Did they get their ways, their peculiarities from Him? Does He feel the same way about Gentiles that the Jews do?

2:19-20. A GUIDE OF THE BLIND. To the Jewish religious leaders the blind, the wayward, the foolish, and the babes were not Gentiles but the mass of the Jews. The Jews never thought it their responsibility to teach Gentiles. Paul is reprimanding the Jews in high places; priests, the scribes, and other leaders. According to God's purpose, however, these four nouns (guide, light, corrector, teacher) do, in fact, describe the role of the Jew among the Gentiles. It is true that the Jews should have been a guide to the blind and a light to the nations, but they did not want anything to do with the Gentiles.

The terms the Jews used for themselves (guide, light, corrector, teacher) are self-praising. All the terms (blind, darkness, foolish, children) applied to others, whether the masses of the Jews or Gentiles, are defaming. If the blind, foolish, etc., applied to Gentiles, then the terms would show the high esteem the Jew held of himself and the low regard he held for the Gentile.

2:21-22. TEACHEST THOU NOT THYSELF. The word "Not" demands an affirmative answer. They must admit that they do not practice what they teach. This is the problem Jesus pointed out in dealing with the Pharisees: "Whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matt. 23:3).

ABHORRING IDOLS. Abhorring carries the idea of physical repulsion, or bodily shrinking in horror of idols. The Jews professed to abhor idols, but liked to plunder heathen shrines (Josephus). Today many professing Christians will try to make a profit off the occult, off astrology, witchcraft and pagan influences on some of our holidays.

2:23. They boasted in the law, but their transgressions showed only contempt for the character expressed in the law. This should serve as a warning to Christians. Allen says:

The non-Christian world knows of our boasting in Christianity. It knows of our profession, our commitment to the teachings of Christ, and so the people of the world expect a demonstration of integrity, purity, and unselfishness. Every failure to live up to the standards of Christians morality becomes occasion for blaspheming Christ on the part of the pagan world. The Christian faith suffers more from the unchristian conduct of Christians than from anything else [2: 33].

2:24. Immoral Jewish conduct gave the impression to the Gentiles that they had a wicked and immoral God. The Gentiles were more consistent for their gods were immoral; their religion, ungodly. The Gentiles practiced those things that are consistent with the nature and character and teachings of their gods and assumed that the Jews were doing the same thing. They concluded, therefore, that the Jewish immorality and lawlessness were consistent with the character of their God.

The Gentile was more consistent. But before criticizing the Jews of Paul's day, what does your life tell others about your God? Suppose all lost men could learn about God is that which your life reveals of Him. Would the lost people who know you have any desire to know your Lord?

2:25. Circumcision was the seal of righteousness by faith. It was a symbol and a symbol is profitable only if you have that for which it is a sign. The seal, circumcision, was profitable only if faith was the substance of the seal. By the time of Paul circumcision had acquired almost absolute value, so much so that it was the supreme shield against Sheol or gehenna (hell). "Some rabbis could not conceive of a Jew going to Gehenna, the place of final punishment for the wicked, until his sign of circumcision had been removed" [19: 177]. Paul does not discount the value of circumcision, provided the external sign is accompanied by inward obedience.

6. God judges according to the heart, 2:26-29.

2:26 - UNCIRCUMCISION. This term refers to the Gentiles. Paul seems to be saying that "a moral Gentile without circumcision excels the immoral Jew with circumcision; and that righteousness without the sign would be better than the sign without the righteousness" [17: 87]. Before we declare this a moot issue today, just think of all the people who get drunk, tell lies, violate the Lord's Day, commit adultery, buy pornography and watch anything they show on television or in the theater, but tell everyone they are Christians because they were baptized when they were infants, or because they belong to a certain church.

Think of those Baptists who believe in "once saved, always saved," but live like the devil himself. The problem is not in the doctrine of Security of Believers, but in their profession. They have succeeded in taking a Biblical doctrine and making it look cheap. God's grace is free, but it is not cheap. It can never be made cheap, but it can be made to appear cheap by a cheap, hypocritical profession and by an ungodly life.

2:27 - JUDGE. The Jew had no moral advantage over the Gentile. Many professing Christians are put to shame by moral non-believers. But we must avoid the thought that the moral lost person will be saved by his works. While a non-Christian may impress the world with his goodness, moral standards, and philosophies, if he rejects Christ he is guilty of a wicked and vile sin. Salvation is not accomplished by man's works, but by the grace of God.

2:28. Being a Jew is a matter of the heart, an inward matter of the spirit. Being a son of Abraham does not make the Jew a child of God. Abraham obtained sonship through faith. Few things in the Bible are more clearly stated than the fact that Abraham was declared just by faith, not works, law, or circumcision.

2:29 - HE IS A JEW WHO IS ONE INWARDLY. Abraham is the father of the faithful. Physical descent does not prove spiritual sonship. But faith makes the believer, whether Jew or Gentile, an immediate son of Abraham.

HEART. Heart contrasts with flesh in verse 28. True circumcision is inward, of the heart. It is the cutting away of the unclean, impure, corruptible and sinful nature.

IN THE SPIRIT AND NOT IN THE LETTER. The two words are contrasted. They are in extreme opposition to one another. "Spirit" cannot mean either the spirit of man or the Holy Spirit. These two words point to the true and false nature of circumcision respectively. "The 'spirit' is the spiritual significance of circumcision; the 'letter' is the outward ceremonial act without meaning" [17: 90].

OUT OF ... FROM...respectively deny man as the author of this inward grace and attribute all the glory to God. He alone can save. Grace robs man of all merit and gives all the glory to God.

D. Objections Anticipated and Answered, 3:1-8.

3:1 WHAT ADVANTAGE THEN? Paul knew the Jews would object to his statements made in the previous chapter. He anticipates the objections and offers an answer. He had encountered the same objections from Jews in other places.

"What then" shows that Paul anticipates their questions. What is the advantage of being a Jew? If Paul is right in claiming the Jews were facing more harsh judgment than Gentiles, would it not be better to be a Gentile? Is it really a blessing to be a Jew? Paul destroys any distinction between the circumcision and the uncircumcision, condemned outward circumcision as no better than unrestrained Gentile depravity and exalted circumcision of the heart above literal circumcision of the flesh. What is the advantage of circumcision? None, if you do not have the faith for which faith is a sign. But there were very real advantages. It might help to ask, "What are the advantages in being born in a Christian land?" There are many.

MUCH EVERY WAY. This does not suggest any one advantage but stresses that the Jew had the advantage at that point in time in every respect.

3:2 - FIRST. Paul mentions one advantage which is preeminent and would head a long list if one chose to make one.

THE ORACLES OF THE GOD. The oracles denote the complete Old Testament. The article with "oracles" shows unity, and with "God" it denotes personality. The Jews had the Scripture, the Word of God. This was an advantage beyond estimate. To see this one only needs to think of the advantages of being reared in a Christian land with ready access to the Word of God at almost any time, day or night. The Jews had been given the Scripture with the strict commission to teach them to their children.

Never has the Word of God been so readily available to man as it is to Americans today. Any American who wants a copy of the Bible can get one. If he cannot afford it someone will give him one. If a person does not read the Bible he either cannot read or does not want to read it.

The Gospel is proclaimed by radio, television and short wave sets around the world. The signals are bounced off satellites to receivers around the world. Millions of New Testaments are given away annually, and Bible tapes permit one to hear the Scripture even as he travels. Video tapes, magazines and various papers proclaim the salvation of God through Jesus Christ as never before. Thousands of ministers would respond to an invitation to preach or teach the Word of God anywhere there is a need. So, there is a distinct advantage in living in America. And with the advantage, a responsibility.

3:3. The second objection is answered.

WHAT IF SOME WERE WITHOUT FAITH... The Greek word translated "unbelief" here should be either unbelief or lack of faith; not unfaithfulness. Unfaithfulness (unrighteousness, immorality) is the result of unbelief. "unbelief" is the nature; while 'unrighteousness' or 'immorality' is the expression of the nature" [17: 95]. The first is what a man is; the second is what he does. Unbelief is not a negative attitude, it is a positive and wicked activity. Unbelief does not lead to ungodliness, it is ungodly.

MAKE. Literally, to walk down, render invalid.

THE FAITH OF GOD. The "faith" of God is contrasted with the "unbelief" of man. Will the unbelief of some abolish God's promise to Israel? The obvious answer is NO! Man's unbelief is no strain on God's faith. God is not dependent upon man for His truthfulness. There is yet a live root in Israel into which the Gentiles can be grafted and receive Israel's promise (John 1:12).

3:4. GOD FORBID. Paul uses this expression of horror at the thought of this question (vs. 3).

TRUE. God is immutable. He always keeps His promise.

LIAR. This "denotes man's unbelief in its final issue with reference to the promise of God" [17 - 97]. Man is branded a liar because it is in him that the promise failed.

3:5. The third objection is answered. Paul anticipates objections from the Jews. They might challenge: Does not the unrighteousness of the Jews become a virtue in that it actually exhibits God's righteousness; and is God justified in punishing them for acts that help establish His righteousness?

COMMENETH means to recommend, to prove, to establish.

OUR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS. This expression is synonymous with "unbelief" in 3:3 and parallel with "every man a liar" in 3:4. This kind of argument may seem strange to the modern reader, but Paul is using the method a rabbi might use in presenting his case. He anticipates the cynical objection some might raise, possibly not because they believed it so much as to refute what Paul is writing.

IS GOD UNRIGHTEOUS. Actually a double negative is used which emphatically denies the question they might ask and demands a negative answer. Their objection would lead to Paul's question which should effectively head off that line of debate.

TAKETH VENGEANCE. Or, "the wrath." Wrath is a better translation of the Greek word (ogre). "The" holds this to be a definite wrath, a consuming wrath. What he is talking about here is

divine wrath (See 2:8 for additional comments on this wrath).

I SPEAK AS A MAN. This expression is added as an apology for such an absurd question. It is inserted to prevent the reader from identifying Paul with this false doctrine. Paul is obviously repulsed by such an irreverent question about the eternal holiness of God. He is simply speaking as the rebellious, irreverent Jew who professed to know God but rejected His Saviour and His law.

Paul is not saying that while the Holy Spirit inspired the writing of most of what he is writing, he personally wrote this and that it was not inspired. He was inspired to write down the absurd, cynical question some of the Jews would ask.

3:6 - GOD FORBID. Paul finds this kind of reasoning unthinkable. An unrighteous God would not be qualified to judge the world according to the standards set forth in the Scripture (According to truth, 2:1-5; according to works, 2:6-10; without respect of persons, 2:11-15).

3:8. Those who follow this line of reasoning will deserve the condemnation they will receive. Good cannot come from evil and sin cannot come from God. Sin never glorifies God. Anyone who thinks such things knows nothing of the holiness of God (See A. W. Tozer, Knowledge of the Holy).

E. The Universal Corruption of Man, 3:9-18.

1. Sin of Character, 3:9-12.

3:9. Paul concludes that he has proved his point. He has them asking, "Have we no hope?" His answer is "None." He states that no one, Jew or Gentile, has any defense. To be "under sin" means that we are all sinners by nature and therefore, justly condemned as sinners before a righteous God. The term points to the reign of sin and the reign of death in man. Paul included himself with those universally condemned.

3:10 - THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS. This is not a new revelation (see Ps. 14:1). The righteous ones are the ones who are just before God, those in a perfect relationship with Him. There is no one! The absence of righteousness in man is universal.

3:11 - UNDERSTANDING. Everyone is destitute of moral and spiritual understanding (Psalm 14:2). Sin has robbed them of the ability to make moral and spiritual discriminations. Jonah said the people of Nineveh "cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand" (Jonah 4:11).

Many professing Christians are destitute of moral understanding. They are constantly saying, "I see no harm in this," or "that's no worse than a lot of things." Some are constantly seeking

ways to do as little for God as possible, and to live as worldly as they can and still be religiously respectable. McBeth says, "The fool might just as reasonably ask how close he can come to the fire and not be burned. Though some may not come close enough to burn, yet they will have upon them the smell of fire - the fires of hell" [17: 103]. McBeth has more to say on the subject:

The Christian cannot serve the Lord and be all the time hunting for the borderline. Why does he want to fine it but to cross over? He cannot be a child of the kingdom and live on the borderline. If the kingdom is in his heart, he will live in the heart of the kingdom, and not on the border. If he loves life he will not want to march up to the borderline of death. If he is satisfied with the home land he will not be seeking strange lands. Many have lived on the border so long that they talk like the children of sin. Many have lived so near the border that they look like the people on the other side [17: 103].

This is especially true in this permissive age. We might add that some even smell like the people on the other side. According to some polls a higher percentage of Americans profess to believe in God than a generation ago, but it is having less impact on their lives.

SEEKING OUT. See Psalm 14:2. The fool has such an affinity for evil he cannot, or will not, seek out God.

3:12 - ALL TURNED ASIDE. Totality is emphasized. All have turned aside. Gentiles knew the right way by the light of conscience (1:19f), and the Jew by the written law (2:17-20). Yet they turn away from Him.

UNPROFITABLE. A man's works will be the same as his nature. A corrupt tree bears corrupt fruit.

2. Sin of speech, 3:13-14.

3:13 - THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN SEPULCHRE. See Psalm 5:9. The Hebrew word used for throat here implies destruction. The word first meant to gape or yawn, and then the term was applied to a yawning abyss or gaping chasm. In time it took on moral significance. The throat is an organ of speech, but the emphasis here is upon the primary function of swallowing. The picture is of an open grave with a putrefying corpse at the bottom of it. The open grave is a description of their nature rather than of their practice, denoting depravity rather than occasional eruption.

WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY HAVE USED DECEIT. Their tongues were "smooth, slick or oily," thus a smooth talker, slick tongued. Flattery, deceit and hypocrisy are stressed.

Here, their speech is contrary to their nature. Their nature is as corrupt as a dead body and ought to have been covered long ago. Their speech appears to be sound, seems to have life in, seems to be the only way to avoid destruction, professes to be the way of life, and a haven instead of a chasm [17: 106].

In a word, they sought to produce fruit that would conceal the nature of the tree. Consider that:

A hypocrite is the vilest when he tries to be the sweetest. They are the most hypocritical when they use flattery. They are the most satanic when they ill garb themselves in the spirit of Christ [17: 107).

THE POISON OF ASPES. An asp is a venomous serpent, the bite of which may be fatal. Without antivenom serum a neurotoxic serpent's bite would be fatal unless the bitten part is immediately cut away. The venom of slander is the thought here. The "poison of asps" points to the most poisonous form of speech, used for the injection of deadly corruption into others. A slanderous tongue identifies one as a child of Satan. It should be remembered that the venom belongs to the one doing the slandering. The one doing the biting is the serpent. We should crush the head of the serpent and treat the victim. Too often in the church we applaud the serpent and crush the head of the victim. Unfortunately, the most popular person in some churches is the one who knows and shares everybody's business. Many people have been hurt by gossip and slander. They are hurt more when the church takes the side of the slanderer without giving them the benefit of a doubt.

A number of years ago someone suggested to me, "when a pastor is accused of being immoral or becoming involved with some woman and it is proved, he ought to be run out of town on a rail. And you preachers ought to contact the state convention and try to keep them from getting another church." I said, "I might go along with you under this one condition: if the man bringing the charges cannot show grounds for the charges, or accusations, then he ought to lose his job and we ought to follow him around to keep him from getting another job in his field. He ought to be forced to leave his home in disgrace and never be able to return. And he ought to be labeled, 'Slanderer.'"

3:14 - MOUTH FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS. See Psalm 10:7. Cursing means profanity. Bitterness points to the anger, hate and strife that too often accompany profanity. Fits of anger is the rule among many people who curse. The heart of the profane person is boiling with bitterness. There are many people who curse when they are not angry. The problem is that when the person who habitually uses profanity becomes angry, or is injured or threatened, the first thing he is likely to do is use profanity. And once he begins to use profanity, the potential for heated arguments and violence is significantly increased.

Any person's troubles may increase with profanity. When individuals are having difficulties there is always the potential for violence, but often times this can be controlled if no profanity is used. When profanity is used feelings that are already running high may be

intensified. Even if violence does not follow, the emotional scars may result that will show for a long time.

Another thought might be added here. Why would a mature person want to use profanity? What does profanity tell you about the person using it? It has been observed that vulgarity (3:13a) is the most obnoxious form of speech. Flattery (3:13b) is the hypocritical form of speech. Slander (3:13c) is the most deadly form of speech. And profanity (3:14) is the most inexcusable form of speech. Furthermore:

There may be temptations for the first three; but there is never a temptation for a person to profane God's holy name. It is characteristic of man to sin by temptation; and it is characteristic of Satan to sin without temptation; therefore, to use profanity is to sin in similitude to the devil [17: 109].

3. The sin of deeds, 3:15-17.

3:15 - FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED INNOCENT BLOOD. The crime of murder heads the list of crimes of violence. Crime is the issue and result of the bitterness and hostile attitude seen in verse 14. Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and then, after his humiliating defeat, his vicious slaughter of the Kurds shows how swift some are to shed innocent blood.

There have been times when men placed little value on human life, but one would think in this "civilized" age more value would be placed on the life of another human being. This is not the case. All you have to do is look at the situation in the Middle East today to see that there are Palestinians who need only the opportunity to kill an Israeli, and when Israel strikes back, they intend to exact a high toll in lives for the offence. This only makes the Palestinians more determined to kill Jews.

Terrorism has been refined and raised to new heights, as terrorists from Lybia and other places seek opportunities to kill Americans and Jews any place in the world they have an opportunity. They bomb planes, buses and cars. They hijack ships and planes and they kill without mercy.

With the influx of Haitian refugees and the arrival of Cuban criminals in Florida and New York, crimes of violence is demanding special task forces try to cope with this new element. According to reports, many criminals rob places and know when they enter they are going to kill people. They kill for the pleasure of killing, and not because they feel threatened.

Various books, movies and television programs on organized crime have made Americans aware of how quickly the feet of many of these people run to shed blood. Add the serial killer to the list and we realize the application this has for America.

For a number of years we have been reminded of the six million Jews killed by Hitler and his Nazi Party in Germany. Unfortunately, we are not reminded often enough that Hitler may have

killed as many as fifteen million people. Someone needs to cry out for the forty to sixty million Stalin and his other Communist cohorts slaughtered in Russia. Millions more were killed by Chairman Mao and his followers when the Communists took over in China. The same applies to Communist regimes everywhere (including Cuba and Nicaragua in the Western Hemisphere).

There is every reason to believe there would have been a blood bath in America if the Communists had taken over here before Mikhail Gorbochev came to power. And that was their goal. Americans should never be deceived; Communism is not dead. It is alive in China and in the hearts of hard liners in the old Soviet countries. Leaders should seek peace and arms control, but always be alert. The folks with the olive branch in their hand have a trail of blood behind them that is unparalleled in history. The dropping of toy bombs to maim and cripple children in Afghanistan should not be forgotten. If hard liners get their way we may see a return to those atrocities.

Today certain elements of the New Age Movement tell us they are planning to purify or cleanse the earth when they take over. What they mean by cleansing the earth is killing Christians and Jews (monotheists).

3:16 - DESTRUCTION AND MISERY. Destruction is objective, and misery is subjective. One, (destruction) refers to external punishment. The other, Misery, refers to internal suffering, remorse, agony of soul. Serial murderers, rapist, child molesters, drug dealers and other criminals have left such a wake of destruction and misery behind them that many people are calling for special assistance for victims of these crimes in the United States. The criminal often gets more sympathy and help than his victim.

3:17 - THE WAY OF PEACE HAVE THEY NOT KNOWN. The "way" that leads to peace is the opposite of the ways that lead to destruction and misery. "They have not known" refers to experiential knowledge. They have never known the reality of inner peace.

4. The source of these sins, 3:18.

3:18 - FEAR OF GOD. The lack of fear of, or reverence for God, is the source of the sins named in 3:10-17. When one surveys the social conditions, the political scene, the moral laxity in America today, these words seem to leap from the page at the reader. As Paul said, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." This is a sad but true commentary on most Americans today.

You may have noticed the careless, even cynical was many comedians and actors in television programs treat the name of God today. The American Family Association monitors television programs carefully and report monthly their evidence that Christianity is almost always presented in a negative light. According to recent reports, even the courts have been convinced that public school text books have presented a very false picture of religion in the history of America.

When people use God's name in vain, His Day for profit and pleasure and His title for their own personal use, they show that they have no fear of God in their hearts. What about the people

who burglarize a church building, sell their drugs on the church parking lot and throw their beer cans on the church lawn? There are reports of all kinds of sins that are committed in church facilities.

F. These Old Testament Condemn the Jews (Those Under the Law), 3:19-20.

3:19 - WE KNOW. This is knowledge received by eye-witness. We can figure this out by observation. Paul has already made a case for this conclusion. Any astute believer can find evidence for it all around if he learns from what he observes.

WHAT THINGS SOEVER. This means just what it says: anything. Whatsoever particular thing is said anywhere in the Jewish Scripture speaks directly to the Jews. The whole law, being a unit, condemns them. Paul allows no avenue of escape. All stand condemned before God because all are guilty. The inspired Word is presented this way in order that every mouth be stopped. They are without defense and without excuse. There can be no rationalization.

3:20. This verse explains why the whole world is silenced by judgment. (1) The law cannot save. (2) The law can only reveal sins and bring judgment.

JUSTIFIED. The word means accounted righteous, pronounced righteous, declared righteous; but never to be righteous, nor to be made righteous. Spiros Zodhiates has a lengthy discussion in his Lexicon to the New Testament in the Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible. He says the word (dikaioo) means to "bring out that which a person is... To bring out the fact that a person is righteous." [17: 1682]. It means to recognize, or set forth one as righteous. It is not the act of making one righteous. That is regeneration.

FLESH. This means the unregenerated human nature in all its corruption and depravity. 'For by (through the instrument) of the law is the knowledge of sin' is the clearest statement in the Bible as to the purpose of the law. A person may look into a mirror and see that his face is dirty, but he would be foolish to attempt to correct the problem by washing the face in the mirror. The office of the law is not that of salvation, but conviction, prosecution, death. "Knowledge" here is personal experience.

SIN. The word means missing the mark and denotes natural depravity. This does not point to sinful acts, but to the sinful nature. The law reveals not only sinful acts, but also the sinful nature of man.

SUMMARY OF THE SECTION

1. God revealed Himself to the Gentiles through nature (1:19-20) and conscience (2:14-15). He revealed Himself to the Jews through the law (2:12,17, 18, 20). God's revelation of Himself established the basis of their responsibility before Him.
2. Both the Gentiles and the Jews rebelled against God. The Gentiles rebelled blatantly and shamelessly (1:29-32). The Jews maintained a hard and impenitent heart (2:5) while professing a right relationship to Him (2:17-24).
3. God judges all men impartially.
4. All men are guilty before God because all have sinned against Him. All have sinned and all need His salvation. All are under the power of sin and all need His deliverance. There are no exceptions.

This section gives us a background for Paul's wonderful declaration of God's grace in 3:21-5:21 (THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION).

II. THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION, 3:21-5:21.

A. The Nature of Justification, 3:21-26.

3:21 - BUT NOW. Paul resumes the discussion of the basic thesis of the Epistle to the Romans (1:17).

WITHOUT THE LAW. Separate from the law. There is not one law that can impart righteousness. Law has no part in salvation, works no part in righteousness. Righteousness is a faith righteousness.

A RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. Or, a divine righteousness. We are saved by His righteousness. We do not have any! God requires righteousness, but He must produce it. Any righteousness man receives is that which is imputed unto him by God through faith. It is important for the lost person to understand that he receives God's righteousness through faith, and it is important for the believer to understand that he lives in righteousness only by faith.

HATH BEEN MANIFESTED. The perfect tense shows past accomplishment with present and future benefits. It is made clear that the law cannot save and that only God's righteousness can. That righteousness is imputed unto each believer by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8).

WITNESSED BY THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS. The righteousness of God is not opposed to the law; it is the fulfillment of the testimony of both the law and the prophets. It is the nature of prophecy to be in perfect harmony with God's righteousness. The law "demands justice,

the prophecy promises mercy, but it is on the cross of Jesus where justice and mercy meet" [17 - 118].

3:22 - EVEN. But. Having stated that we are saved by God's righteousness, he now reveals faith as the method whereby the righteousness of God is appropriated to the individual. It is faith in Jesus Christ that saves. Man must have faith in Jesus. We must embrace Him in faith. The faith that saves is a faith that involves total commitment. Intellectual knowledge is not enough.

There are some who profess to believe in God who do not accept Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. Such a faith is inadequate. It will never save. Denial of Christ is proof they do not believe in God Who sent His Son, Who testified to the authenticity of His Sonship, and speaks in His Son (Heb. 1:2).

3:23 - FOR ALL HAVE SINNED. Or, for all sinned (past tense). This refers specifically to the sinful nature in man. The tense denotes an act as an historic fact. McBeth says this refers to Adamic sin in every man. Sin entered the human race through Adam and man does have a sinful nature, but each individual is responsible for his own sin. In other words, while we inherited a sinful nature from Adam, we cannot use Adam for a scapegoat and transfer responsibility for our sins to him. We are guilty; we have a sinful nature and have committed sinful acts. The first part of the verse shows the character of man and the second part reveals the issue of sin.

This verse is often used in witnessing to lost people. This is a good starting place, because man must recognize his need for a Saviour before he will call on the Lord. All have sinned. He does not have to sit down and list all his sins, nor categorize them. It is the sinful nature which must be confessed, the fact of sin (the condition of sin).

FALL SHORT. They all continue to fall short of the glory of God. This is a present reality. All men are continually falling short of God's glory. All have sinned (past tense) and all continually fall short of the glory of God (present tense). This stresses to the lost person his sinful condition and his need for the Saviour. It also stresses to the Christian the fact that falling short of the perfect will of God for his life is sin and sin must be confessed (I John 1:9).

THE GLORY OF GOD. The article with both "glory" and "God" shows the glory that belongs to the personal God. Man falls short of something God possesses but man does not. It does not emanate from man to God: God has that in which man is deficient.

The root meaning of "glory" is value. Glory does not mean praise. Man falls short of the "value" of the Personal God. It is the righteousness of God that man does not have.

3:24. In verses 24-25 Paul seeks to describe what God has done for sinful men through Jesus Christ His Son. He uses three metaphors. Each provides a helpful glimpse of the cross but neither is capable of telling the whole story. Neither metaphor should be isolated in such a way that we erect a whole system of theology around it.. Every metaphor has its limits. All metaphors do not have the

same capacity to communicate the meaning of the cross but all are effective in helping us understand the cross. It should also be noted that these metaphors do not describe progressive steps to be achieved in a sequence. The metaphors are:

1. Metaphor of the courtroom (They are justified).
2. The metaphor of slavery (redemption).
3. The metaphor of ritual sacrifice (propitiation or expiation).

3:24 - BEING JUSTIFIED FREELY. The righteousness of God is free to the believer. It is an unmerited gift. Justification means to be declared just, or pronounced just, as in a courtroom.

REDEMPTION. This verse reveals how this righteousness can be free to man. The word denotes a release by payment of a ransom, a deliverance upon the ransom payment, and redemption at ransom cost. It refers to unconditional acquittal upon payment of the ransom. The believer is redeemed by Christ's shedding His life blood for the ransom of man. God had to bankrupt heaven in order to save a wretched sinner.

Redemption points to the ransom provided in Christ. It's basic idea is ransom, or the price paid for the liberation of a slave. It denotes emancipation or deliverance. Its major emphasis is not the payment of a price, but simply emancipation. This verse states that salvation is free but the main emphasis here is on the cost of man's salvation. It is free to man but it cost God the most precious thing He had, the highest price ever paid for anything.

3:25 - PROPITIATION. Satisfying, covering, appeasing, mercy seat. Zodhiates provides a background:

Lid or covering of the Ark of the Covenant...before which the high priest was to sprinkle the blood of expiatory sacrifices on the great day of atonement, and where the Lord promised to meet His people (Ex. 25:17, 22; 29:42; 30:36; Lev. 16:2, 14, 15). Paul, by applying this name to Christ in Rom. 3:25, assures us that Christ was the true mercy seat, the reality of the cover of the Ark of the Covenant (Heb. 9:5) [30: 1699].

The coverig is translated "mercy-seat" in Hebrews (that is, the lid or the covering of the Ark of the Covenant). It has been pointed out that the word should be propitiatory (adjective). Propitiation refers to the sacrifice, while propitiatory expresses the work of the sacrifice. Propitiatory carries the idea of priestly service as well as that of the sacrifice. Christ is referred to as both priest and sacrifice. The Scripture refers to Him as both priest and lamb (Heb. 9:12).

In the New Testament word the 'propitiatory' means to satisfy, or to cover. Expiate, an Old Testament word, means to extinguish sins, to put them out of existence. "This is all that will satisfy God. The offering of the blood of Jesus upon the mercy-seat in heaven does this very thing" [17:

121]. His blood blots out sin.

This is a difficult subject, but what it means is that Jesus Christ is the "mercy-seat" set forward openly by God for the atonement of man's sins. Most writers will vehemently reject the idea of appeasement; that is, the idea that God is puffed up and not forgiving until Jesus intercedes. This suggests that God must be placated and implies that Jesus is more merciful than the Father. In fact, God both demanded the atonement and provided it.

Some of the modern translations may help. For example: "God designed him to be the means of expiating sin by his sacrificial death, effective through faith" (NEB). Bruce shows that the idea of placating God is removed in the Bible by showing that God takes the initiative in removing sin.

The death of Christ...is the means by which God does away with his people's sin - not symbolically, as in the ritual of Leviticus 16 in which the material mercy seat figured, but really. And really in a twofold sense: the sin has been removed, on which it lay as an intollerable burden, but also from the presence of God [5: 100].

IN HIS BLOOD. His blood, offered on the mercy-seat, constitutes the sacrifice. The blood of Jesus is the propitiatory sacrifice. The Scripture is clear on this point; "Without shedding of the blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22b). In considering the blood, remember that:

The penal idea is in His suffering, the debt is in His death, and substitution is in both His death and His life; but the emphasis of substitution is in the giving of His life rather than in dying, since the blood contains the life. He died to pay our penalty, but He gave His life that we might live [17: 122].

3:25. PASSING OVER OF THE SINS...FORBEARANCE OF GOD. Jesus died to exhibit the righteousness of God. The cross of Jesus Christ is God's estimate of sin. His death shows that there is no such thing as forgiveness; but atonement and life by substitution. "The cross remains a living monument to the fact that all sin will be punished, either in the sinner or in his substitute, and the life of the Substitute is appropriated through faith in His blood" [17: 123].

The cross is a revelation of both God's righteousness and His wrath. But it is more than that. The cross is a revelation of God's estimate of sin, but even more than that, it is a revelation of the righteousness of Almighty God.

"Passing over" does not mean freedom from the penalty of sin, but delayed punishment. As far as the redeemed are concerned, their sins were transferred (imputed) to the Lamb of God. Why did God withhold the full expression of His wrath? Why did He withhold the full measure of judgment for their sins? This verse attributes this restraint to God's forbearance. This restraint should never be interpreted as indifference to sin. "No one can stand at the foot of the cross where

Jesus died and charge God with indifference to sin. God abhors sin and judges it. But His judgment falls upon Jesus Christ His Son, who died in our behalf [18: 63].

The sins of those who reject Jesus Christ will never be passed over, but will forever be punished in the transgressor. The sins of the redeemed are transferred to our Pass-over Lamb.

B. The Fruits of Justification, 3:27-31.

3:27. BOASTING. Grace is a free gift and by its very nature excludes boasting. The word translated "excluded" is in the aorist tense and means that it is excluded once for all. The use of the aorist tense may not mean much to the average person today but God saw to it that the New Testament was recorded in the Greek language, which many students of Greek and the New Testament believe was the ideal language for the original manuscripts and for in-depth study today. One of the reasons may be the use of the aorist tense because it nails down certain timeless truths so that while there may be questions in the English, the Greek student can go back to the original and know exactly what is intended.

BUT. This is a strong conjunction showing sharp contrast between the "work" principle and the "faith" principle of salvation. We are justified by faith. Paul never forgets his basic theses (1:17).

3:28 - WE CONCLUDE. This denotes a conclusion drawn from evidence. The case for justification by faith has been presented and the evidence is conclusive: man is justified by faith without the deeds (works) of the law.

MAN. "Man" is used in the generic sense of humanity. Contrary to what some modern people think, the Bible is not a sexist book. It only becomes that when we read our prejudices, misconceptions, and sometimes our hang-ups into it. This writer has always been keenly aware of discrimination against women in many area of society and supportive of many efforts to correct the problem. But today many people have gone far beyond correction and created a whole new set of problems. Psychiatrist, Dr. Harold M. Voth, says:

The American dream is not forever safe. These ideas are illusions, born of self-deception. An internal process is at work in our country which poses a far greater danger to us than dwindling natural resources, the energy crisis, our huge national debt, or the trade deficit. The pattern of life in America is changing very dramatically. The divorce rate is approaching 50% with second marriages failing at a rate close to 60%. Millions of young people are living together without taking the formal step of marriage. The simple truth is that the heterosexual bond, that is the capacity for a man and a woman to remain lovingly committed to each other has become very fragile [27:

13; 14-15).

Voth stresses the importance of the family in the healthy development of children:

In order for the vast potentialities that lie locked in the biology of the newborn child to be realized, certain events must take place within the family. For these developmental processes to occur optimally, the child must have a feminine mother and a masculine father who are harmoniously committed to each other and to their children and family [27: 22, 23].

Voth sees the modern feminist movement as a major problem. He is disturbed by the trend toward unisexism and, even worse, role reversal. He sees enormous tension between the sexes. On balance, he feels that feminists are winning and because they are, men are losing, the family is losing out, society is losing, and ultimately so will women.

This writer has determined to stay with the word "man," but use it in the generic sense, rather than use "human kind" or "people." It may seem unfair to modern women and to some men, but the Gospel was like an oasis in the desert for the women of the first century.

3:29-30. Paul has based justification on the righteousness of God. Fallen man has no righteousness, neither can he produce a righteousness, but must go to the source of righteousness for believers.

The unity of God is stressed in verse 30. He is the only God. There can be but one God. Two infinite beings cannot co-exist. Jehovah God fills the universe with His presence. All nations came from God. Christ is called the Son of Man, not the Son of the Jews. He is not the king of the Jews, but the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:16). The unity of the human race is based upon the unity of God - and only realized in Jesus Christ.

God is One and He fills the universe. But He is not the universe and the universe is not God, the claims of New Agers notwithstanding. "All is one. One is all" is very popular among the New Age Movements. Shirley MacLaine came to the heart of her belief in monism (the idea that all is one) in her book, *Dancing in the Light*. She said, "I know that I exist, therefore I AM. I know the God-source exists. Therefore IT IS. Since I am a part of that force, then I AM THAT I AM" [14 - 22]. Actor, Richard Chamberlain, in introducing a program he will narrate for public television, said, "We are the universe." William Shatner of Star Trek fame expresses the same view, which contradicts the Scripture. Man is not the universe, and he is not God.

The universe is not God. Shirley MacClaine is not God. And you are not God; and you never will be! Monism is in direct conflict with the Bible. Many New Agers are pan-theists. One of their leading writers, John Randolph Price, teaches that everyone should affirm, "I and the Father are one, and all that the Father has is mine. In truth I am the Christ of God" [14 - 16]. Groothuis reminds us that these people are a part of the second oldest religion in the world. This thought had its

beginning in the Garden of Eden when Satan tempted Eve, "You shall be as gods."

3:31. The law and faith are in harmony, just as promise and fulfillment. The only way a man can be accredited with keeping the law is to appropriate it to himself by faith in Jesus Christ, Who did keep the law and Who is the fulfillment of the law, in both obedience and penalties.

The Old Testament Scripture is Holy Scripture, the Word of God. The Old Testament is prophetic of the New Testament. The Old Testament is the promise, while the New Testament is the fulfillment. Jesus did not destroy the law but fulfilled it. He gave it meaning. If you could take the entire sacrificial system and put it on a slide and then drop the slide into a projector and project it onto a screen, you would see Jesus Christ, crucified, resurrected, glorified.

This is a transitional verse which introduces the next section. God never intended the law to be the means whereby men attained a right standing with Him. This lay beyond its power. See Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 5:13; 7:7-25; Gal. 3:19-4:7.

C. Priority of Gentiles in God's Grace, 4:1-8.

In 3:21-31, Paul proved that man is justified by faith, not works of the law. He then stated the harmonious relationship between the law and justification by faith. He does not introduce a grace/works theory of justification but shows the relationship between faith and works.

The late Dr. E. R. Pinson, who for a number of years was a Bible professor at Mississippi College, used to say, "Wind is not wind unless it is blowing, and faith is not faith unless it is working." There is no conflict between faith and works as long as each is seen in its proper place. Our works manifest (declare) our faith, but it cannot produce faith, or the righteousness God makes available to us through faith. A saving faith is a working faith. Faith must produce works. Works must issue from faith. One must work for the Lord because he is saved, not in order to be saved (Eph. 2:10).

Paul illustrates his point at length by citing the great man of faith, Abraham, in whom the Jews found their ground for boasting. Paul points to the man they cited to support their position in an effort to prove justification by faith.

4:1 - ABRAHAM, OUR FATHER. We might paraphrase the verse, "What shall we say concerning Abraham, our forefather in the flesh?" The emphasis is not on what Abraham found but how he was justified.

4:2. Abraham was the father of many nations, including the Chosen Nation. He had many extraordinary encounters with Jehovah, received a special covenant from the Lord, and received the law of circumcision. He also obtained justification. If he had accomplished all this on his own, he would have had every reason to glorify himself. But he would not have had occasion to glory in the

Lord. If Abraham had done it all for himself the Lord would deserve no glory. A man may glory in what he accomplished or achieves for himself, but justification is not one of those accomplishments.

4:3. Paul takes his readers to the Scripture to show how Abraham received justification. Genesis 15:6 records Abraham's faith as having been counted for righteousness.

RECKONED. The word meant to set down an account, to enter on record transactions of business. The word was often used of recording deeds of people, whether good or bad.

4:4. Paul uses an illustration any working man or woman can appreciate. When a person works for another there is a debt that must be settled. The laborer is deserving of his merited wage. I grew up on a family farm in the Mississippi delta, seven miles west of Sledge. I was expected to lead all hands when we were chopping cotton by the time I was twelve, and I did it. But when we were picking, I was such a poor hand that by age fifteen my father told me to forget about picking and haul hands, carry, weigh and empty sacks. I worked harder and did not receive any pay, while pickers were paid by the pound. But, I was happy, because I hated picking cotton until we bought a mechanical cotton picker.

As I weighed and emptied sacks I observed an interesting drama played out before me at the end of every day. My father would be off to one side, or sitting in his pickup, figuring what he owed each picker. Some pickers simply waited for their money. But some, especially those who did not work for us regularly, would have out a little sheet of paper and a stub of a pencil. They were figuring the weight of each sack for the day and multiplying to try to have the amount they were to receive before he called them. Some would be nervously waiting, occasionally whispering about their pay. It was obvious that some were afraid they would not get all they had coming to them.

I understood better later on when a man who lived on our place told me he had worked for a wealthy planter and once when his pay check was short fifty cents. He pointed out the mistake and the farmer asked, "Well, what do you want me to do about it?" When he said that he wanted his money, the man said, "Son, I expect you better move!"

It worked both ways. In those days, before wide spread use of chemical to control grass weeds, most farmers knew what it was like to look out across a field and see hands who spent most of the day leaning on the hoe handle. Because of abuse on both sides of the ledger, both the employer and the employee pay close attention to the wage.

It would be an insult to call his wage a gift (free gift or grace). An employer is under obligation to pay the wage of the laborer. But God is obliged to no man, and no person deserves His favor. We are without merit and our only hope is His grace.

4:5. In verse 3 we see that Abraham was saved by grace through faith. In verse 4 Paul proves that works exclude both grace and faith. In this verse he takes up his basic theme and shows that faith, grace, and righteousness are related, and that they operate only in the absence of works. As long as a person works for his salvation he cannot receive 59

it because faith cannot co-exist with the feeling of merit. The two are mutually exclusive.

There are three basic theories of justification:

1. Justification by works - refuted by Scripture (Eph. 2:9; Gal. 2:16).
2. Justification by grace plus works - also rejected by Scripture, in any and every combination of the two (Rom. 11:6; Gal. 3:3).
3. Justification by grace - the only Scriptural way (Eph. 2:8; Rom. 1:17; 5:1).

All churches and denominations hold to one of these three theories of justification. There are those who hold that salvation comes from good works, observing ordinances, baptism, or something else the individual must do. Most hold some view that combines grace and works. There are those who teach that one is saved by grace plus baptism. That is a combination of grace plus works just as the Judaizers' claim that people were saved by faith plus circumcision (See Galatians and the study by this writer on Galatians). To add anything (baptism, works) to grace is to take Pilate's sign down from the cross and hang a new one that reads: ESSENTIAL, BUT INADEQUATE. (or, NECESSARY, BUT NOT ENOUGH). See also this writer's study on Galatians.

Many others believe one is saved by pure grace, grace alone. But once he is saved, he must do certain things in order to remain saved. If you don't go to church regularly, or if you commit certain sins, you will lose your salvation. This combines grace and works (after beginning with grace). This view was particularly disturbing to Paul. He wrote to the Galatians, "Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (3:3).

There are some who believe that believe that one is saved by grace and kept by grace; that you are saved unto good works, and not by good work (Eph. 2:10). Those who hold this view can more readily accept the doctrine of Security of Believers, and they more readily accept God assurance of salvation.

HIM THAT JUSTIFIETH THE UNGODLY. This is a great title for God and it reveals His Noblest work. "The ungodly" refers to everyone in his unregenerated human nature and Abraham was no different from any other man. "The sin principle is just as sinful in the 'moral' lost man as in the wretch. The transgressions do not degrade corrupt human nature" [17: 133, 134]. The sin principle is equally as corrupt in every lost person, though they are unequal in transgressions. This may be confusing to many who somehow feel like the moral person is earning a place in heaven.

Were it not for the restraining power of the Holy Spirit, the influence of Christians, the Word of God, and the law, all sinful nature would be worse than it is. Even violent man is acting according to his unregenerated nature.

As America moves deeper into the post-Christian age, a Christian consensus having already been lost, masses are losing even the memory of the Christian consensus. Francis Shaeffer was

deeply burdened about this. His works are profitable for the student of the Word of God. Morality is no longer determined by the Word of God. Laws are no longer based on the Bible. Francis Shaeffer said, "we are not a theocracy, it is true; nevertheless, when Reformation Christianity provided the consensus, men naturally looked back to the civil law God gave Israel, not to carry it out in every detail, but to see it as a pattern and a base" [23: 298].

To see what that means to some people all you have to do is look at some of the New Age literature. They teach that you "Create your own reality." And since "all is one" (monism) you cannot have both good and evil. You have to move "beyond good and evil." A "spirit-guide," Ramtha says (through his channel) that there is no sin and no need for forgiveness. He says, "Every vile and wretched thing you do broadens your understanding...If you want to do any one thing regardless of what it is, it would not be wise to go against your feeling; for there is an experience awaiting you and a grand adventure that will make your life sweeter" [14: 24]. The truth from the father of liars!

It is not hopeless. This same Gospel made an dynamic and dramatic impact on the Roman empire with all its evil and corruption (Romans 1). We can have a revival in America and return to a Christian consensus, if God's Own people want it and are willing to pay the price (II Chrinicles 7:14).

UNGODLY. Irreverent. This term places the lost person at the greatest possible distance from God. It denotes the antithesis of God, the negation of God. "Ungodly" here points to the subjects of His grace and shows how unworthy everyone is of being justified. This reveals the magnitude of God's grace.

4:6. David's words in Psalm 32 are seen as a testimony of the way Abraham was saved (Ps. 32:1). "Right standing with God involves a righteousness that is reckoned and sin that is not reckoned. This is the essence of justification by faith" [18: 67].

Paul was a wise teacher and he knew that the reference to Abraham would hold the attention of his Jewish readers. Abraham was looked to as the founder of the race and Paul points to him (as inspired by the Holy Spirit) to prove his point that man is not saved by the works of the law or by circumcision, but by faith. He believed God and received His grace before the giving of the law of circumcision and centuries before the giving of the Mosaic Law.

D. Priority of Gentiles in Faith, 4:9-10.

4:9. When was Abraham justified by faith? If it was in circumcision, he is the father of the circumcision. But if he was saved while still in uncircumcision, the Jews' claims were in vain. Allen is right when he says:

This very meaningful rite was never meant to be a shield behind

which to hide or an advantage about which to boast, but it was meant to be a testimony of faith and the sign of a covenant relationship existing between God and His people [2: 49].

Abraham is the father of all who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles, circumcision or uncircumcision. Like baptism, the outward act is a declaration of an inward experience. As a symbol it means nothing if that which it signifies is not present.

4:10. This verse answers the question of the previous verse. It has been suggested that Abraham's justification came soon after he entered Canaan (Gen. 13:3). However, I believe he was justified when he believed God in Urr of the Chaldees. Ishmael's birth probably came about 11 years after Abraham entered the land. Ishmael was in his 14th year when Abraham was circumcised (Gen. 17:25f). So we see that at 25 years [probably more] lapsed between Abraham's justification and his circumcision. There is no doubt then that he was saved in uncircumcision. It follows then that the Gentiles have more ground for boasting than the Jew - that is, if their argument had merit.

This thought would be incredible to the Jew. The Jewish circumcision prayer is "Blessed is He who sanctified His beloved from the womb, and put His ordinance upon his flesh, and sealed His offspring with the sign of the holy covenant." The rabbinic ordinance lays down the law: "Ye shall not eat of the Passover unless the seal of Abraham be in your flesh." If a Gentile accepted the Jewish faith, he could not enter fully into it without three things; baptism, sacrifice, and circumcision. To the Jew no uncircumcised man was a Jew in a right relationship with God.

E. Priority of Gentiles from the Standpoint of Circumcision, 4:11-12.

4:11. Paul now explains the purpose and value of circumcision, since it does not confer righteousness. Circumcision is the seal of righteousness through faith. It was the outward testimony of an inner reality. The first part of the verse tells why Abraham was circumcised. The second part tells why he was circumcised after justification. He was justified in uncircumcision that he might be the father of the uncircumcised. He was father of Gentiles before he was father of the Jews! If the traditional argument of the Jews proved anything it would exclude the Jews rather than the Gentiles who had precedence in priority over Jews, both in justification and in the fatherhood of Abraham.

FATHER. Absence of the article denotes Abraham as the common father of the faithful.

4:12. Abraham was saved without respect to circumcision. Nothing had to be done to include the Gentiles; and Abraham was not circumcised to exclude the Gentiles, but to admit the Jews.

F. Priority of Gentiles From the Standpoint of the Law, 4:13-16.

4:13. Having excluded circumcision as a means of salvation, Paul turns to the law. This statement excludes all law as having any saving power. The promise was made to Abraham over 400 years before the giving of the Mosaic Law (Gal. 3:14-17). The inheritance is obtained in Christ through faith, and not in Abraham by circumcision.

The Scripture is very clear about one thing. Faith is the only response on the part of any person that is compatible with the grace of God. Anything else will be rejected as incompatible. The promise rests solely on the Grace of God and it is received by faith (and that faith is the gift of God, Eph. 2:8).

4:14. Verse 13 says the promise was not made through the law. Verse 14 says it could not have been made through the law. Verse 15 tells us why.

4:15. The promise is realized through faith and the promise and faith would be annulled if the promise were only to those under the law. Faith offers hope. Law never gives a promise of anything. It only metes out justice. It does not offer inheritance, but a penalty.

G. Priority of Gentiles from the Standpoint of the Fatherhood of Abraham, 4:17-21.

4:17 - MANY NATIONS. Many nations mean an unlimited number in contrast to a favored nation, or favored nations (Gen. 17:5). The number is limited only by the totality of believing nations. "Nations" (foreign nations, Gentile nations) stresses Gentile nations in sharp contrast to the Jews.

QUICKENETH THE DEAD. Making alive the dead. This is a fitting description of the character of Abraham's faith and of the power of the God in Whom he trusted. "The faith of Abraham was based upon a resurrection. Abraham believed in all the divine attributes, but faith is the one characteristic, quickening faith of the dead, that wrought the quickening of his own dead powers" [17: 141].

4:18 - WHO AGAINST HOPE BELIEVED IN HOPE. Or, "Who in hope believed against hope." Abraham joyfully believed against what he knew to be humanly impossible. He trusted God without demanding human evidence. He simply believed God.

Barclay says that it was this willingness to take God at His word which put Abraham into a right relationship with God. He pointed out that the Jewish rabbis had a saying to which Paul is referring. They said, "What is written of Abraham is written also of his children." Seed in this verse refers to his children. They meant that any promise that God made to Abraham extends to his

children also. He says:

Therefore if Abraham's willingness to take God at His word brought him into a right relationship with God, so it is with us. It is not the works of the law, it is this trusting faith which established the relationship between God and man which ought to exist [3: 69].

H. The Scripture Is Over All Authorities for all Time in Matters of Salvation, 4:22-25.

4:22. Faith was reckoned unto Abraham for righteousness. It was not of Abraham, but imputed by Jehovah. Abraham did not just believe in God, he believed God.

4:24. We receive God's righteousness the same way Abraham received it. It is imputed unto us by faith if we believe "on Him that raised up Jesus from the dead."

4:25. There are many ways to look at redemption. There is but one faith, one salvation, but many metaphors and explanations that help us understand it. McBeth says:

These many views can be summed up in two: The atonement and justification - the provision and the fruit. The verse under discussion places the atonement with His death and attributes our justification to His Resurrection - His life [17: 144].

We died with Jesus on the cross, but we live with Him in His resurrection. He died that we will not have to die, and He arose that we may live in Him. "We do not live by His death, but by His life that He released in His blood" [17: - 144]. On the cross Jesus, He Who all the time loves, once for all died for us.

My younger son, Mark, has filled our home with piano music since he was a young child. He loves hymns, anthems, and some Southern Gospel. I remember his excitement when he came in with some new music and began singing, to his own accompaniment, "When He was on the cross I was on His mind." What He did for us on the Cross should never be far from our minds.

I. Justification by Faith Is the Believer's Assurance of Final Salvation, 5:1-11.

5:1. In chapter 4 Paul proves that Abraham was justified by faith. Now he returns to the subject of justification where he left off in chapter three. Jesus was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

BEING JUSTIFIED. The aorist tense is used, showing justification as being wrought once for all time. The participle shows the continuous progress that God's justifying grace is making from individual to individual. It denotes the continuous progress of His grace. As grace is extended to a growing number of people, they are justified once for all time. Jesus made the once-for-all sacrifice whereby we are justified, and we are justified once-for-all.

Many people have a problem with this, as evidenced by the many interpretations and by the various views expressed on the security of believers. This should be no problem for anyone who believes in justification by grace through faith, unto good works. One can accept this promise if he believes that salvation is by grace alone; grace plus nothing.

A study of this subject in Romans will confirm the conviction many people hold that man is saved once for all time. There are many who will not agree with this. Some Baptists, for example, will admit that while they agree with almost all the basic Baptist Doctrines, they have a problem with this doctrine. Invariably, they point to those who make a profession of faith and later drop out, or live inconsistent, sinful lives. They should be disturbed by this. I am very disturbed by it. But rather than question the perfect (infallible, inerrant) Word of God, why not question the profession of those who profess to be children of God and live like the children of Satan?

Those who reject this doctrine can quote Scripture to support their position. Those who believe in a once-for-all justification can support their position with many proof texts. So, what is the answer? First, keep on loving one another and agree to disagree agreeably. Second, continue to study God's Word. Third, Depend upon the Holy Spirit Who inspired the writing of all Scripture to illuminate your mind and your heart so that you will know what He wants you to believe.

In the fourth place, remember something very important. The Bible is the basis for all doctrine, just as God is the basis of all reality. Your interpretation may be faulty. You may feel that you are not loyal to your church, your pastor, your fellow members if you consider any other position. Your church may have a creed or doctrinal statement (Confession) to which you feel a loyalty. But your first obligation is to the Lord. We must know what God says. He has revealed His divine truth through His Holy Scripture.

There must be a basis for all our beliefs and that basis must be the truth (divine truth, reality, the Truth). And we have it in God's Word. It is not a matter of what you have always been taught, or what you have always believed, or what you "feel in your heart." The issue is the sure and certain Word of God (objective truth, not subjective feelings). Sincere Bible students will read the same passages and present two totally different interpretations and each will say, "I have prayed about this and this is the answer God has given me." Or they may both say, "The Holy Spirit revealed this to me and I feel in my heart that it is right." Since both cannot be right if they oppose each other, then obviously either one is wrong, or both are wrong. Which one? Is the other a false teacher? It does not mean that at all.

What it does mean is that while we are promised that God will answer prayer and that the

Holy Spirit will guide believers, our interpretation of the answer to prayer and our interpretation of the leadership of the Holy Spirit should never be considered as infallible. In the mid-seventies I recorded in my notes on this passage the following note:

I accept the doctrine of security of believers because I believe it is taught in the Bible and because the Holy Spirit has affirmed it in my heart. If this had not previously occurred, this study of Romans would be very convincing.

I have not changed my interpretation in the least, but I have gained some insight. I have changed my position on a number of things over the years, primarily because of additional study and spiritual growth. Fortunately, in most cases, I simply went a little deeper. But the point is, I was confident that my interpretation was right and that the Holy Spirit was leading me to that position. What I feel in my heart is important to me, but it may not be convincing to some one else. He may be interested in what I feel in my heart, but what he needs to know is what the Bible teaches. Furthermore, I must not adopt a view and continually go back to my interpretation of a passage rather than going to the Scripture for fresh insight.

Continue in the Word of God. Study it, not just with an open mind, but a mind open to the Holy Spirit. Be humble enough to let others help you. But never arrive at a position and set it in concrete with a determination that you will not be open to further study and to the continued guidance and illumination from the Holy Spirit.

The security of believers is a very important doctrine. I never use "Once saved always saved," or "perseverance of saints." We are not saved by our perseverance, but by the grace of God. And if you were never "once saved" you will never be "always saved. This position is consistent with justification is by faith; consistent with the price paid for our salvation; and consistent with the preponderance of Scriptural evidence on the subject, problem texts notwithstanding. For study beyond Romans, see John 10:28-30, I Peter 1:3-5 and the First Epistle of John.

It is doubtful that all Christians will ever agree on this subject, but if the reader totally rejects this position let us continue to love one another, to search the Scripture and to be open to every impression from the Holy Spirit. I do not question your salvation if you disagree with my interpretation. If you reject the doctrine you do not lose your salvation, but you will have an ongoing problem with assurance and that will have an effect on the joy of your salvation. Search the Scripture for the "Thus saith the Word of the Lord" and let that have precedence over all arguments.

PEACE. Three words characterize the new relationship to God that faith in Jesus Christ makes possible: (1) peace, (2) access, (3) hope. "Peace" is more than tranquility or absence of hostility. Peace is a positive term. In 1:7, we see that peace is an inclusive term denoting the sum total of the blessedness and fruits of justification.

WE HAVE. Present tense. Peace is the fruit of justification and every justified person has this peace as a blessing right now. We may ask why so many professing Christians seem to doubt or

worry about their salvation, or why others seem never to have this peace. This does not simply mean peace of mind, or freedom from care, or a spirit of euphoria. We have a peace from God that will see us through hard times. It will bear us up when the going gets rough. This will be confirmed when we let the Holy Spirit minister to us.

The peace of God is ours, but we will not receive the benefits we should from it if we grieve the Holy Spirit by our sins, or quench the Holy Spirit by refusing to submit to His control over our lives. When the unseen Guest becomes the divine Host in your heart you will know the peace that passes all understanding.

WITH. The word shows motion toward. This stresses a personal and intimate relationship (fellowship, communion). Peace has motion toward God.

5:2 - ACCESS. This is a beautiful picture. This carries the idea of one being introduced into the private chamber of a king. Jesus is the One making the introduction. The believer is introduced; God is the King; and grace is the realm of the introduction [17: 147].

The story is told of a Roman emperor who was entering the city as throngs of citizens crowded the edge of the streets to see their emperor and his troops display prisoners and other spoils of war. A little boy tried to rush from the crowd toward the emperor's chariot, but a guard stopped him. He said, "That is the emperor; you cannot run out there." The child responded, "He may be your emperor, but he is my father!" We have constant and eternal access to our Heavenly Father.

WE HAVE HAD. In other words, not as an occasional visit. The perfect tense denotes past accomplishment, present and permanent possession, and the deriving of eternal benefits. We have present and everlasting access to the King in the realm of grace. Grace is the permanent realm in which every believer lives (not every church member, but every believer). The security of the believer is grounded in the eternal grace of God, in which the believer has full and permanent access to the throne of God through Jesus Christ. "Omnipotence cannot make assurance any more sure; and inspiration cannot reveal assurance in any stronger terms" [17: 148].

When Jesus died on the cross the veil in the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51), opening the heavenly Holy of Holies to every believer (who has permanent access as a priest unto the Lord. Jesus Christ is the key to our access. He is our High Priest, as well as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Because of his sacrificial death on the cross, and His resurrection and ascension, we now have access to the sphere of God's grace. We do not have to stand on the outside as the ancient Israelites, waiting upon the priestly services of another person who alone had access to the mercy seat. We stand within, ushered into the presence of Almighty God through the sacrificial death of the Lamb of God.

WE STAND. Past accomplishment, present and permanent possession and the deriving of eternal benefits. We have permanent standing in the realm of grace (eternal grace of God). **WE GLORY.** Rejoice. This suggests a shout of triumph. The Christian should glory, not in himself or his accomplishments, but in God and in what God does for him. Glory has both a positive side and a

negative side. It is important that one does not glory in himself, or in other people. On the positive side, it is important that we do glory in the Lord. He deserves glory and honor.

HOPE. Hope does not mean to wish for something we really may not expect, or for something that may or may not happen. Hope is the perseverance of faith. It denotes assurance of salvation together with joyful, peaceful confidence in the consummation of one's assurance. "Hope is not the tuition we pay as we enroll in the school of adversity. Rather, it is the diploma awarded to those who by the grace of God, do well on the tests" [19 : 76].

5:3-4. Paul has shown that justification by faith will stand the test of the future. Now he shows it will triumph over the present, however great the tribulation. We can rejoice, even in tribulation. Tribulation produces patience, steadfastness and endurance (James 1:1-3). No Christian wants to face tribulation, but at the same time we must acknowledge the fact that some of the greatest victories in history have sprung from tribulation.

It is possible that some of the greatest Christians in all the world are behind the Bamboo Curtain (Red China), and other areas where their faith is tested daily. This statement is based on reports from those who have traveled in Communist China. Now that Communism has collapsed in the former Soviet Union and we can communicate with Christians who were persecuted for their faith in Christ, we know more about the trials and tribulations of believers, as well as the severity of the persecution. While persecution may not be as intense as it has been during most of the history of Communist control, we must never forget that to the Communist, religion is still the "opiate of the people."

The freedom gained in the USSR must not be taken for granted, because if hard-liners have their way, they could soon lose their freedom again. While many credit President Reagan and the Strategic Defense Initiative (Star Wars, or SDI) with the change in attitude in the USSR, we must not forget the faithful Christians who have prayed for years for relief from that evil power. Should we not give God the credit? Too much happened too fast to give man full credit.

Christians lived with serious restrictions and persecution which was often very intense. Believers under such conditions have had their faith tested by fire and proved by trials and tribulation.

5:5. In 5:5-11 we see the triumph of the love of God. In this section Paul shows a third time how hope will triumph. (1) It is founded in the eternal grace of God, 5:2; (2) Tribulation is a second reason for the triumph of hope, 5:3-4; and (3) in our present verse he says hope will triumph because it rests in the abundant love of God, Who gives full assurance of final salvation.

5:6. The death of Christ for sinners is the proof of God's love for the believer. Allen says, "No one is so wicked, no one so corrupt, no one so violent or adulterous, no one so depraved or morally destitute, but that God's love reaches him and encompasses him and offers the riches of grace to him [2: 56]."

This does not teach either universalism or radical predestination and predetermination. One must either accept Christ or reject Him. Everyone is free to choose, but no one is free not to choose.

THE WEAK ONES. Here the reference is to the ungodly; in 5:8, to sinners; in 5:10, to enemies. The ungodly were weak and powerless to produce good works. They may produce "human good," but their very best effort is as filthy rags before God.

5:7 - A RIGHTEOUS MAN. Or, a just one. The law-abiding person. He is just in the eyes of the court. Scarcely for a person who is legally just will one die.

THE GOOD MAN. This shows moral quality in addition to his conforming to the law. It would be difficult to find a person who would be a substitute in death for a man whose righteousness has been just enough to keep him out of jail! I worked my way through college and seminary working for the ASCS (USDA) office in Marks, Mississippi. For several years I measured cotton (and other crops). I actually plotted fields on aerial photographs. I recall on a number of occasions hearing a statement that disturbed me. I might have complimented the farmer of his farm, or family. His reply was something like this: "I raised nine chillun' on this place and ain't nar' of 'em ever spent a night in jail." He was obviously proud of the accomplishment. Would you sacrifice your life for one about whom you could say, "He never spent a night in jail?" The "just" man might live far above the demands of the law, but the principle is the same.

There is scarcely one among all the just men for whom there could be found a substitute in death. There is some possibility that someone might die for the good man - but still a very slim chance.

5:8 - GOD COMMENDETH HIS LOVE... A love that is beyond human comprehension is exhibited in Christ's dying for corrupt humanity. This verse is often quoted to the unsaved person to stress the magnitude of God's love for sinners. God does not wait until He can make the man over after His will and purpose before He loves him. The hymn, "Just As I Am" is a wonderful commentary on this great verse.

"God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." This really is good news (Gospel means good news).

5:9 - BEING JUSTIFIED. See comments on 5:1. Repetition is in order. It is a difficult subject for some and all need to understand it.

IN THE BLOOD. (See 3:25). Since the death of Christ saved us, much more will the life of Christ keep us saved. His death perfected our life, much more will His life preserve our life.

5:10. Since the death of Jesus reconciled vicious enemies to God, much more is His life powerful for keeping saved those who are God's children through reconciliation.

- (1) God loves the ungodly, 5:6.
- (2) God justifies the sinner, 5:8.
- (3) God reconciles enemies, 5:10.

5:11 - WE GLORY. We rejoice (we give a shout of triumph). The King James Version has, "we also joy in God..." Every Christian should glory, or rejoice in the Lord through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

ATONEMENT. For years some people have tried to explain atonement by saying that it means "at-one-ment" with God. That may help some, but it is an over simplification. Zodhiates says:

A change or reconciliation from a state of enmity between persons to one of friendship. It is the result of ... redemption, the divine act of salvation, the ceasing of God's wrath [30: 1701].

J. Adam, the First Man; Christ the Second Man, Romans 5:12-21.

Paul has dealt with justification and reconciliation and to show the need for reconciliation he stressed in verse 10 that we were "enemies" or hostile toward God. "Reconciliation was not needed to change God's attitude toward sinful men but to change their feeling toward God" [2: 60]. It began with justification by faith. It continues through sanctification in the power of the Spirit. It will be consummated in glorification. Now he presents a different argument in support of his thesis.

5:12. McBeth notes that the word translated "sin" in this section denotes corruption and fallen nature, as the direct issue of the original sin of Adam (3:20). This is a very difficult passage and commentaries often differ. When we find a difficult passage we should not skip over it or accept half-baked answers. We should search the Scriptures prayerfully for the truth.

DEATH. Both physical and spiritual death entered into the world by one man, Adam.

DEATH PASSED UPON ALL MEN. "By 'death' in Gen. 2:17; 3:19, physical death is meant. In verses 17 and 21 eternal death is Paul's idea and that lurks constantly behind physical death with Paul" [21: 357]. Sin here refers to corrupt nature. James 1:14-15 tells us, "every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

ALL SINNED. The word and the aorist tense hold this sin to be Adamic. When Adam sinned, all sinned in that all were in Adam. Adam was the first man and sin entered the human race through

him. Each person will give an account of his own sin. He is personally responsible and accountable to God. But still, when Adam sinned it effected the entire human race, for it was through him that sin invaded humanity, and from him we inherited a sinful nature.

We refer to Adam's sin as the Fall. Francis Shaeffer, had a lot to say about the Fall. In a letter to friends he wrote:

I am sorry that you are in the midst of many conflicting thoughts and emotions. This should not surprise us, for there is a tension in the Bible itself - not because there is a contradiction in it or a tension in the truths that the Bible sets forth; but rather, because of the tension in the world as it now is since the Fall. Since the Fall, we are surrounded by the wonder of God's creation and yet, simultaneously, with the reality of the abnormality of the world and man because of the Fall [9: 120].

5:13. SIN. This denotes corrupt human nature, the depravity of fallen man. Death came, not by the law of Moses, but reigned before Moses in the violation of God's first law and direct commandment. Death does not come from individual sins, but from sin. Man must confess the fact of sin in his life, the presence of sin, the reality of sin, and not just a particular sin. He must confess, "Lord, I am a sinner. I am dead in sin."

We must be careful here. The Bible tells us we inherited a sinful nature from Adam. But if one dies and goes to hell, he has only himself to blame. Each person chooses either to continue in sin or to trust Jesus Christ for the remission of sin. In Christ's death the old nature is buried and in His resurrection we are "raised to walk in newness of life" (as portrayed in New Testament baptism).

5:14. There is a great deal of debate at this point and it is easy to go too far in either direction. For example, one Old Testament Professor said to this writer, "I am not affected any more by Adam's sins than I am by Julius Caesars." McBeth, on the other hand, said, "Adam violated a known law. Others died without violating a revealed law; none die except by violation of law; therefore, they died for Adam's violation" [17: 158].

Of this one thing we are certain. From Adam to Moses to John the Baptist, death reigned as a mighty monarch over Adam and over all who sinned after "the similitude of Adam's transgression." It was by Adam that sin entered the world, but no man has ever gone to hell for Adam. To understand the significance of the nature we inherited from Adam one only has to watch a small child. As soon as he is able to respond, Mother asks, "Did you break the vase?" You know the answer: No, I didn't do it." "Who did it?" "Billy did it." Learned behavior, or was it something is his nature that led him first to lie, and then to blame someone else?

Watch the same child. His parents, grand parents, and brothers and sisters share with him and teach him to share from the very earliest age. One day Susie comes by and asks, "May I have one of your cookies?" You know what happens. He clutches them frantically and shouts, "No! They are mine!" Learned behavior, or something inherent in his nature?

5:15. The key here is that the sin and rebellion of Adam is to be contrasted with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Death resides in man, while salvation resides in God; sin is inherent in man, while life is inherent in God. But the grace of God is mightier than the depravity inherited from Adam and the grace of God is greater than the sin of one individual.

While it is easy to contradict one's self, there is no contradiction in the Scripture. Sin entered the human race through Adam and we are affected by sin. McGorman and Allen make strong statements, but it is obvious that they do not agree (Allen is quoted below). McGorman says:

Human guilt derives from human sin; it is not inherited. Men are guilty because they have sinned, not because they were born. No interpretation of Romans 5:12-21 that obscures or refutes the plain teaching of Romans 1:18- 3:20 can be correct. Is it not interesting that Paul managed to demonstrate the guiltiness of all men in this earlier passage without any reference to Adam? (18: 79].

By the same token, Paul makes a point of the sin of Adam. Sin entered the human race through Adam. Man does have a sinful nature. You do not have to teach a child to lie, steal, cheat, be selfish or to blame others for his mis- deeds.

5:16. In 5:16-17 the grace of God is contrasted with the sin of Adam. Grace perfects in all believers what sin wrecked in one (Adam). Death came by one offence; but grace covers multiplied offences. What sin did in Adam, God recreates in countless millions. Allen makes some interesting observations:

(1) Adam is the head of mankind; so is Christ, but He is also the Head of a new humanity, the redeemed of the Lord.

(2) The trespasses of Adam brought condemnation and Death; the righteousness of Christ brought justification and life eternal.

(3) The disobedience of Adam made men sinners; the obedience of Christ has made it possible for men to become righteous.

(4) Death is mandatory for all who sin; but life is voluntary, dependent on faith in Christ.

(5) Men are condemned because of kinship with Adam; but they may be justified by faith in Christ (2: - 62f].

5:17. A great contrast is seen between the reign of death by one man's offence (Adam) and the reign of grace and righteousness in one's life through One (Jesus Christ). How

appropriate it is that the Scripture reveals that we receive 'abundance of grace' and the 'gift of righteousness.' God's grace is always in abundance, and righteousness can only be received as a faith gift.

5:18. The one righteous act of Jesus perfects more than one sinful act of Adam could destroy. The superiority of Christ over Adam is stressed. The purpose of the judgment of sin is condemnation, but the purpose of the righteous act of Christ is justification and eternal life.

5:19. The contrast between the first man (Adam) and the second Man (Christ) is continued in this verse as Paul stresses his point. In this verse we see that "the disobedience of one man, with its consequence of many sinners is superseded by the obedience of One, with its resulting consequence of many being made righteous" [17: 160].

5:20. Man died as a result of sin before the law. The law brought added guilt and revealed the penalty of sin. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Paul is talking about two orders of humanity. The old order, headed by Adam, and the new order headed by Christ. The first was marked by sin and death; the second by righteousness and life.

5:21. Death reigned through one (5:7) unto all (5:4). Death reigned toward one end - death. Grace is also a personified king. "His subjects are the redeemed, his dominion is righteousness, and his government is unto life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord" [17: 160].

III. THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION, 6:1 - 8:39.

A. The Christian Is Dead to the Principle of Sin, 6:1 - 8:39.

In 3:21-5:21 Paul proved his thesis of Justification by Faith. Justification by faith obtained the imputed righteousness of God but did not give personal righteousness. In chapters 6-8 he deals with sanctification to prove that justification by faith produces moral character in addition to obtaining the imputed righteousness of God. That is, God justifies the sinner (imputes righteousness unto him) and then sanctifies him (produces righteousness within him and makes the sinner like Himself).

Justification saves us (or declares us just); sanctification develops us. Justification delivers us from the penalty of sin; sanctification delivers us from the power of sin. Justification (instantaneous and final) declares us righteous; sanctification (progressive from new birth until glorification) makes us righteous. "The former bears us, the latter grows us. The one is our nature, the other is our nurture. The one is imputed, the other is engendered. Both are from God and of God" [17: 162].

Neither justification, nor sanctification is personal to the believer, but both are the work of grace and come through faith to develop the person in character, nature and righteousness of God. The following comparison may help:

JUSTIFICATION

1. God working for us
2. Once-for-all experience
3. Complete
4. Root of our experience
5. Righteousness declared

SANCTIFICATION

1. God working in us
2. Progressive experience
3. Incomplete until death
4. Fruit of our experience
5. Righteousness demonstrated

Groothuis (*Confronting the New Age*) stresses that while we do not compromise the Gospel we proclaim in witnessing to New Agers, one must be prepared to give some serious answers to some disturbing questions. He says, "What the church desperately needs is a better understanding of justification and sanctification, not lessons on self-esteem from New Age psychology" [13: 176]. He is right. Many people, New Agers, Humanists and countless others who cannot even define those terms, are not going to respond to the witness approach of 1960. We must be prepared to defend the faith (aggressively and not defensively).

Before 1970, almost anywhere you went in the Bible Belt, you could ask an unsaved person, "Do you believe in God?" and you knew his answer would be, "Yes." Asked, "Do you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" the answer was "Yes." You might continue, showing your Bible, "Do you believe this is the word of God?" His answer was "Yes." I tried it in the fields of the Mississippi Delta, the streets and rescue mission of New Orleans, the county jail in Jackson, the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman, and church fields across the mid-south. At the turn of the Twentieth Century people are not going to answer "Yes" to all your questions.

You must be prepared today to answer some serious challenges if you are to be an effective witness for Jesus Christ. It is inconceivable that you will be a well equipped witness if you do not have at least a basic understanding of the doctrinal section of Romans. This includes one subject many Baptists have avoided like the plague - that subject is sanctification.

A friendly, intelligent middle aged man applied for the janitorial job at the church I once served as pastor. As we walked through the auditorium he said, "Reverend Sanders, I want to ask you a question. "Is this a Baptist church or is it sanctified?" I tried to explain that it was a Baptist church, and as Baptists we believe very strongly in sanctification. But some Baptists might ask the same question the janitorial candidate asked, because sanctification is one subject they pass over very quickly, seemingly thinking the word is synonymous with emotional, ecstatic, or charismatic (in the modern vernacular use of the word).

Paul shows that the believer is saved by grace through faith (3:24f), without the works of the law (3:20, 21, 28). The rest of the Bible, in its entirety, corroborates with our experience in support of this theme. McBeth says:

Yet a vast host of Bible readers ignore God's revelation of scriptural righteousness, and follow the Pharisaic justification by law and the self-obtained righteousness in the covering with leaves. All those who believe in salvation by works, wholly or partially, transfer the redemptive power from justification to sanctification. We are born anew in justification and not in sanctification. Sanctification is not the ground of our salvation, but the fruit of justification [17: 162].

If you follow some of those who are calling salvation a process today, it is very difficult to see that they are making any distinction between justification and sanctification. Sanctification is a process, but justification is a once-for-all experience of new birth.

6:1 - SHALL WE CONTINUE IN SIN, THAT GRACE MAY ABOUND?

Paul anticipates an objection by those who might ask, "Well, if grace so abounded over sin, why should we not go on sinning to give grace an opportunity to abound even more over sin?" Bruce notes that this is not a completely hypothetical objection. "In fact," he says, "there have always been people to insist that this is the logical corollary of Paul's teaching about justification by faith; and unfortunately, in every generation, people claiming to be justified by faith have behaved in such a way as to lend colour to this charge. James Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) provided an outstanding literary example of such deliberate antinomianism" [5: 127]. The Russian monk Gregory Rasputin, the evil genius of the Romanov family in its last years of power is a notable historical example of this kind of thinking.

Paul seems to be trying to head off any objection at this point with a question which demands an emphatic "No!" Grace is greater than our sins. But its greatness is in deliverance from sin, and not in license to sin.

"Sin" (the sin) is a noun here. The question is not shall we continue, or remain, in the practice of sin, but in the principle of sin. This does not license or overlook the acts of sin, but seeks to eradicate them by going to their source. That source is the principle and nature of sin, or the sinful nature.

Those justified cannot, from the nature of sin and the nature of grace, live in the realm of both. Grace changed the nature of the believer so that he no longer lives in the realm of the sin-principle. Grace abounds in and through faith, not through sin. Sin limits grace rather than causing it to flourish. To illustrate this point someone has suggested that bankruptcy might reveal a man's mistakes and lead him to make millions, but only a fool would think of going broke so that he might get rich, or continue in bankruptcy that riches might abound. The redeemed person does not want to live in sin, and abhors the sins he does commit. He must love good and hate evil. See I John, chapters one and two for further study.

6:2 - GOD FORBID. If we died to the principle of sin, how can we continue to live in the realm of it. The thought is unspeakable. Death to sin is in contradiction to living in sin. As Christ died for sin, so the believer died to sin when he, by faith, appropriated the death of Christ for his

atonement (in justification).

DEAD. The aorist tense means died once for all, as opposed to "yet live in it." "Died once for all" precludes any lapsing back into death. The believer, being dead to the principle and penalty of sin, is thereby dead to the practice of sin. Being dead to sin and living in sin are contradictory terms.

It might seem like an over simplification, but there are two kinds of people in the world; saved and lost. There are two kinds of saved people in the world; those in the spirit and those in the flesh. Many Christian have not even the faintest idea what it means to walk in the spirit, to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. Yet, this is essential to the process of sanctification.

When one is born again and then walks in the flesh, he dishonors God and quenches the Holy Spirit. He does not bear the fruit of the spirit, but the fruits of the flesh, which might make his life appear more like that of a lost person than a Christian. But not necessarily so. There are believers who are walking in the flesh who are in church every Sunday, read their "daily Bible reading" and perform numerous Christian services; but do not bear the fruit of the Spirit and do not enjoy the power of the Spirit in their lives.

Both those Christians who are walking in the Spirit and those who are walking in the flesh have been delivered from the eternal penalty of sin. According to Romans 3:23 both "come short of the glory of God." When the Christian sins the Holy Spirit convicts him he must confess his sin (I John 1:9) to receive God's forgiveness and cleansing. The believer will commit acts of sin, but he will not sin habitually so that it becomes his life-style.

6:3 - OR...introduces the truth, in contrast to the false position just stated. Paul uses baptism as a commentary on the Christian life. It sets forth the believer's relation to sin, to the old self, to Christ, and to the resurrection life. First of all, baptism is a burial. "It is the burial of the body of sin that died with Jesus on the cross through faith. We were buried with Christ in baptism not in order that we might die to sin, but because we were already dead to sin" [17: 165].

We do not bury living people, we bury dead people. We do not bury a person so that he may die, but because he is already dead. Baptism is symbolic of the believer's having died in Christ's death. It is an interpretation of the believer's experience of grace. The burial of a believer is the New Testament mode of baptism. The first meaning of baptism is death. Sin is consummated in death, and burial is the consummated of death. Baptism is valid only when the candidate has died to sin (in Christ). It is without meaning if the individual has not been "raised to walk in newness of life."

A minister on a Monroe, Louisiana television program ("Let the Bible Speak") was trying to prove that immersion is the only Scriptural mode of baptism. He also taught that one had to be baptized in order to be saved. His illustration was remarkable in that it supported his first thesis and destroyed the second. He said, "You do not take a dead person out to the cemetery and lay him down by a grace and sprinkle dirt on him, you put in the grace and cover him with dirt."

He was right up to that point; but he stopped short of making a discovery that would have been very disturbing. That point is that you do not bury living people. You only bury dead people. You do not bury living people so that they may die. We do not baptize people so that they will die to sin (the sin principle or nature), because they have already died once-for-all to sin.

Baptism was both a picture of the individual's death to sin and his being raised to walk in newness of life, and a public profession of one's faith in Christ. McGorman notes:

In Paul's day there were no Christian buildings with aisles for people to walk. Instead men and women made public their confessions of faith in Christ by submitting to baptism. Baptism was both the time and mode of confession whereby one professed to be disciple of Jesus Christ through faith [18: 84].

6:4. The second view of Baptism (already mentioned above) is considered in this verse. That is a resurrection from the watery grave. We were buried to show that we had died to sin, and we are raised to publicly proclaim that we are alive unto God to live the resurrection life imparted by justification and nurtured in sanctification. Death is seen in the immersion and the resurrection is proclaimed in the emersion. The believer is more than dead to sin: he is alive to righteousness.

THROUGH THE GLORY OF THE FATHER. This points to the glory of God that attended the resurrection of Jesus and implies that the same manifestation of divine glory ought to characterize the walk of the Christian in his new life. This is the chief reason the saved cannot continue in sin (I John 1 and 2).

6:5 - PLANTED TOGETHER (implanted, united, grafted). If we have died with Christ, we also live with Him. Death is consummated in a burial, and life is completed in the resurrection. "Being dead to sin guarantees our resurrection and the resurrected life is the final consummation of the death to sin" [17: 167]. The union with Christ holds throughout, both in death and in life. The graft is engrafted and it is supported by the life of the tree. As the sap of the tree guarantees the life of the graft, the life fluid of the Tree of Life guarantees the eternal life of those of us who are grafted into Him. For further study, see Andrew Murray's book, *The True Vine*.

6:6 - THE OLD MAN. This term refers to the unregenerated person of our past. When you trust Jesus Christ as Saviour you are born again; you are a new creature in Christ. "The old man" is the person you used to be when you were dead to Christ and alive to sin.

CRUCIFIED WITH HIM. How can I be crucified with Him when He was crucified twenty centuries ago? When you trust Jesus, your sins are placed on Him and crucified with Him on the cross. Sins are never excused. They are always punished, with either the unrepentant sinner paying the price, or Christ our Substitute paying the price for us. He died once-for-all, but whether one lived in the first century, the tenth or today, the sins of the redeemed are transferred to Him. "Jesus Paid It All" is more than a great hymn. It is a fact.

In a video tape series ("What Every Christian Should Know," from Video Dynamics, Jackson, MS), Adrian Rodgers used an illustration about the cross that meant a lot to this writer. He got my attention when he mentioned Dr. R. G. Lee, who served as pastor of Belvue Baptist Church, Memphis for over thirty years. When I was a young boy living in the Green River community seven miles west of Sledge, Mississippi, my life centered around family, farm, the Green River Baptist Mission, and school. By the time I was twelve years old, we scheduled services early enough for the pastor of the Lula Baptist Church, Henning Andrews, to preach for us and then make it back to Lula for their morning service. This permitted us to get home just in time to see and hear R. G. Lee preach on television.

I heard R. G. Lee at 11:20, had lunch with my family, watched Billy Graham's program at one o'clock. We then played ball or boxed until time to feed livestock and get ready to go back to church that evening. I was privileged to hear Dr. Lee and visit with him a number of times when I was in college and seminary. I distinctly remember his challenging ministerial students at Mississippi College to memorize the New Testament. I did not believe he was serious until I learned that he had done just that! I thought I had accomplished something when I memorized the books of the Bible forward and in reverse order.

Adrian Rodgers said that once when Dr. Lee stood at Calvary with a tour group, the tour guide asked, "Has anyone of you ever been here before?" Dr. Lee raised his hand and the guide asked, "Really; when were you here?" Dr. Lee answered, "Two thousand years ago."

THE BODY OF SIN. "The old man" is the unregenerate nature. "The body of sin" is the physical body which is the instrument of sin. The body of sin is disabled in the crucifixion of the old man.

6:7. The dead are said to be justified from sin in that they are no longer the servants of sin, nor subjects of the penalty of sin. People who are dead owed no debts, no obligations, no vows. Death is payment in full for the guilty sinner. Sin must release its grip on the dead, just as if there was a legal verdict of acquittal. The law cannot touch a dead person. He is beyond the reach of the law and in that sense the dead person may be rightly termed 'justified from sin.' He is not justified in sin, but "from sin."

6:8. Dying with Christ guarantees our living with Him. No person can live with, or in, Christ if he is dead to Christ. When one is born again, he is alive and the realm in which he lives is "in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:1).

BELIEVE. The present tense is used, showing the reality of present faith. We have no English word for faith as it is used in the New Testament sense. Faith is not blindly wishing for something one may or may not receive. It has nothing to do with the power of positive thinking. As a matter of fact, the power of positive thinking may become an act of works, or even, the work of the flesh, and not of the spirit. Faith in the New Testament involves knowledge, evidence and reality. It is also a

commitment of one's life (heart, soul, mind and strength) to Jesus. Faith is based on rational truth, on reality, and not some existential leap. It is based on the evidence of:

1. Our having died to sin once for all time.
2. Our having died once for all with Christ.
3. Our being raised with Him.
4. Our present experience in the reality of a vital living relationship with Christ in the present.

WE SHALL ALSO LIVE WITH HIM. The verb is in the future tense. This does not mean that the promised life with Christ is all in the future (Pie in the sky bye and bye). It means that the present life we have in Christ is to be continuous and eternal. Life with Christ is not held out as a future award, as some seem to think. The present possession of eternal life by faith is our assurance of this life for all eternity. The only kind of life God is giving any sinner is eternal life. This denotes both quality and quantity, but too often people place emphasis on the quantity and overlook the quality of the life with Christ. To the man who is lost in sin, Jesus offers eternal life here and now. The quality of that life testifies of the quantity. The Lord never grants temporal life, or life of a trial basis.

With Him shows a vital union with the Person of Christ. "If we die with Him, He does the dying for us. But when we live with Him, His life is as much a part of us as it is of Him. There is no distinction between the eternal life of the Saviour and the eternal life of the saved" [17: 169]. The life He gives us is the life of heaven, His life. The only way you can live with Christ is for Christ to live in you.

6:9 - KNOWING. We have evidence that the resurrected Christ can never die again. Christ overcame death and it is forever behind Him. The life of the believer is just as secure as His life. What is said of Jesus' life is true of the life of the redeemed. Therefore, the believer having died to death and having been raised unto eternal life "dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him."

6:10 - HE DIED. Jesus died unto sin once. But His life, His living, is an eternal living unto God. Jesus made one sacrifice of Himself, and then entered into heaven with the blood of perfect sacrifice to be sprinkled on the mercy seat of heaven. And that is never again to be repeated (Heb. 6:6).

6:11 - RECKON YE. This is imperative. Paul commands us to think "yourselves to be dead indeed to sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Christ died once for the destruction of sin, so we died once-for-all unto the principle of sin.

By what authority does Paul give us commands? His apostolic authority? Remember that Paul is the human instrument by which this epistle was written, but the Holy Spirit is the divine author. He has the authority to command us to think as we should think. Paul wrote to the

Philippians, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5). That is a good definition of spirituality, thinking like Jesus. Shouting "Praise the Lord" or "Amen" may impress others with our spirituality, and if one is sincere it can be a wonderful testimony and expression of praise. But true spirituality is seen when the believer begins thinking the thoughts of Jesus, for as a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Pro. 23:7).

6:12 - SIN. The sin (noun as in 6:1). Sin means to miss the mark, or to miss the target.

YOUR MORTAL BODY. The physical part of the individual that is subject to death. Paul has shown that the principle of sin has no relation to the new nature of the believer. Now he exhorts the Christian not to let sin rule over that part of us which is mortal, or subject to death. Sin cannot live in the believer's nature and he is urged not to let it express itself through the mortal body. "Sin is not innate to matter, but the body is the most common instrument under the reign of sin" [17: 171].

6:13 - THE MEMBERS. This points to any functional part of man's nature; all of the faculties, physical, mental, spiritual. "Holiness of life is possible because one has become a Christian, but it is not an automatic result of conversion" [2: 70].

INSTRUMENTS. Weapons. "Sin is a monarch, mobilizing the members of the whole man as weapons of immorality to battle against God and His righteousness" [17: 171].

BUT. "Neither" in KJV. This word shows sharp contrast between what they ought to do and what they ought not to do.

YIELD YE YOUR MEMBERS. The word in the Greek means to present, yield, surrender, to place at the disposal of another. It carries the Old Testament idea of offering a sacrifice and is the same word Paul uses in 12:1 (present your bodies a living sacrifice). Every person yields himself as a sacrifice either unto righteousness or unto unrighteousness.

6:14. The reason for the preceding argument is that we are not lorded over by sin when we are in Christ. This verse also gives us a summary statement of the above portion of this chapter, and a transition into the rest of the chapter.

YE ARE NOT UNDER LAW, BUT UNDER GRACE. This gives both the negative and positive explanation of why sin is no more lord over us. Living under grace is to be free from both the penalty and the power of sin; from the penalty of sin (justification) and corruption of sin (sanctification).

B. The Christian is dead to the practice of sin, 6:15-23.

6:15 - SHALL WE SIN. This question concerns the occasional sin in the absence of the life of sin. In 3:23, Paul said we are all presently falling short of the glory of God. That is sin. Believers will sin but sin should not become their life-style. He may yield to temptation but he must loathe sin.

First John deals with this and anyone who has a problem with this should study the first three chapters of I John where it is seen that "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1:8). In 3:6 the Scripture says "whosoever abideth in him sinneth not." In the first verse the reference is to acts of sin and in the second verse the reference is to the principle of sin. The true child of God will commit acts of sin and he will be guilty of sins of omission which must be confessed (I John 1:9). But he will not continue in sin so as to make it his life-style.

6:16 - SERVANTS. Every person is a servant of some one master. Every person is under the command of one supreme authority. Jesus pointed out the fact that man cannot serve two masters. We are servants of one master "whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness."

6:17. Christians in the church at Rome had been servants of sin, but that was in the past. They now render obedience "from the heart" to a new master. "Heart" reveals that the obedience is coming from the center and the essence of their moral nature. The heart is the center of intellectual, volitional and emotional response to God.

6:19 - I SPEAK AS A MAN. Or, I speak as man speaks (see notes on 3:5). This verse challenges believers to give themselves as completely unto righteousness as they had formerly given themselves to sin.

FLESH. This refers to the carnal nature of man as it is predisposed to sin.

YE HAVE YIELDED YOUR MEMBERS SERVANTS TO...SIN. Paul thinks of himself as the servant of Jesus Christ. Those who have not received Christ are servants of "uncleaness and sin." Most people would reject the idea that they are slaves to sin. But today with widespread addiction to alcohol and drugs we can understand how one can yield himself to sin and in time become the servant of that sin. There are people who are servants to such sins as pornography, adultery, homosexuality, lying, greed, violence, and gossip.

TO INIQUITY UNTO INIQUITY. The literal meaning of the word is "no law," and denotes transgression and lawlessness. The emphasis is not upon the act but upon the principle of lawlessness.

SERVANTS TO RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO HOLINESS. The word translated "Holiness" (hagiasmos), is the word for sanctification. "Separation unto God" is the idea. It is used here without the article in order to express the highest type of moral character. Sanctification must be understood as progressive and not instantaneous. No person can choose Christ as Saviour

without choosing righteousness as his goal. He thus commits himself as a servant of righteousness.

Sanctification is not a matter of emotions, ecstatic services and the repetition of religious cliches. It is a matter of separation from the world for the glory of God. Sanctification begins the moment one is justified and continues until glorification. It is growth in the "grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18).

6:20. When they were "the servants of sin," they were "free from righteousness." That is, they were free in regard to the possession of righteousness. They were destitute of righteousness; and now that they are free from sin, they ought to be likewise destitute of sin.

6:21. Paul's question leaves little room for them to evade the issue. What are the values of the past life of shame that embarrass you now? This is a good question for believers of today. They could not have been bearing spiritual fruit. The fruit of their old life was death.

Against this backdrop, one must wonder about some of the personal testimonies you sometimes hear during crusades and at times in worship services. An athlete or entertainer spends half an hour telling how ungodly he was until Jesus saved him and he can tell about his Christian experience in two minutes. A certain excitement in his voice when he talks about the life of sin might suggest that he still misses it.

6:22. The preceding verse pictures the readers in their shameless lost condition in the past. This verse reveals them in the glory yet to be revealed in eternity. The old life was filled with occasions for shame; the new life is filled with the joy of fruit unto sanctification.

6:23. THE WAGES OF SIN. The word translated "wages" might also be translated pay, rations or allowance. This refers, not to the salary of a laborer, but to the allowance or rations of a soldier, such as bread, meat and salt (that which sustains bare existence). Sin never pays well; just enough to entice the sinner to keep working for its deadly wage. Sin offers only a bare existence.

Alcoholic beverage commercials promise life, happiness, friendship, relaxation, sexual fulfillment - the good life. They don't tell us that "at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder" (Pro. 23:32). Hallucinogenic drugs offer young people a thrill, a trip, ecstasy. They pay in addiction, jail, poverty, prostitution and death.

There is no deceit about the allowance of sin. Some people show that they have been deceived by Satan; but they do not have to be deceived, because God has given them a clear warning about Satan's devices and the consequences of following him (Ephesians 6).

Sin pays faithfully, promptly and eagerly. But if the final analysis it is the dying sinner who does the paying. He pays the price of sin with an eternity in hell. Someone has said, "When you work for God, He pays; when you work for the devil, you pay." Death and sin are inseparably connected. The devil pays wages, but he always pays with counterfeit currency. The practice of sin

will not merit anything but death.

BUT THE GIFT OF GOD. To paraphrase it, "but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is one of a number of verses from Romans used in what is often called 'The Roman Road to Salvation'. Some of the other verses are 3:23; 5:8; 10:9-13. The "free gift of God" stands in sharp contrast with what sin pays. Grace is not pay or wages; but the free gift of God apart from merit of any kind. The sinner earns death. God gives His servants eternal life. If only every lost person would think of the contrast!

C. The believer is dead to the power of sin, 7:1-6.

7:1. Paul is not resorting to flattery when he says, "I speak to men who know the law." It is because of their knowledge of the law that they should be able to understand his argument. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 15:56, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law."

THE LAW HATH DOMINION...SO LONG AS HE LIVETH. It holds dominion over him until death - but no longer! This is illustrated in terms of marriage. The wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives, and either is free from the other when he dies. When either dies, his spouse is free to marry another. The person who dies is free from the marriage laws. That death frees the surviving spouse also.

When the Christian dies in Christ to sin, he is thereby dead to the law. The law does not die, but it has no authority over the dead. The law has no further authority over the Christian. He dies to sin and the law and is free from the law. Being free from the law, he is at liberty to enter another union. The union with Christ is a permanent marriage. The believer serves in a new relationship.

D. The believer's relationship to law, 7:7-25.

This section shows the inability of the law to sanctify the believer. There is nothing wrong with the law. The wrong is in the heart, in the addiction to sin.

7:7-13. The nature and office of the law is stated briefly to prove that the inability of the law to sanctify is not due to its being sinful. Its nature is different from sanctification. In this passage Paul discusses the nature and office of the law, irrespective of its relation to either the lost or the saved. Paul has high regard for the law. It makes sin appear to be exactly what it is - sin. It shows that sin is exceedingly sinful and evil.

7:7. Paul asks, "is the law sin?" After all he has to say about the limitations of the law, someone

might ask such a question. Paul anticipates such an argument and redacts strongly against it: "God forbid!" The law is not evil for it reveals sin and it condemns the sinner (7:9ff).

7:8. The law is good but it cannot sanctify; it does condemn sin in the heart.

CONCUPISCENCE. The NASV reads, "produced in me coveting of every kind." Concupiscence may be defined as an active desire in the heart of an individual for all kinds of evil passions (desire, lust, a longing for).

7:9-11. The average reader may have trouble following Paul's argument here. McBeth says, "Paul is relating his own experience with the law, in order to give an experiential interpretation of the nature and office of the law. Paul's experience is not singular, nor peculiar, but is representative of the totality of those who have law-consciousness" [17: 180].

7:9. The meaning of this verse is that when Paul came to understand the true meaning of the law, he realized that he was a sinner worthy of death.

7:11. The NASV renders this verse, "for sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me."

7:12. WHEREFORE THE LAW IS HOLY. Paul concludes that it is holy, and just, and good. Ryrie says (footnotes, Ryrie Study Bible):

The law is fundamentally good, but the result of the law is to bring into the open the power of sin. It is sin, not the law which exposes it, that deceives and kills (vs. 11).

7:13. Paul rejects (God forbid) the thought that the law, which is good, had become a cause of death. The law reveals sin to be "exceedingly sinful."

7:14-25. In these verses Paul explains why the law cannot sanctify. The question of whether this Scripture is to apply the unsaved or to the saved is more acute in this passage than in 7:7-13. The answer to another question should settle this one. What is the subject of 6:1-8:39? Scholars agree that this is Paul's proof that his doctrine of justification by grace produces righteousness. One term for this is sanctification. 3:21-5:21 deals with justification and chapters 6-8 with sanctification. So, this passage seems to prove that law cannot sanctify anymore than it can produce justification. Sanctification deals with the saved and not the lost.

7:14-17. This passage pictures the unsanctified believer as having his nature preyed upon by sin.

7:14. THE LAW IS SPIRITUAL. It is spiritual in nature; it is not ruled by the flesh.

I AM CARNAL. Carnal means to be of the flesh and it is the opposite of "spiritual." It means to

be ruled by the flesh. All lost people are ruled by the flesh, and the believer who refuses to walk in the Spirit of God is carnal. He is ruled by the flesh. His soul is saved but his life is shamefully wasted, if not an outright disgrace before a Holy God.

7:15. Every serious Christian can identify with the tug-of-war that was going on inside Paul's heart. Inside every heart there is a civil war brewing. In some cases the war is raging. What believer has not been thoroughly disgusted with himself after committing some sin which he loathes in others?

In sanctification, the Holy Spirit produces righteousness within the believer and gives him victory over sin. He will empower the saint for spiritual warfare, and the longer one walks in the power of the Holy Spirit, the better equipped he is for this spiritual warfare. As one grows in the Spirit some temptations will not be as great as the once were. But we should never be deceived; others will take their place. Different temptations are stronger at different periods in one's life, but as the Lord gives us a victory over today's temptations we are being prepared to face tomorrow's temptations.

You must never try to match your power or your mind with Satan. You are no match for him. James says, "resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7b). But immediately after that he says, "draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you" (4:8). Satan is not afraid of you; he is afraid of the Christ Who indwells your heart.

It will help to remember that in justification we are delivered from the penalty of sin. In sanctification we are being delivered from the power of sin. Justification is once-for-all, but sanctification is day by day.

Paul, like Isaiah before him, missed the lessons of high self-esteem. Jay Adams mentions a seminary professor who is a strong advocate of the self-worth movement. The professor criticizes Isaac Watts' famous hymn "At the Cross." He says the words "such a worm as I" could convey "a quite unflattering self-image." Adams responds, "This seems to be a strange argument on the face of it. Since when does the Bible indicate that God is in the business of flattering sinners?" [1: 20].

In Verses 15-17 Paul reveals his personal experience because in it there is an application for all of us. "This is his diagnosis of what happens when one tries to be sanctified by keeping the law" [32 - foot notes].

7:18-20. This passage shows that the unsanctified believer has no power to execute the will of a new creature in Christ. McGorman says:

A slave cannot act upon his own will. He is bound to obey his master. His noble desires will be overruled and crushed by the one who owns him. Through the metaphor of slavery Paul explained why he was unable to obey the law. As sin's slave, bought and paid for, he had to do his master's bidding [18: 96].

7:18. IN ME. Paul explains this by adding, "in my flesh."

DWELLETH NO GOOD THING. Robertson translates this "Not absolutely good." He adds, "This is not a complete view of man even in his unregenerate state as Paul at once shows" [21: 370]. Paul says, "the will is present with me." Robertson says, "The wishing is the better self, the doing is the lower self" [21: 370].

7:19. "For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." An example of this type of sinning is seen in the addiction to alcohol and drugs in our society today.

My wife, at the time of this writing, is teaching her seventh graders a drug awareness program. Yesterday she told me she omitted the lesson. Why? Because the subject was, "When It Is Safe to Drink Alcohol." Ask an alcoholic when it is safe to drink alcoholic beverages. Some people like to remind us that many medical prescriptions contain alcohol.

My answer is the same that it would be for handling rattlesnakes. Leave it to the experts! If alcohol is required in the preparation of a prescription I would give it to my son. But with every fiber of my being I will oppose it as a beverage. After more than thirty years in the ministry I can testify that in the lives of many people it "biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder" (Pro. 23:32).

7:20 - IT IS NO MORE I THAT DO IT. "Just as in verse 17, 'no longer do I do it' the real Ego, my better self), and yet there is responsibility and guilt for the struggle goes on" [21: 370].

7:21. THE LAW. The principle already seen in verses 18 and 19. The law cannot produce sanctification and it cannot heal the stricken conscience.

7:22. Paul delights in the law "after the inward man" (as opposed to the outward man).

7:23. The picture continues of the inner battle, the inner struggle between sin and righteousness; between what he knows to do and what he wants to do, the struggle between his deeds and his conscience.

7:24 - O WRETCHED MAN THAT I AM. The body dominated by sin endures a "living" death [32: - footnotes]. This is a far cry from the high self-esteem philosophy so popular with many today, including Christian leaders. Paul could identify with Isaiah, who cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone..." (Is. 6:5). Surely, these men are to be pitied! Someone should have helped them with their self-image; their self-esteem. Robert Schuler and Norman Vincent Peale would like to save us all from such low self-image. But David wrote, "A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17).

7:25 - I THANK GOD. The struggle that goes on in the heart and mine can be frustrating to the believer; and Paul's argument might be a little confusing at first. But he is careful to thank God for

the victory over death (vs. 24) through Christ our Lord.

SO THEN...I MYSELF. This inner struggle may refer to Paul's experience in his unregenerate state. But since he does not tell us that, it is not clear that this should be limited to his unregenerate state. Since the subject of this section is sanctification, it would seem that Paul is pointing to the inner struggle that continues in the heart of the believer from the time of justification through his growth and development as a child of God; the process of sanctification. Sanctification is a process, not some "second blessing" that occurs at some point after justification.

Robertson points out that "in 6:1-7:6 Paul proved the obligation to be sanctified. In 7:7-8:11 he discusses the possibility of sanctification, only for the renewed man by the help of the Holy Spirit" [21: 371].

E. The believer's relationship to Christ, 8:1-39.

1. Believers are free from condemnation in Christ, 8:1-11.

We now come to one of the great chapters of the Bible. Bible scholars point out that the Greek word for "Spirit is used 21 times in Romans 8. Eighteen, possibly twenty of these references are to the Holy Spirit; more references to the Holy Spirit than any other chapter in Paul's epistles. I Corinthians 12 ranks second with 12.

8:1. A statement of fact. This whole verse is an exclamation and shout, containing no verb. The negative is emphatic.

NOW. The word here is not temporal but conclusive, not of time but eternity.

CONDEMNATION. The word is used without the article and therefore the emphasis is general rather than specific. It points to any judgment, not the final judgment. There is no condemnation from any person, cause, or source. There is no cause within us for condemnation, for we are redeemed by the blood of Christ. There is no person who can condemn us, for God has justified us. Being in Jesus, the believer is just as free from condemnation as He is. He is our assurance.

Those in Christ are as safe as heaven can make them. He is our security. If any believer should ever be condemned and go to hell, this Scripture would fall with him. For that matter, so would Jesus Christ. No regenerate person has ever lost his salvation, nor been condemned in judgment, nor gone to hell. There has never been an erasure in the Book of Life.

8:2. We are alive in Christ Jesus. "The law of the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus" has superseded the "law of sin and death," The believer has by faith in Jesus Christ been freed from the domination

of sin and death, but is governed by the Spirit of life, or the Holy Spirit.

FREE. Liberated, emancipated - once for all time.

8:3 - 4. The law is God given, but it still cannot provide man with the moral power to meet its demands. So God acted in his behalf.

KEEPS ON BEING WEAK. The imperfect tense is used, implying the continued weakness of the law. The weakness of the law has been, and will continue to be, coexistent with the weakness of the flesh. Paul is not here charging the law with any weakness as to purpose. He says the inability of the law was due to our weakness and frailty. Law failed to gain obedience, not because it was weak, but because we are weak. Jesus came to condemn sin and fulfill the law. He fulfilled all the requirements of the law and if we are in Him we satisfy the law. The incarnation of Jesus broke the dominion of sin as a principle. He was in the likeness of flesh, but He was the one exception to the universal dominion of sin.

8:5 - MIND (understand, think, to agree with). They are according to the flesh, thinking the things of the flesh. Their minds dwell on the carnal and their thinking is compatible with the flesh. The mind of the carnal man is fashioned by his unregenerate nature. And his reasoning and judgment, especially on moral questions, are just as weak (wrong) as his heart.

What a man thinks grows out of what he is. You do what you do because you are what you are. The honey bee does what he does because he is what he is. Salmon do what they do because they are what they are. Salmon are not going to make a honey comb and fill it with honey. The same principle applies to man. You do what you do because you are what you are. The carnally minded will think carnal thoughts and do carnal things. Those who are fashioned according to the Spirit have an understanding of the Spirit. They think like Jesus thinks and the more they think like Jesus the more they will behave like Jesus, according to the will of God, for "whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son..." (Rom. 8:29).

8:6. The consequences of carnal thinking (vs. 5) is death. Death can only mean eternal death. The results of spiritual thinking is eternal life (see Gal. 6:7-8).

8:7-8. These two verses take up only the darker picture as revealed in the two preceding verses to tell why the carnal mind results in death. The mind of the flesh is hateful and hostile toward God.

8:7 - ENMITY AGAINST GOD. The absence of the article proves the previous statement; and denotes the evil nature of the carnal mind in its reaction, not against the personality of God, but against His character, essence, and nature. If the article had been present it would have marked the opposition as being against the person- al God. Its absence shows the nature of the carnal mind to be at enmity against the holiness of God. His righteousness is attacked. The whole of nature is odious to the nature of God, but the Person of God is ever ready to the carnal man. His holiness is offended, but His Person is ready to give of His righteousness unto the vilest of His enemies, if they repent and

trust in Jesus Christ. The Person of God offers mercy to the sinner, but the holiness of God cannot tolerate sin.

This is a powerful commentary of both the love of God and the holiness of God. He loved man enough to give His only begotten Son to die on a cruel cross for man's salvation. He saw Him humiliated, persecuted, slandered, betrayed, tortured and slaughtered for man. Nevertheless, the His holiness must react against sin. His nature demands punishment. His holiness demands righteousness and will not tolerate sin. For man to have fellowship with God and life in His Son, he must be born again and receive a new heart, a new nature. The lost man does not need a reformation, he needs regeneration. He does not need to turn over a new leaf, he needs to be born again. He does not need a change of heart, he needs a new heart.

8:9 - IN THE FLESH, BUT IN THE SPIRIT. If you are in Christ, you are dead to the flesh and alive to the Spirit. It is significant that:

The construction, the tense, and the strongest conjunction all go to frame the firmest denial of the flesh and the strongest affirmation to the Spirit that inspiration could muster from the world's most perfect language [17: 189].

"If" does not express doubt but a fact for each individual to appreciate. In essence, he is saying, We are at home in the Spirit since the Spirit is at home in us.

DWELLS. The word means to dwell or abide, not to visit, but to dwell at home, to administer or govern. This reveals the right relationship between the believer and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not an occasional guest, but the unseen Host in the believer's heart. A deep fellowship and obedience to the Spirit are seen in this word.

The language is clear. We are Christ's if we have His Spirit; but if one does not have His Spirit he does not belong to Christ. The Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God are terms for the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit of God dwells in us, we are no longer "in the flesh." If one's conversion is real, he is actually indwelt by the Holy Spirit, He is also indwelt by Christ.

8:10-11. When Christ indwells a person's spirit, "the body is dead because of sin." The body of Christ arose from the very nature of fact that there was no sin in Him. Allen sees a glorious climax of our spiritual freedom in these verses:

First of all, it means justification and the forgiveness of sin. Secondly, it involves energy to overcome the power of sin and to live on the new level of righteousness. On this level it is possible to please God and to do His will. In the third place, this freedom will mean ultimate deliverance from the presence of sin in the glory of eternity [2: 84].

2. Believers are the sons of God, 8:12-17.

2:12. We are free from sin, death, and the flesh and as such we are not obligated to serve them in the flesh. Being delivered from these things, we are deeply indebted to our Liberator, the Holy Spirit.

8:13. In verse 13 we have the key to sanctification; the means whereby we can live the Christian life on a level of righteousness. The Holy Spirit is the agent, but we must yield to Him so that He can accomplish His work within us. We can, "through the Spirit," put to death the deeds of the body; the sinful habits of the old sinful nature.

You cannot produce sanctification any more than you can produce justification. But you have an essential part to play, and that part is faith. You are justified by grace through faith and you are sanctified by grace through faith. God does not violate the individual's free will in justification and the Holy Spirit will not violate the free will of the believer in sanctification. So, you have a choice. Everyone is free to choose, but no one is free not to choose.

In this verse we see Paul's attitude toward the human body. There have been three primary attitudes.

(1) One is the attitude of the pagans who worshipped the body because of its beauty and strength. Greek art and sculpture illustrates this. Paul would never worship any human body, but urges us to regard it as dead. He refuses to live for the flesh.

(2) There is also the pseudo-Christian attitude that regards the body as the source of sin. Those who believe this reason that the affliction of the body perfects the purity of the soul. They believe that in exhausting the physical body we are exalting of the spirit.

(3) Paul's attitude is that of the Scripture. This attitude is inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is expressed in the words, "put to death the deeds of the body;" rather than the body itself. The body is to be purified, but not by abuse. Purification of the body comes, not through torture, but through living in the Spirit of Christ. Righteousness comes from internal transformation rather than external conformity.

8:14. Obedience is not seen as the source of life but the proof of it. The faithful saints will be led by the Holy Spirit. The leadership of the Holy Spirit is not the source of salvation but the proof, or test. Obedience is not the root of salvation but the fruit. Obedience is also the proof that one has the life of Christ.

8:15. In justification we receive not the spirit of slaves but the spirit of children; not the spirit of fear, but of boldness to approach the throne of God. We also receive the privilege of fellowship with the Father.

ABBA, FATHER. This is more than bilingual repetition. Often when a bilingual person prays,

or utters an exclamation, he does so in his mother tongue. It is only natural for his prayers and the deepest expressions of his soul to be uttered in his native tongue. 'Abba' had a special meaning to Paul and he expresses his feelings in the language of his childhood, which was Aramaic. "It expresses the deepest filial affection, and the most profound sense of sonship, together with the fullest recognition of the Father- hood of God to believers" [17: 192].

8:16. The witness of the Spirit is God's testimony that we are His. The testimony of the Spirit is God's answer to the filial cry, "Abba, Father." The cry, "Abba, Father" is the child's yearning for the Father; while the testimony of the Spirit is God's brooding over His children. The Spirit of God bears witness in company with our spirit that we are His children.

This is an occasion for thanksgiving. We need assurance and God provides it. Assurance is one of the sweet fruits of sanctification. The person who has been justified, but resists the influence of the Holy Spirit, quenches the Holy Spirit and denies himself two very special blessings. First, he denies himself the fellowship and maturity that can only occur when one permits the Spirit of God to operate in his life. Secondly, he will lack the assurance of salvation that he needs and the Lord wants him to have. If he has assurance it may be based either on what he has been taught, or what he had read from the Bible, both of which are important. But the fresh daily testimony that puts joy in one's salvation is not there.

CHILDREN. Little children. The word denotes children as begotten, those of natural relations, children by birth. The term is one of affection. Son might refer to the legal relationship in addition to birth.

8:17. Being children of God, we are the heirs of God. We are the sons of God and Jesus is our elder brother. Being heirs of God, we are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. The inheritance of the children is just as certain as that of Christ.

3. The suffering of the world will not compare with the future glory of believers in Christ, 8:18-27.

8:18 - I RECKON. See notes on 3:28. Paul is not saying that the calamities of this world weigh less than the glory of the next. He says the sufferings of this life weigh nothing in comparison to the future glory.

THE GLORY WHICH SHALL BE REVEALED IN US. The glory of God is to be revealed in His children from the time of their redemption. The glory of God is revealed in creation, but it reaches new heights in redemption. This does not say that we have to wait until we get to heaven for the glory of God to be revealed in us. His glory is revealed in us as we are conformed to the image of His glorious Son.

In Christ, and only in Christ, can you have your cake and eat it, too! You can drink freely from that well that is springing up and bubbling over unto everlasting life (John 4) without taking one thing away from the blessings God has stored up for you in Heaven. His is a well that never runs dry, in time or eternity.

8:19 - EARNEST EXPECTATION. This means "earnest expectation or looking for, as with the neck stretched out and the head thrust forward (as in Phil. 1:20) [30 - 1668). This is the way nature is yearning for the revelation that is to be exhibited in the sons of God.

8:20 - WAS SUBJECT TO VANITY. Or futility. Ryrie says:

After Adam sinned, God was obliged to subject the creation to futility so that man in his sinful state might retain some measure of dominion over creation. Nature was involved for evil in man's fall; she will be emancipated when man receives adoption as sons (vs. 23) [31 - Study Bible, footnote].

Nature has been marred by the pollution of sinful man. Creation was polluted, not because there was anything wrong with it or because it deserved it, but as an unmerited curse; not for nature's corruption, but for man's (Gen. 3:17f; 4:12f).

Now at the end of the second millennium since Christ, man is polluting nature as never imagined in the middle of the twentieth century. Farmers have to use chemical fertilizers to produce a crop, but the run-off is creating serious problems in streams. They have to use insecticides and herbicides if they are to stay in business (until someone comes up with a better way) and those chemicals have polluted both the soil and the streams. Acid rain is a serious problem which could become acute in another generation. Industrial chemicals and chemical developed for warfare are a serious threat to man's well being.

We are told that there are chemicals that are being released in our environment that will not break down in less than a thousand years. We are destroying the ozone layer and filling the environment with carbon monoxide, smoke and various carcinogenic chemicals. Does this mean that God has lost control of nature? The answer must be "No." Some fear that some accident might set off a nuclear war and wipe out humanity. Others fear that it might happen, but not by accident. The fact is, God has already determined just exactly when and how the end will come. When it comes He will be in absolute control.

8:21. The subjection of creation was accompanied with a purpose; and that purpose it towards a deliverance. The curse carried with it a promise of deliverance: "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

8:22. All creation groans in travail for a new life; for deliverance from its curse. Man has defiled whatever he has touched. Nature crumbles under his hand. One only has to drive down a highway, any highway, to see what man is doing to his environment.

History, on the positive side, has been called His story. History, on the negative side, is a record of man's atrocities against man and nature. Whatever man touches, he pollutes. More and more people today are becoming concerned about the environment. Ecologists are forming strong political lobbies and exerting pressure on officials to fund programs and pass laws to protect the environment. Some, however, are demanding radical changes with no regard for the economy of an area or jobs of individuals.

8:23. We who are Christians, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, also groan in our spirit while we are "waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body" (NASV). "The culmination of our position as adopted sons is the resurrection state" [32: Study Bible footnote]. We are eagerly awaiting our full "adoption" as sons (children) and "the redemption of our body," both of which are future. "The we shall have complete redemption of both body and soul" [21: 376].

8:24. Hope is the very nature of our salvation. We are saved in hope (see notes on 5:2). Our salvation was not based upon the grounds of what we could see, but in faith as we trusted in Jesus Christ.

The NASV has "in hope." King James renders it 'by hope.' Robertson says it is inconclusive as to whether it should be in, by, or for. "Curiously enough either makes good sense in the context: 'We were saved in hope, by hope, for hope' (of the redemption of the body) [21: 376].

8:25. Patience is related to hope. It is native to hope.

8:26. Emphasis is placed upon the Spirit as acting in our behalf in prayer.

THE SPIRIT ALSO HELPETH OUR INFIRMITIES. "Here beautifully Paul pictures the Holy Spirit as taking hold at our side at the very time of our weakness" [21 - 376]. In the time of our weakness, the Holy Spirit helps us pray. He helps us pray with unutterable groanings (sighs). We must be careful not to either overstate or understate this. Is the Scripture saying that we pray with unutterable groanings, or that the Holy Spirit does?

Most Christians know the weakness of knowing we should pray for someone, or about something and we really do not know what to request. In some cases one may be overcome by grief or some other emotion, and the words do not come. The Holy Spirit knows our prayer thought and bears it up to the Father. Though we may become speechless or overwhelmed by stress, or from natural inability and infirmities, yet the silent, unuttered prayers are borne up to the Father by the Spirit, in groanings what cannot be articulated because of one's extreme grief or anxiety. God reads our speechless prayers in the groanings of the Spirit. "The creation, the redeemed, and the Spirit, all are in groaning for the consummation of our salvation" [17: 197].

McGorman says that the Holy Spirit prays in us. Even when our thoughts leave us speechless, the Spirit takes our unuttered prayers and lifts them up to the Father [18: 101]. Dodd

said, "Prayer is the Divine in us appealing to the Divine above us" [3 - 116]. As Christians know, we cannot always pray as we ought because we cannot see the future and we cannot really know what is best for us in a given situation. There are times in the life of every believer when all he can do is trust God and say, "Thy will be done."

8:27. God, Who knows the secrets of the heart, also knows both our unuttered words and the Spirit. He knows the heart of man and the mind of the Spirit. There is no way for one to fail when he really wants to pray; that is, if the person is a child of God and goes to Him sincerely, humbly and in faith. You may not be able to communicate your thoughts to other people, but there are no communication gaps with God.

4. Believers have assurance of triumph in redemption, 8:28-30.

8:28. This verse does not mean that whatever happens, happens for the best. Nor does it say that all things will work together for our comfort, ease or prosperity. This wonderful verse does not encourage a health and wealth theology, such as is all too common today, especially on television as health and wealth are promised to those who give their money to keep some religious program on the air. Leonard Ravenhill asks, "Isn't it interesting that the people who talk the most about faith, do the most begging?" [31: video Dynamics].

Evil cannot be justified by this verse. Sin is never good, not even desirable. The Greek carries the idea that the essence of all things are to be destined for our eternal good. God has predestined His children unto eternal life and He has ordained that nothing will prevent our being glorified. All things work together for our ultimate good and for the perfection of our redemption.

Romans 8:28 does not teach that everything that happens is good. It does not say that whatever happens is for our temporal advantage. And it does not say that whatever happens, God caused it. Sometimes people ascribe to God things they would despise in another human being.

Once a lady had a nurse to call me from a hospital to tell me she had been attacked by a man as she entered her office. She had been beaten, strangled, stabbed (as I recall) and left for dead. Someone found her and she was rushed to the hospital. Now, fully conscious, but thoroughly confused, she needed some answers and she asked me to come to the hospital. As I entered her hospital room she demanded, "Did God cause this to happen to me?" I assured her that the evil act was the act of the devil and not of God. She said, "When the next person who comes through that door and tells me that God did it for a reason, I'm going to throw that glass at them!"

A beautiful little girl received severe burns to one side of her face while playing with other children. Another child was playing with fire and her dress caught fire. A family member wondered what she had ever done to deserve such punishment.

After sustaining a severe strain to both feet I was amazed at the people who assured me that

God did it for a reason, or that it was for the best. They would drop canned religious cliches and then wait for me to agree with them. To me it was never that simple. God did not do it! As far as I have been able to determine, it has not been "for the best," in a general sense, or as far as daily activities were concerned. There has been a lot of pain, a lot of inconveniences, a lot of restrictions placed on me and on my family. But through it all God has ministered to me, given me opportunities and permitted me to minister for Him. There is no doubt that He has worked things out for my ultimate good, and that He will never leave me nor forsake me. I praise Him for it. I dealt with this experience at length in my major writing project for the Doctor of Ministry degree ("Help for Long Term Semi-disabled Persons").

This verse should be a source of encouragement for every believer. We should commit it to memory and apply its promise in our every day life. But we should be careful in imposing our interpretation on others.

8:29 - WHOM HE DID FOREKNOW. God is omniscient. He has known everything from the beginning. Nothing is ever a surprise to God; nor does He ever come into possession of new knowledge. He has more than intellectual knowledge. He knows some people in a special way. He knows them redemptively.

PREDESTINATED. Or, preordained. Thus, whom God foreknew in a redemptive relationship are predestined to be made in the likeness of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. He has preordained that every believer be made into the likeness of the character of Christ. "Preordained" means that God, in eternity past, determined to save those whom He foreknew or elected; in other words, those who accept Christ as Savior. "When God purposes the salvation and ordains it in eternity, nothing can thwart the omnipotence of God. Predestination is the assurance that the elect will be conformed to the image of the Son, Jesus Christ" [17: 198].

A good concise definition of predestination would be helpful. But when you look for one you will find that scholars differ widely on the meaning. One dictionary has:

We define predestination as that theological doctrine, primarily associated with Calvinism, which holds that from eternity God has foreordained all things which come to pass, including the final salvation or reprobation of man [4: 415].

Those who follow this line strictly believe that "what is to be will be," and man's choice has no bearing on the final outcome. This disregards the many conditional promises and provisional covenants found in the Bible. The hyper-Calvinist believes that in eternity past God predetermined which people would go to heaven and which ones would go to hell.

The problem with that position is that it violates many passages that teach that man must choose to accept or reject the grace of God. It disregards the "whosoever" of the Scripture as well as the many invitations to come to Jesus. Read Revelation 22:17:

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.”

God can foreknow without stripping man of his free choice. Preordination is a deep subject and throughout the years there has been a lot of debate on every aspect of the subject. But there are some things we can know for certain. First, God is not confused about preordination, foreknowledge or predestination. Secondly, there is nothing in the eighth chapter of Romans that violates the rest of the sacred and infallible Word of God. In the third place, preordination will not violate the freedom God has given each individual to make a choice. Everyone is free to choose, but no one is free not to choose.

Some have built a whole system of theology around the subject of predestination. The doctrine has had a remarkable influence on both church and state. It is important for the Christian to understand this doctrine. When you do, you will see that it is consistent with the rest of the Bible. Ryrie comments on Ephesians 1:5:

God has determined beforehand that those who believe in Christ will be adopted into His family and be conformed to His Son (cf. Rom. 8:29) It involves a choice on His part (Eph. 1:4); it is done in love (v. 4); it is based on the good pleasure of His perfect will (vv. 5, 9, 11); its purpose is to glorify God (v. 14); but it does not relieve man of his responsibility to believe the gospel in order to bring to pass personally God's predestination (v. 13) [32 - Footnotes].

One thing is clearly stated in Romans 8:29: God has preordained that everyone whom He foreknows (redemptively) should be conformed to the image of His Son. That is a good definition of sanctification (being conformed to the image of His Son).

8:30 - CALLED. This is more than the general Gospel invitation to men to come to Jesus (as in Rev. 22:17). The emphasis on this call in eternity rather than in time. L. R. Scarborough said that J. P. McBeth's commentary on the eighth chapter of Romans was the best he had ever seen. The following quotation might have influenced Dr. Scarborough's evaluation. Speaking of predestination, calling, and glorification, he said:

All are harmonized with the tense (aorist), in that the whole of God's redemptive dealings with man have been culminated in eternity past to agree with eternity future. He Who redemptively knew us in eternity past also foreknows us in glorification in eternity future. In the mind of God and in the act of God, man cannot separate between eternity past and eternity future, nor distinguish between the time element in predestination and glorification, nor separate God's initial redemptive act from the consummation of redemption [17: 199].

Whom God foreknew, them He preordained to be identical with the character of Christ. He called them to make them like Christ. McBeth notes:

Justification is the transformation of the sinner to the character of Christ; and glorification is the consummation of the change. In the experience of the man of time, the divine acts operate timely and periodically; but in the mind of God, His acts are one, eternal, finished in eternity past, and consummated in eternity future. The tense of completed action (aorist) denotes glorification as evident, as sure and as real as predestination [17: 199, 200].

From eternity past God has foreknown those who would respond to His grace. The tense, as already noted, means that our future glorification is so certain that it is spoken of as already accomplished. Every person who is foreknow will be glorified. There will not be one single exception. God, Who preordained our redemption, also preordained our glorification.

5. The Christian's eternal security is in Christ, 8:31-39.

8:31 -IF GOD IS FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US? To many, this verse simply means that if God is on our side we can face any foe, win any battle, overcome any obstacle. McBeth insists that “for” implies substitution. It may be a rather narrow interpretation, but if it is right, it does tend to lift it to the lofty heights of the eighth chapter of Romans. Verse 29 enumerates five ways in which God reveals Himself to be “for” us: (1) Foreknowledge, (2) Predestination, (3) Calling, (4) Justification and (5) Glorification. All of these things are provided through the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ. If this interpretation has any merit, Christ is “for” us, not only in death, but also in life.

This interpretation reveals again the magnitude of our Lord's love, His power, His omniscience, and His great salvation. If God substitutes His Son for the believer He could no more cast the believer off than he could cast off His Son. Satan cannot destroy the believer without destroying his Substitute. The danger to the believer's soul does not lie with Satan; but his safety lies with God. The security of the believer does not depend on the failure of Satan, but on the grace of God.

There are those who feel that if they can persuade God to choose their side in a conflict, or in a contest, they will win. At times opposing players (or opposing soldiers) call on God to give their side the victory. Christian athletes may pray for victory without realizing that God has children on both sides. What we must understand is that God is the eternal Absolute. He does not choose sides. With God there is but one side and the individual has two options: to choose to honor Him, or to dishonor Him. The question is, "Who is on the Lord's side?," and not "Whose side is the Lord on?"

8:32. Since God delivered up His only begotten Son as our Substitute, He will give us all things (that are essential for our well being). We receive all things through His Son, Jesus Christ.

8:33. The personal pronouns point to a personality who is the enemy of Christians. Satan is the

great Accuser of Christians. But, "it is God that justifieth," and the accuser must face Him with any charge against the believer.

ELECT. Satan, according to 3:31 cannot destroy the soul (the spirit). So he turns his attack to the character of the believer, but God has covered that base, too. He may destroy the reputation but since Jesus is our Substitute he cannot impeach the character of the elect. We glory in that we are clothed in the righteousness of God, which is unimpeachable (II Cor. 5:21).

8:34 - WHO IS HE THAT SHALL CONDEMN? Condemnation by the devil is unthinkable. Christ will not condemn those whom God acquits. Deity is not divided; Jesus is making intercession for us. "He died for our atonement, was raised for our justification, and intercedes till the consummation of our redemption in glory. The work of Christ cannot make our redemption any more sure in heaven than is the assurance already secured" [17: 205].

Our security is in our Lord's hand. "It is a bold accuser who can face God with false charges or with true ones for that matter for we have an 'Advocate' at God's court (I John 2:1), 'who is at the right hand of God...who maketh intercession for us" [21: 379].

8:35 - WHO SHALL SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF CHRIST? Can anyone lead Christ to turn His back on the Christian? Can anyone cause Him to abandon those for whom He died? An emphatic "NO!" is demanded.

The personal pronoun implies that Satan mobilizes the forces of nature, together with forces of evil spirits against the Christian. Note: (1) No one, implying Satan, can accuse us before our God (8:33). (2) No one can condemn us (8:34). (3) No one can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (8:35). Satan has mobilized his forces for a full scale assault on the bride of Christ in this day. Satanism, witchcraft and various occult practices are wide spread in America. Satan is the force behind the New Age Movements. While many people who are not involved in the occult are involved in the New Age Movement, many of the people are satanists or practitioners of the occult.

Many New Agers claim to be "channels" through whom "spirit guides" both speak and write. When one reads reports of their messages it becomes obvious that these people are mediums through which evil spirits (demons) speak. Some have proclaimed that when the New Age Christ comes to power (they say he has already come and remains in hiding at present), the earth will be purified, or cleansed. Texe Marrs tells us that New Agers have marked Christians and Jews for extinction [16: 154, 166]. That is what some of them mean by cleansing the earth.

Mark Bubek warns that when a person becomes a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, he becomes a marked target for attack from "the same enemies that oppose and attack the Person, plans, and purposes of God" [6: 22]. He stresses that "believers must know all they can about their available defense system and their weapons of warfare" [6 - 22]. Bubek cautions that we must take Satan seriously, but in Jesus Christ we do not have to live in fear. No one can separate us from the love of Christ.

TRIBULATION OR DISTRESS. See notes on 2:9.

PERSECUTION. Tribulation and distress are often closely related to persecution. All tribulation and distress are not the result of persecution, but persecution leads to tribulation and anguish. Paul can speak from personal experience (II Cor. 11). Throughout the history of Christianity there have been many outbreaks of persecution in various place. There are records of sustained persecution against the children of God. Christians have faced lions and gladiators in the Roman arenas, been burned at the stake, imprisoned, beaten, thrown into mental institutions, exiled and tortured in various ways for the cause of Christ. Persecution has been the source of intense tribulation.

Christians are in danger in many places in the world today. Hard-line communists still considers religion an opiate of the people which must be exterminated. Many Islamic people intensely hate Christians. Evolutionists laugh at the Bible. Humanists are seeking to purge society of ever reminder of God. In an environment like this, tribulation and persecution could become a reality for believer in America. But no persecution can separate one from his Saviour.

FAMINE. Persecution leads to famine and nakedness. Famine and nakedness show progression in tribulation and distress which the Lord knew would fall upon His children.
See II Corinthians 4:11.

SWORD. A symbol of death. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, is an example of one who chose death rather than reject Christ. As they prepared to light the fire that would take his life at the stake he was given an opportunity to deny Christ and live. He responded, "Eighty and six years have I served my Lord, and He has never done me wrong. How can I deny my Christ Who loved me so?" As the flames engulfed his body he prayed, thanking God for "finding me worthy of this hour."

8:37 - WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS. We are more than conquerors because Jesus won the victory for us. Not only will we not be separated from Christ; we will be victorious - no, we are "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

8:38 - I AM PERSUADED. The perfect tense shows that he is permanently persuaded. Robertson translates it, "I stand convinced" [21: 378].

NEITHER DEATH... Paul lists things which people dread or fear most (life, death, supernatural powers, etc.). None of these things can separate us from.

NOR ANGELS, NOR PRINCIPALITIES. The combined powers of all evil spirits - not heavenly angels. "Nor powers" is added to include any or all powers known or unknown. Paul included the invisible perils in this list. No force in time or eternity can effect our relationship to

Jesus Christ.

8:39 - NEITHER HEIGHT, NOR DEPTH. There is no dimension of space in which there exists, or ever will exist, any force, either personalities, principalities or powers, which can separate us from "the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

This great chapter should be a source of encouragement and assurance to every born again child of God. Inspiration and construction could not have combined to make a stronger statement concerning our relationship with Christ, our sanctification which the Holy Spirit accomplishes in us, and our eternal security. For further study on the subject of security, read John 10:28-30; I Peter 1:3-5; and I John.

IV. ISRAEL AND THE GOSPEL, 9:1-11:36.

A. National Rejection of Israel, 9:1-29.

Paul has already stressed the plight of both Jews and Gentiles apart from grace. He has proved that the law cannot produce righteousness in either Jew or Gentile. He has revealed the shocking fact that the Jews were in greater peril because they had sinned against a greater light. He has also pointed out the advantages the Jew had over the Gentile, primarily because they had the Old Testament Scriptures and because of their experience with Him since He chose them.

Paul will now deal with some difficult questions about his people. With centuries of preparation behind them, why were they rejecting the Gospel? How does the doctrine of righteousness by grace through faith, apart from the law, relate to the Jews and their special position as the chosen nation? Another question concerns the covenant between God and Israel. Would God not honor His promises to Israel?

1. Paul's Burden for his people, 9:1-5.

Paul assures Israel of his love for his kinsmen, and his sincere grief in their lost condition before showing them their national rejection from the Messianic Kingdom. Paul has been a role model for Christians throughout the ages. His life has been an inspiration to many in time of persecution, defeat, discouragement, and loneliness, as well as in triumphant living. Here we find another key to the greatness (or should we say effectiveness) of the Apostle to the Gentiles. If all the saints of God today had that kind of burden for the lost in their families, in their school, in their profession, and in their community, we would be turning this world up-side-down for Jesus Christ.

9:1. Paul places himself under an oath of truth, conscience, and the Holy Spirit in expressing His

love for Israel. He actually takes a triple oath because of the deep grief he felt in their rejection of Jesus Christ.

9:2. Paul's great sorrow is declared. His sorrow was as deep as that experienced by the Jews after the destruction of the temple in 586 B. C.

9:3 - I COULD WISH. "Idiomatic imperfect, 'I was on the point of wishing' [21 - 380]. His great concern for Israel is comparable to that of Moses for their forefathers. Paul was willing to be condemned to an eternity in hell if it were possible, and if it would bring Israel to faith Jesus Christ. He was (or was at the point of being) willing to suffer Israel's doom, if only all Israel might thereby be saved. What price would you pay to see your relatives or your neighbor saved?

9:4. Potential glories are enumerated.

WHO ARE ISRAELITES. This was the covenant name for God's people. They are descendants of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. The Arab may trace his ancestry back to Abraham, but only the Israelites could trace it back to Abraham through Jacob.

ADOPTION. The Greek word translated "adoption" is used five times in the NT (Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5). Paul uses it in this passage in reference to The filial relationship into which Israel was admitted by election to God (Deut. 14:1) [30 - 1735]. In the other passages it refers to New Testament election. Paul adopts the term to show that God takes into His spiritual family all those, Jew or Gentile, who believe.

GLORY. "Glory" is the Shekinah Glory of God (3:23), used of Jesus in James 2:1.

9:5. This verse concludes a brief section which hints at what Israel might have been and how far she had fallen.

2. Exclusion of Israel is not impossible and not just a recent issue, 9:6-13.

The principle of exclusion has always accompanied God's selection, or choice. He chose Abraham from all people, Isaac from Abraham's children, Israel from all nations; and now He chooses a new spiritual institution for the propagation of His Gospel of salvation.

In this passage Paul teaches that not all belong to Israel who are descended from Israel. There is an Israel within Israel. They are the children of promise (9:8). In Romans 9:19-29 he teaches that not all who are called to become vessels of mercy belong to physical Israel. They are vessels of mercy whom God has prepared beforehand for glory.

9:6 - FOR THEY ARE NOT ALL ISRAEL, WHICH ARE OF ISRAEL.

Robertson renders this, "For not all those out of Israel (the literal Jewish nation), these are Israel (the spiritual Israel)" [21: 381]. This is a startling paradox, but it is not the first time Paul has presented this idea. In Galatians 3:7-9 he has already shown that only those of faith are the sons of Abraham. Jesus had stated the same fact in His debate with the Jews in John, chapter 8.

9:7 - SEED. "Sperma" refers to "both what is sown as containing the germ of new fruit, and the seed growing out of the seed which was sown" [30: 1729]. Originally it referred to plants but it was also used figuratively of descendants of a man. Physical descent is intended here but spiritual seed (children of the promise) is the emphasis in verse 8.

9:8 - THE CHILDREN OF THE PROMISE. They were the children of Abraham through Isaac and not through Ishmael. "Only the children of the promise are 'children of God'...in the full sense. He is not speaking of Christians here, but simply showing that the privileges of the Jews were not due to their physical descent from Abraham. Cf. Luke 3:8" [21: 381].

9:9 - THE WORD OF PROMISE. Literally, "this word is one of promise." See Genesis 18:10 for more on the promise. All the Jewish readers knew this story well and when Paul referred to Abraham or to the promise, he had their attention.

9:10. Rebekah conceived two sons of one husbands.

9:11. God made a choice between Jacob and Esau before they were born; when neither had done anything, either good or bad. How, then could the choice have been based on works? The choice was based on the principle of election.

9:12. THE ELDER SHALL SERVE THE YOUNGER. Rebekah was told that the elder, (Esau), shall serve the younger (Jacob). See Genesis 25:23. The choice of Jacob could not have been based on works or merit.

9:13 - JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED. See Malachi 1:2f. This statement has given a lot of people a problem. How could God discriminate like this? How can a God Who "is love" hate a human being? Some have tried to explain this by saying that the ancient rabbis used extremes to illustrate a point and since love is the extreme opposite of hate, this is the way God chose to illustrate the difference in His affection for the two brothers.

A few years ago the Andy Mercers of Hurst, Texas gave me a wonderful little book by Major Ian Thomas entitled, *The Saving Life of Christ* (Zondervan, 1961). Thomas provides some insight into this difficult passage in a chapter entitled "The Came Amalek." Commenting on Exodus 17, he points out that Amalek was the grandson of Esau and that "the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation" (Exodus 17:16). He documents the history of this warfare. It began when Amalek sought to prevent the Israelites from returning to the Promised Land ("then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim").

Thomas says, "Amalek here is a picture of the flesh, seeking at all costs to bar the onward journey of God's redeemed people, through the wilderness, into the Land of Promise" [25 - 78]. Amalek (who continued Esau's hatred for the chosen people) represents everything God hates and every effort to hinder His children, to defeat them, to destroy them. The conflict between the spirit and the flesh is seen throughout the Bible, just as the conflict between the descendants of Jacob and Esau can be documented through the centuries. We are looking at more than two men. God loves His children, the children of promise and He hates the children of the flesh, the enemy of His people. He hates that which makes war against His people from generation to generation. Paul understood that principle: "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh" (Gal. 5:17). See the study guide on Malachi by this writer a discussion of this conflict.

3. God is just in His selection, 9:14-29.

God is obligated to no man. No lost person deserves anything from God. All deserve justice and justice demands eternal punishment for our sins (the wages of sin is death). All deserve to perish, so His choosing one was an act of mercy. God does not wrong one person by choosing another for a task, responsibility, or blessing. The lost person cannot accuse God of being unfair. He cannot blame God for his being lost, nor condemn Him for saving another. One is saved in mercy; the other is lost in justice. The holiness of God demands justice, but the mercy of God provides atonement through Jesus Christ our Lord. The lost person has only himself to blame, because God's invitation has always been to "whosoever will."

9:14 - IS THERE UNRIGHTEOUSNESS WITH GOD? Paul goes to the heart of the matter with a question that demands a negative answer. God is not guilty of an injustice to Esau because He chose Jacob.

9:15. If God were not free to show mercy to whomsoever He chooses, no one would receive any mercy, because no one deserves it.

9:16. Mercy is not "of him that wills or the man who runs, but on God who has the mercy" (NASV). Paul loves the metaphor of running. Man cannot will God's mercy and he cannot win it as one wins an athletic contest. It is of God.

9:17 - TO PHAROAH. In verses 7-13 Paul is dealing with the election of nations. Here the subject is God's election of individuals. God's grace does not necessarily depend on anything but the will and purpose of God.

There are verses in the New Testament which seem to support the view that God has predestined some to be saved and every one else to condemnation, and there is nothing they can do about it. But when all the evidence is considered, the balance is tipped in favor of freedom of choice. Every one is free to choose, but no one is free not to choose. "...And whosoever will, let

him take the water of life freely" Rev. 22:17).

9:18. In this verse we see that God owes no man anything and He will deal with each person according to His will. This is a very disturbing verse, but it places emphasis on the sovereignty of Almighty God.

9:19. WHY DOTHE HE STILL FIND FAULT? As in other places Paul anticipates their objection (as expressed in the question). He does not answer the question, but rebukes the questioner for such a preposterous conclusion [30: Footnotes].

9:20 - THOU THAT REPLIEST... This means to reply to one's face. If one should ask this question, he would be arrogantly demanding an answer of God. The NASV renders it "who answers back to God." No one who has reverence for the Lord would ask 'talk back to God,' or demand an answer of Him.

THE THING FORMED. The peak of arrogance is for the creature to demand an answer of his Creator. The lost person who persists in rejecting God is guilty of a similar sin. He, the creature, is looking God, the Creator, in the face and saying, "I don't need you!"

The word translated "formed" in the Authorized Version is translated 'molded' in the NASV: "The thing molded will not say to the molder..." Every creature has been molded and God is the molder (potter).

9:21 - HATH NOT THE POTTER POWER OVER THE CLAY? The question demands a positive answer. This question is Paul's answer to the question (or objection) in verse 20. The Lord has answered this question in Jeremiah 18 and all the Jewish readers were familiar with the story of Jeremiah and the potter. The Sovereign Potter has absolute authority over the vessel he molds.

9:22 - DESTRUCTION. This is eternal perdition, or torture, not annihilation. Annihilation is no more taught in the Bible than reincarnation. Destruction points to conscious, eternal torment (Matt 7:13; II Thes 2:3; Rev. 20 - 21).

9:23. VESSELS OF MERCY. Mercy and grace are often connected, and rightly so. They are like the two sides of a coin, one positive and the other negative. Mercy means that I do not get what I deserve. Grace means that I get what I could never deserve. When one pleads for the mercy of the court, he is saying, "I am guilty but I do not want to pay the full penalty the law requires." On the other hand, grace is the unmerited favor, or love of God. God's mercy means I do not pay the price I deserve to pay for my sins (death). God's grace means I receive something I could never deserve (eternal life).

AFORE PREPARED. The Greek verb is used in the New Testament only here and in Ephesians 2:10, where it is translated "before ordained." The same idea is expressed in Romans

8:28-30. The vessels of mercy are recipients of the "riches of His glory."

9:24. NOT OF THE JEWS ONLY, BUT ALSO OF THE GENTILES. Paul had alluded to this earlier (9:6f; Gal. 3:7-9). Even though the Jews did not want to hear this, he is now going to prove it from the Old Testament Scriptures.

9:25 - IN HOSEA. The reference is to Hosea 2:23. Hosea had a son whose name was Lo-ammi, which means "Not my people." His daughter's name was Lo-ruhamah, which means 'without mercy or love.' What we have here is a play on their names. Hosea, writing in the eighth century B. C., was referring to the ten tribes of Israel. Paul applies this to Gentiles.

9:26. YE ARE NOT MY PEOPLE. He is quoting from Hosea 1:10.

THERE. "Palestine in the original, but Paul applies it to scattered Jews and Gentiles everywhere" [21: 385]. The revelation that God would receive Gentiles was not new and if they had taken the prophets of old seriously they would have known it.

9:27 - ISAIAH. This is a shortened quotation of Isaiah 10:22. Isaiah was deeply burdened for Israel.

A REMNANT SHALL BE SAVED. The great eighth century B. C. prophet, prophesying in the Golden Age of Prophecy, cried tears of anguish over the masses of Israel who would reject God and perish in their sins. But he sees hope in the remnant that would be saved. The remnant theme is richly, though disturbingly, developed by Isaiah and other prophets.

9:28 - HE WILL FINISH THE WORK. Finish is to "finish entirely," or completely. He not only has the will to finish the work, He has the power to completely finish it.

CUT IT SHORT. Literally, "cutting off completely." Paul is quoting from Isaiah 28:22.

9:29. EXCEPT THE LORD OF SABBATH. This is one of the great titles for the Lord in the Scripture. The titles for God not only make an interesting study, they also reveal a lot about His character and attributes.

A SEED. This refers to the remnant of verse 27. If a remnant had not been spared, Israel would have been like Sodom and Gomorrah.

B. Israel alone is to blame for rejection, 9:30-10:21.

1. The Reason for Israel's rejection, 9:30-33.

In 9:1-29, Paul discusses the sovereignty of God in salvation. He shows God's initiative in man's salvation. He was not unfair in rejecting national Israel. The cause of His rejection of Israel, and what it will mean to Israel will become more apparent when contrasted with the ground of Gentile acceptance.

The Gentiles never had a revealed spiritual law. They never had a system of morality which was based on true reality, even though some followed their moral conscience. Some would protest at this point and remind us of the Code of Hammurabi. A friend who has often tried to point out errors in the Bible to this writer implied that the Mosaic Law and even the Sermon on the Mount were taken from the Code of Hammurabi. But a clear distinction can be drawn between the Mosaic Law and that code of law. The distinction covers basis, scope, purpose, and nature of the law.

The Jews could see the Spirit of God at work. They had the law and the prophets, yet they rejected the Messiah. "He came unto His own and His own received Him not" (John 1:11). The Jews did not experience that inner personal communion and fellowship with God. Religion for them had grown into a burdensome ritualism. They were religious but their religion was out of touch with God. Paul declared the Jews to be without God, and therefore rejected by Him. Since they did not have the righteousness of God which comes by faith, they had no righteousness. The Jewish Christian understood this, but the non-believing Jew would find this thought shocking. A lot of church members would be shocked to discover that while they have religion and membership in the church, they do not have the Lord as their Saviour.

The difference is not in God, nor in the two races, but in their method of obtaining righteousness. The Gentiles, having no righteousness, obtained the righteousness of God by grace through faith (9:30). The Jews, seeking to establish their own righteousness by law rejected the righteousness of God which they might have had through faith.

9:30. Paul concludes that he has made his point: The Gentiles, "who did not pursue righteousness, attained the righteousness which is by faith" (NASV). Robertson points out an interesting paradox. The word translated 'attained' means to grasp, seize or overtake. They who did not pursue it overtook it and seized it.

WHICH IS OF FAITH. This is the only way to receive the righteousness of God. Paul never forgets the theme of this epistle: "the just shall live by faith" (1:17). It was God's revelation of this verse to Martin Luther that verse that launched the Protestant Reformation.

9:31. Israel pursued righteousness through the law but did not arrive at it, because if one seeks righteousness through the law, he must keep the law perfectly. Only Jesus Christ has ever done that.

9:32 - WHY. Because Israel tried to attain righteousness by the works of the law and not by faith.

THEY STUMBLER AT THE STUMBLING STONE. The word translated stumbled means to "cut against" as one strikes his foot against a stone and stumbles. The Jews found in Jesus a stone of stumbling, or stumbling block (I Cor. 1:23). The Greek word for stumbling block refers to the trigger in a trap on which a bait is placed so that an animal would spring it trying to get the bait. (Rom. 11:9; I Pet. 2:8). In the New Testament it is not a hidden snare or trap, as much as it is a certain kind of behavior which leads to ruin. The way of sin leads to a ruin or to a fall (Rom. 14:13; I Cor 1:23; Gal. 5:11; Rev. 2:14).

9:33. Paul repeats the phrase he has just used, this time as a part of the whole quotation from Isaiah 8:14. The latter part of the verse is a quoted from Isaiah 28:16. Peter uses these same Scriptures in I Peter 2:8.

Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. He poured out His life's blood for sinful man. All anyone has to do to be saved is to accept Him in faith. That's all - just trust Jesus Christ. It is so simple that thousands of children commit their heart to Him without reservation. But to millions He is still a stone of stumbling. It is inconceivable, but true, and He remains a stone of stumbling for Jews today. He is also a stone of stumbling for millions of Gentiles. But He is the **way**, the **truth** and the **life** to those who will accept the righteousness of God and the gift of eternal life.

LIST SOME OF OUR DEBTS TO ISRAEL

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

2. Paul's earnest desire for Israel's salvation is repeated, 10:1.

One can almost feel Paul's anguish at the thought of the rejection of Israel. He loves his people and his burden for them is no less than that of Moses at Sinai. Every Christian should have a similar burden for lost people. During my seminary days and immediately after graduation I served first as Youth Pastor, and then as Assistant Pastor to Dr. H. R. Herrington at the First Baptist Church, Rayville, Louisiana. A few years later when I had an opportunity I stopped by for a visit. He had a lot to do on the field but had to attend a training session for a new evangelism program. He said, "Johnny, if we could just give our people a little compassion for the lost, we wouldn't have to spend all this time with programs."

3. Faith-righteousness is opposed to law-righteousness, 10:2-13.

10:2. The Jews have a zeal, but not according to truth. They are religious but their religion does not produce fruit. God is not in their worship. He is not in their lives. Amos witnessed the same type of religiosity in his day. Jehovah declared that He loathed the worship services in Israel in the eighth century B. C. He despised their feast days, hated their music, and rejected their sacrifices.

If God were to speak to us following some of the things that go on in His house on His day, He might well say the same thing about some of our services today. Leonard Ravenhill says that most people do not go to church on Sunday to meet God. They go to hear a sermon about God [31: Video Dynamics).

10:3. The subject of this section is Paul's longing for the salvation of Israel (vs. 1), who was substituting a law-righteousness for faith-righteousness. This verse shows how they went about it.

10:4-13. Paul now shows the Jews how to live up to the law in which they have so far fallen short. Christ met the law for us, and the only way we can meet the demands of the law is in Christ, "for Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to everyone that believeth" (10:4). Jesus is the last word in the law, the final fulfillment of the law. He is "first and last, the beginning and the end."

10:5. Moses gave a protective law but not a saving law. The violated law of Moses gave no haven, nor refuge; but justice and penalty. Every Jew has broken enough of the Mosaic Law to be lost, even if it were redemptive, which it is not, and was never intended to be. God has only one way to save sinners, and that is by grace through faith.

Grace is all God's part. Faith is man's part, but he can only receive saving faith as a gift of God (Eph. 2:8). Only faith is compatible with the grace of God. Law or works are totally incompatible. An illustration may help us to understand the relationship between grace and faith. You are thirsty and you go to a water cooler and drink until your thirst is quenched. Then do you say, "My, that was refreshing! My thirst has just been quenched by a series of pipes and tubing?" No, you really gave the pipes and the tubing no thought at all. It was the water that quenched your thirst. But if the pipes had not been there, your thirst would not have been quenched. By God's grace you receive that "living water" Jesus promises. But if there is no faith, your spiritual thirst will never be quenched. Faith is the channel through which grace flows into your heart and that channel is the gift of God.

God's grace is offered to all on the same basis. The ground truly is level at the foot of the cross! We are not all equal, regardless of claims to the contrary. If we were all equal, some would immediately begin to try to prove that they are "more equal" than others. But at the cross we are all on level ground. No one is looking up at any one else. And only Jesus is looking down on anyone.

10:6-7. Paul claims that Christ has already achieved all that was necessary for our salvation. Faithrighteousness does not demand the impossible. His salvation is so near and it is so simple. The

price has been paid and God takes the initiative in making it known to us. All one has to do is trust in Jesus. The only thing anyone can do is the one thing everyone must do, and that is to trust Jesus.

RIGHTEOUSNESS. Since only God is righteous, He is the standard for righteousness. Righteousness means the righteousness which belongs to God, or God-like righteousness. It would be encouraging if all those people who are aspiring to be gods would instead, seek the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ.

10:8 - THE WORD IS NEAR YOU. The "word" is in your mouth and it has been planted in your heart. What is the "word" to which he refers? It is the revealed word that righteousness is by faith.

10:9 - IF THOU SHALT CONFESS. Any person who confesses Jesus Christ as Saviour, based on a personal experience of a new birth by grace, through faith, receives the righteousness of God with all its benefits, including eternal life. It seems obvious that there are many people who are interested in eternal life who have given very little thought to the righteousness God seeks to produce within them. He imputes righteousness into the individual through justification and He develops it daily through sanctification.

BELIEVE IN THINE HEART. It is not the confession that saves; it is faith, or believing. The Greek word, "pisteuo," is from "pistis," which means faith or belief. This is not a general acknowledgment of facts about Jesus Christ. It involves a personal commitment to Christ by faith.

Paul is very clear in Ephesians 2:8-10: we are saved by grace, through faith, unto good works. No one is saved by works, but no saved person should ignore good works. The the earlier quotation from the Bible professor at Mississippi College is also applicable here: "Wind is not wind unless it's blowing, and faith is not faith unless it's working."

This is a part of the "Roman Road" presentation of God's salvation. Those who use this approach usually include Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:8 and 10:9ff. Any person who can read, or memorize a few verses, can be an effective witness if he will begin with verses like these and others like John 3:16 and build on these as he grows in the Lord.

This verse teaches that if you believe God sent His Son to die for your sins; and that He raised Him from death that you might have everlasting life, you shall be saved. I once explained this to a teen aged girl and when I finished, she looked at me and asked, "Is that all there is to it?" When I assured her that this is exactly what God wants us to do, she joyfully placed her faith in Him and received His salvation.

10:10. When one believes in his heart, he will want to express his new life. The confession does not save, but it gives expression to the salvation. Words of the mouth do not save, but faith from the heart will do it every time. Confession is a profession of faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord. While the confession does not save, it is very important. Jesus is very clear about that:

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 10:32-33).

This is not a contradiction. It simply states the fact that a saving faith is a confessing faith. There is no such thing as secret discipleship, especially in a land where there is and measure of freedom. This is illustrated by those saints who maintained home churches in China during the days of persecution and torture and continued their witness the best way they knew. They confessed Christ but had to be careful not to waste their witness, much as those early saints in Rome who hid in the catacombs and used secret passwords to identify themselves to other believers. But in a society like America, the problem with secret discipleship is that the secret destroys discipleship and discipleship destroys the secret.

Allan W. Eckert has written a series of historical narratives following the theme, "The Winning of America." The first book in the series, and my favorite, is *The Frontiersman* (Little, Brown and Company, Boston and Toronto, 1967). The main character in the book is Simon Kenton who was born in 1755. When he was an adult he was a giant of a man. He knew many of the great leaders of the day, both white and indian. Once a cocky young military officer struck him without provocation. He was rewarded by being knocked out with one punch. The officer was Andrew Jackson. On one occasion, when their fort was under siege, Daniel Boone was hit in the leg with an arrow while some of the men tried to get water. Kenton scooped him up and ran with him. When indians tried to cut them off before the reached the gate, he threw Boone into them, fought off the enemy, picked up Boone and under cover of fire from the fort made it inside safely.

In later years, Kenton attended an outdoor evangelistic service. Afterward he asked to preacher to walk with him in the woods and when they were alone he asked him to promise never to reveal the subject of their conversation to any one. He asked how to be saved and the minister shared with him God's word about how to be saved. Following prayer, this dignified giant ran from the woods shouting to everyone that God had saved him. When the preacher had an opportunity he asked him why he changed his mind about keeping it a secret. He said, "It's too good to keep it a secret!" [10: 423ff].

10:11. Anyone who trusts in Jesus Christ will never have occasion to be ashamed. He will not be disappointed. He will never be disappointed (NASV) in, or by Christ. Nor, will he be ashamed (KJV) to confess Him.

10:12. All men are saved in exactly the same way, with no distinction being made between races or nationalities. Man is constantly making distinctions, and those distinctions may be either good or bad, depending on the circumstances. When God makes distinctions in judgement, His distinctions are perfect. But when it comes to the offer of eternal life, He makes no distinctions along the lines humans usually follow in making distinctions (race, class, gender, national origin, education, wealth).

10:13 - WHOSOEVER SHALL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED. This should keep us on the right track when we study foreknowledge, and predestination in chapter eight. Once again, everyone is free to choose, but no one is free not to choose. Salvation is as simple as this, and all who call on Jesus in faith are saved. Remember that we are saved by faith and not by our prayer or by any word formula. He has already laid the foundation for this great promise. The person who believes in Jesus and calls on Him in faith **SHALL** be saved (not may be).

4. They have heard the Gospel message, 10:14-18.

10:14 - HOW THEN SHALL THEY CALL ON HIM. The world needs to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God calls people to carry His message but it would seem today that many who are called are not responding to God's call. Some denominations are having great difficulty finding enough men to fill their pulpits.

There is another problem. According to some reports ninety-five per cent of all graduates of our seminaries are ministering to five per cent of the world's population and five per cent of the graduates are ministering to the remaining ninety-five per cent.

10:15 - HOW SHALL THEY PREACH, UNLESS THEY ARE SENT? God calls men to preach His Word to the lost around the world and He expects His church to help send them. Southern Baptists and a number of other denominations have made a commitment to reach the world for Christ. Some elaborate plans have been implemented to help reach this goal. Some churches and individuals support those efforts. Forest Baptist Church, Forest, LA (where the writer is pastor) gives more than one third of its receipts to support missions around the world. That does not mean that the person in the pew is deeply concerned about reaching the lost of the world for Jesus Christ. We need to send them out and support them, with our money and with our prayers, but each believer must also witness for Christ.

10:16 - THEY HAVE NOT OBEYED THE GOSPEL. God has clearly taught us through Paul's writings that He has taken the initiative in revealing Himself to all men. He has written Himself into the consciousness of every person and He reveals Himself before each person in His creation. He has revealed Himself within each person and before each person. Though some say it is not fair for the heathen to go to hell, God knows how He has revealed Himself to each person and what that person has done with the revelation he has received. He reveals that no one will be able to stand before Him and plead ignorance. The problem is not simply one of ignorance, but of disobedience and rebellion. They heard it, but they did not heed it.

10:17 - FAITH COMETH BY HEARING AND HEARING BY THE WORD... The "word of God" refers to the spoken word, rather than the written word (Bible). Our oral testimony (witness for Christ) is, of course, based on the Bible. The word of God on the tongue of

the believer must be the living Word of God and his testimony to its truth and power. This places the burden on the lost hearer to accept Jesus and not reject him. It also places a burden on the saved person to take the message of salvation to lost people wherever they are in the world, honoring the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20).

There is another doctrinal truth we should consider, although it is not the specific subject of this verse. When the Christian experiences doubt, or simply desires assurance that God is near and that He hears his prayers, he should remember this verse. The Christian who is not spending time with the Word of God is going to have doubts. The believer who spends time in Bible study and prayer will find that his faith is being strengthened daily.

10:18. They should have believed. They had the opportunity. They had heard the Gospel but refused it. The person who hears the Gospel and rejects it is taking an awesome responsibility upon himself. He will never be able to plead ignorance. He is guilty of rejecting the message he has heard. Will anyone be able to stand before God and plead ignorance? The NASV is clear (and blunt): "But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have;

Their voice has gone out into all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world" (Ps. 19:4).

5. The Jews cannot plead a lack of understanding, 10:19-21.

10:19. Moses had warned that God would reject them in favor of a foolish (Gentile) nation, when they turn from Him (Deut. 32:21).

10:20. God witnessed His saving power among the Gentiles in Isaiah's day (Is. 65:1-2).

10:21 - ALL THE DAY LONG. Paul sums up God's personal pleadings by quoting Isaiah 65:2: "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." The NASV has "disobedient and obstinate people." Robertson renders it: "Unto a people disobeying and talking back." He rightly observes that the two go hand in hand [21: 390]. See Luke 13:34f for a description of their rejection of God and His prophets.

C. Hope Remaining for Israel's Restoration, 11:1-36.

1. As in Elijah's day, there is a remnant in Israel that is faithful to God, 11:1-5.

11:1 - HAS GOD CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE? God had chosen Israel for Himself; established a covenant with the father of the nation, Abraham; and preserved it through the centuries. Would God cast away His people now? Paul's answer is a forceful, "God forbid!" The very thought is horrifying. A negative answer is demanded.

Paul could answer from his own experience.

Paul followed up his emphatic denial that God had rejected His people by pointing to himself as a Christian Jew (11:1-2). The rejection was partial rather than complete. There was a remnant of believers, of whom Paul was an example. The remnant theme was an old and very familiar one even then. In the eighth century B. C. God revealed that His wrath would be visited upon Israel (the Ten Tribes) and only a remnant would be spared (see Amos and Hosea, the great prophets of Yahweh in Israel during that time).

The Lord then revealed that if Judah did not learn from the experience of their kinsmen, they would go into captivity in Babylon and a remnant would return, through whom God would continue His covenant. Isaiah and Micah delivered the "Thus saith the word of the Lord" in Judah in the eighth century B. C., in what is called The Golden Age of Prophecy.

Now Paul is saying that God has a remnant of faithful believers whom He has saved and will bless. God was not through with Israel, but national Israel would not be the instrument of His redeeming grace, nor the instrument by which the Gospel would be propagated. Jesus illustrated this when He placed the curse on the fig tree which had all the signs of fruitfulness, yet bore no fruit (Matt. 21:18-22).

11:2-5. Paul reminds anyone who might ask the above question of the experience of Elijah. Elijah pleaded, "Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, they have torn down thine altar, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life" (11:3, NASV). But God responded, "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal" (vs. 4). In the same way there has been preserved "a remnant according to His gracious choice" (vs. 5, NASV). This is the only time the word 'remnant' is used in the New Testament.

There are two strongly opposing positions about Israel. There are those who believe that all the blessings and promises of God are transferred from national Israel to spiritual Israel (the church). They support their position with references from the Scripture. There are those who believe all Israel will eventually turn to Christ and that the covenant with Israel will be honored. Ryrie takes this position in commenting on 11:1-36:

In this chapter Paul assures us that God has not forgotten His people, the Jews, and His promises to them. After the full number of gentiles have been incorporated into the church, all Jews will turn to the Lord, not just a handful as now. Paul does not assert that the O.T. promises to Israel have been transferred to the largely Christian church [30: Footnotes].

In 11:1-5 Paul points out that there is yet a remnant in Israel; meaning among the Jews, not the land of Palestine. In a few years after Paul wrote this Jerusalem would be destroyed and the people dispersed (A.D. 70). From his own experience he can testify to the fact that God is saving Jews as fast as they believe in Jesus Christ. The modern 'Jews for Jesus' movement, as controversial as it is some quarters, is a current testimony to that very fact.

One must be careful never to write off Israel with regards to God's grace. He would be equally foolish to assume that some mystical or mysterious scheme will save Israel whether or not Jews turn to Jesus Christ. The Bible is very clear about one thing: "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The attitude of the Christian toward the Jew should be one of compassion, concern and gratitude: Compassion because the Jew without Christ is just as lost as an Arab without Christ; concern because Israel will not acknowledge Him; and gratitude because of the great debt we have to the Jews who played such a major role in God's revelation of Himself and His salvation. The Jew is saved in the same way as the Gentile. "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." What the Jew needs today is the same thing the Gentile needs; and he must receive it the same way as the Gentile.

There is a real danger in being too dogmatic on either side of the above mentioned argument. Those who insist that God's rejection is full and final may use that believe to justify his writing off his Jewish neighbor as a prospect for evangelism. The danger on the side of those who hold that all Israel will some day turn to Christ, is that they may also write off their Jewish neighbor as a prospect for evangelism on the grounds that God is going to save the Jews some day anyway. The real danger is that we may become more concerned with proving our position than we are for the unsaved Jewish individual with whom we come into contact.

Paul was a completed Jew, a Jew who trusted in Jesus Christ. He was no less a Jew when he became a Christian. The Jew believes that if he accepts Christ, he becomes a traitor to Israel; that he ceases to be a Jew. It is tantamount to rejecting his race. The Christian should pray for the opportunity to share with the Jew the fact that in receiving Christ he is in reality fulfilling his Jewishness. He is becoming a fulfilled Jew, not a non-Jew.

2. The remnant consists of those in grace, not works, 11:6.

THEN IF BY GRACE, THEN IT NO MORE OF WORKS. Grace and works are at opposite ends of the pole. Man is either saved by grace, or works; never by both. It would be helpful to remember the three basic theories of justification (see discussion of 4:5).

(1) **WORKS.** This was, and is the position of Jews. A Jewish rabbi, trying to explain the difference between Jewish and Christian beliefs, said, "We Jews believe we have to earn God's approval. You Christians think you can just trust in Jesus." He was exactly right. The "works" position is unscriptural according to Ephesians 2:9 and Galatians 2:16, as well as the Book of Romans.

(2) **WORKS PLUS GRACE.** Or, grace plus works. This view is also unscriptural according to Romans 11:6 and Galatians 3:3. You are not saved by grace plus baptism; or grace plus good works; or grace plus a certain doctrinal position. Nor, is any saved person preeserved by his works (Gal. 3:3). To add anything to grace is to take Pilate's sign down from the cross and put up another that

reads: 'Necessary, but not enough.'

(3) GRACE. Pure grace. That is the only way of justification revealed in the Bible. This is stressed in Ephesians 2:8; Romans 1:17; Galatians 2:16, and numerous other passages.

This verse shows that as far as salvation is concerned, grace destroys works and works prohibit grace. The two are mutually exclusive. No person is saved by works, or by works plus grace. Nor, is salvation sustained by works, or any combination of grace and works. Does that mean that works are not important? Of course not. We are saved by grace through faith (only faith is compatible with grace) unto good works (Eph. 2:8-10). Works are an essential manifestation of the "fruit of the Spirit." But we must distinguish between the root and the fruit.

Man is saved by grace through faith, and he cannot even provide that. God must provide it. You cannot muster up enough faith to believe in God. It begins with His revelation of Himself to the individual, just as He revealed to Peter that Jesus is The Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour.

Anyone who accepts the fact that you are saved by grace and that your relationship is maintained by grace can also accept the doctrine of security of believers. "Perseverance of the saints" implies that the believer maintains his own salvation by his works. Preservation would be a better term; but we do not preserve ourselves. God preserves us (John 10:28; I Peter 1:3-5; I John).

Failure to accept this, or to understand it, will not take away the believer's salvation, but it will rob him of a great deal of joy in his salvation. How can our joy be complete when there is doubt; when there is fear that the individual will fail? Many people never know real joy in their salvation because they harbor needless doubts which stem from their rejection of this New Testament doctrine.

The Christian knows God by grace through faith. He is known to others as a child of God by His Christian works, according to James. The believer works, not to become a Christian, or to sustain his salvation, but because he is a Christian. Works is not the source but the result of salvation.

3. Hearts hardened by unbelief, 11:7-10.

11:7-10. National Israel had never found what she sought. In addition to national security she sought righteousness, life, salvation. The elect, both Jews and Gentiles, find these through faith in Christ. Those who reject Him become hardened in sin and rebellion. God is said to harden man's heart as He did in the case of Pharaoh. He does not harden the heart or blind the eyes of anyone who believes in Him, or is receptive to Him, and He is never the first to harden the heart. When God hardens the heart it is after the sinner has already hardened his heart. "He, that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck. shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy" (Proverbs 29:1).

If one persists in hardening his heart against God, he may well find God cooperating with him in the hardening of his heart. And when God hardens a heart He holds the sinner guilty of the hardening. God never hardens man's heart in the sense that he makes a man sin. But He hardens it just as He gave up the wicked Gentiles to the evil lusts of their vile affections (2:22). God simply releases the restraints that they may sin in the full liberty of their own evil desires. Since they are determined to reject Him and to seek evil, He simply 'gives them enough rope to hang themselves.'

Each rejection of Christ hardens the unbeliever a little more. No one can say "no" to Jesus without growing more calloused in his heart. Each rejection plunges the sinner deeper into the darkness of sin.

There are two lines of action open to the unbeliever. 1. He may accept Jesus as Saviour. 2. He may spurn His love, His call, and His salvation. He either responds to the love of God, or invites the wrath of God upon himself. The first is to become tender in relation to Him; the latter is to grow hardened against Him. One is to become like Christ; the other is to become like His arch enemy, Satan.

4. Israel rejected but restoration offered, 11:11-32.

11:11. The purpose of the fall of Israel is not destruction, but by Israel's stumbling, salvation is brought to the Gentiles, and in turn the conversion of the Gentiles is designed to stir the Jews to jealousy, and thereby hasten the return of Israel to the Lord.

11:12. Great riches were forfeited to the Gentiles but to those who return, the riches shall be magnified. This return would not be at the expense of the Gentiles, but in fact, the return of the Jews to Christ would bring greater riches to the Gentiles.

11:13-15. The Apostle to the Gentiles reveals hope for his own people. He is speaking here to the Gentiles, inasmuch as he is an apostle to the Gentiles. His sincere hope is that his own people will be moved to jealousy and that some of them will be saved (14). If their rejection (casting away) meant the reconciliation of the world, just think what will "their acceptance be, but life from the dead" (NASV).

Some student of the Word believe that by "life from the dead" Paul means the general resurrection, and the end will come when the Jews are converted. Robertson concedes that this may be true, but cautions against being dogmatic because "it is by no means sure. His language may be merely figura- tive" [21: 395]. Others do not share his reservations. Since the great doctrines are rarely based on one verse, especially one this difficult to get a handle on, it would seem wise to expand this subject beyond this verse before drawing a conclusion.

11:16. ROOT...BRANCHES. "If the fruit of Israel is holy when her branches are cut off,

what glorious fruit must grace her branches when the holy root shoots forth in the strength of the Tree of Life" [17: 223].

11:17. At present the branches are Gentile, being grafted where the Jewish branches were broken off. The spiritual fruit of the world is borne on Gentile branches.

11:18. This is not an occasion for boasting by the Gentiles. Pride should be held in check, as the Gentiles remember that though they bear the fruit, yet they are borne by the everliving Jewish stump. The root of the tree is the Abrahamic covenant which offered salvation to both Jews and Gentiles.

11:19. Paul anticipates the question Gentiles might ask. Were the branches broken off so that the Gentile might be grafted in (in their place)? This attitude shows contempt for the cast off Jews.

11:20. Jewish branches were broken off by unbelief. Gentile branches are held on by faith. This is not an occasion for pride, but for reverential fear. This attitude would solve a lot of the problems in the world today between the Jews and the Gentiles.

11:21. Here we have a warning the Gentile should consider. America should heed this warning. For a long time America was called a Christian nation. But, today we are living in what Francis Shaeffer called the Post-Christian Age. He based that conclusion on the fact that we have lost the Christian consensus in America. If God cast off Israel, will He not also cast off America if we become a liability to Him rather than an asset?

11:22. The Gentile graft exists by faith and by the goodness of God; and may perish by reason of unbelief; or unfaithfulness, and the judgment of God which unfaithfulness demands. The center of the spread of the Gospel in the world has shifted many times. When people become complacent or unfaithful, the Lord awakens someone else in some other place. We are reminded of the difference in the attendance at the Metropolitan Tabernacle from the days of Spurgeon until today. Five thousand people packed the building for every service then and today we hear reports of attendance in the neighborhood of one hundred.

The story has been told of the lady from the United States who listened to a tour guide tell of the glorious history of Westminster Cathedral. When he finished he asked if there were any questions. This "little lady" raised her hand. He invited her to ask her question and she asked, "Has there been anybody saved here lately? He said, "I beg your pardon!?" She asked her question again: "Has anybody been saved here lately?" The other tourists were as shocked as the guide.

11:23. If the Jews return to God, they shall be grafted in again by God. As a matter of fact, that is happening today as some Jews trust Jesus as Saviour and Lord. Is this what Paul has in mind, or does he have a greater return in mind at some point in the future.

11:24. The Jews are a far more natural graft than Gentiles. Furthermore, converted Jew, or a completed Jew, often makes a dynamic witness for Christ. Verses 23 and 24 reveal that God will

restore the Jews "To their place in the family of God if they will give up their effort to gain salvation by works and respond to Christ in faith" [28 - 39].

11:25-32. The fruit of the Gentile believer shall be the salvation of Israel. "When Gentile Christians are full of fruit, full of grace, rich in Christ, this shall lead the Jews to trust the Gentile's Saviour as the Jewish Messiah. Gentile salvation has not yet convinced the Jews of its genuineness" [17 - 224]. When Gentile Christians live more like Jesus, Jews will be more readily persuaded that Christ is the Messiah. One only needs to think of the attitude of the average Gentile toward the Jew to see how far short we fall in winning the Jew to Christ. Take for example, the Jewish man who grew up in a city where he was called "Christ killer."

The late Dr. H. Leo Eddleman was president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary when I was a student there. We spent a lot of time in the gym together and I heard him preach many times. He was the evangelist for revival services in churches where I was pastor. He had been a missionary to Israel early in his ministry and had returned many times.

Dr. Eddleman used to tell of preaching in Israel and having a tall young Jewish man stand and ask him how he could expect them to become Christians when all the great atrocities of the world; wars, persecution and slaughter of the Jews had been caused by Christians. When he asked for an explanation, the young man said, "Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini; they were all Christians." That is about all some Jews know about Christianity. They cannot distinguish between Christianity and Christendom, and they cannot understand the difference between a born-again Christian and a nominal Christian (one in name only).

11:26 - ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED. The question is: Who is intended by "all Israel?" There are at least five possibilities:

1. Every one of the Jews.
2. Spiritual Israel (the Israel of God, Gal. 6:16).
3. The elect who are composed of both Jews and Gentiles who believe in Christ.
4. The remnant of Israel.
5. The nation of Israel as a whole (but not absolutely every Jew).

To be consistent with the context, it seems that Paul is teaching that there will be a time when national Israel will turn to the Lord. However, some may make a case for numbers three and four. Every Christian who uses this as an excuse not to witness to Jewish people must be reminded that every Jewish individual who dies without Jesus Christ is going to hell. The Great Commission includes Jewish people.

11:33-36. A Doxology concludes this section. Joy floods Paul's heart as he anticipates Israel's return to the Lord. His soul sings this doxology in heavenly ecstasy as he sees his own people turning to Jesus. Is it just possible that Israel today might be a Christian land if Gentile Christians had the same kind of burden for the Jews that Paul had? Is it possible that Christians have failed the

Jews through neglect, or prejudice against Jewish people? In some cases, the Christian may have a genuine desire to see the Jewish person saved, but simply does not know how to go about witnessing to him.

We could take this thought a step further and consider our attitude toward our Gentile neighbors who are lost. This might include close friends or relatives we think we may offend if we talk with them about Jesus. But God holds us accountable for witnessing to lost persons about Christ.

This doxology is one of great beauty and simplicity, yet one of profound gravity. In it Paul praises the wisdom and knowledge of God. He concludes with the following words: "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (v. 36). This doxology in verses 33-36 has been called "the sublimest apostrophe existing even in the pages of inspiration itself" [21: 401].

V. The Practical Section, 12:1 - 15:13.

A. The Christian's relationship to God, 12:1-2.

12:1 - I BESEECH YOU THEREFORE, BRETHREN. The "therefores" of Paul are important and the student of the Word of God has learned that when Paul uses this word he is saying, in essence, "Now, on the basis of what I have just said (or all that I have previously said), I am going to say something else." Then he either builds on the argument or makes a practical application of it. "This inferential participle gathers up all the great argument of chapters 1-11" [21: 402].

There is also a note of victory in the use of this conjunction. It carries with it the weight of the previous eleven chapters and it looks ahead to the balance of the epistle. But it denotes more than a conjunction between two divisions of the Epistle. It is, in fact, a shout of victory which sets our minds and hearts on new heights.

Paul begins an exhortation based on the doctrinal foundation which is now established. "I beseech you" shows that he is aware of the urgent need for applied Christianity in society. How does the "salt of the earth," or the "light of the world" manifest itself? How do we light the way to Christ? How are we to add flavor and a preservative to the hearts of men and women? Paul is pleading with his readers to first commit themselves completely to the Lord. Then they must commit themselves to His ministry in the world.

Paul addresses them as brethren. The original word shows blood kin and is the tenderest word for expressing closest kinship. Paul is not related to the members of the church at Rome, except in the blood of the Lamb. They are his brothers (and sisters) in Christ. Christian Paul had

come a long way from Pharisaic Saul or he would never have called Gentiles "brethren." This a good example for us. We should feel a kindred with other Christians, but where does your feeling of kinship end? With your family? With a small group within your church? With your entire local church? With your own denomination? Does it cross denominational lines?

Allen is right in that "Nothing is more important for Christians than a deepening conviction that the righteousness they have received by faith is to be demonstrated in daily living" [2: 110]. This righteousness should by all means be demonstrated toward the "brethren."

BY THE MERCIES OF GOD. What are the mercies of God? They have been discussed in detail in the previous chapters. The plural denotes the abundance of His saving grace. They include:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Revelation of sin | 2. Atonement |
| 3. Justification | 4. Sonship (Adoption) |
| 5. Sanctification | 6. Hope |
| 7. Life in the Spirit | 8. Glorification |

PRESENT. The word means to present, yield, surrender, to place one's self at the disposal of another. The aorist tense means present once for all time. The word carries the Old Testament idea of offering a sacrifice. "It carries the most plastic idea of receiving every impression and conforming to mold, will, and influence [17: 230].

The word "present" implies a complete or whole sacrifice. A partial sacrifice was unknown and unthinkable to the Jew. The whole body is to be presented. If you present your total body, once for all time, to God, a lot of problems are going to be solved - once for all time! There are guidelines for presenting the body:

1. It must be a whole sacrifice.
2. It must be a living sacrifice
3. It must be a holy sacrifice.
4. It must be an acceptable sacrifice.
5. This makes it a reasonable sacrifice.

A LIVING SACRIFICE. This is the thank-offering and not the sin-offering. This term marks a new distinction for the sacrificial idea in the minds of both Gentiles and Jews. It carries the highest and noblest idea of self-surrender. To the Jewish mind, to sacrifice meant to die. Living through sacrifice was the essence of their offering, but they did not always consider this.

HOLY. With reference to the slain animal this means clean, perfect, no blemish, no blood clot. Before an animal was sacrificed a priest, with a sharp knife, probed the joints and marrow to see if there were any imperfections (see Heb. 4:12ff). If the animal passed the careful inspection it was

marked "holy." The Christian's body is to be a "holy" sacrifice. It must be morally clean. Sin hinders the work of the Holy Spirit in the individual's heart and life. It brings down the wrath of a Holy God on the sinner on one side and prevents sanctification on the other side. But the living sacrifice is purged and refined in the fires of the Holy Spirit. The lost world needs to see in your life the distinct marks of holiness, purity, and decency.

ACCEPTABLE. Well pleasing. A sacrifice could be "perfect" externally, and internally be unacceptable. Cain's sacrifice would not have been accepted if it had been of blood as was that of Abel, because his heart was as wrong as his sacrifice. No sacrifice is acceptable unless the heart of the worshipper is acceptable. The offerer must be acceptable before the offering is accepted. For further study, see Isaiah 1:13-17; Psalm 51:16f; I Samuel 15:22f.

Recent polls have indicated that in the United States more people are professing a belief in God than in the previous generation. The same polls also show that their belief in God is having less impact on their lives than one would expect. The modern Christian needs to understand that while grace is free, it is not cheap. God forbid that we make it appear cheap by cheap, shoddy living before the world!

YOUR LOGICAL SERVICE. "The article marks the sacrifice as the only logical service and as the only Christian sacrifice" [17: 231]. To present the body to God is logical. Service here does not point to the work of a slave, but to the ministry of a priest. We are to present our bodies in priestly service. The believer is to be the priest of his own soul, ministering not in a temple made with hands, but in the Spirit. This is the priesthood of believers. Remember that Jesus is our High Priest.

Logic is taking on some strange characteristics in this Post-Christian Age in America which the world proclaims as the New Age. There is no more Christian consensus in America and it has long since been gone in England and Europe.

When my younger son, Mark, was about three years old I picked him up at Preschool, took him home and fixed lunch for him. He had a good vocabulary for his age and people were amused by some of the things he said. I said something to him and instantly realized that what I had said was over his head. He calmly responded, "That's logical." I was surprised and a little excited as I quickly thought of what I had said and tried to relate it to the logic of a three year old. My pride was growing by the millisecond. Then he nonchalantly added, "Of course, everything is logical to me."

Today a movie star can write a book about reincarnation and all across America young people say, "There might be something to that." Science teachers can teach some evolutionary theory from a textbook, without knowing that even the author has discovered he was wrong, and to students it seems logical. This kind of logic is both illogical and ludicrous. But it is no more illogical and ludicrous than what the average Christian presents to the Lord; and expects Him to be pleased with it.

12:2 - BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD. For the lost person to be conformed to the world is natural. For the Christian to be conformed to the world is for him to walk in the flesh, to be carnally minded, which is inconsistent with his new nature in Christ.

BUT BE YE TRANSFORMED. Continuous action is intended. The same word is used of the transfiguration of Jesus. "When Christians present their bodies, deny the example of the ages, and are transformed in Christ's transfiguration through a new type of thinking, then shall they know and 'prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God" [17: 233]. This points to the sanctification process (maturing process) and points to one who is walking in the Spirit.

BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND. Concerning the mind, Allen says:

This means the mind indwelt by Christ, the mind strengthened by the Holy Spirit and, the Mind which is committed to the ideas and ideals of the kingdom of God. Moral transformation depends upon moral insight which comes through the indwelling Spirit and through moral purpose energized by the Holy Spirit [2: 112].

B. The believer and spiritual Gifts, 12:3-8.

12:3. Christians are urged to be grateful for their God given gifts rather than being proud. The endowment of divine gifts should produce humility, graveness, and sobriety. We are saved by grace; we grow by grace; we are endowed by grace. Salvation, sanctification, and service are all of God's grace - from beginning to end.

12:4-5. MANY MEMBERS IN ONE BODY. We have a diversity of gifts as Paul explains in I Corinthians 12-14. These gifts are just that - gifts. We receive them by grace and can take no credit for them. They should produce gratitude toward God, but never arrogance toward others.

12:6. God gives gifts in proportion to His grace, and we use them in proportion to our faith. The word for proportion is "analogia;" from ana, denoting distribution, and logos which denotes proportion [30: 1664]. God distributes in the right proportion the gifts he wants each person to have. The individual is then to exercise them accordingly. For example, "The revelation that comes through the prophet must be in agreement with the body of truth already revealed" [32: footnotes]. The same word for faith is used in verse 3 where it is translated "measure of faith."

12:7-8. Whatever gift a person has he should apply himself to the exercise of that responsibility. Each person should use the gift God has given him and not be jealous of another's gift, or gifts.

C. Moral and spiritual injunctions for the Christian life, 12:9-21.

12:9a. Love must be sincere, pure, (see I Cor 13).

12:9b. Love must be moral and moral love will react against sin as vigorously as it clings to good. It is sad, and frustrating to see how many people cannot distinguish between love and lust. Loving goodness and hating sin are two sides of the Christian's experience; the positive and the negative. It is not enough to hate what He hates; we must love what He loves.

12:10. Christian love is unselfish. "In honor preferring one another" is descriptive of Christian love. This verse reminds one of the Church Covenant:

We further engage to watch over one another; to aid one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Saviour to secure it without delay.

12:11. Paul adds a statement about service. "Not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (NASV) This statement is given in the same breath as the above statement about love for the brethren. Our relationship with man is closely bound to our relationship with God.

12:12-13. Paul mentions some vital Christian traits. These verses are rich in application. Those who practice the life-style outlined here are making wise use of their spiritual gifts.

HOPE. Hope is a predominant element in our Christian experience. "Assurance is the essence of hope, and the predominant earthly fruit of hope is joy and patience... Patience is therefore native to hope. Patience is not a surprise to him who trusts in a promise, and who hopes in the unseen" [17: 235]. Hope produces patience, and patience is the assurance of hope.

12:14 - BLESS THEM THAT PERSECUTE YOU. For a commentary on this verse, see the fifth chapter of Matthew, especially the Beatitudes and 5:44; and the life of Paul (in Acts and the Pauline Epistles).

12:15 - REJOICE WITH THEM THAT REJOICE; WEEP WITH THEM THAT WEEP. Here we see the Christian attitude toward those who are rejoicing because of some blessing (health, success, family or some honor). The Christian who really loves his fellow believer will rejoice with him. We also see the Christian attitude toward those who are in sorrow. We should have compassion and manifest the love of Jesus Christ for those who weep (grief, discouragement, illness, or some other problem). Some seem more adept at weeping with those who weep than they are at rejoicing with those who rejoice. The real test one's love might not be in ministering those who weep as much as how we handle it when a fellow Christian experiences some blessing.

12:16. This verse characterizes our relationship with other Christians. Almost any student of the

Scripture can provide his own commentary on this from his, or her, observation. But the problem is not in our understanding, but in our application of the principles. The NASV has: "Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own conceit." Anyone who has ever been victimized by some injustice should be motivated to avoid hurting others. What Paul is calling for here is an application of "The Golden Rule."

12:17-20. The Christian's conduct in public is discussed in these verses. He is never to return evil for evil, 17a (rather, he is to turn the other cheek). He must be honest and honorable in all things. While there are many times when contracts are needed, a Christian's word should still be his bond. How refreshing it is to be around people with genuine Christian integrity. Every community needs people of Christian integrity. Every child needs parents who have real character and integrity.

It was my privilege to grow up in the home of an honest man. He was honest with money, material things, and with his word. He had great respect for the rights and property of others. Once when he had bought a used tractor, he and I drove about ten miles to get it, but when I got on it to drive it home I discovered that it would not start. I suggested that we might use one of the other tractors around the farm headquarters to pull the tractor to crank it (or to jump start it). The owner, from whom we had bought the tractor, was a friend of many years, but since he was not on the place so we could ask permission, my father would not use one of his tractors. He explained that it was his tractor and we should not use it without permission. We drove home and both of us rode the ten miles back on another tractor to start the one we had bought. His family observed this kind of attitude daily and we appreciate it more today than then.

In vs.20 we see that the believer should try to bless the offender by serving his fundamental needs in life. Returning good for evil will often break his evil spirit. It will also short-circuit what might become an endless cycle of retaliation, if his service is genuine. If it is faked, it will only widen the gap between the believer and the offender. There is no place for hypocrisy in this. If it is for show, it will only be resented.

12:21. This verse deals with the Christian's relation to sin. His relation to sin should be that of victor rather than victim; of conqueror rather than conquered. According to Romans 3:23, we all "have sinned," and we all "come short of the glory of God." But our attitude should never be, "Well, everybody does it." Rather, it should reflect the admonition of John, 'My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not' (I John 2:1).

We cannot overcome sin in our own strength, but we can win the victory in the power of the Holy Spirit. There will never be a day when we do not need to seek God's forgiveness and restoration. We must ask God to deliver us from temptation, and when we sin, we must confess it to the Lord: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

D. The believer in civic matters, 13:1-14.

1. Government, a divine institution, 13:1-7.

13:1 - BE IN SUBJECTION. "Be in subjection" is from the same word Paul used in Titus 3:1 and by Peter in I Peter 2:13 and the idea is basically the same. Christianity is often called a religion, but the word "relationships" is more relevant, for the Christian has a special relationship with God, with other individuals, with society, and with the state. Both the believer and state officials should understand one basic truth: there is no authority, except of God. He is the ultimate authority.

This passage does not say that every form of government is of God, or that He ordains every kind of government. What it does teach is that God ordains the principle of government. Some forms of government are oppressive and cruel (Iraq, Iran, Cuba, China, and for seventy years, Russia). Others recognize the dignity of citizens and protect the rights and opportunities of individuals to pursue happiness and fulfillment in life.

The twentieth century has been a century of monumental change, much of it for good. When one thinks of terms like engineering, electricity, electronics, jet-propulsion, immunization, space program, space station, lunar landing craft, DNA, laser surgery or micro-chip, he thinks primarily of the second half of the twentieth century. The world today is in the midst a knowledge explosion that defies the imagination.

The twentieth century will also be remembered by other names and terms, like: World War I and World War II, Adolph Hitler, V. I. Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Communism, Pearl Harbor, Atom Bomb, Hydrogen Bomb, Holocaust, Terrorism, SDI, Korea, Cuba, Viet Nam, Afghanistan and Nicaragua. Does God ordain a government like Hitler's which slaughtered fifteen million people, including six million Jews; or Stalin's Communist regime which may have killed as many as forty to sixty million; and Mao's Communist Party in China which may have slaughtered thirty million people? And what about Castro's Cuba; Quaddafi's Lybia; or the murderous Sheite Moslem government of Iran?

When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, he showed the world that it has not seen the end of cruel governments. Atrocities committed by soldiers of Iraq against the people of Kuwait were only surpassed by his murderous attacks on his own people. At the time of this writing hundreds of thousands of Kurds are camped along the Border of Turkey. Young and old are starving and large numbers have died of exposure to the elements. The United States and other nations are dropping food, clothing, and tents. Medical personnel have been sent in to try to help, and U. S. Marines are guarding them. As "Desert Storm" (Persian Gulf War, 1991) ended in an overwhelming defeat for Iraq, President George Bush called on the people of Iraq to overthrow Saddam Hussein. But even in defeat, he turned on the Sheites in the south and Kurds in the north and what followed was nothing short of a blood bath. Who can blame them for not being in subjection to Hussein?

For decades we heard shocking stories about the persecution of Christians in the Soviet Union. But, in April, 1991, Bill Bright, speaking from Russia, declared that there is more freedom

in classrooms Russia than in the United States. He was permitted to give children Bibles in the classrooms and present the plan of salvation to them. The taped program showed teachers rushing forward to receive a free Bible. He cannot do that in public school classrooms in America. In fact, the Gideons are facing increasing resistance in their efforts to place New Testaments in the hands of fifth graders (even in the Bible-belt). If America does not experience a spiritual awakening, Christians may be facing difficult times in this country in the near future.

There is no Christian consensus in America any more, but Christians must still be in subjection to the government. We must render unto Caesar the things that are Caesars, and unto God the things that are Gods (Matt. 22:21). We must pray for revival, and seek to elect Christians to represent us in gov- ernment, but be prepared for some difficult decisions. We must pray and work to see that America never denies us the opportunity to worship and serve God without interference from the government. If that time should come, the Christian's course is clearly stated in the Scripture: "We ought to obey God, rather than man" (Acts 5:29).

God does not ordain violence, murder, oppression and deception. He certainly did not ordain the slavery of the Roman Empire. We would never defend the oppressive system in England from which many Christians were fleeing when they came to America. In some cases the government has actually led in the persecution of Christians. But the principle of government is ordained of God. Some forms of government which are not democratic, have protected citizens and given them an opportunity to worship God and win the lost to Christ. Without a doubt, these forms of government are better than anarchy.

For most of the history of the United States Christianity has enjoyed more freedom than at any other time in the two thousand years of Christian history. Today, Christianity is under attack in America. We have lost the Christian consensus, into ae Post-Christian period, and now face attacks from Humanists, Communists, evolutionists, cults, the occult and New Age Movements. There have been documented reports that show that Christianity has received unfair treatment from the media and from education.

Many people in the world identify Christianity with democracy and some Christians seem to think democracy will stand forever because God finally directed our progress to the point that we now have His form of government and He will protect it regardless of what happens in the world. When the Christian has that attitude toward his government he will want to be in subjection to his government. But Jean-Francois Revel says "Democracy may, after all, turn out to have been a historical accident, a brief parenthesis that is closing before our eyes" [22: 3]. Revel added:

Democracy probably could have endured had it been the only type of political organization in the world. But it is not basically structured to defend itself against outside enemies seeking its annihilation, especially since the latest and most dangerous of these external enemies, communism--the current and complete model of totalitarianism--parades as democracy perfected when it is in fact the absolute negation of democracy [22: 3].

The collapse of the Soviet Union did not eliminate all threats to democracy. In his book, *Suicide of the West: An Essay on the Meaning and Destiny of Liberalism*, James Burnham claims that by permitting the modern brand of liberalism to grow in power and influence, we are committing national suicide. He says, "The average liberal is just not so concerned about, not so emotionally involved in, nationhood, national patriotism, sovereignty and Liberty as is a fellow citizen to his ideological right" [7: 178]. Another fact should also be considered: America protects those internal forces that would destroy her (liberal media, special interest groups and radical organizations that hide behind the First Amendment). Exponents of Global Education, animal rights advocates, some environmentalists, radical feminist groups, and others would have us give less allegiance to America and pursue a one world government and one world religion.

We elect a president and members of congress, but the national media, over whom we have no control, can make or break most politicians. Current trends in education and the influence of groups like the radical feminists threaten the very existence of America as we have known it. The leaders of these groups are portrayed as normal, while leaders of groups like the American Family Association and Concerned Women for America are portrayed in an unfavorable light. Pornography and abortion advocates enjoy the protection of the government while while promoting behavior that is eating away at the moral fabric of society.

Numerous books have been published that reflect a growing concern for the future of America. One that merits attention is entitled, *Exploding the Myths that Could Destroy America*, by Erwin W. Lutzer. Any Christian who has not slept through the seventies and eighties could anticipate such chapter titles as:

2. The Myth That Life Began with Blind Chance
3. The Myth That We Can Have Morality without Religion
4. The Myth That Whatever is Legal Is Moral
6. The Myth That the Roles of Men and Women Are Interchangeable.
7. The Myth That a Fetus Is Not a Baby
8. The Myth That We Can Ignore the Ghost of Karl Marx

Lutzer is deeply concerned about the agenda of the radical feminist movement. He points out that the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution which died in 1982 sounded good on the surface, but behind the ERA there lies a deception. He claims that "the media has carefully diverted attention from the real goal of the radical feminists who back this proposal now that it has been resubmitted to Congress" [15: 92]. Lutzer points out that the cry of this group is equal pay for equal work. In fact, women were guaranteed that right by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 [15: 92].

The problem with ERA and the agenda of the radical feminists is seen in the definition of equality. By this term, they mean interchangeability of roles. They want to see all gender-based roles abolished [15: 92]. Some have stated that "marriage formalizes the persecution of women" [15: 94]. Radical feminists do not deny the sexual drive; they just do not believe it can be best met by a man. Some of these people teach that "lesbianism is the logical life- style to adopt because a relationship with other women would eliminate the need to be submissive to men. Ti-Grace

Atkinson is quoted as saying, 'Feminism is the theory; lesbianism is the practice' [15: 94f].

At a conference for women in Houston sponsored by NOW, there was a call for federally funded day-care centers which would operate twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. "only by putting the responsibility of children on society as a whole, it was argued, could women be free" [15: 97]. In feminist literature little positive is said about children. James Dobson is quoted as saying, "Kids have been perceived as an imposition, a nuisance, and a drain on the world's natural resources" [15: 97]. Is it any wonder that so many feminists defend and promote abortion? Is it any wonder they oppose groups like Concerned Women for America? The surprising thing is that the radical feminists can always get the attention of politicians and the media, but the American Family Association and other Christian groups receive only passing attention, or negative coverage.

Christian women, through churches, Christian organizations, and some of the civic and social institutions are working for women's protection and rights. They are seeking, however, to improve the lives of women without abandoning Scriptural principles. Christian men should join them in every way possible to assure protection from abuse and harassment in the home and work place. The Christian should do whatever he/she can to prevent exploitation of women by any one - for any reason. Scriptural roles for men and women, however, should not be abolished.

When I was a child growing up in Sledge, Mississippi, the heart of the Bible Belt, Christian mothers taught their daughters the Word of God. They helped them develop values consistent with the Bible. They taught them etiquette, and the social graces. They taught them to be modest in dress and speech. They taught them that there were places Christian young ladies might go and places they should never go. They taught them the importance of both character and a good reputation. In short, the Christian mother taught her daughter what it meant to be a Christian lady. She prepared her daughter to be a good wife and mother, to be faithful to the Lord and His church.

Many mothers today are so concerned with their daughter's GPA, her ACT score, her degrees, and her career that they forget the Lord. The woman today who wants a career, wants to serve the Lord, and a Christian home, is facing some serious obstacles. But many Christian women are doing just that. More, however, is needed. They may be far more effective in the battle with ungodly radical feminists than any man. It may be unfair of us to place too heavy a burden on the shoulders of Christian women, but they are used to it. They have been carrying more than their fair share of the load in the family, and in the church, for centuries. And they will continue to do it, because there are too many men who simply cannot be depended upon, either in the home or church.

They are often not only first in service, but also in trials and tribulation when the laws of the state conflict with the laws of God.

Christians have a message the world needs. We have answers to the most perplexing problems of our day, but our society is not only not listening, it seeks to restrict our opportunities to proclaim the truth of the Scripture. The teaching of evolution is an example. A biologist, Mrs. Andy Mercer of Hurst, Texas, confirmed a report I had read that stated that some universities have discussed the possibility of denying a degree to any student who believes in creation.

Charles Colson has been a blessing to thousands since his conversion. He makes a valid point on this subject:

Today we may have much of "religion," whether it be the generic American civil religion, or one of the "name brands"; we may have majorities who claim to be born again," and countless retreats, rallies and rituals; but if we fail to stand for Christ at that place where the world is denying His Lordship, we are missing the mark [8: 11].

Many who profess to be Christians seem to be missing the mark today. Colson quotes Martin Luther:

If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are attacking at that moment, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all battlefields besides, is merely flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point [8: 11].

There are battles to be fought and won by Christians today against enemies who enjoy the protection, and at times, the encouragement of the state. The believer must remain in subjection to the state, while engaging the enemy at the point of attack. The reason we are at a disadvantage is not found in the strength of the enemy, but in the failure of Christians to engage the enemy at the point of attack.

If there is no spiritual awakening, and if things continue as they have for the past generation, Christians in a few years may be called on to make some difficult decisions about their relationship to the state. Passive resistance is being practiced by some Christians against abortion today. Nation-wide boycotts against sponsors of pornography and indecent television programs are being promoted by some groups today.

The Scripture must be our guide in all relationships, including the state. Our first commitment is to God. But He expects us to be in subjection to the state, unless there is a conflict between the two. In such case, the Christian must obey God. If that means that he will be penalized by the state, he must pay the penalty. But he must not practice civil disobedience without careful (and prayerful) consideration.

13:2. The lawless citizen is rebellious toward God. To resist the authority of the state is to disobey God and invite not only the judgment of the state, but also the judgment of the Lord.

13:3. Most governments have been designed to be a terror to evil doers, not the law abiding citizen. Very few governments have laws which were designed to protect evil doers.

13:4 - MINISTER OF GOD. Or, the servant of God. It is God's purpose for the head of state

and other officials to be a force for good. Punishment of those who violate the laws of the state is also ordained of the Lord. "Governmental wrath upon lawlessness is that agent of God against evil doers" [17: 238].

SWORD. The "minister of God" does not bear the sword in vain. The sword was a symbol of a Roman magistrate's authority. The official, as a servant of God is to execute wrath on wrongdoers. The state is thus charged with a function which has been explicitly forbidden to the Christian as an individual (12:17a, 19). Bruce says:

The Christian state of later days lay, outside the range of Paul's admonition and no express direction is given by which the Christian ruler or judge may reconcile his duty as a Christian to leave the exacting of vengeance to 'the wrath of God' and his official duty to 'execute His wrath' [5: 244].

Believers have been trying to reconcile these two seemingly opposite principles for ages, a simple principle I applies to the issue of capital punishment might help. The same God Who says that we are to "do no murder," also orders the organized state to carry out the death penalty against individuals guilty of certain crimes. Is there a conflict? Not as I see it. The Bible prohibits the individual from taking another person's life, but the Scripture makes a distinction between the individual who would take the law into his own hands, and the organized state which is given the responsibility to protect its citizens, even if that means removing violent criminals from society by imprisonment or by death.

I have stood many times in a state penitentiary or county jail and read the Scripture, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). That principle applies in both the spiritual and physical realms; and it is God's purpose for the "servant," or "minister" of God to enforce punishment for a crime. Again, it is the duty of the state to take responsible, and just action; but it is not the duty, or privilege of the individual to mete out God's wrath against others.

13:5. Subjection to law is not only for one's safety; it is the right thing to do.

YE MUST NEEDS BE SUBJECT. There is a necessity which is based both on the law and upon conscience. We must be subject to the law because it is right.

13:6-7. Taxes must be paid to support the government and to pay the salaries of the officials. Fortunately, in a democratic society, there are procedures for changing laws that are inequitable. We should try to work within the law to change the law when it needs changing, rather than violate the law.

2. Love is the fulfillment of all laws, 13:8-10.

The secret for keeping the Law is love. "Love is the one debt which the Christian owes all men" [2: 119]. A person who loves does not commit adultery, steal, or murder. If one loves his neighbor, he does not lie to him, or about him. He does not covet his possessions. If you love your neighbor you do not commit adultery with him, or her. Godly love is the solution to social injustice, to abortion, to family problems.

3. Incentives for obedience to the law, 13:11-14.

13:11. In 13:8-10 Paul gave the secret for keeping the law. Now he gives incentives for obedience to the law, for moral conduct, and good citizenship. The incentive is that we are nearer heaven than we believe. "The rapid approach of our consummated salvation ought to heighten the moral character of our citizenship" [17: 238].

13:12 - THE NIGHT IS ALMOST GONE, AND THE DAY IS AT HAND. This might seem like an unusual way of saying it is almost dawn. It is time to put away the deeds of darkness as one puts away his night clothes at daybreak and puts on the armor of the light (dresses for the work of the day).

THE ARMOR OF LIGHT. "The weapons of light, that belong to the light, (to the day time) [21: 410]. For other references to the metaphor of the Christian armor see I Thes. 5:8; II Cor. 6:7; Rom. 6:13; Eph. 6:13ff.

13:13. Christians are to walk in the light of the eternal day of heaven and not stumble along in the dark. The Williams translation is helpful:

Let us live becomingly for people who are in the light of day, not in carousing, and drunkenness. not in sexual immorality and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy.

13:14. The Christian is to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ (II Cor. 5:21), and 'the fine linen is the righteousness of saints' (Rev. 19:8).

E. The Christian and moral issues, 14:1-15:13.

1. The eating of meat, 14:1-3.

Problems had arisen concerning the eating of meat that had been offered to idols. Gentiles made sacrifices to heathen gods, and then ate the meat in their homes or sold it in the market place. Mature Christians knew that sin was not inherent in eating the meat if it was free from pollution. Weaker ones considered it sacrilegious. Instead of taking sides Paul shows what the Christian

attitude should be in such circumstances.

When I was a youth, I heard a number of people ask questions about playing cards. Some could see no problem with playing certain card games, but others believed cards were instruments of sin because cards are often used for gambling. I could see no difference in playing cards when no gambling was involved and playing dominoes, checkers, or chess. But, I made up my mind that if there were so many people who had a problem with card playing, I would simply abstain from card games. The exception has been some games with my children when they were growing up (Like "Uno").

14:1-3. We know we should not sin. The question here is not what shall be our "attitude towards a sin that we minimize, but what shall characterize our attitude towards a misunderstood question that is altogether moral" [17 - 241]. The question is not sin, but the possibility of being misunderstood. Stronger Christians should not conduct themselves in such a way as to confuse or mislead weaker believers.

Christians must often make decisions in which this principle has an application. Young people have to make a lot of decisions about the music they will listen to, places they will go, clothes they will wear and activities in which they participate. They need clear examples from parents and others. It is interesting how many people who oppose casino gambling, or a state lottery, see nothing wrong with playing bingo or buying a raffle ticket if the school will benefit from it. Bingo games sponsored by schools and other institutions to raise money meet the definition set down in state laws concerning gambling. But as a Christian, if I did not know that, or did not like the definition, I would still abstain if I thought my participation in these things would create a problem for others who believed it sinful. It is a fact that some forms of gambling prey on those who can least afford it, including the poorest among us, the jobless, and those already in serious financial difficulty.

14:1. Weaker believers are to be taken into fellowship by the stronger ones. Am I my brother's keeper? Paul answers in the affirmative. Parents should remember this when they select television programs they will watch with their children.

14:2. The well grounded Christian may eat meat; the weaker ones ought not to eat in violation of their conscience. Neither should judge or condemn the other. God loves and receives both. Some people advocate a vegetarian diet today, while others reject it. Righteousness is not established by the diet, but Christian love has an opportunity to manifest itself when questions like these arise.

14:3. There is no moral wrong or sin in eating meat, but there is moral wrong in violating conscience. The strong are not to despise the weak, and weak are not to judge the strong. This is very practical because Christians must be concerned about their relationship with others. Too many people are quick to turn off people who differ in their ideas or practices.

2. The principle that should govern one's life, 14:4-12.

14:4. Paul stresses the point that God is the sole judge of man. A funeral director once told me about a service for a man who had committed suicide. His church would not permit the service to be held in their church building, so the family turned to Dr. Perry Claxton, who was at that time pastor of the First Baptist Church, Greenville, Mississippi. The director said that everybody was wondering what he would say at the service. He said that Dr. Claxton began by saying, "There are many things for which I am indeed grateful; not the least of which is that man is not my judge." There have been many times when I have recalled that statement and breathed a silent, "Amen."

14:5. LET EVERY MAN BE FULLY PERSUADED IN HIS OWN MIND. We might paraphrase it, "Let us be sure in our own mind that we are conscientious, instead of just contentious." This is not the same as the philosophy, "If it feels good, do it." Nor does this teach that you can disregard the sure and certain Word of God and base your conduct on "What you feel in your heart." Your persuasion must be based on the eternal truth of God.

14:7-9. Paul widens the realm in which we are responsible to Him - in life and in death. For the Christian, both life and death focus on the Lord. Verse 8 expresses the philosophy Paul claims for his life:

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.

To most believers this kind of commitment seem a bit radical. But Paul lived every day by this philosophy. In Phil. 1:21, he said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Consider the implications of this kind of commitment in Paul or any other believer. You cannot buy him; you cannot intimidate him; you cannot hold anything in the world over his head. You cannot silence him without killing him, and that would be doing him a favor!

14:9 - FOR TO THIS END. This is a clause of purpose. The purpose in His death and resurrection is "that He might be Lord both of the dead, and of the living" (Vs. 9, NASV).

14:10-12. Paul pictures "the judgment of God for a contradistinction from human judgment and to deduce sincerity and induce righteousness in every act of his readers" [17: 242].

14:10. All men will be judged for any wrong toward others. God takes the judgment out of human hands. God will judge every man for having judged his brother. There is a rather sobering statement in this verse: "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." Some feel that we should seek more positive ways of trying to motivate people, but the threat of judgment is set forth in the Scripture as an incentive for treating others as we should.

14:11. Paul urges that we live in the consciousness of the coming judgment, knowing that the Lord says, every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord (Phil. 2:10f).

14:12. Each one of us has an appointment to stand before the judgment seat of Christ [Heb. 9:27]. Paul takes another step with reference to this judgment: "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." This is a significant statement of the judgment of God. We are going to give an account of ourselves to God. We will give account in matters of morality, honesty, honesty and stewardship. But this passage relates to judgment of others. Man is not responsible to God for his neighbor, but he is responsible for himself. He does not give an account of his neighbor's sins, but he must give account to God for his relationship to his neighbor.

3. The Christian must respect his neighbor's conscience, 14:13-23.

14:13a - LET US NOT JUDGE ONE ANOTHER ANYMORE (NASV). This is not preventive, this is corrective. You are judging your neighbor. Stop it!

14:13b. A STUMBLING BLOCK...IN HIS BROTHER'S WAY. Above all, Christians must avoid putting stumbling blocks before others. A stumbling block is a temptation to sin. Being responsible to God makes one responsible for the brother in Christ. Some areas in which Christians should exercise caution to keep from being stumbling blocks include:

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Alcoholic beverages | 2. The Lord's Day |
| 3. Entertainment | 4. Business affairs |
| 5. Honesty | 6. Courtesy |
| 7. Morality | 8. Speech |

14:14 - NOTHING IS UNCLEAN IN ITSELF. Paul identifies himself with the "strong" just as he did in I Corinthians 8:4f. "Unclean" refers to food not permitted by the law (Lev. 11). These restrictions no longer applied to these believers (even the Jews, according to Romans 14:20), but some of the immature saints still practiced them. The mature saints were urged to abstain from those foods and from wine so that they would not be a hindrance to the weaker brother (vs. 21). "Abstention, though one may personally think it unnecessary, is better than placing temptation in a brother's way" [32: Footnotes].

14:14 - BUT IF BECAUSE OF FOOD. The Authorized Version has "meat," instead of food. Food is the subject here, but the same principle applies in other situations. Once, following a Baptist World Alliance meeting in Europe, someone told a story (probably a joke) about the German Baptist who became so upset when he saw an American Baptist light a cigarette that he spilled his beer all over himself. Having grown up in an area where most church members condemned the game of pool, mostly because of the environment in pool halls and the gambling associated with it.

It was a little disturbing for me when I learned that some Christians had pool tables in their homes. In time I came to understand that they wanted to enjoy the game but avoid the atmosphere often associated with many pool halls.

Another area in which Christians should be very careful is in their observance of the Lord's Day. My wife, Becky, and I visited an elderly man in his hospital room. He was unsaved and like many others, hiding behind an excuse. He had for years run a fruit and vegetable stand and often on Sunday a local minister stopped by and tried to persuade him to close on the Lord's day and go to church - while he was buying a watermelon for his family to enjoy on Sunday afternoon. The believer should avoid violating his neighbor's conscience.

14:16-19. Christians should not spend all their time wrestling with secondary or periphery issues. We should not major on eating and drinking, but on righteousness. This section is summed up in verse 17. It is important that Christians not major in minors and minor in majors. When I was a youth our Associational Missionary, Rev. M. C. Waldrup, preached at our mission church every Sunday. It was not unusual for someone to ask, "Brother Waldrup, do you think it is a sin to go to this place of that place?" Even as a teenager, it seemed to me that a little maturity and a little more knowledge of God's Word would have answered many of those questions for them.

14:20-23. Paul says, in essence, that the Christian must not sell out his brother for a mess of pottage. It is not wrong to eat meat but it is wrong to cause another to stumble. If eating meat would cause another to stumble, the sincere Christian will gladly sacrifice his liberty rather than offend one for whom Jesus Christ died.

In verse 20 Paul says that "All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense" (NASV). The Levitical law concerning food is not imposed on the Christian, but the mature Christian who understands that should not flaunt his liberty so as to cause another to stumble. Then it becomes sin.

In verse 23 we see that the believer's conduct must grow out of faith, and if it grows out of any other source it becomes sin. "He that doubteth is damned if he eat...for whatever is not of faith is sin." Doubt is a guide for the Christian, but doubt is not an infallible guide. Many sin seemingly without doubt or conviction. Some advise, "When in doubt, don't." This may help, but it is better to say, "When in doubt, go to the Word of God to find His answer." We should take advantage of the privilege of prayer and the presence of the indwelling Spirit of God to direct us.

14:23 - WHATSOEVER IS NOT OF FAITH IS SIN. Robertson says that, "Faith (pistis) here is subjective, one's strong conviction in the light of his relation to Christ and his enlightened conscience. To go against this combination is sin beyond a doubt" [21: 416].

4. Jesus set an example for us with regards to others, 15:1-13.

The Christian is advised to follow the example of Jesus in self-sacrificing, and self-denial as the governing principle in regarding a brother's conscience.

15:1 - WE THEN THAT ARE STRONG. Paul identifies with this side of the controversy. By "strong" he means morally strong, as in II Cor. 12:10; 13:9, and not the mighty, as in I Cor. 1:26. Those who are strong have a responsibility to God for those who are weak. The Christian should not be self-centered or self-serving. The Second Greatest Commandment covers our responsibility to minister to others.

15:2. The believer should try to please his neighbor, not just to please him, but for his spiritual edification, or benefit. It is not a matter of our always giving in to a person who insists on always having his own way. Rather, it is a matter of our being willing to sacrifice our 'right' or privilege in order to encourage or strengthen another.

15:3 - CHRIST. Jesus Christ is our eternal example. He did not put self first. He did not live to please Himself. Paul quotes Psalm 69:9 and represents the Messiah as bearing the reproaches of others. By quoting from Psalm 69:9, Paul answers the question of why we should restrict our behavior for the sake of others.

15:4 - FOR WHATEVER WAS WRITTEN IN EARLIER TIMES WAS WRITTEN FOR OUR INSTRUCTION. (NASV). The Scripture was written for our instruction and if we persevere in the study and application of it, it will provide the encouragement and hope we need.

15:5-6. It is the desire of the Father and the ministry of the Holy Spirit to make us "likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus." What should our attitude toward others be? Paul writes, "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus." This helps us to understand and apply the Golden Rule in our dealings with others.

15:7-13. We must relate to others as Christ did and as the Holy Spirit leads. Jesus Christ was a "minister" ("Became a servant," NASV) to the circumcision. He ministered to fellow Jews (vs. 8), and He is the hope of the Gentiles (vs 9). "He came unto His own and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:11-12).

In verses 9-13 we see a number of quotations. These quotations are from the Greek version of the Old Testament. For this reason when you look up the references in the Old Testament, the words will not be identical.

The purpose in quoting the Old Testament Scriptures is seen in verse 9: "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."

CONCLUSION, 15:14 - 16:27

A. Reasons for the Epistle to the Romans, 15:14-16:27.

15:14. Paul had every reason to believe that his readers were mature believers.

15:15. Paul's message was a bold one, but the boldness is based on the grace "that is given me of God."

15:16. Paul was called to minister to the Gentiles and sanctified by the Holy Spirit for this ministry.

15:17-19. Paul's glory was in Jesus Christ. His work had been accompanied by mighty signs and wonders.

15:20-21. Paul had been a missions pioneer, breaking new ground with the Gospel of salvation, not preaching where the name of Christ was known, but where it was unknown. He did not want to build on the work of others. There is nothing wrong with building on the work of others; it just was not Paul's calling. The apostle was still looking for new fields.

15:22-23. Paul greatly desired to visit the Christians in Rome. In the first chapter he expressed the same desire. He wanted to preach the Gospel to them, believing both he and the Roman church would stand to profit from his visit. He also planned to go to Spain and wanted to enlist their financial support and their commitment to pray for his work. He was ready to go to Rome to see them now, because he was no longer needed where he was. His work there was finished. In verses 24 and following he deals with his goals.

15:24-26. He shares his immediate plans. He plans to go to Jerusalem with an offering for the needy saints. The offering had been collected in churches in Asia and Greece during Paul's third missionary journey. He would go with representatives from some of these churches to Jerusalem (Acts 20-21).

Little did Paul know what would happen to him before he finally arrived in Rome. He did know the situation in Jerusalem would be perilous, and it proved to be every bit as dangerous as he

had thought. He was taken by an angry mob, rescued by Roman soldiers, then slipped out of the city and taken to Caesarea just ahead of a plot to kill him.

After more than two years of confinement at Caesarea, during which time he was subjected to a series of injustices, he finally exercised his privilege as a Roman citizen and appealed to Rome. He arrived after a ship wreck that left the ship's passengers, officers and prisoners stranded on the Mediterranean island of Melita for three months. He arrived as a prisoner but continued preaching, teaching, and ministering to those who came to him in the private house he rented and where he remained under guard for two years. Tradition tells us that he was freed and then went to Spain to preach the Gospel. He later returned and, according to tradition, was arrested and executed in Rome.

B. Personal greetings, 16:1-23.

In verses 1-16 Paul sends his greetings to the church, naming many members by name. He mentions Phoebe. "The letter, when completed, was evidently taken to its destination by Phoebe, a Christian lady of substance who was making the journey on her own account: [5: 252]. Paul commends her to the saints to whom he is writing. Prisca and Aquila are among the best known believers (see Acts 18:2, 26; I Cor. 16:19; II Tim. 4:19. He does not say how they risked their lives for him (vs. 4).

In verses 17-23 we find a final admonition and benediction. In particular, he warns against those who would cause dissension and hindrances. Victory over Satan is promised in verse 20. The benediction begins with 20b. Paul reveals that Timothy was with him and; along with Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, sends greetings to the church. Tertius (vs, 22) is identified as Paul's amanuensis or stenographer.

C. Benediction, 16:24-27.

In verses 25-26 we have a definition of mystery as used in the Scripture. A mystery is something once unknown, but now revealed in the New Testament.

"To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever.
Amen" Romans 16:27).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. ADAMS, Jay, The Biblical View of Self Esteem, Self-Love, Self-Image, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 1986.
2. ALLEN, Clifton J., The Gospel According to Paul - a Study of the Letter to the Romans, Broadman Press, Nashville, TN, 1973.
3. BARCLAY, William, The Letter to the Romans, in the Daily Bible Study Series, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1957.
4. Baker Dictionary of Theology, Everett F. Harrison, Chief Editor, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1981.
5. BRUCE, F. F., Romans, in the Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Inter-Varsity Press, Grand Rapids, MI, 1989.
6. BUBEK, Mark I., The Adversary, Moody Press, Chicago, 1975.
7. BURNHAM, James, Suicide of the West: An Essay on the Meaning and Destiny of Liberalism, Regenery Books, Chicago, 1985.
8. COLSON, Charles, Who Speaks for God, Crossway Books, Westchester, Ill., 1985
9. DENNIS, Lane T., Editor, The Letters of Francis Shaeffer, Crossway Books, Westchester, Ill., 1985
10. ECKERT, Allan W., The Frontiersman, Little, Brown and Company, Boston and Toronto, 1975.
11. GEISLER, Norman, False Gods of Our Times, Harvest House, Eugene, Oregon, 1985.
12. GEISLER, Norman, Is Man the Measure, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1983.
13. GROOTHUIS, Douglas, Confronting the New Age Movement, Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill., 1988.

14. GROOTHIUS, Douglas, Unmasking the New Age, Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill., 1986.
15. LUTZER, Erwin, Exploding the Myths that Would Destroy America, Moody Press, Chicago, 1986.
16. MARRS, Texe, Mystery Mark of the New Age, Crossway Books, Westchester, Ill., 1988.
17. McBETH, J. P., A Practical and Exegetical Commentary on Romans, Hennington Publishing Co., Wolfe City, Texas, 1937.
18. McGORMAN, J. W., Romans: Everyman's Gospel, Convention Press, Nashville, TN, 1976.
19. MOODY, Dale, Romans, Vol. 10, The Broadman Bible Commentary, Broadman Nashville,
20. MORRIS, Henry, The Biblical Basis for Modern Science, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1984.
21. ROBERTSON, A. T., Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol. IV, Broadman Press, Nashville, TN, 1933.
22. REVEL, Jean-Francois, How Democracies Perish, Doubleday and Co., Garden City, N.Y., 1984
23. SHAEFFER, Francis, A Christian World View, The Complete Works of Francis Shaeffer edited by Francis Shaeffer, Vol. 2, Crossway Books, Westchester, Ill., 1982
24. Romans, The Speaker's Bible, Vol. 1.
25. THOMAS, Major Ian, The Saving Life of Christ, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1961.
26. VINES, W. E., Vines Expositor's Dictionary of New Testament Words, Revell. Old Tappan, New Jersey. 1966.
27. VOTH, Harold M., Families: the Future of America, Regenery Gateway, Chicago, 1984.

OTHER HELPS

28. BROWN, Raymond Bryan, "Romans", Seminary Extension Study Guide, Seminary Extension Department, Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville, TN, 1968.
29. GLAZE, R. E., "The Theological Educator" Vol. VII, New Orleans Baptist Theological

Seminary, 1976.

30. HEBREW-GREEK KEY STUDY BIBLE, THE, The King James Version of the Bible, with Study Helps by Spiros Zodhiates, Chattanooga, TN, 1986.

31. RAVENHILL, Leonard, Video Tape, "Revival God's Way," Video Dynamics, Jackson, MS.

32. RYRIE STUDY BIBLE, Study Helps by Charles Ryrie, NASV

33. Zuck, Roy B., "What About Those Who haven't heard," *Kindred Spirit*, Dallas Theological Seminary, Winter, 1994, Vol. 18, No. 4.

Copyright© 2005
Johnny L. Sanders
All Rights Reserved