Icon

Description automatically generated

ROMANS

*No difference between Jews and Gentiles in Christ*

WRITTEN

57 AD

KEY VERSE

*"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

15:5-6

Last updated May 3, 2023

Unite the congregation in Rome

PURPOSE

**CONTENTS**

[INTRODUCTION 4](#_Toc126233773)

[FACTS ABOUT THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS 4](#_Toc126233774)

[HISTORICAL SITUATION 5](#_Toc126233775)

[STRUCTURE 5](#_Toc126233776)

[PURPOSE OF THE LETTER 6](#_Toc126233777)

[THE INTRODUCTION (1:1-7) 6](#_Toc126233778)

[THE THEME OF THE LETTER (1:16-17) 7](#_Toc126233779)

["THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD" 7](#_Toc126233780)

[1:17 - LUTHER'S DISCOVERY 7](#_Toc126233781)

[THE CONTEXT OF THE ARGUMENT 8](#_Toc126233782)

[THE BOOK OF WISDOM 13:1-9 8](#_Toc126233783)

[OBSERVATION: ROM 1:18-24 9](#_Toc126233784)

[THE GENERAL REVELATION 9](#_Toc126233785)

[1:18-32 11](#_Toc126233786)

[WHY DID GOD GAVE THEM OVER IN THE SINFUL DESIRES? 11](#_Toc126233787)

[ROMANS 2:6-16 12](#_Toc126233788)

[WHAT DO YOU TRUST IN? (2:17-29, KELLER) 13](#_Toc126233789)

[3:1-20 14](#_Toc126233790)

[3:10-18 14](#_Toc126233791)

[APPLICATION 1:1 – 3:20 15](#_Toc126233792)

[ROMANS 3:21-26 15](#_Toc126233793)

[THE SACRIFICE OF ATONEMENT 16](#_Toc126233794)

[GOD DEMONSTRATED HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS (VV. 24-26) 16](#_Toc126233795)

["COULDN'T GOD JUST FORGIVE US WITHOUT JESUS HAVING TO DIE?" 17](#_Toc126233796)

[CHAPTER 4 - ABRAHAM'S RIGHTEOUSNESS 17](#_Toc126233797)

[ROM 4:19-22: HOW CAN ABRAHAM BE MENTIONED LIKE THIS? 18](#_Toc126233798)

[THE GLORY OF GOD 19](#_Toc126233799)

[THE WRATH OF GOD 20](#_Toc126233800)

[ROMANS 5:12-21 20](#_Toc126233801)

[ORIGINAL SIN? 20](#_Toc126233802)

[APPLICATION 3:21 – 5:21 22](#_Toc126233803)

[CHAPTER 6: DEAD TO SIN 23](#_Toc126233804)

[SHALL WE GO ON SINNING SO THAT GRACE MAY INCREASE? (6:1-14) 24](#_Toc126233805)

[DEACTIVATED 25](#_Toc126233806)

[SHALL WE SIN BECAUSE WE ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW BUT UNDER GRACE? (6:15-23) 25](#_Toc126233807)

[6:22 25](#_Toc126233808)

[APPLICATION OF CHAPTER 6 25](#_Toc126233809)

[CHAPTER 7: THE LAW OF MOSES 26](#_Toc126233810)

[IS THE LAW SINFUL? (7:7) 26](#_Toc126233811)

[7:7-25: WHO AM 'I' AND IS HE A CHRISTIAN? 27](#_Toc126233812)

[CHAPTER 8 27](#_Toc126233813)

[8:1-4 27](#_Toc126233814)

[8:9-11 28](#_Toc126233815)

[8:12-13 28](#_Toc126233816)

[8:15 28](#_Toc126233817)

[8:31-39 28](#_Toc126233818)

[APPLICATION CHAPTERS 6-8 29](#_Toc126233819)

[CHAP 9-11: WHAT ABOUT ISRAEL? 29](#_Toc126233820)

[BENEFITS OF BEING JEWISH (3:2, 9:4-5) 29](#_Toc126233821)

[WHAT HAPPENED? (9:6-33) 30](#_Toc126233822)

[INTERPRETATIONS OF 9:21-23 30](#_Toc126233823)

[ELECTION, HARDENING, PREDESTINATION, AND FREE WILL 31](#_Toc126233824)

[9:24-33 32](#_Toc126233825)

[10:1-13 32](#_Toc126233826)

[10:14-21 32](#_Toc126233827)

[11:1-10 33](#_Toc126233828)

[11:11-24 33](#_Toc126233829)

[“ALL ISRAEL” (11:26) 34](#_Toc126233830)

[APPLICATION CHAPTERS 9-11 34](#_Toc126233831)

[CH. 12-16 34](#_Toc126233832)

[12:1-2 35](#_Toc126233833)

[SPIRITUAL GIFTS (12:3-8) 35](#_Toc126233834)

[THE AUTHORITIES (13:1-7) 36](#_Toc126233835)

[14:1 - 15:13 37](#_Toc126233836)

[14:1-6 37](#_Toc126233837)

[THE CHRISTIAN LIFE 38](#_Toc126233838)

[APPLICATION OF CHAPTERS 12-16 39](#_Toc126233839)

## INTRODUCTION

The book of Romans has had a great influence on Christian theology and has meant a lot to many people in the history of the church. The Old Church's great theologian Augustine came to faith when he read Romans; the Reformation was a result of, among other things, Luther's discovery of Romans 1:17; and John Wesley was saved through Luther's commentary on the Epistle to the Romans and stood for the Methodist revival in the 18th century.

In Acts 18:2, we read that Emperor Claudius had banished all Jews from Rome. We know from the Roman historian Suetonius that this was due to *"unrest caused by Christ"*. This happened in the year 49 AD. The Christian Jews were also expelled, along with all other Jews. When Nero became emperor in the year 54 AD, the Jews were allowed to return to Rome again (see Romans 16:3, where Priscilla and Aquila were back), but in the meantime, the congregation had become "Gentile Christians" (1:5-6:13, 11:13). Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians had different ways of expressing their faith, and this led to division in some areas (see especially Ch. 14). Paul wrote this letter around the year 57 AD, probably from Corinth toward the end of his third missionary journey, to emphasize that they are all equal in Christ and must live in unity.

In addition to uniting the Christians in the congregation, the letter may also have served as preparation for a visit by Paul. He has not yet been to Rome but plans to visit them on his way to Spain (15:23-24). A third purpose may have been to thoroughly explain the gospel to them. They may not have received such instruction from an apostle yet.

The book of Romans deals with the basics of Christianity and is important for understanding what we believe. In addition, there is a clear voice for unity among Christians.

### FACTS ABOUT THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

* Has had an enormous influence on Christian theology - one of the most important Christian writings ever.
* The longest letter we have from ancient times. More than 7000 words.
* Besides Colossians, the only epistle Paul wrote to a church he had not founded or visited.
* Explains the basics of Christianity.

### HISTORICAL SITUATION

Acts 2:10 → Many of the first members were probably Jewish Christians.

Acts 18:2 → year 49 AD, when Emperor Claudius expelled 40-50,000 Jews from Rome because of "disturbances caused by Christus" (Suetonius). Christians and Jews were seen as one until the year 70 AD.

Rom 16:3 → After the year 54 AD, when Claudius died, the Jewish Christians returned to Rome. Meanwhile, the congregation had become "Gentile Christians" (1:5-6, 13; 11:13). Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians had different ways of expressing their faith, and this led to division (Ch. 14).

Rom 1:7, 16:5, 16:15 → many house churches? Both Jewish Christians, Gentile Christians, and mixed congregations?

The letter was written from Corinth (16:23, 1 Cor 1:14) around the year 57 AD.

### STRUCTURE

**1:1-3:20 All are sinners**

Ch. 1: Gentiles are sinners

2:1-3:8: Jews are sinners

3:9-20: All are sinners

**3:21-5:21: All are saved in the same way**

3:21-31: Righteousness by faith

Ch. 4: Abraham's righteousness

Ch. 5: Grace overcomes sin

**Ch. 6-8: All are sanctified in the same way**

Ch. 6: Gentiles are dead to sin

Ch. 7: Jews are dead to the law

Ch. 8: The Spirit sets everyone free

**Ch. 9-11: God's relationship with Jews and Gentiles**

Ch. 9: Children of the promise

Ch. 10: All are saved by calling on his name

Ch. 11: God's true people

**Ch. 12-16: Application of Ch. 1-11. Receive one another as Christ has received you.**

### PURPOSE OF THE LETTER

**Pastoral**

Unite the Christians. Paul was perfect for this task, as a Jew called to the Gentiles.

**Missionary**

Prepare for the visit. Plans to visit them on the way to Spain and get help for the journey ahead (15:24, 28). A "letter of introduction".

**Theologically**

Explain the gospel. Had they not received the basic teaching from an apostle?

## THE INTRODUCTION (1:1-7)

v.1 Apostolic preaching of God's gospel

v.2 The gospel that God promised in the OT (→ 3:21, Ch. 4-5, 16:26)

v.3 The gospel is about Jesus, who came as a human being and was the Messiah (of David's lineage) ( → among other things, Ch. 9-11)

v.4 The Spirit confirmed that Jesus was the son of God at the resurrection

v.5 Paul's call to the Gentiles → why he writes (1:13-15, 15:15-18) "the obedience that comes from faith" (16:26, also 15:18) → Ch. 6-8. It's all about giving God glory (mentions God a lot, Jesus less)

v.6 The Christians in Rome belong to Jesus. God calls people to himself.

v.7 God loves the church. Christians are called to live holy lives (→ Ch. 6-8)

## THE THEME OF THE LETTER (1:16-17)

**CLAIM/THESIS**

(v. 15: I am eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome)

v. 16a: *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel"*

v. 16b: *"because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile."*

v. 17: "*For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'"*

### "THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD"

Used in two ways in Romans:

**1. When used *without* "faith" (3:5, 3:25-26):**

* God's character. God is just.

**2. When used with "faith" (1:17, 3:21-22, 10:3-6):**

* God's action to restore (salvation) + the status God gives to those who are restored (saved) → God brings people into the right relationship with him.
* The legal term for when a judge declares the defendant “not guilty”. Acquittal.

### 1:17 - LUTHER'S DISCOVERY

*"[…] it was […] a simple quote in Ch. 1, "For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed," that stood in my way. Because I hated the expression "God's righteousness," which all the teachers had taught me to understand as [...] the active justice, as they called it, that God is just and punishes sinners and the unjust. Although I lived blamelessly as a monk, I felt that I was a sinner before God with a very disturbed conscience; I could not believe that he was appeased by my dutifulness.”*

*"I did not love, but actually hated the righteous God who punishes sinners. Secretly, if not in blasphemy, I grumbled much, I was angry with God [...] Finally by the mercy of God, while I was meditating day and night, I noticed the connection around the words, "For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'" Then I began to understand that God's righteousness is what the righteous lives by as a gift from God, namely by faith."*

*"This then is the meaning: God's righteousness is revealed by the gospel, namely the passive righteousness with which the gracious God justifies us by faith, as it is written: " The righteous will live by faith." Here I felt that I was completely reborn and had entered paradise itself through open gates.”*

## THE CONTEXT OF THE ARGUMENT

(v. 15: I want to preach the gospel also to you in Rome.)

v. 16a: *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel"*

v. 16b: *"for it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes"*

v. 17: *"For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'"*

v. 18: *"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness"*

v. 19a: *"since what may be known about God is plain to them,"*

v. 19b: *"because God has made it plain to them."*

v. 20: *"For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."*

v. 21: *"For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God..."*

## THE BOOK OF WISDOM 13:1-9

*"Foolish by nature were all who were in ignorance of God, and who from the good things seen did not succeed in knowing the one who is, and from studying the works did not discern the artisan; Instead either fire, or wind, or the swift air, or the circuit of the stars, or the mighty water, or the luminaries of heaven, the governors of the world, they considered gods. Now if out of joy in their beauty they thought them gods, let them know how far more excellent is the Lord than these; for the original source of beauty fashioned them. Or if they were struck by their might and energy, let them realize from these things how much more powerful is the one who made them. For from the greatness and the beauty of created things their original author, by analogy, is seen. But yet, for these the blame is less; For they have gone astray perhaps, though they seek God and wish to find him. For they search busily among his works, but are distracted by what they see, because the things seen are fair. But again, not even these are pardonable. For if they so far succeeded in knowledge that they could speculate about the world, how did they not more quickly find its Lord?"* New American Bible (Revised Edition)

## OBSERVATION: ROM 1:18-24

1. What 4 things can everyone know about God?
2. Why are people without excuse?
3. Why is the wrath of God being revealed?
4. What is the connection between God's wrath and moral decay?

## THE GENERAL REVELATION

God's questions to all people:

1. What is the universe?
2. What is man?
3. Where does morality come from?
4. What's wrong with the world?
5. What is the meaning of life?
6. What is death?
7. How is it possible to know anything?

*"Social theorists, therapists, and politicians all say "this is how we should live"... We basically know how, but we just can't do it. This is humanity's problem."* Jacob Needleman (the quote has been translated)

*"The knowledge of God that men have outside of special revelation is in itself woefully inadequate when it comes to salvation. It was meant to be of help in their search for God, but instead, it only serves to make them "without excuse" before God's wrath."* Douglas J. Moo (the quote has been translated)

*“As long as we suppress the truth we will never understand who we are or why the world is the way it is... This exploitation in our worship and service reverses the created order. Humans are created in God's image, made to relate to him in his world and to reflect his nature and goodness towards the world. People take irrational leaps to suppress the truth. Since the fundamental truth of God is suppressed and ignored, life cannot be lived* *consistently.”* (Timothy Keller, the quote has been translated)

*“Imagine a person who comes in here tonight and argues 'no air exists' but continues to breathe air while he argues. Now intellectually, atheists continue to breathe - they continue to use reason to draw scientific conclusions (which assumes an orderly universe), to make moral judgments (which assumes absolute values) - but the atheistic view of things would in theory make such 'breathing' impossible. They are breathing God's air all the time they are arguing against him.”* Greg Bahnsen

*"We humans are not only thinking beings. We also have feelings, desires, and free will, and these affect our outlook on life. It is important to remind atheists of the rational evidence for God, but in many cases, the real problem is of moral and psychological nature."* Jim Spiegel (the quote has been translated)

*"I want atheism to be true... It's not just that I don't believe in God and naturally hope I'm right. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be any God. I don't want the universe to be like this."* Thomas Nagel (the quote has been translated)

*"...it would require a radical change in my lifestyle, a fundamental change in my daily choices as well as in the ultimate goals one seeks and hopes for... The simple truth is that I* *did not want to live up to being a thoroughly religious person."* Ethical philosopher Mortimer Adler (the quote has been translated)

*"As children of the Enlightenment, we tend to place a lot of emphasis on how outlook affects behavior. But it also goes the other way around. Our behavior affects how we think."* Jim Spiegel (the quote is translated)

## 1:18-32

A continuous fall. Repeated in every generation by every individual.

The human side is described in Eph 4:18-19: *"They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.”*

*“Every man is 'without excuse' because every man - whether a heathen in the 1st century or a materialist in the 20th century - has been given knowledge of God and has discarded that knowledge in favor of idolatry, in all its varied ways .”* Douglas J. Moo (the quote has been translated)

*"Mankind's basic problem is not lack of knowledge, but rebellion."* Dan Lewis (the quote has been translated)

## WHY DID GOD GIVE THEM OVER TO THEIR SINFUL DESIRES?

1. To wake them up? When God "surrenders" in the OT, it is not the last word either, but to bring about a conversion. To make it clear that they are sinners and at the same time announce the judgment?
2. To "seal" the judgment that is waiting for them?
3. To emphasize that no one can get out of this on their own without God saving them by letting them see the light?
4. Because God cannot be indifferent to his creation being destroyed by sin?
5. Because he says, "Your will be done" (Matt 6:10) to those who did not say this to him?

*"We only understand the gospel when, like Paul, we understand that we are the worst sinner we know (1 Tim 1:15) - and that if Jesus came to die for us, there is no one he would not die for. This frees us to obey Jesus by loving our neighbor, and to be able to accept Jesus' definition of our neighbor as the person whom our (church or secular) culture defines as the one who is, or should be, too far gone to be helped."* Tim Keller (the quote is translated)

## ROMANS 2:6-16

v. 7: A godly life as a pattern of life. *"glory, honor and immortality"* (v. 7) can only be found in a life with God. We do good because we want to become like God in our character. James says that our works show that our faith is alive.

v. 11: *"God does not show favoritism."*

* Because he judges according to the conduct of life regardless of who we are (vv. 6-10) and regardless of the Law of Moses (vv. 12-16).

The Jews cannot boast of having the law and believe it saves them. Everyone is a sinner regardless of whether one has the law or not.

Who are these heathens?

1. Gentiles who obey the law without having heard of Jesus and who are thus saved without having heard of Jesus.
2. Gentile Christians who obey the law in their hearts without having it externally.
3. Gentiles who partially keep the law but who are not saved.

Q: “How can people be judged by a standard they did not know? How can it be fair that *"All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law"* (v. 12)?

A: Because everyone has God's law in their hearts (v. 14). Everyone knows the difference between right and wrong. When someone who does not know God does what God wants because it is the "right thing to do", they show that they know God's law, and their conscience also bears witness to that (v. 15).

The point is not that Gentiles fulfill the law, but that the Jews should not think that they are saved because they have the law. They must do what the law says.

Gentiles can also follow the law to some extent but are still lost. Therefore, it does not help the Jews to have the law.

The point of the letter: No one deserves to be saved; it only happens through faith in Jesus.

**WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE WHO NEVER HEAR THE GOSPEL?**

Millard Erickson in the article " [What Happens to Those Who Never Hear the Gospel?](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/what-happens-to-those-who-never-hear-gospel/) " by Matt Smethurst:

*“What if someone were to throw himself . . . upon the mercy of God, not knowing on what basis that mercy was provided? Would not such a person in a sense be in the same situation as the Old Testament believers? The doctrine of Christ and his atoning work had not been fully revealed to these people. Yet they knew there was provision for the forgiveness of their sins, and that they could not be accepted on the merits of any works of their own. They had the form of the gospel without its full content. And they were saved.*

*But doesn’t this parallel trivialize Christ’s saving work? Not at all, Erickson insists, for Jesus is still the source of every saving benefit:*

*The basis of acceptance would be the work of Jesus Christ, even though the person involved is not conscious that this is how provision has been made for his salvation. . . . Salvation has always been appropriated by faith. . . . Nothing has been changed in that respect.”*

*"First, though inclusivists sometimes employ Romans 1:18–23 to highlight the importance of general revelation, on closer reading the text actually supports the exclusivist view. Paul’s argument is that God’s revelation in nature is sufficient only to condemn, not to save. Though the man on the island “knows God” (v. 21), he “suppresses the truth” (v. 18) perceptible in nature and is therefore “without excuse” (v. 20). Humans aren’t guilty because they haven’t heard the gospel; they’re guilty because they haven’t honored their Creator. In other words, not because of the absence of something (faith), but because of the presence of something (rebellion).*

*So will God condemn the innocent tribesman who has never heard the name of Christ? No, because there are no innocent tribesmen."*

## WHAT DO YOU TRUST IN? (2:17-29, KELLER)

**Lawfulness**

Constantly need to hear that they are holier and have more correct theology than others and that "the liberals" are wrong. They rely on their correct theology. Correct theology = righteousness.

**Power**

Constantly need to have strong or emotional experiences and see dramatic things happen. They trust their feelings and dramatic answers to prayer. Strong emotions = justice.

**Sacramental**

Emphasis on rituals and tradition. Guilt-burdened people are stunned by the beauty of the music and architecture and by the grandeur and mystery of the ceremony. Following liturgy = justice.

These can easily and often replace trusting in the righteousness of Christ. Which one are you or your congregation closest to? What can be done?

## 3:1-20

v. 1: If both the law and circumcision have nothing to say, is there any advantage at all to being a Jew?

vv. 2-4: Benefits of being entrusted to the OT, and that God was faithful to them even though Israel was not.

vv. 5-8 (parallel to v. 3): *"But if our unrighteousness brings out God’s righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us?"*

v. 6: How can God judge the world if he is unjust? So it must be fair to judge us as well as Jews.

v. 9: No advantage to being a Jew regarding salvation, since all men are sinners.

## 3:10-18

*"As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one [Our “legal” position]; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God [Our Mind and Motives]. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one [Our Will].” “Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.” “The poison of vipers is on their lips.” “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness [Our Tongues].” “Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know [Our relations].” “There is no fear of God before their eyes [Our relationship with God].”"*

## APPLICATION 1:1 – 3:20

That no one is without excuse follows grammatically from Paul's zeal to preach the gospel (1:15). Can 1:18-32 help us to be more eager to communicate the gospel to those who do not believe? Can this passage help us with how to communicate the gospel?

What "idols" are rivals for God's position in my heart? Are we greedy, envious, slanderous, false, or untrustworthy? How would it look different if we praised God on these points instead of serving something created?

What makes you want to justify yourself? How can you make sure that the sinfulness of the world does not drive you to self-righteousness but to the cross?

## ROMANS 3:21-26

*“But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins Id beforehand unpunished— he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus."*

1. Paul presents the human situation as a trial. Identify the different parties: the defendant, the aggrieved party, and the judge.
2. Who provides the solution? What is the solution?
3. What do you think of Paul's conclusion in v. 27?

How can the same God who needs a sacrifice to appease His wrath over sin already be satisfied enough to provide the sacrifice He needs to be satisfied?

* Answer: This is the gospel!

God Himself provides the only possible solution. And it is he himself! The gospel is truly unique!

## THE SACRIFICE OF ATONEMENT

Leviticus 16:2: *"The Lord said to Moses: “Tell your brother Aaron that he is not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die. For I will appear in the cloud over the atonement cover.”*

Romans 3:25a: *"God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness,”*

John 10:18: *“No one takes it from me, but I [Jesus] lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”*

*“I could never myself believe in God, if it were not for the cross. The only God I believe in is the One Nietzsche ridiculed as 'God on the cross.' In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it? I have entered many Buddhist temples in different Asian countries and stood respectfully before the statue of the Buddha, his legs crossed, arms folded, eyes closed, the ghost of a smile playing round his mouth, a remote look on his face, detached from the agonies of the world. But each time after a while I have had to turn away. And in imagination I have turned instead to that lonely, twisted, tortured figure on the cross, nails through hands and feet, back lacerated, limbs wrenched, brow bleeding from thorn-pricks, mouth dry and intolerably thirsty, plunged in Godforsaken darkness. That is the God for me! He laid aside his immunity to pain. He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death. He suffered for us. Our sufferings become more manageable in the light of his. There is still a question mark against human suffering, but over it we boldly stamp another mark, the cross that symbolizes divine suffering. 'The cross of Christ ... is God’s only self-justification in such a world” as ours....' 'The other gods were strong; but thou wast weak;* *they rode, but thou didst stumble to a throne; But to our wounds only God’s wounds can* *speak, And not a god has wounds, but thou alone.”* John R. W. Stott

## GOD DEMONSTRATED HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS (VV. 24-26)

God did not fully judge sin in the OT as they deserved. Not because he wasn't righteous, but because he was patient and had planned to send Jesus to deal with sin once and for all.

Sin was just as bad before Jesus’ days, but God allowed a partial solution until the perfect solution came.

## "COULDN'T GOD JUST FORGIVE US WITHOUT JESUS HAVING TO DIE?"

*"If God forgave us by becoming indifferent to sin – if he would give up his role as judge – it would hardly be loving to the victims of sin, it would provide no assurance for the future and would make God deeply weakened in character. No, God will, must, and will judge us. The wonder is that he judged us in his own Son..."* Timothy Keller (the quote has been translated)

*“God does not set aside his justice, he turns it against himself. The cross does not represent a compromise between God's wrath and His love, it does not partly satisfy each. Rather, it satisfies each of them completely in one and the same act.”* Timothy Keller (the quote has been translated)

## CHAPTER 4 – ABRAHAM'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

1. Observation: Where does he get the quote in v. 3 from?

* Interpretation: When was Abraham counted righteous?
* Interpretation: Why does he speak of circumcision in vv. 9-12?

2. Observation: Who are Abraham's children? (vv. 11-12)

* Interpretation: How does this relate to the meaning of his name? (vv. 11-13, 16-18, Genesis 17:1-6)

Interpretation: How does chapter 4 show that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles when it comes to salvation?

"*count*" (v. 8): Primarily an expression from mathematics and accounting, used in ancient business documents to credit payment to someone's account. (vv. 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 24).

v. 3: From Genesis 15:6, Abraham believes in God's promise of a son who will give him countless descendants, and it was counted to him as righteousness.

v. 10: Justified in Genesis 15 (85 years), circumcised in Genesis 17 (99 years)

v. 11: Abraham is the father of all believing Gentiles

v. 12: He is also the father of believing Jews, but not of unbelieving Jews (even if they are circumcised)

v. 17 – Abram: exalted father – Abraham: father of many nations (Genesis 17:5)

*"father of many nations"* = father of many Gentiles

All are saved in the same way: by faith.

### ROM 4:19-22: HOW CAN ABRAHAM BE MENTIONED LIKE THIS?

*"Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, 'Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?'"* Genesis 17:17

He had been justified by faith (on God's promise of an heir) 14 years earlier (Genesis 15). Doubt did nothing to his standing before God.

Although he hesitated to believe this, as it went against all reason and experience, he did not lose all faith in God. He did not "waver through unbelief" (v. 20), because instead, he doubted in faith.

* Faith and doubt are not opposites in the Bible.
* Not even faith and unbelief are mutually exclusive (Mark 9:24, John 20:27)
* Belief: A rational conviction that something is true, which allows you to have confidence in it.
* Rather, the opposites are faith (trust) and fear. (Mark 4:40, 5:36, John 14:1)

*"…, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God…"* (v. 20b).

* This can mean that he was strengthened in his faith at the same time as he gave God glory, or he was strengthened in his faith because he gave God glory.
* The opposite of 1:21, where the result was futile thoughts and foolish hearts.
* Since not giving glory to God caused mankind to become unwise, perhaps giving glory to God causes us to grow in faith so that we can understand. To give God glory even if we doubt is to have confidence in him (= believe in him) even if we do not understand everything.
* There is room for doubt in faith.

Is it faith that saves? No, we are saved by faith. It is Jesus who saves!

*"If you think your faith saves you, you will stop looking at Christ and start looking at your faith instead. When you see doubt, it will shake you. When you don't feel it so clearly, it will worry you. What happened? You have turned your faith into a “deed”! Faith is only what you accept your salvation with, it is not the reason you are saved. If you don't see this, you'll think you have something to brag about: "The reason I'm saved is because I believe in Jesus." This is a subtle misunderstanding that cuts away our security and increases our pride. And 3:27 says that the gospel gives us no reason to boast.”* Timothy Keller (the quote has been translated)

What would you choose to cross the Atlantic with? A primitive old plane and strong faith or a modern plane and little faith?

*“You must stop relying on your prayers, your tears, your baptism, your repentance, and even your faith. Your trust must be in nothing else but that which is in Christ Jesus.”* Charles Spurgeon (the quote has been translated)

What else but Jesus might you tend to boast of as the foundation of your self-confidence or worth? How can you make sure that you only boast of Jesus?

## THE GLORY OF GOD

1:23 The fall consisted of exchanging God's glory for created things

2:7,10 Glory is part of salvation

3:23 All fall short of the glory of God

5:2 The justified have hope of the glory of God

8:17 God's children will share in God's glory

8:18 Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

8:19 The children of God shall be revealed in glory

Now we have hope of the glory of God; one day we shall receive it. Parallel to vv. 10-11: Reconciled now, saved later.

## THE WRATH OF GOD

1:18: God's wrath is revealed against all wickedness

2:5: He who will not repent heaps up wrath upon himself until the day of wrath

2:8: Those who disobey the truth have wrath in store

5:9: We who are justified shall be saved from wrath

## ROMANS 5:12-21

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Vers** | **Adam** | **Christ** |
| 15 | Adam's fall → the many had to die | Grace, God's gift, is given to the many |
| 16 | the judgment → condemnation | the grace → acquittal |
| 17 | death gained dominion | reign in life through Jesus Christ |
| 18 | Adam's fall brought condemnation to all men | Jesus' righteous deed leads to acquittal and life for all |
| 19 | Adam's disobedience made many sinners | Jesus' obedience will make many righteous |
| 21 | sin reigned through death | grace reigns through righteousness to bring eternal life |

## ORIGINAL SIN?

Pelagius (360-420) believed that Adam only influenced humanity by being a bad example, while Augustine (354-430) believed that sin was transferred physically.

The teaching of the Catholic Church since the year 418

The Augsburg Confession (1530): *"... that after the fall of Adam, all men who are procreated naturally are born with sin, that is, without fear of God, without trust in God and with desire, and that this hereditary disease and deficiency really is sin, which condemns and even now brings with it eternal death for those who are not born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit.”* (the quote has been translated)

Eastern Church: Death, more than sin, was seen as the inheritance from Adam. Never developed a doctrine of original sin to the same degree as the Western Church with Augustine.

*"…death came to all people, because all sinned"* (Rom 5:12b)

Greek: ἐφ᾽ ᾧ (eph ho (*epi* + *ho*), literally: “because of what”)

Yet understood as "because" by most Greek Church Fathers, as in 2 Cor 5:4 (*"for"*) and Phil 3:12 (*"for"*).

Therefore, probably functions as a conjunction in the sense of "from which it follows", "with the result that" or "because".

Augustine used the Latin translation Vulgate:

* *"et ita in omnes homines mors pertransiit in quo omnes peccaverunt"*
* *"in quo"* = in where (“there”)
* developed the doctrine of original sin from there

**ADAM'S SIN + OUR SIN?**

**Problems:**

* Paul does not explain how sin is transferred.
* How is Adam's sin the cause of everyone's condemnation (vv. 18-19), at the same time that everyone dies because they sin on their own (v. 12)?

**Suggestions:**

1. A sinful nature. In that case, one must read 5:18 as *"one trespass (led to a sinful human nature which causes all men to sin and) resulted in condemnation for all people."*

* Luther and Calvin: All people live in "a sinful state". We die because of our sinful nature, not because of our own sins.

b) We sin "in and with" Adam. Our sin is in a way similar to Adam's sin.

The paragraph is not really about sin but about how Jesus' work overcomes Adam's work. It is more about death than about sin. If everyone dies, then everyone must deserve this because of sin. "Original death" more than "original sin".

Paul does not clearly state how Adam's sin has led to death for all or the connection between Adam's sin and the sin of all men.

But he has made it clear that the connection between sin and death has repeated itself since Adam. No one escapes death because no one escapes sin.

Adam was the one through whom sin and death were unleashed into the world.

Both Adam and Christ have a universal meaning, and all people are represented by one of them. The actions of Adam and Jesus determine the future of those who belong to them.

All must thus go through Christ to be saved. There is no way around it because everyone is Adam's successor in one way or another.

## APPLICATION 3:21 – 5:21

No one can be proud of his works before God. We can never do enough to please God! The whole point of grace is that it is a gift that you can never earn. It is Jesus alone or no Jesus at all. Trying to please God with other things is insulting Jesus' work on the cross.

1. Do you feel that God will be more pleased if you do certain things?
2. Is your relationship with God tiring?
3. Do you feel like you are failing God sometimes?
4. Do you feel that doubt is a threat to your salvation?
5. Have you thought that you will lose your salvation if you commit a great sin?

Have you understood what it means to be justified? Do you trust yourself too much and God too little?

1. What aspects of the gospel have you learned that is new?
2. Which ones did you forget?
3. Which ones do you appreciate the most?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Legalism** | **Gospel** | **Liberalism** |
| God is holy | God is holy and love | God is love |
| Earn your righteousness | Receive God's perfect righteousness | You don't need perfect righteousness |
| Matter is bad and we are fallen – be suspicious of or reject physical pleasure (asceticism) | Matter is good yet we are fallen – physical enjoyment is good, but live wisely | Matter is good and we aren't fallen – satisfy your physical appetites |
| Sin only affects individuals – just do evangelism | Sin affects both individuals and social systems – do both evangelism and social action | I about the depth of human sin – just do social action |
| People can't change/change is easy | People can change, but there are no quick fixes | People don't need to change |
| Go into guilt – work it off | Go through guilt – rest in Christ | Go away from guilt – convince yourself you're OK |
| Repent of sins | Repent of sins and self-righteousness | Repent of neither |

[Clip from "Les Miserables"](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjiDi0-FnA8)

## CHAPTER 6: DEAD TO SIN

It is Jesus' death that saves us, and Jesus' death also becomes the pattern for our sanctification. In chapter 5, Jesus dies for sinners, whereas in chapter 6, the sinners themselves must die to sin.

Justification comes with a new "influence" and power that leads to a new life (sanctification).

Sanctification = to live out justification, to grow in faith.

Jesus frees us not only from the penalty of sin but also from the power of sin.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FROM** |  | **TO** |
| Sin reigned through death | 5:21 | Grace reigns through righteousness |
| Slaves to sin | 6:6, 14, 18-19 | Slaves for what is right |
| Under the law | 6:14-15 | Under grace |
| Serving in the old way of the written code | 7:6 | Serving in the new way of the Spirit |
| The law of sin and death | 8:2 | The law of the Spirit who gives life |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **FROM** | **TO** |
| Adam (old habits, impulses, tendencies) | Christ |
| The dominion and power of sin | The kingdom of God |
| Sin determined | Can resist sin |
| Sin: why not? | Sin = not realizing who I am |

### SHALL WE GO ON SINNING SO THAT GRACE MAY INCREASE? (6:1-14)

What does it mean to "die" to sin?

* Something that has happened (v. 2) – not a process
* Not that all desire to sin is gone (vv. 12-14)
* The domain and power of sin are broken. We must realize that the connection to Adam (and sin) is broken.
* We must realize and adopt our new status (“sin shall no longer be your master” (v. 14) is future tense).

When we believe, God sees it as if we died the same death as Jesus did.

Jesus' death for sin is also our death for sin – and his resurrection (which we will share in the future) enables us already now to *"live a new life"* (v. 4).

### DEACTIVATED

6:6: *"For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin"*

KJ21: "destroyed", "made ineffective" AMPC

Greek dictionary: to render idle, unemployed, inactive, inoperative

The body that is subject to sin is turned off and disabled. It still exists, but it does not rule over us.

### SHALL WE SIN BECAUSE WE ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW BUT UNDER GRACE? (6:15-23)

That we are saved does not mean that we are without any master. All men are either slaves to sin or slaves to God. No one is neutral or "free". The world's "freedom" is slavery to sin.

The natural thing is to serve our new master, who has freed us from our old master.

The proper "use" of salvation is sanctification.

### 6:22

1. Freed from sin
2. Become servants of God
3. Become holy
4. Leads to eternal life

*“In religion you obey because God is useful. In Christianity, you obey because God is beautiful.”* Timothy Keller

### APPLICATION OF CHAPTER 6

How would you respond if anyone made the following two claims:

*1. "Justification by faith but sanctification by toil?"*

God provides for both in Christ. Because we have been set free from the power of sin, we can expect to be able to not have sin as our master. The gospel gives us a new and different motivation for a life according to God's will.

*2. “We do not sin because of weak willpower, but because we forget or have not understood the gospel and still think in the "old way". Sinful actions come from sinful motivations. If we ask why we sin, we may discover that the reason is that we look for justification, identity, and worth elsewhere than in God. If we remember that we are completely loved and righteous in Christ, it will undermine the motivation and remove the desire to sin.”*

## CHAPTER 7: THE LAW OF MOSES

1. Our connection to the law must be broken so that we can be put into a new relationship with Jesus. Death breaks the relationship with the law. (7:1-6)

2. Is the law then sinful? (7:7-25)

* The law is of God but has become an instrument of sin.
* Although it comes from God, it can neither justify nor sanctify because of our human nature (8:3).

### IS THE LAW SINFUL? (7:7)

2:17 Has to do with a relationship with God

2:18 An expression of God's will

2:19 A guide

2:19 A light

2:20 An instructor

2:20 A teacher

2:20 The embodiment of knowledge and truth

7:7 Certainly not sinful

7:12 Holy

7:12 Righteous

7:12 Good

7:14 Spiritual

### 7:7-25: WHO AM 'I' AND IS HE A CHRISTIAN?

1. Paul himself? Before or after Jesus?
2. Adam?
3. Israel?
4. Anyone in the face of God's demands?

## CHAPTER 8

8:1-17 – Life in the Spirit

* vv. 1-4: Freed from sin to live a new life in the Spirit
* vv. 5-17: The flesh against the Spirit

8:18-30 – The glory we have in store

8:31-39 – Nothing can separate us from God's love

### 8:1-4

**Observation**

Condemnation: The last time he spoke of condemnation in this letter was in 5:16 and 5:18. What kind of condemnation was there?

The law of sin and death: The first time he mentions these two together is in 5:12. Who is sin and death associated with there?

**Interpretation:**

1. Why then is there no condemnation for those who are in Christ?

### 8:9-11

* No Christian can be *"in the flesh"*; all Christians are per definition *"in the Spirit"*.
* There is not one Christian who does not have the Holy Spirit.
* To be a Christian means to have God's Spirit, and to have God's Spirit is to be "in the Spirit" and not in the flesh.
* Since God's Spirit lives in us, he is the one who has power over us.

### 8:12-13

*"Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live."*

### 8:15

*"If some Christians make the mistake of basing their certainty of salvation only on feelings, many others make the mistake of basing it only on facts and arguments. What Paul says here questions whether one can have a real experience of the adoption of God's Spirit without it touching the feelings."* Douglas Moo (the quote is translated)

### 8:31-39

8:31: God is for us, in the courtroom.

8:33-34: Legal language. No one can accuse us because God has already acquitted us and declared us “not guilty”.

8:35-39:

* v. 35: a "normal" life under persecution (2 Cor 11:22-28).
* vv. 38-39: spiritual obstacles
* 8:36-37 - Center of the chiasm. Especially important for a reader in antiquity. The main point is that they are "more than conquerors" in their sufferings through Christ.

From no condemnation (v. 1) to no separation (v. 39). We have been saved into the kingdom of God and are forever safe there.

## APPLICATION CHAPTERS 6-8

1. Have you thought that it doesn't matter how you live because you are *"under grace"*? Or has the Christian life been a struggle? Do you think differently now?
2. To live as the flesh wants is to be guided by the values of the world, the world that is in rebellion against God (8:7). To live as the Spirit wants is to live according to the values that characterize the coming world (God's kingdom). What does our new status (in Christ/in the Spirit) have to say about how we allow ourselves to be led?
3. What might it look like in practice to *"put to death the misdeeds of the body"* by the Spirit?

## CHAP 9-11: WHAT ABOUT ISRAEL?

If Jews have no advantage in salvation, then what happens to their status in the OT as *"God's chosen people"*?

If Gentile Christians can also be called *"Abraham's children"* (Ch. 4), *"God's children"* (Ch. 8), heirs of God's glory (5:2, 8:18-30), and have God's Spirit - has Israel then been replaced?

How is the new covenant a continuation of the old? (3:21) Why was Jesus then rejected by most Jews? Does the gospel connect with the promises to Israel?

If not, how can Christians trust God's promises to them if he has gone back on the promises he made to Israel?

## BENEFITS OF BEING JEWISH (3:2, 9:4-5)

* Entrusted with the very words of God
* The adoption to sonship
* The divine glory
* The covenants
* The receiving of the law
* The temple worship
* The promises
* The patriarchs
* From them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah

## WHAT HAPPENED? (9:6-33)

**1. Has God's word failed since Israel will not be saved? (vv. 6-13)**

* No, we just have to redefine "Israel" based on what the OT says.
* Israel/Abraham's children = believing Jews
* In addition, it is about God's election.
* Not all of Abraham's physical descendants received the promise. Also in the OT, many broke the covenant. Physical descent was not enough even when the old covenant was applied.

**2. Isn't it unfair to elect some and not others? (vv. 14-18)**

* No, it is inconceivable that God is unjust.
* Goodness is the point.
* Even God's hardening leads to a much greater positive result.

**3. How can God accuse someone of being hardened if he is the one who hardened them? (vv. 19-23)**

* Can't God do as He pleases?
* He could have ended the story long ago, but He is patient with judgment to show kindness to us.

## INTERPRETATIONS OF 9:21-23

1. Double predestination: God has determined in advance who will perish and who will be saved.

2. Romans 9 is not really about salvation but about nations, and when Paul touches on salvation, it is not about individual people.

A. Paul says that it is God who has prepared some for glory in advance ( *proetoimazo* ), but he does not say who has prepared ( *katartizo* ) those who perish - and not that this was done in advance.

* The jars that were under the wrath are all people, who are therefore basically prepared to perish. (Ch. 1-3)

B. The picture in v. 21 is taken from Jer 18, where the context is that God changes his plans for the nations based on their response. God uses nations in his plan: Ishmael, Esau, Pharaoh, and the hardened Jews play a simpler role in God's plan of salvation.

C. *"Make"* in v. 21 is a different verb ( *poieo* ) than in vv. 22 and 23, and the image should perhaps not be taken too literally anyway.

## ELECTION, HARDENING, PREDESTINATION, AND FREE WILL

Pharaoh was already in rebellion against God. The hardening kept him in the state he was already in. In Exodus, God's hardening and Pharaoh's hardening appear to be the same thing.

An *individual* election within the *collective* election.

* The collective (Israel) does not guarantee salvation. It was entirely possible to drop out.
* Individual election (believing Jews). Expanded in the NT to apply to the Gentiles as well.

If God *"is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."* (2 Pet 3:9), and he is not unjust (v. 14), then we can trust that he does the right thing when he hardens.

God's grace is given to those who do not deserve it. Hardening comes upon those who already, because of their sin, deserve condemnation.

The election of Abraham was missional, with the non-elect in view. Can be understood as being chosen for service in this life, not primarily for eternal life.

*"Paul does not try to show how God's election of men is connected with them "choosing" God in faith [...] He is content to set forth the truth of God's absolute sovereignty - in both election and hardening - and the truth of full human responsibility, without uniting them. We do well to imitate his approach.”* Douglas J. Moo (the quote has been translated)

## 9:24-33

Back to the main topic of Jews and Gentiles. Both Hosea and Isaiah support Paul's point:

* Hos 2:23: Originally about Israel (the northern kingdom). Here it is used about the Gentiles who were *not loved* and *not my people*, but who are now *loved*, *my people* and *children of the living God*.
* Isa 10:22-23: Originally about the faithful in Judah. Not all Israelites would be saved.
* Isa 1:9: It was God who ensured that there were some left.

9:31-33 – They missed the climax of salvation history. This too, was predicted in the OT.

## 10:1-13

10:1 – He prays that they will be saved and not long after he says that everything depends on God's election. No contradiction. Both prayer and mission are necessary even though God chooses.

10:4 - The time of the law is over, and Jesus is what the law pointed towards.

10:5 – The person who lives according to the commandments will be able to achieve God's righteousness.

10:6-13 – The righteousness of faith is so near that it needs only a simple response.

## 10:14-21

vv. 14-17: Sent → preach →hear → faith → calls on the name of the Lord → saved

v. 18: Did the Jews never have the chance to respond to the gospel because they never heard it?

* From Ps 19:5: God's special revelation (the gospel) has been preached as God's general revelation (creation) - all over the earth (Rom 1:8, Col 1:6, 23)
* The Jews had thus been given many opportunities.

v. 19: But perhaps they did not understand the gospel?

* The Gentiles, "a foolish people", understood it. There was no reason why the Jews should not have understood the message.
* This too, was predicted in the OT.

## 11:1-10

v. 1: Paul is living proof that God has not rejected Israel.

vv. 2-6: God has in his grace chosen and spared a remnant of Israel, the believing Jews, the "real Jews" (2:28-29).

*"A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person’s praise is not from other people, but from God."* 2:28-29

v. 7: Israel = the elect + the others (have been hardened)

## 11:11-24

v. 11: Is all hope lost? Not at all!

v. 12: The fall and salvation of the Jews are very positive for the Gentiles!

v. 16: Israel is holy (“set aside”) because of the ancestors.

v. 18: The Gentiles must not be arrogant towards the Jews.

vv. 20-23: No difference between Jews and Gentiles regarding how one remains part of God's people. Always by faith.

There is only one tree = God only has one people.

God's people in the OT are called "Israel" and God's people in the NT are called "the church".

The "Church" is not the same as the "Gentiles"!

## “ALL ISRAEL” (11:26)

**1. Ethnic Israel**

"Israel" meant ethnically in vv. 25 and 28 (and throughout the letter except in 9:6).

"All Israel" = believing Israel + hardened Israel

The way: Most are hardened, while the Gentiles are saved → Jews' envy and salvation

**2. Spiritual Israel (the Church)**

4:11; 9:3, 8; 11:14; 1 Cor 10:18; Phil 3:5 - Gal 6:16; Phil 3:3

"All Israel": Chosen Jews + Chosen Gentiles, from all generations.

The way: Most are hardened, while a few Jews + many Gentiles are saved

**3. Believing Israel**

Israel is redefined in 2:28-29 and 9:6

“All Israel”: All chosen Jews of all generations

The way: Most are hardened, while the "real" Israel is saved "as it is written": by the Messiah.

## APPLICATION CHAPTERS 9-11

Timeless truths:

God has only one people, and you are part of it.

We can always trust God! He always keeps what he promises, even what he promised 4000 years ago.

Paul's conclusion is: God's ways are unfathomable → To him be glory for all eternity! (11:33-36) We can give God glory because he knows what he is doing, even if we don't understand it. He has had a plan all along.

Question: Should you change how you think about Israel and the Jews?

## CH. 12-16

Ch. 12-13 Christian lifestyle in general

14:1 - 15:13 Christian lifestyle regarding the situation in Rome

15:14 - 16:27 Travel plans and greetings

## 12:1-2

Our response to chapters 1-11: A life for God, our whole life, with all of us

sin → a *"depraved mind"* ( *adokimos* ) (1:28)

salvation → a renewed mind that can judge ( *dokimazo* ) what God's will is

Because of the gospel, the mind can be renewed, and it becomes possible to know God's will.

The gospel reverses the downward spiral of sin in chapter 1.

What do I get out of this? (natural thinking) → How can I honor God? (the renewed mind)

Think right → live right

Renew = renewal, renovation, complete change for the better

*"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day."* 2 Corinthians 4:16

*"...and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."* Col 3:10 → Rom 8:29, 13:14

*"he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,"* Titus 3:5

We are renewed day by day, in the image of our Creator, by the Spirit. We can discern what God's will is. We are transferred from the "world" to God's kingdom (chapter 6) and learn day by day to think and live in a new way in line with God's character and Jesus' example.

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS (12:3-8)

The context is the church as one body (also in 1 Cor 12:8-10, 28-30, 14:26 and Eph 4:11 + 1 Pet 4:10-11).

Prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leading, showing mercy…

Is the focus on "indoor" gifts here because of the situation in Rome?

One of the purposes is to unite the congregation. He reminds them that even though they are one body, they also have different spiritual gifts.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Paul** | **Jesus** |
| *"Bless those who persecute you."* (12:14) | *"pray for those who persecute you."* (Matthew 5:44) |
| *"Do not not repay anyone evil for evil."* (12:17) | *"turn to them the other cheek also"*, etc. (Matthew 5:39-41) |
| *“live at peace with everyone.”* (12:18) | *"Blessed are the peacemakers"* (Matthew 5:9a) *"be at peace with each other"* (Mark 9:50) |
| *"Do not take revenge"…love your enemies…"overcome evil with good"*. (12:19-21). | *"Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you"* (Luke 6:27) |
| *"If you owe taxes, pay taxes"* (13:7) | *"give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s"* (Matthew 22:21) |
| *"Love your neighbor as yourself"* (13:9) | *"Love your neighbor as yourself"* (Mark 12:31) |
| Free to keep the Sabbath (14:5) | *"The Sabbath was made for man"* (Mark 2:27) |
| *"nothing is unclean in itself"* (14:14) | *"nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them."* All food is clean. (Mark 7:18-19) |

## THE AUTHORITIES (13:1-7)

Dan 4:17: *"…so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of people.”*

Talking about the ideal: When the laws of the authorities follow God's law, God judges the sins of people through the authorities. (vv. 3-4)

Even after being expelled, they were to submit to the authorities.

v. 6: Tacitus mentions opposition to “indirect tax” in the mid-50s → tax revolt in the year 58

Suggestion: Submit to (and obey) the authorities as long as they follow God's definition of good and evil. *"We must obey God rather than human beings!"* Acts 5:29

## 14:1 - 15:13

14:1-12 Do not judge one another

14:13-23 The strong must be careful

15:1-13 Receive one another

## 14:1-6

*"Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. One person’s faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand. One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.”*

**Problems:**

1) Sabbath (v. 5)

2) Meat and wine that had been sacrificed to idols

**A. the weak:**

weak in faith (v. 1)

Judeo-Christians (?) who ate only vegetables to be sure they did not eat any such meat.

faith = "conviction" (v. 22, HCSB)

Care for others! (14:13 - 15:7)

**B. the strong:**

faith to eat anything (v. 2)

No problem because the idols don't exist

v. 23: To sin is to go against one's conviction. Eating is not a sin in itself, but it is a sin to do something you don't think is right. You go against your faith/conscience.

## THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

*"Be devoted to one another in love"* 12:10a

*"Honor one another above yourselves"* 12:10b

*"Share with the Lord’s people who are in need"* 12:13a

*"Rejoice with those who rejoice"* 12:15a

*"Mourn with those who mourn"* 12:15b

*"Live in harmony with one another"* 12:16a

Be humble: *"Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited."* 12:16b

*"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." 12*:18

*"Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another"* 13:8a

*"Stop passing judgment on one another"* 14:13a

*"Make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister."* 14:13b

*"Make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification"* 14:19

*"We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up. For even Christ did not please himself"* 15:1-3a

*"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God’s truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. "* 15:5-9

## APPLICATION OF CHAPTERS 12-16

It is perfectly fine to have different opinions, traditions, and practices, to have different consciences, and not to agree on everything, but we must be generous with each other where we differ. We must accept each other because God has already accepted us. (If Jews and Gentiles could do this, so can we.)

What is "Sabbath, meat and wine" today? Theology, charismatics, politics, types of people, Sunday outfits, hymns…? Do you realize that you have to "receive" someone in a better way?