

The Book of Romans

A Bible Study

In his preface to the Epistle of the Romans, Martin Luther says, "This Epistle is really the Chief part of the New Testament and the VERY PUREST GOSPEL, and is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul. It can NEVER be read or pondered too much, and the more it is dealt with the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes."

About the book of Romans we hear this that no other book of the New Testament presents the fundamental teachings of Christianity in such an extensive, systematic, and comprehensive manner as does the Epistle to the Romans. In the book of Romans, the central doctrine of Christianity justification is treated with great care. Justification means that a person obtains forgiveness of sins not by works of the law, but by God's grace, through faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ.

ROMANS' POSITION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Romans follows the book of Acts. It is the first of the epistles. It is the longest of the epistles. It is the most important of the epistles.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE EPISTLE

It has sixteen chapters. It is Christ-centered. It begins and ends with the Gospel of Christ.

THE DIVINE AUTHOR

The Holy Spirit, cf. 1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:15-16

THE HUMAN AUTHOR

The apostle Paul, Romans 1:1 a Jew, Romans 9:3-4; 11:1 A Roman citizen, Acts 16:37-38; 22:25-29, From the city of Tarsus, Acts 22:3. An apostle to the Gentiles, the non-Jews Romans 11:13; 15:16; as well as to the Jews, the children of Israel, Acts 9:15 Paul's conversion, Acts 9:1-22.

WRITTEN TO WHOM

The Christians at Rome, Romans 1:6-7 Both Jews and Gentiles Romans 1:13,16; 2:9-10; 3:9,29; 9:24; 10:12

THE SECRETARY TO WHOM PAUL DICTATED THE LETTER

Tertius Romans 16:22

QUOTATIONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

Over 60 O.T. quotations! More than in all other epistles of St. Paul put together. To benefit all (Romans 15:4)

THE CHURCH AT ROME

Paul has not founded or served this church Romans 1:15, He does know the Christians there intimately,

Romans 16:3-15 Some believe that Peter founded the church at Rome while others believe that it was founded by some of the "strangers of Rome" present in Jerusalem on the first day of Pentecost, Acts 2:10-11,41

WHERE THE LETTER WAS WRITTEN

Most likely at Corinth. On Paul's third missionary journey Paul stayed in Greece for three months, Acts 20:1-3. Here he enjoyed the hospitality of Gaius, Romans 16:23 who lived in Corinth, 1 Cor.1:14. Erastus: Romans 16:23; 2 Tim.4 20. Phoebe: Romans 16:1-2

TIME OF THE WRITING

About 57 AD or 58 AD; About three years before his journey to Rome in 60 AD or 61 AD Acts 24:27

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF ROMANS

I. INTRODUCTION (Romans 1:1-15)

1. Salutation, Romans 1:1-7
2. Paul's desire to visit the Christians at Rome, Romans 1:8-15

II. DOCTRINAL SECTION (Romans 1:16--11:36)

THE THEME: The Gospel of Christ & Justification by faith. Romans 1:16-17

1. SIN: The need of the Gospel. Both Gentiles & Jews have sinned. Romans 1:18-3:20
 - a. The wrath of God rests upon unrighteous Gentiles 1:18-32
 - b. The wrath of God rests upon unrighteous Jews 2:1-3, 8
 - c. Both Jews and Gentiles are under sin. 3:9-10
2. JUSTIFICATION: The nature of the Gospel. Salvation comes not by works but by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Romans 3:21-5:21
 - a. The doctrine of justification by faith is set forth. 3:21-31
 - b. Abraham was justified not by works but by faith. 4:1-25
 - c. The blessed consequences of justification. 5:1-11
 - d. The universality of "objective" justification. 5:12-21
3. SANCTIFICATION: The effect of the Gospel. Romans 6:1-8:39
 - a. Refutation of the FIRST OBJECTION, that men may continue in sin and yet be saved. The believer rises to a new life. 6:1-14
 - b. Refutation of the SECOND OBJECTION, that men under grace are free to serve sin. The believer serves not sin, but Jesus Christ. 6:15-7:6.
 - c. Refutation of the THIRD OBJECTION, that the law is evil. Not

[the law, but man is evil. The law is good.](#) 7:7-25

d. [Sanctification is through the Holy Spirit.](#) 8:1-39

4. [ELECTION: The relation to the Gospel.](#) Romans 9:1-11:36

a. [Praise of God's free grace and election to salvation.](#) 9:1-33

b. [God rejected Israel as a whole because she rejected God's grace.](#)
10:1-21

c. [Due to God's election, there is also in Israel a people of God.](#)
11:1-32

d. [Praise to and of the unsearchable wisdom and ways of God.](#)
11:33-36

III. [PRACTICAL SECTION](#) (Romans 12:1-15:13)

THE THEME: The Christian's life is one of service to God. Romans 12:1-2

1. [The Christian's proper attitude toward and use of God's various gifts of grace.](#) 12:3-8

2. [Various admonitions to godly attitudes & conduct.](#) 12:9-21

3. [Be subject to the civil government as the minister of God.](#) 13:1-7

4. [Love each other and thus fulfill God's moral law.](#) 13:8-10

5. [Prepare yourselves for the approaching day of salvation.](#) 13:11-14

6. [The Christian's conduct in matters of Christian liberty.](#) 14:1-23

a. The strong in understanding and the weak in understanding should not judge and despise, but respect each other. 14:1-13a

b. The strong should not cause the weak to fall. 14:13b-23

7. [The strong should bear the infirmities of and edify the weak.](#) 15:1-4

8. [Admonition to unity of both Jews and Gentiles.](#) 15:5-13

IV. [CONCLUSION](#) (Romans 15:14-16:27)

1. [Paul justifies his writing to the Christians at Rome.](#) 15:14-21

2. [Paul's plan for a journey to Rome.](#) 15:22-33

3. [Paul's commendation of Phoebe.](#) 16:1-2

4. [Greetings to many individuals and groups.](#) 16:3-16

5. [Admonition to mark and avoid false teachers.](#) 16:17-20

6. [Greetings from various fellow Christians.](#) 16:21-24

7. [Closing doxology.](#) 16:25-27

CHAPTERS	THE GOSPEL OF JESUS
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1. T--estimony about man's sinfulness

2. H--uman judgment of sin
3. E--vidence of God's justification
4. G--od counts Abraham righteous
5. O--btaining righteousness by Christ
6. S--inful nature is crucified
7. P--roblem of continued sin
8. E--xperiencing freedom in Christ
9. L--ove shown for Israel
- 10 O--ppportunity for Jews' salvation
- 11 F--ullness of the Gentiles
- 12 J--oy in using gifts
- 13 E--stablished authorities of God
- 14 S--trong and weak brethren
- 15 U--nity within the church
- 16 S--alutations given by Paul

I. INTRODUCTION (Romans 1:1-15)

1. The Salutation 1:1-7

Paul's greeting follows a common ancient letter form: The sender verse 1 to the recipients verse 7a, greetings ve.7b Paul's opening differs from the ancient form in two points; first, the name of the sender is greatly expanded. This feature is found only in ancient "official" letters. Second, the whole is given a distinctly Christian character and content.

This is Paul's confession of faith. He speaks of the grace which called and consecrated him to be an accredited and authorized messenger of Christ (i.e. an apostle). Paul is a bearer of the Gospel which proclaims Jesus Christ universally (among all nations, verse 5) as the Son of David and Son of God in power, the risen Lord (verses 3-4) to whom every knee must bow for His glory (obedience of faith for the sake of his name, verse 5). By virtue of this God-given authority he invokes on the Roman Christians the undeserved recreating favor of the Father (His grace and peace verse 7) According to Paul the well-being of divine health which God's fatherly grace is revealed is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Paul's desire to visit the Christians at Rome 1:8-15

Paul gives thanks for the faith of the Roman church. Faith is so essential to the Christian life that he uses the term to designate the whole existence and activity of the Romans who are in that congregation. Paul

prays to the Father that he may fulfill his long-cherished desire to visit Rome in order to reap some harvest (verse 13) of men won for Christ among them and to strengthen and be strengthened by them for the sake of carrying the Gospel to the western regions beyond Rome. (verse 12)

II. DOCTRINAL SECTION: 1:16--11:36

The Theme of the Letter is found in Romans 1:16-17

Paul is eager to preach the Gospel to the people in Rome. The Gospel is the "power of God for salvation" to all believers. He is "not ashamed" of this Gospel, although his missionary experience has taught him that the Jew finds the good news of a crucified Messiah offensive and the intellectual Greek finds the Gospel foolishness.

The Gospel is power because it has revelation and revelation takes place in it. By it God makes Himself known and makes Himself count among men. The Gospel is news of God's action through His Son, a saving action which gives men the gift of the righteousness of God.

A gift it is! for it asks of the hearer only the receptive "yes" of faith. It creates faith in the hearer, it is revealed for faith. The Gospel and its message of life and salvation are given to us as a gift. It is all pure grace.

1. SIN: The NEED of the Gospel. Both Gentiles and Jews have sinned. 1:18-3:20

A. The wrath of God rests upon the unrighteous gentiles. 1:18-32

The Gospel is the power of God to deliver man out of a desperate situation. Man is under the revelation, the making known and making felt the wrath of God. The wrath of God is God's reaction to man's ungodliness and wickedness.

Men suppress the truth, the truth of truths, they know God but will not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him. In their folly they seek independence of God but cannot free themselves from Him and so they exchange the glory of the immortal God for gods of their own devising, worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator.

God is not mocked; He uses the very wickedness of man, to punish their ungodliness. God gives men up to the wickedness they wanted by giving them more of it than they wanted. He delivers them up to the degradation of their unleashed sensuality to the debasement of sexual perversion to the base mind which sets man against man and makes men hell to each other in the social order that was designed by God to be their protection and blessing.

B. The wrath of God rests upon the unrighteous Jews also. Romans 2:1-3:8

1. The wrath of God and the judgment upon the man who judges his fellowman. 2:1-11

If the Jew misused his priority in the grace of God, he has a priority in punishment, as his own prophets have warned him.

(Amos 3:2)

God has made a great distinction between Himself and the Jews and the rest of the world. He made His covenant with Israel and gave His law to Israel alone. The one great question therefore breaks down into two questions...

A. Concerning the Gentiles

-Did the nations without the Law know God?

-Can God hold them accountable?

B. Concerning the Jews

-The Jews knew God, but did they do God's will?

Paul now deals with these issues in verses 12-24 of chapter 2

2. The Question Concerning The Gentiles. Romans 2:12-16

All who sin will perish, each man being judged on the basis of the revelation God has given him. The deed is what counts, whether it is done by a Jew who possesses the Law or by a Gentile who has it not. The deed will decide in the judgment; the deed is the great leveler between Gentiles and Jews.

The Jew is guided in his action by the written Law, the direct, expressed written Word of God. God has attested His will to the Gentile too; the finger of God has written on his heart what the Law requires. This we call the conscience.

3. The question concerning the Jew. 2:17-24

The Jew knows God's will and proudly fancies himself the teacher and enlightener of mankind. Only he does not keep the Law which is his pride; he brings disgrace on his God by flouting it.

The sum of Paul's point is this: The Gentile is a law to himself; The Jew has and knows the law. Both, when they sin, suppress the truth; both are without excuse.

4. Circumcision and the Law 2:25-29

Not the mere possession of the Law makes the Jew a Jew. Long before the giving of the Law, God made His covenant with Abraham and his descendants and set on it the sign and seal of circumcision. In circumcision God incised on the flesh of the Jew His pledge "I will be your God" (cf.Gn.17)

Circumcision is not some type of magic spell, but God's personal dealing and coming with responsible man. If a man breaks the Law, the covenant of God, circumcision cannot save him; it indicts him. The true Jew is in fact not an ethnic quantity at all. A line must be drawn between the physical Jew and the Jew in heart whose "praise is...from God" (verse 29) on whom God's good pleasure rests.

C. Both Jews and Gentiles are under the curse of sin. 3:1-20

There are three objections to Paul's indictment (verses 1, 5, 9) Paul's reply comes and follows in each case (verses 2-4, 6-8, 9-20)

1. The first objection: "If possession of the Law and circumcision does not avail in the Judgment, at the one point where it matters supremely, what advantage DOES the Jew have?"

The answer: The Jew has been entrusted with the oracles of God.

To him God gave Law and Promise; to him he spoke by His servants the prophets and in the last days by His Son. (Mt.21:37; Heb.1:1)

The failure of others does not call into question the validity and power of the Word given to Israel. God is still faithful to His given Word. God's Word holds whatever else may break. Where God's will and man's collide, it is necessary for faith that the will of man be found false.

2. The second objection: "If God always prevails when He is judged, does not the history of our nation, blackened as it is by our unfaithfulness, show forth God's justice, His fidelity to the covenant which we broke--can He still in justice inflict wrath on us for what in the last analysis glorifies Him?"

The answer: The Jew's objection proves too much. Since God's sovereign control of history overrules the sin of all men, every sinner could make this plea and God would have to abdicate as Judge of the world.

3. The third objection: "Are we Jews actually worse off?"

Paul's answer: All men stand equally guilty before the great tribunal of God. Why? Paul gives a few reasons

- a. Sin appears as a power ruling over man (cf.5:12, 21; 6:6,7,12,14)
- b. The Old Testament, the Jew's Bible, stop his mouth as it shows us our sin.
- c. There is an inability in man to find acceptance

before God by ways of the works of the Law.
d. Man has within himself a "knowledge of sin" because of our confrontation with the Law, sin becomes a powerful reality in man's life. Paul's words ring true for us, just as they did for those first century Christians living in Rome in the year 60 AD Every mouth pleading in man's defense is stopped. The old status of man under sin and wrath is, for man fixed. If he is to have a new status, a new life, he can obtain it only if God, his Judge, creates it, and he can receive it only as His gift, by faith.

2. **JUSTIFICATION:** The Nature of the Gospel. Justification comes not by works, but by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Romans 3:21-5:21

This marks the second of four major sections in the section under "doctrine" Because of man's problem with sin Paul tells us of our new status: Man under the righteousness of God.

A. The doctrine of justification by faith set forth. 3:21-31

Man receives a free acquittal. God has spoken and all mankind must fall silent. His Word is acquittal, full, and free, as a gift (verse 24)

This forgiveness from God is a judicial action, but it is apart from the law, it violates all legal justice. Only God's righteousness can make a man righteous. God makes man a gift of His acquittal and gives him, the status of righteousness and lets him stand and count as righteous in His sight.

God bestows righteousness on man. This is pure grace, gratuitous favor, against all man's deserving. This acquitting and restoring grace is lavish, generous, and without reserve.

This righteousness is not sentimental nor arbitrary. It does not simply ignore sin. God deals with sin; in His grace He remains the God of justice. His grace was a holy, costly grace. He ransomed men from their ruined past "with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter.1:19) He did not spare up His son but "gave him up for us all" (8:32)

All merit of man disappears; all boasting of man is silenced. There is now room only for the faith which receives everything from God and gives all glory to God: the believing Greek sheds his sorry wisdom, leaves his idols and bows down before His God. The believing Jew strips off the filthy rags of his own righteousness drops his high pretensions, and finds the God of Abraham who justifies the ungodly (4:5)

B. Abraham was justified not by works but by faith. 4:1-25

What then shall we say about Abraham? Paul can not ignore Abraham if he wants to win the Jew. According to most Jews Abraham was a "works" hero.

Abraham was one who had kept the whole law. If any were to be justified by works it would have been Abraham.

There is another reason why Paul must pay attention to Abraham. According to the Old Testament Scriptures God's dealing with Abraham represents the first and basic step in the creation of the people of God. If Paul is saying that God is acting anew and in a new way he is denying the authority of God's Word. If this new teaching of Paul is God's Gospel it must remain in harmony with the whole of the Old Testament.

Paul uses the Old Testament itself to demonstrate that Abraham was justified through faith "apart from works" (verses 1-8) through faith without circumcision (verses 9-12) through faith without the Law. (verses 13-15)

Without works: In the one place where Genesis speaks of Abraham's righteousness (15:6) it speaks not of Abraham's doing but of his believing. Here God was acting and Abraham remained passive. God reckoned his faith to him as righteousness which means God opened up the future for him and all mankind by forgiving him with that free and total forgiveness of which David sang about in Psalm 32:1-2. It was God's free grace which made Abraham a blessing.

Without Circumcision: The Jews believed that the blessings which came from God came only to those who were circumcised, specifically those Israelites on the Day of Atonement. (Leviticus 16) Paul shows that Abraham came under the blessings of God before circumcision. The reckoned righteousness received by faith in Genesis 15 and the gift of circumcision are two chapters and 29 years apart! In the case of Abraham faith counted supremely, and all men of faith, not only the circumcised, can claim Abraham as father.

Without the Law: Where God promises, God is at work, not demanding but giving. Where the law of God demands works of man, there is wrath against the failure of man, and there can be no Justification.

But where the promise is there God's creative giving deals and does away with man's transgression and unites man with his God. If God's Word to Abraham is promise, it must be pure promise, unmixed with and unadulterated by the demands of the law.

Abraham's faith depended totally on the promise (verse 20) for he saw the possibility of life and blessing in God alone, in God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist (verse 17) he saw in himself only death (verses 18-19) and so he gave glory to God alone, the sole Author and Giver of life as He is the sole Author of righteousness.

Abraham's faith is the prototype and exemplar of the Christian's faith (verses 23-25). The exemplar of the way we live on this earth for we see in Christ's death the hopelessness and inevitable dying man only in the resurrection do we have any possibility of life because it is God's righteousness which is given to

an by faith. The Christian lives by his hold on the redeeming Word of God, the Gospel, which proclaims and gives Christ as his righteousness and life.

C. The blessed consequences of Justification 5:1-11

Our new status before God is no neutral state. Being justified does not mean merely that we have "gotten off" unpunished. It means peace in the full sense given to that word by the Old Testament, that God

given state in which we have access to God and His grace.

Grace as a power that enables us to stand and play our part according to the will of God is what gives the Christian 'peace of mind and heart.'

The peace which Jesus offers fills the present, and it opens up a future that is cause for exultation: sharing in the very glory of God.

Because of this peace which Jesus gives our present suffering gives us cause for rejoicing, for faith can recognize in suffering that same unparalleled love of God that has justified us contrary to all our deserving; and suffering, by tempering us and strengthening us gives us that sure hope which only the Holy Spirit-given knowledge of the love of God can inspire.

The reconciling love that sought and found us when we were "still weak" (verse 6) "incapable of response; "ungodly" (verse 6) and therefore "sinners" (verse 8), and "enemies" (verse 10) of the Christ who died for us--that love assures us that the "wrath of God" (verse 9) which looms up at the end of all men's ways to destroy them does not loom up at the end of our new way...

The new Christ, that is to say, the LIVING CHRIST, once dead for our salvation, looms up, and He will save us from the wrath which is to come. Paul can say therefore in verse 11, "We...rejoice in God."

What they said at death's door:

Thomas Paine, An American author and unbeliever: "I would give worlds, if I had them, that

'The Age Of Reason' had never been published. O God, what have I done to suffer so much? But there is no God! But if there should be, what will become of me hereafter? Stay with me, for God's sake! Send even a child to stay with me, for it is Hell to be alone. If ever the Devil had an agent, I have been that one."

Francis Voltaire, A French unbeliever said to his doctor: "I am abandoned by God and men! I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months' life. Then I will go to Hell; and you will go with me. O Christ! O Jesus Christ!"

Dwight L. Moody, An American preacher and believer: " I see earth receding,

Heaven is opening. God is calling!"

D. The universality of "objective" justification. 5:12-21

Now Paul speaks of an old and new Adam. The first Adam and the second Adam. One was the first human, the second is the man Jesus Christ.

Paul now looks back and surveys the ground he has traveled. All that he has said of sin and grace, Law and Gospel, of man's old status under the Judgment of God and his new status under the acquittal of God. (Notice the legal terms which are used.)

Now Paul sums up once more the monumental comparison and the contrast between two men; Adam on the one hand and Jesus Christ on the other.

5:12 Paul inserts a comparison and contrast between Adam and Christ.

5:13-14 Now Paul gives two thoughts, one is designed to support his statement that "all men sinned" in the death-dealing primal sin of Adam, the head of the human race, that the sway of death over mankind is due to mankind's solidarity in sin with Adam. How else could we explain the unbroken universal sway of death during the period without Law between Adam and Moses?

5:15-17 The second thought safeguards the unique glory of Christ against the misunderstanding that Christ and Adam are equal forces in the life of mankind.

Three times Paul asserts the positive, creative plus on the side of Christ.

5:19-20 Two pithy statements stress the comparison and contrast between Adam's trespass and disobedience and Christ's act of righteousness and obedience.

Both Adam and Christ's "works" are universally effective in their result for all mankind.

5:20-21 We have a brief conclusion that points out the subordinate and negative role of the Law in the desperate situation created by the sin of Adam and resolved triumphantly by the grace of God.

Grace has established a reign whose gift to man is righteousness. That reign means life, unbroken, filled, and eternal. This grace, reign, righteousness, and life are all through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul is making two important points in this section. Since Christ is the key figure in the history of God's dealing with man, He may be compared to another key figure in that history, Adam.

In Adam, prefigured in black, was the bright figure of Him who would like Adam by His action determine the history of all mankind and be the Beginning, Head, and Representative of a new mankind.

3. SANCTIFICATION: The EFFECT of the Gospel. Romans 6:1-8:39

A. Refutation of the FIRST OBJECTION, men may continue in sin and yet be saved. Answer: The believer rises to a new life. 6:1-14

If increasing sin means abounding grace, which is a logic of evil, then one might conclude that man might well continue in sin. But such logic is impossible for the man of faith. Faith knows that man can't fly in the face of an action of God. By an action of God's by the death and the resurrection of His Son, made ours in Holy Baptism, continuing in sin has become not only reprehensible but impossible, as impossible as reversing the irreversible act of Christ's death and resurrection.

That death and resurrection embraced us all and ushering us into a wholly new kind of life, the resurrection-life of Christ, in which there is no room for sinning. Paul's proclamation in verse 5-10 is an underscoring of this double statement.

1. The reality of our union with Christ through Baptism
2. The wholly new quality of our resurrection-life.

Three times Paul will speak about the reality of our union with the dying and resurrected Jesus Christ: verses 5, 6 and 8. Paul says that a real death has taken place. This was a death and burial kind of death. Consider the following:

6:4 Jesus' death was a criminal's death. He was crucified.

6:6 Jesus' death destroyed our old, active criminal self. Our sinful body.

6:10 Our present life gets its character, direction, and purpose from the fact that we shall live with Jesus who lives a life beyond death; a life lived wholly to God the Father, now that He has died an atoning death once for all to sin.

6:11-13 Now that his word has revealed the way trodden by Christ before us and for us, he can bid us to enter on that way. He gives us courage and strength to enter by pronouncing the promise: "Sin will have no dominion over you...you are...under grace. (verse 14)

We enter, not under the compulsion of Law but under the power of enabling grace!

B. Refutation of the SECOND OBJECTION, that men under grace are free to serve sin.

Answer: The believer serves not sin, but Jesus Christ. 6:15-7:6

How does this happen? Paul tells us that as Jesus freed us from sin we are now enslaved to righteousness. This happens through the power of the Word of God.

Being under grace does not revive the old wild dream of "continuing to sin." It forces us to face facts and gives us the power to face them and joy in facing

them.

One set of facts is grim: the fact that we can't "take our leave sin"-sin takes us, and enslaves us! (verse 16) Sin also rewards us with the due reward or wages of death (verse 23)

Being free in regard to righteousness (verse 20) is the most "dubious of dubious liberties." The other set of facts is glorious: God Himself has freed us from the dubious liberty by Himself committing us to His Word ("standard of teaching" verse 17) and making us obedient to it.

Christ has made us slaves to Himself "whom to serve is perfect liberty." He has caught us up into His work of making God's men of us and holds out to us His "free gift of...eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (v.23) God's facts about us are better than any of our tawdry dreams!

A question might be asked at this point. How is it possible that man be liberated from the Law, that holy, just and good (7:12) Word of God? Paul gives us the answer in verses 1-6 of chapter 7.

How can man be freed from the Law? Liberation from the Law is not an arbitrary act of man. It is a liberation on the Law's own terms, by death.

Death severs legal ties, as the analogy of marriage shows.

By God's action we died to the Law "through the body of Christ" (verse 4) and were set free by Him that we might serve Him in "the new life" bestowed by His Holy Spirit.

7:6 "New life of the Spirit" This, the first reference to the Holy Spirit, points forward to the theme which will come in chapter 8 "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (8:2)

C. Refutation of the THIRD OBJECTION, that the law is evil. Answer: Not the law, but man is evil! The law is good! 7:7-25

Paul has drawn a sharp division between the Gospel and the Law (3:28 3:20). The working and effect of the Law is the opposite of that of the Gospel. The Law is negative and destructive. The Law indicts the Jew (2:17-24) and renders all accountable to God (3:19). It makes sin a known and experienced reality in a person's life (3:20) and therefore "brings wrath." (4:15). The Law also increases the trespass initiated by Adam (5:20) Men can live to God only when grace replaces Law as the impelling power in their lives (6:14).

Why does the Law, the Word of God, have this uncanny effect on man, and why must man be liberated from it if he is to be God's saint? Paul answers these important questions in 7:7-25. Paul tells us why man must be liberated from the Law.

The Law is holy and its commandment is holy and just and good. (verse 12)

But sin, that diabolic power, manifests itself in its true colors (verse 13) by using just that good Word of God to rouse in man the dormant will of opposition to God which destroys him.

Paul illustrates this working of the Law (as misused by the power of sin) from his early life. (verses 7-13)

Paul also shows us the working of the Law from his own experience with the Law as a Christian. (verses 14-25)

7:9-11 It was contact with the Law, confronting him as the "commandment" that first gave sin its deadly power in his life.

7:14-25 Paul as a Christian, when confronted by the Law, becomes a man rent by an agonizing struggle.

7:25 Only Christ can release the Christian from this hard fought struggle.

Key words to take note of in this section:

7:8 "lies dead" It is dormant and therefore inactive.

7:11 "Sin...deceived me." The tragic history of the Fall (Gen.3) was reenacted in Paul's life; sin is personified in the role of the Tempter.

7:14 "Sold under sin" Not the old slavery of preconversion days, where total slave-devotion made any other tie impossible; here the claim of sin is offset and opposed by an anterior and superior claim. (15:17)

7:24 "Body of death" The unceasing encroachment of sin (verses 21-23) threatens ever and again to make the body a "sinful body" the expressive instrument of the sinner's revolt against God, and thus to doom it to death.

D. Sanctification is through the Holy Spirit of Jesus. 8:1-39

Here is one of the most important chapters of the whole Bible. Some have said that the Bible is a engagement ring, the book of Romans is the setting and chapter 8 is the stone itself. Here Paul tells us that Jesus has set the Christian free!

8:1-8 The establishment of the Law of the Spirit of Love.

Where sin reigns, there is death. Where Jesus Christ is Lord, sin is overcome, The Law no longer controls and condemns. There is a new "law" and new and compelling order of things which sets men free from the old dark orders of sin and death.

Christ's order is the order of righteousness and life, presented and enforced by the Spirit of life. This new order of the Spirit of life was inaugurated by the sending of Christ. The Law could not break the old order for it could not overcome the flesh, man's innate will of opposition to God.

God did not overcome it by sending His Son into the flesh but by His death the Spirit, God's own creative and renewing presence, was released for man and creates new possibilities of obedience in man.

Now, the "Just requirement of the law" (verse 4) can be fulfilled-there can be a people of God living in love with God and one another where the Spirit is at work. Nothing else will work, nothing else will give peace with God. The indwelling Spirit (chapter 8) triumphs over indwelling sin (chapter 7)

8:9-17 The present life of the Christian under the new Law.

Life in the Spirit-and that is what the Christian life is, is life with a future. The grave is not the goal; the indwelling of the Spirit is the sure pledge that our "mortal bodies" will be raised from death as Jesus' body was.

Life in the Spirit is life with a purpose! We are bound to live the new life of freedom under the law of the Spirit of life, on pain of death; we are led by the Spirit to lead the Son's life of obedience to the Father whom we can address with the familiarity of a child's love (Abba! verse 15) "Daddy"

As "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ" (verse 17) we can go steadfastly down the road of Christ through suffering into glory!

8:18-39 The future of the Christian under this new law of the Spirit

The glory that awaits the suffering fellow heirs of Jesus Christ is so great that present sufferings can't outweigh it. (verse 18) Nor can Paul describe it!

Paul pictures it by describing the greatness of the longing it evokes. All creation which is subjected to futility by the fall of man and destined to participate in the final "glorious liberty of the children of God" (verse 21) longs for the great day when it shall be set free from its bondage and decay.

Men who possess in the Spirit a foretaste and a pledge of the glory "groan inwardly" (v.23) in the intensity of their longing for the day when their sonship shall be freely manifested and fully enjoyed, when their bodies shall be transformed into glorious bodies. (Ph.3:21)

Even the Spirit who prompts the Christian's prayers joins in the universal longing and intercedes for saints in their stammering weakness when they pray "Thy kingdom come!"

That glory is as certain as it is great. For those who know the unparalleled love of God for them and love Him because He first loved them, for such man a golden chain of unbreakable certitude links all actions of God together from His first motion of eternal predestining love to the crowning act which will give to His firstborn glorified Son a host of glorified brethren.

Standing on this height, Paul leads all Christendom in a song of triumphant certitude in verses 31-39.

He who in the unsparing sanctity of His love gave up His Son for us all will give us no less than all.

The Judge of mankind has spoken. No one can reverse His verdict. Christ sits enthroned beside His Father; who dares to raise a voice against His intercession for us?

No, suffering, no powers seen or unseen, no aspect or dimension of all creation can henceforth "separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

-The love of Jesus and His activity in our lives did not stop at the empty cross or the open tomb. Jesus Christ is still actively involved in our salvation. He will continue to shape and use and mold the circumstances of our life to draw us to Himself. As we live in this world which is certainly fallen, nothing will separate us from Christ and His love. The last five words which Jesus spoke to humans before He left this earth give meaning to this chapter: "I am with you always!" That is not an idle wish that is reality for the Christian! Have no fear, Christ is with you. Nothing will separate you from His love and concern for you in your life!

4. Election: The RELATION to the Gospel Romans 9:1-11:36

A. Praise of God's free grace and election to salvation. 9:1-33

A new section starts here. As surely as the Gospel creates a new status before God for man and creates a new life in man that sets him free to serve God by the power of the Holy Spirit so surely it creates a "new Israel," a new people of God in the last days.

This new Israel has a continuity with the old (the Jews) and there are also many Gentile sons of believing Abraham, the sad reality is that few from among the Jews "follow the examples of the faith" of Abraham (4:12). In election God has chosen from both Jews and Gentiles those to be part of His church, "the New Israel."

9:1-5 Paul mourns for Israel

Paul writes no cool and thoughtful essay on "The Problem of the Jew." He mourns, as all sons of Abraham, for his kinsmen by race just as Jesus mourned (Matthew 23:37-39; Luke 19:41-42). Paul is ready to lose all for their gain if that were possible. He cannot but mourn as he recalls the greatness of God's gifts to them (verses 4-5) gifts squandered now by the Jew's disobedience and unbelief.

9:6-12 The Word of God has not failed.

If Israel is cause for mourning, does that mean that the Word of God has failed?

If this is true the church is in serious trouble. For the church to survive it must trust the power of God's Word. We only have salvation and life because of the

power of the Word.

If the physical descendants of Israel have failed; that does not mean that God's Word has failed. Paul is saying: "If you would know where Israel, God's people is, look where God's promise is at work creating Israel." See there how the Word of God is sovereign freedom works: not the children of the flesh...are the children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned as descendants (verse 8). God creates His Israel as He wills.

9:14-33 God has not been unjust

In emphasizing the fact that the unbelief of physical Israel does not call into question the power of God's Word to Israel, Paul has asserted the free sovereignty of God boldly to the point of some ambiguity. A question can be raised: Is not this freedom a tyrannical assertion of God's will because it is His will? Is God, after all, unjust?

Paul has already anticipated this point and so answers it

1. by pointing to God's revelation of Himself in the Old Testament and showing there in God's dealing with faithful Moses and rebellious Pharaoh the unquestionably sovereign mercy and Judgment of God. (verses 15-18)
2. By asserting the absolute authority over man which is God's as man's Creator-an authority which He has used in the service of His mercy.(verses 19-24)
3. By citing the words of Hosea and Isaiah which prefigured and foretold the history of God's underserved compassion on the Gentiles and His rejection of the mass of Israel. (verses 25-29)

B. God's rejection of Israel as a whole because she rejected God's grace.
10:1-21

In this chapter we have an emphasis on the necessity of faith and the guilt of unbelief.

Paul speaks in chapter 10 as the compassionate intercessor for His people, He is not the Judge. (verse 1) He must in love lay bare the guilt of their unenlightened zeal (verse 2)

When Israel was confronted by the revelation of God's saving righteousness in Christ, it was being summoned to believe, find righteousness, and live.

Israel ignored the righteousness and chose to go its own way and to establish its own righteousness on the basis of the Law, which God superseded by the sending of Christ.

This wrong choice was disobedience and unbelief and therefore guilt. The right choice has to be made: man, whether Jew or Greek, has to choose between Moses' Do and the "It is finished" proclaimed by Jesus Christ.

The "right choice" can be made. God the Father saw to that. Every link in the golden chain which binds men to faith to the Lord has been forged by Himself. He has sent His heralds; they have proclaimed Jesus Christ, and men have come to faith and called upon His name for their salvation. (verses 14-17)

The foolish nation of the Gentiles has heard and understood; those who did not seek (verse 20) the Lord have found Him, If Israel did not confess and believe (verses 9-10) but disobeyed and contradicted instead (verse 21) the fault is clearly Israel's. They have ignored the outstretched, pleading hand of God.

Thus, salvation is determined on answering the question: "What do you think of Jesus?" If you reject Him, it is your own damned fault. If you believe in Him it is by grace and the working of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Luther put it best when on his death bed said "We are only beggars!" All that we can hang our hat on is the mercy and grace of Jesus Christ. We do not merit, earn, or deserve forgiveness and life offered by Jesus Christ. By grace I'm saved, Grace free and boundless! That is our hymn. That is where you and I must stand!

C. Due to God's election, there is also in Israel a people of God. 11:1-32

D. Praise to and of the unsearchable wisdom and ways of God. 11:33-36

God is free, and Israel is guilty. But it isn't Paul's mission to provide a way to vindicate God. God's Word has never failed. His Word can make light shine even out of Israel's present darkness; His Word has uses for the dead branches cut from the tree of Israel, for Israel hardened in resistance to God. God's almighty love is in that Word.

11:1-10 The present state of Israel

The present case of Israel is cause for mourning. The majority of the Israelites are cut off from God as most have rejected His mercy. But thanks be to God that by God's grace some Jews have turned to Christ to live a new life. Paul himself knows that he is not a lone true Israelite no more than Elijah was of old, when he felt all alone amid an unbelieving nation. The assurance of Elijah is the assurance of Paul. He knows that he belongs to a remnant chosen by grace. The history of Israel has not ended in the extinction of Israel.

11:11-16 God's uses for Israel.

The wisdom of God can make even Israel's trespass and Israel's rejection serve His saving purposes. Paul has seen with his own eyes how Jewish rejection of the Word of God has served to send that Word of life out among the Gentiles.

In bringing reconciliation to the world of nations (verse 15) God has forgotten His ancient people, the first fruits of His harvest and the root of the tree that is the people of God. What happens to Gentiles has its effect of Israel also. God is wooing Israel when He makes Israel jealous (verses 11,14) When God receives

into

His new people those Israelites won by Paul's work among the Gentiles, will that not be His proper work of bringing life from the dead a triumph of His creative grace in Christ Jesus?

11:17-24 The tree and the branches

The new people of God is a fair olive tree. Cultivating that tree hears witness to the kindness and the severity of God. His kindness has given the Gentile his place and life in that tree. It was an extravagant kindness, one that ignored the rules of horticulture. Normally and naturally, cultivated branches are engrafted on wild plants; the reverse is contrary to nature! (verse 24) Therefore the Gentile dare not boast and the Jew and all who mourn for him need not despair.

11:25-27 The mystery

There are three elements to this mystery.

1. The hardening of Israel is only partial, and there is still a time of grace for Israel.
2. This time of grace will endure until the full number of Gentiles will come in that is to say until the end of the age, judgment day. Until that time Gentiles will repent, making Israel jealous, and God will thus continue to call Israel to repentance.
3. And so, by God's grace, all Israel (the whole of God's people both Jew and Gentile) will be saved! What God can do He will do, all God's people will come home to Him.

11:28-32 Enemies and beloved

Israel as a nation has refused the Gospel which offered them righteousness and life. This has made them an enemy of God! But as He calls all to Himself He stands against all who would say Jesus be cursed!

11:33-36 Doxology.

III. PRACTICAL SECTION Romans 12:1-15:13

THE THEME: *The Christian's life is one of service to God. Romans 12:1-2*

1. The Christian's proper attitude toward and use of God's various gifts of grace. 12:3-8
2. Various admonitions to godly attitudes and conduct. 12:9-21

12:1-2 The Gospel basis

The new people of God are universal, and their worship is total. The whole living man presents his acting self as a living sacrifice to God in a true spiritual dedication of all his powers. The call to worship is therefore not based on the compulsion of Law but on the inspiration of the Gospel. The Gospel transforms a person into the true worshiper living his renewed life to God in faith, hope, and love.

12:3-8 The renewed life a life of faith.

Faith that is born of the mercies of God and lives of them spells the end of pride and makes of a man a soberly functioning member of the one body in Christ, the new people of God. Whether his new worship is by way of the vocal ministries of preaching or teaching or exhortation or in the silently winning witness of service or generous contribution or giving aid or acts of mercy all is done in the knowledge and conviction that they are recipients and stewards of the mercies of God, empowered and circumscribed by Christ alone.

12:12-21 The renewed life a life of hope.

Hope is faith looking forward, rejoicing in the future provided by the mercies of God. The assurance of that great future gives the believer patience in present tribulation and constancy in prayer. It gives him the generous largeness of heart which can "contribute to the needs of the saints" (verse 13) can love and bless even the enemy and the persecutors (verse 14) can enter with ready sympathy into other men's laughter and tears (verse 15) can preserve harmony and quell pride (verse 18) and can forego vengeance in the assurance that the Lord who reserves vengeance to Himself "will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants" (Deut.32:36)

The only "vengeance" open to the man of hope is the vengeance of undeserved love, which heaps "burning coals" of agonizing contrition upon the head of the enemy. (verse 20)

Christian hope triumphs by overcoming evil with good. To do evil in return for evil is defeat, is to be overcome by evil and so to lose all that glorious victory and future which Christ, who overcomes evil with good, has won for us.

3. Be subject to the civil government as the minister of God. 13:1-7

4. Love each other and thus fulfill God's moral law. 13:8-10

5. Prepare yourselves for the approaching day of salvation. 13:11-14

13:1-7 The renewed life within the orders of this world

Chapter 13 repeats the emphasis of chapter 12 on faith, (verses 1-7) love (verses 8-10 and hope (verses 11-14)

True faith is to given to recognize in the governing authorities:

- a. an order that God has appointed for His good ends and man's benefit.
- b. To see in Caesar God's servant and in Caesar's sword the consecrated instrument of God's wrath and to obey for the sake of conscience to pay not only taxes and revenue but also the heart's tribute of respect and honor to this ambiguous representative of God.

No area of life however is to be considered "secular" All falls under the heading of worship.

13:8-10 The debt of love

Paul's preaching of faith does not overthrow the Law but upholds it. Believing men are

expected to pay what is due wherever it is due.

Love does not stop at what is due but works unceasingly to pay the debt of love perpetually owed, never marked "paid in full." Where love born of faith, born of the mercies of God, lives and works, the just requirement of the Law has been fulfilled! There is no wrong that the Law must condemn. The will of God, "what is good and acceptable and perfect" is "proved" known and done.

13:11-14 Life as in the day

The summons to pay the debt of love is reinforced by a hymn of hope. To know God's hour His appointed time of final salvation as the imminent hour that it is involves acting on that knowledge; means being aroused from sleep, from ignorance of and indifference to one's opportunities and duties.

The hour when the night of this age of sin and death is far gone and the great day of God's new world of righteousness and life is at hand-that hour is one that challenges the renewed man to resist the still potent forces of darkness and bear militant witness to the reality of the inbreaking day, to live a whole life as in the coming day in a bodily witness to the day and its righteousness; renewed man professes his hope ~n things as concrete and ordinary as his attitude toward sex and alcohol and the peaceable preservation of society (verse 13)

Only the renewed man can do this, the man who makes his baptism his daily dress and clothes Himself in the Christ in whom he has been clothed at baptism.

Paul is telling us that with Jesus Christ for his Lord the Christian can turn his back on the old concerns of his flesh and live a life launched forward into the eternal day. (verse 14)

6. The Christian's conduct in matters of Christian liberty. 14:1-23

A. The strong in understanding and the weak in understanding should not Judge and despise, but respect each other. 14:1-13a

B. The strong should not cause the weak to fall. 14:13b-23

Paul first espouses the cause of the weak. The weak man is to find a real welcome in the new people of God.

He is not merely to be accepted in order that the strong man argue him out of his misguided opinions. That would be contempt. (verse 3) Contempt has no place in a community of love whose law is "Outdo one another in showing honor" (12:10)

The weak is tempted to pass judgment (verse 3) on the brother whose strong freedom looks to the weak dangerously like religious indifference and a disregard of the danger lurking in such freedom.

Paul reminds the censorious, worrying weak brother that he has no reason to worry and no right to judge. The strong man in his freedom has been received by God, (verse 3)

He has a Master who can sustain him in his freedom (verse 4)

We all, weak and strong have one Lord, whom we serve in all that we do. To whom we live and die, and each of us is accountable to God Himself for his service to that Savior.

14:13b-23 To the strong Paul says this...

Paul identifies himself with the strong.

Paul states their obligation of love both negatively and positively. Negatively whatever does not proceed from faith is sin even the practicing of a freedom of faith without regard for its injurious effect on the weaker brother is sin.

To leave the path of love and to injure the brother, to misuse one's freedom so as to cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died to bring disgrace or disrepute upon his Christian liberty by employing it ruthlessly, to destroy the work of God in a man, that is, his faith and salvation is to make a man stumble.

What advice does Paul give here? He tells us that by one's own swaggering walk of freedom to indulge in freedom in such a way that one's conscience becomes uncertain and doubt enters the picture there is no longer freedom for this is not the fruit of faith.

A word to live by is given by Paul. Faith looks to Christ and the life of faith gets its content and shape from the life of Jesus Christ. He did not please himself but gave Himself so wholly to a life lived for others. Remember: the weak who needed Him the most need to look up to Him. So the strong in faith need to do likewise.

7. The strong should bear the infirmities of and edify the weak. 15:1-4

8. Admonition to unity of both Jews and Gentiles. 15:5-13

Paul in this section uses the writings of the Psalmist (Psalms 69:9) to stress his point. "The reproach of those who reproached thee fell on me.

Christ found the pattern of His life in the Old Testament Scriptures. and the church of the last days that would serve and love in accord with Christ Jesus (15:5) can find the pattern and power for its life there also.

We can find strength and rise above the tensions and difficulties of this human life which the faith and hope and love which is ours in Christ Jesus our Savior.

The welcome which binds brother to brother despite the difficulties and tensions caused by the difference between weak and strong is the church's echo of Christ's welcome.

The welcome of Christ was a costly welcome, it cost him his life. But it revealed His love for us. God's love in Christ spanned greater and graver differences than those which separate vegetarians from those who eat meat from those who chant and those who don't from those who use the New Hymnal and those who want to hold on to the old one. It embarrasses both

the Jew and the Gentile into the new Israel, the family of God.

Both can look to the Savior for salvation and life. He gave to both strong and weak the joy and peace they need for living and worshipping together. Joy and peace can be theirs by believing by receiving from God.

Thus, by God's working, by the power of God's Spirit, they can abound in hope. They can meet the severest demands made on their love with kindly evenness of mind.

Points to ponder:

What are some of the issues which are among us in the church today?

What has the Lord called us to do in our congregation?

How should we treat each other as we look at the challenges and needs of our congregation?

How can the weak and the strong come together?

How can the weak be encouraged by the strong?

IV. CONCLUSION: Romans 15:14-16:27

1. Paul justifies his writing to the Christians at Rome. 15:14-21
2. Paul's plan for a journey to Rome. 15:22-33
3. Paul's commendation of Phoebe. 16:1-2
4. Greetings to many individuals and groups. 16:3-16
5. Admonition to mark and avoid false teachers. 16:17-20
6. Greetings from various fellow-Christians 16:21-24
7. Closing doxology 16:25-27

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