

A  
Doctrinal and Devotional  
Commentary  
on the  
Book of Romans  
by Rénald Leroux Jr.

## *Info page*

A Doctrinal and Devotional Commentary on the book of Romans.

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# Outline

<b>1. Introduction and theme (1:1-17)</b>	<b>Page</b>
<a href="#">1.1 Salutation and theme (1:1-7)</a>	3-8
<a href="#">1.2 Paul's desire to see the Romans (1:8-15)</a>	9-15
<a href="#">1.3 Theme (1:16,17)</a>	16-20
<b>2. Universal guilt of mankind (1:18-3:20)</b>	
<a href="#">2.1 The manifestation of God's wrath (1:18-25)</a>	21-28
<a href="#">2.2 The consequences of being guilty (1:26-32)</a>	29-35
2.3 The impartiality of God (2:1-3:9)	
<a href="#">2.3.1 Impartiality towards the moralists (2:1-16)</a>	36-46
<a href="#">2.3.2 Impartiality towards the Jews (2:17-24)</a>	47-52
<a href="#">2.3.3 Circumcised or not? (2:25-29)</a>	53-56
<a href="#">2.3.4 Paul defends God's judgment (3:1-8)</a>	57-61
<a href="#">2.3.5 Impartiality towards all of mankind (3:9-20)</a>	62-68
<b>3. Justification by faith in the Messiah (3:21-5:21)</b>	
<a href="#">3.1 Justification by faith (3:21-31)</a>	69-74
<a href="#">3.2 Justification and Abraham (4:1-8)</a>	75-79
<a href="#">3.3 Justification before the Law (4:9-12)</a>	80-83
<a href="#">3.4 Justification without the Law (4:13-25)</a>	84-90
<a href="#">3.5 Justification and its consequences (5:1-11)</a>	91-97
<a href="#">3.6 Justification and condemnation (5:12-21)</a>	98-103
<b>4. Sanctification by Christ's death and resurrection (6-8)</b>	
<a href="#">4.1 Freedom from sin (6:1-14)</a>	104-110
<a href="#">4.2 Freedom that leads to righteousness (6:15-23)</a>	111-115
<a href="#">4.3 Freedom through the death of Christ (7:1-6)</a>	116-120
<a href="#">4.4 Law-Sin-death (7:7-13)</a>	121-124
<a href="#">4.5 The battle within (7:14-25)</a>	125-130
<a href="#">4.6 Victory by the Holy Spirit (8:1-4)</a>	131-136
<a href="#">4.7 Victory over the Old man (8:5-13)</a>	137-143
<a href="#">4.8 Victory by adoption (8:14-17)</a>	144-147
<a href="#">4.9 The glory to come (8:18-25)</a>	148-152
<a href="#">4.10 The intercession of the Holy Spirit (8:26,27)</a>	153-155
<a href="#">4.11 The eternal objectives of God (8:28-30)</a>	156-160

<a href="#">4.12 The total security of the believer (8:31-39)</a>	161-167
<b>5. The unbelief of Israel (9-11)</b>	
<a href="#">5.1 Paul and Israel (9:1-5)</a>	168-172
<a href="#">5.2 The natural and spiritual posterity (9:6-13)</a>	173-177
<a href="#">5.3 The mercy and sovereignty of God (9:14-24)</a>	178-184
<a href="#">5.4 Israel and the non Jews (9:25-33)</a>	185-190
<a href="#">5.5 Unbelief and the promises of God (10:1-13)</a>	191-197
<a href="#">5.6 Salvation and the gospel (10:14-21)</a>	198-203
<a href="#">5.7 Has God forgotten Israel? (11:1-6)</a>	204-207
<a href="#">5.8 A spirit of slumber on Israel (11:7-10)</a>	208-211
<a href="#">5.9 Warning to the Gentiles (11:11-24)</a>	212-218
<a href="#">5:10 The Messiah will come again for Israel (11:25-36)</a>	219-224
<b>6. Living as a disciple of Christ (12:1-15:13)</b>	
<a href="#">6.1 The disciple's consecration (12:1,2)</a>	225-228
<a href="#">6.2 Service in the Holy Spirit (12:3-8)</a>	229-233
<a href="#">6.3 Relationship and Christians (12:9-16)</a>	234-239
<a href="#">6.4 Relationships with all people (12:17-21)</a>	240-244
<a href="#">6.5 Relationship with authorities (13:1-7)</a>	245-249
<a href="#">6.6 Christian love (13:8-14)</a>	250-255
<a href="#">6.7 The principle of personal responsibilities (14:1-12)</a>	256-261
<a href="#">6.8 The principle of the good of others (14:13-23)</a>	262-266
<a href="#">6.9 The disciple and edification (15:1-3)</a>	267-270
<a href="#">6.10 Jews and Gentiles united in Christ (15:4-13)</a>	271-276
<b>7. The conclusion (15:14-16:27)</b>	
<a href="#">7.1 Paul servant of Christ (15:14-21)</a>	277-282
<a href="#">7.2 Paul plans to visit Rome (15:22-33)</a>	283-288
<a href="#">7.3 Commendation of Phoebe (16:1,2)</a>	289-290
<a href="#">7.4 Various greetings (16:3-16)</a>	291-296
<a href="#">7.5 Final exhortation (16:17-20)</a>	297-301
<a href="#">7.6 Final greetings from Paul's companions (16:21-24)</a>	302-303
<a href="#">7.7 Doxology (16:25-27)</a>	304-306

## *Introduction to the Book of Romans*

### 1. The author:

It has been overwhelmingly accepted that the author of the Epistle to the Romans is the apostle Paul. In the past, some have disputed Paul's authorship, but this is no longer the case. In Rom. 16:22 it is written, "Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greets you." It is to be understood that Tertius was Paul's secretary who did the actual writing of the epistle but did not author the letter. Romans, along with Galatians and 1 & 2 Corinthians, belong to a group called "The four capital epistles," which outline Paul's theology.

### 2. Date and destination:

It seems that Paul wrote this letter around A.D. 57 while he was in Corinth. This letter was destined for the believers in Christ in the city of Rome. Notice that Paul never mentions "to the church at Rome" but rather "To all who are in Rome".

This letter was written for Jewish and Gentile believers. No one knows how the gospel reached Rome. There is no mention of any missionary work in Rome in the New Testament. But we do know that on the day of Pentecost, people from Rome were present (Acts 2:10). We can imagine that they took the Good News back home with them.

It seems that there were many "house churches" in Rome and five of them are hinted at (16:5,10,11,14,15).

### 3. Some reasons why Paul wrote Romans:

In an effort to evangelize the region (15:24,28), Paul desired to visit Spain. He hoped to see the brethren as he passed by and, at the same time, hoped "to be helped on his way". This may refer to some sort of financial aid for him to carry on towards Spain.

He also desired to encourage the believers and impart spiritual benefits to them. With so many doctrines penned in this book, we see that Paul also wanted to educate the Roman believers.

#### 4. The purpose of the Book of Romans:

The purpose of Paul was to write down a theological thesis so that the Disciples of Christ in Rome could rest upon solid ground and not be "washed away" by so many false teachers and prophets who were already attacking the orthodox Christian faith. Paul also speaks of ethical questions, how believers should act and react when faced with people who do not see things the way they do.

#### 5. The theme of Romans:

The theme of Romans is written in the following verses:

##### Romans 1

<sup>16</sup>For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup>For the righteousness of God is revealed in it from faith to faith, just as it is written, "But the one who is righteous by faith will live."

(LEB)

Here we see the main theme. To never be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ because in it lies the power of God, to live a righteous life by faith in the finished atoning work of Jesus the Messiah.

## 02 - Salutation

Romans 1:1-7

**1** Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called *to be* an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup> which he promised previously through his prophets in the holy scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning his Son, who was born *a descendant* of David according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> who was declared Son of God in power according to *the Holy Spirit* by the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup> through whom we have received grace and apostleship for the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles on behalf of his name, <sup>6</sup> among whom you also are *the* called of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> To all those in Rome who are loved by God, called *to be* saints. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
(LEB)

This section begins with the name of the author, the apostle Paul. This letter has had very little debate concerning its authorship. The vast and overwhelming majority of theologians have no doubt that Saul of Tarsus is the author. He calls himself "*a slave of Jesus Christ*". The word "slave" (DOULOS) means "someone who belongs to another" in Greek. The person to whom Paul belonged (and all other true believers) is Jesus Christ, because we have been bought at a great price (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23), which is the blood of Christ at the cross. If Paul was the DOULOS of Christ, that meant that Christ would direct his life. May I remind my readers that if they are truly God's children, He should direct their lives in all aspects.

Paul also says that he is "*called to be an apostle*". The word "called" (KLETOS) means: to be called, to be summoned. He was summoned by God for a special task, and that was to be an "apostle" (APOSTOLOS), meaning: a sent one on a mission, a messenger. He was one of the chosen few who had a special assignment directly from God. Paul describes his calling as being "*set apart for the gospel of God*." Paul was now "set apart" (APHORIZO), meaning: to mark off by boundaries, to separate. He was separated by God from others. He was going to be different like the other apostles were.

He was set apart "*for the gospel of God*". Paul was to be the bearer of the gospel (EUAGGELION), meaning: good news. He was summoned to proclaim salvation by faith through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We can see that Paul kept his eyes fixed on the mission that he had received. He did not deviate, though tempted like all of us to enjoy what the world had to offer. We also know of the price he had to pay to persevere in his faith. Nothing stopped Paul, not even the thought of death if he persevered.

This good news was not a fabrication of man but was the "*the gospel of God*." No other good news can stand before it! God's gospel is the ONLY gospel. All others are made-up by man and have no eternal value. We can stand on the word of God because Jesus said in John 17: 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup>which he promised previously through his prophets in the holy scriptures,  
(LEB)

Paul declared that the gospel of God had been "*promised previously*". This Greek word (PROEPAGGELLO) means: to announce before, promised beforehand. The promise of God concerning the "good news" was given in the Garden of Eden just after Adam and Eve sinned by eating the forbidden fruit. The promise of a coming Messiah who would defeat the enemy of our souls is found in these verses:

### Genesis 3

14 And the Lord God said to the snake, Because you have done this you are cursed more than all cattle and every beast of the field; you will go flat on the earth, and dust will be your food all the days of your life:

15 And there will be war between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed: by him will your head be crushed and by you his foot will be wounded.

(BBE)

God has spoken to mankind "*through his prophets*". A prophet (PROPHETES) is an interpreter or forth-teller of the divine will of God. In the Old Testament, these prophets wrote inspired books. These books written by God's prophets are now divided into two categories. The four major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel,

and Ezekiel) and also the twelve minor prophets (Jonah, Micah, etc.). These men were inspired by God to be heralds (messengers) to proclaim his message verbally and also write down his message (Ex. 17:14; Num. 5:23; Deut. 27:3; Isaiah 8:1, etc.). I'd like to point out that ALL of the sixty-six books that comprise the Bible were written by prophets (God's messengers).

<sup>3</sup> concerning his Son, who was born *a descendant* of David according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> who was declared Son of God in power according to *the Holy Spirit* by the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ our Lord,  
(LEB)

What was God's gospel all about? It was "*concerning his Son*". God only has ONE begotten Son. In the four references where the apostle John speaks of Jesus as the son of God, he makes mention that he is the ONLY BEGOTTEN son (1:14,18; 3:16,18). Through salvation in Jesus Christ, God has many sons and daughters, but they are all adopted children (Gal 4:5; Eph. 1:5), not BEGOTTEN of him.

So the gospel message is all about Jesus, and the apostle Paul will give certain highlights concerning him. The first is the following:

"... who was born *a descendant* of David according to the flesh,"

First, Jesus was a descendant of King David. The word "born" (SPERMA) means: that in which is sown, offspring, descendant. We see in Luke 1:32 that he is declared to be a descendant of King David. The following verses also declare that Christ was a descendant of David (Mat.1:1; Acts 13:22; 23; 2 Tim. 2:8; Rev. 5:5; 22:16). Being a descendant of King David was one of the traits of the future Messiah. To legally sit on David's throne, one had to be his descendant. Paul also writes "*according to the flesh*" (SARX), which means: flesh, body. A true prophetic lineage (2 Sam. 7:12; Isaiah 11:1; Jer. 23:5) was to be expected of the coming Messiah. Note that the term "according to the flesh" is never applied to anyone else but Christ. Jesus did come "in the flesh" (1 Peter 4:1; 1 John 4:1; 2 John 1:7).

<sup>4</sup> who was declared Son of God in power according to *the Holy Spirit* by the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ our Lord  
(LEB)

Second, Jesus "*was declared Son of God.*" Jesus is not only known as the Son of David (Mat. 9:27; 15:22; 20:30, 31; 21:9, etc..) but also "*declared*" (HORIZO), meaning: to mark out, to appoint, decree, ordain, Son of God. We know that God the Father declared Jesus to be His son (Matt. 3:17; 17:5), but in our verse it is "*in power according to the Holy Spirit*". It is through the "*power*" (DUNAMIS), meaning: miraculous power, might, strength, of the Holy Spirit, that Jesus is also declared the Son of God. But what did the Holy Spirit do to make such a declaration? Paul writes, "*by the resurrection from the dead*". When we read the entire New Testament, we can see that the Father resurrected Jesus (Gal. 1:1), the Holy Spirit raised him from the dead (1 Peter 3:18), and Jesus raised himself from the dead (John 2:19; 10:18). Jesus was raised from the dead as he prophesized he would be, and this was to be obvious proof that he was the Messiah.

<sup>5</sup> through whom we have received grace and apostleship for the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles on behalf of his name  
(LEB)

Third, through Jesus, "*we have received grace and apostleship*". Not we will receive but have received (LAMBANO), meaning: to take, receive, lay hold of. We are the recipients of God's grace (1 Cor. 1:3,4; 16:23, etc.). Probably the most famous "grace" verse is found in Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (NKJV). As for the apostleship (APOSTOLE), this belongs to a very select group of men, which the Bible refers to as the apostles. Paul had received the grace to be an apostle, and we have not.

" *...for the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles on behalf of his name*"  
(LEB)

A fourth highlight concerning Jesus is that the apostolic mandate he had received was not only to spread the Good News of Jesus but also to bring true believers to "*the obedience of faith*". This echoes the last words of Jesus before he was brought to the heavens when he said in:

Mat 28:18-20,

"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying," All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

(NKJV)

Not only has the Messiah come to save, but also to have his disciples follow him and walk in the light with him.

This Good News was for "*all the Gentiles*". This was difficult for many Jews of Paul's day. Salvation is available to ALL nations, not just Jews, as many believed.

<sup>6</sup> *among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ.*

(LEB)

Paul turns to the believers in Rome and encourages them by saying that (like him) they were also "*the called of Jesus Christ*". The word "*called*" (KLETOS) means: called, invited, summoned. They had received a heavenly calling, and repented of their sins, and asked Jesus to become their Savior. They now belonged to Jesus by their calling.

<sup>7</sup> To all those in Rome who are loved by God, called to be saints. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(LEB)

Notice that Paul does not say "To the church in Rome" as he does with the Corinthians, Galatians, and others. He simply says: "*To those in Rome*". We understand that he is writing to the followers of Christ in Rome. There are a few things that he mentions concerning them that would be encouraging.

First, they "*are loved by God*." The word "*loved*" (AGAPETOS) means: dearly, well, beloved. There is no greater favor than to be loved by God. God demonstrated his love for us in this way by sending his only begotten son to bear His wrath in our place (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8). Nothing is greater than that.

Second, they are "*called to be saints*". The word "*called*" (KLETOS) means: called, invited, summoned by God. Our calling, or final destination, if you prefer, is to be a "*saint*" (HAGIOS), meaning: sacred, holy, set apart for God. We have seen that no love is greater than this. Now we see that believers have also received the ultimate calling in life-to become holy as God is holy (1 Peter 1:15,16).

Third, here we see a blessing: "*Grace to you and peace*". Paul expected God's favour to be upon them. First we find "*grace*". This flows from the throne of God to his children. That is why the writer of Hebrews invites us to come boldly to the throne of grace to find mercy (Heb. 4:16). I believe that grace covers every aspect of our relationship with the Lord God. Everything is by his grace.

Then we find "peace." This was one of the main objects of the sacrifice of Christ: to obtain peace between the Father and the sinners that we are. In Isaiah 53 this is what is written concerning Messiah:

Isa 53:5

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.  
(NKJV)

The apostle Paul, when he wrote to the Ephesians, said this about Christ:

Eph 2:14

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,  
(NKJV)

v7 ... from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
(LEB)

Paul ends this section by stating who is the provider of all the blessings that the Roman believers received. It was God, but notice that Paul writes "*OUR Father*". A paternal relationship had been established. God is OUR FATHER and we are HIS

CHILDREN. It was also given through the "*Lord Jesus Christ*". We are His through His Lordship over us. Both Father and Son provide for all Paul has written.

## 03 - Paul's desire to visit the Romans

Romans 1:8-15

<sup>8</sup> First, I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being proclaimed in the whole world. <sup>9</sup> For God, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, is my witness, how constantly I make mention of you, <sup>10</sup> always asking in my prayers if somehow now at last I may succeed to come to you in the will of God. <sup>11</sup> For I desire to see you, in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, in order to strengthen you, <sup>12</sup> that is, to be encouraged together with you through *our mutual faith*, both yours and mine. <sup>13</sup> Now I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, that often I intended to come to you, and was prevented until now, in order that I might have some fruit among you also, just as also among the rest of the Gentiles. <sup>14</sup> I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. <sup>15</sup> Thus *I am eager* to proclaim the gospel also to you who *are* in Rome.

(LEB)

In this section we will see the apostle Paul opening his heart and manifesting his deep love for the Roman believers and also his desire to come and see them.

<sup>8</sup> First, I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being proclaimed in the whole world.

There's a saying that says, "First things first," and this is what Paul does. He is placing God above all else. He begins by writing: "*First, I give thanks to my God*". In his life, God was first, and it should be the same with all true believers. He places God before his brothers and sisters in Christ, for without God, there would be nothing to be thankful for. The words "*give thanks*" (EUCHARISTEO) means: to be grateful, to express gratitude. Practicing gratitude and thankfulness to the Lord manifests the content of our hearts. We see that Paul's heart was filled with gratitude, and so should ours be.

His gratitude is "*through Jesus Christ*". If it were not for Christ and his sacrifice on his behalf, there would be no gratitude to express, for he would still be in spiritual

darkness. May we keep Christ in our hearts and in our minds. May he be the treasure that we find in a field and sell everything to purchase that plot of land (Mat. 13:44).

v.8... for all of you, because your faith is being proclaimed in the whole world.

Paul was grateful "*for all of you*". He appreciated ALL the brothers and sisters in the faith. In Paul's eyes, there were no "special people" that he liked better than others. His heart was open to everyone who called themselves disciples of Christ. This should resound in our hearts: loving one another as Christ loved us. Is this not proof that we belong to Christ and have been renewed in our minds?

### John 13

35 "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."  
(NKJV)

Paul continues and states why he thanks God for them: "*because your faith is being proclaimed in the whole world.*" It was their "*faith*" (PISTIS), meaning: persuasion, credence, moral conviction. It was their faith that stood out. Their faith was "*being proclaimed*". May I remind you that faith in the Nazarene was not welcomed in Rome. Followers of Christ were described as being cannibals because it was believed that in their celebrations they ate "flesh and blood" (which was the Lord's Table). All sorts of tales were told about them. They were enemies of Rome because they proclaimed that they had another king - not Caesar but Christ. This made them outlaws and foes. Yet they proclaimed their faith "*in the whole world*". It must be noted that the "*world*" (KOSMOS) that Paul is speaking about is the known world of his day. Since Rome was the center of the Roman Empire, it was natural that their faith would travel everywhere.

<sup>9</sup> For God, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, is my witness, how constantly I make mention of you, <sup>10</sup> always asking in my prayers if somehow now at last I may succeed to come to you in the will of God.

Here, Paul calls upon God (THEOS), meaning: the supreme God, creator and sustainer of all things. He first says, "*whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son*". This describes the life goal of Paul. He writes, "*I serve*" (LATREUO),

meaning: a hired menial, to minister, to serve. His life was a life of service. His motto could have been "Wherever and whenever the Lord desires". Beloved in Christ should not our hearts own the same deep passion? Paul served God "*with my spirit*". All of his work, his persevering, and labor were not done in the flesh (with his own might) but "*with my spirit*". We could say that one of the keys to Paul's spiritual success was that he followed the Holy Spirit's leading. Jesus said that believers will worship God in "spirit and in truth" (John 4:23,24) and this is exactly what Paul was doing.

Paul was at the service of "the gospel of his Son." The word "*gospel*" (EUAGGELION) means: a good message, the gospel. He was not at the service of anyone or anything else. Far too many people divide their lives into many facets and have too many goals. Because of this, we often fail or are mediocre at best. Paul fixed his eyes on his calling and placed all his energy into doing so. He knew that God was the great rewarder (Heb. 11:6) and that he would take care of him. May we also be totally devoted to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul called on God to be his witness (MARTUS), meaning: a witness, a martyr. One has to be very careful when calling upon God to be his witness. If the person lies, he is implying that God is in accord with his lie, and that would be blasphemous. Jesus said:

Mat. 5:37

"But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

(NKJV)

Paul called God to be his witness for two aspects in his relationship with the Roman believers. The first is "*how constantly I make mention of you.*" In other words, the Roman brethren were always on his mind and in his heart. There is a saying that says, "Far from the eyes, far from the heart," but this wasn't so with Paul. If Paul wrote this letter while he was in Corinth, in today's traveling, he was almost 1200 km away from Rome. Yet the believers were close to his heart. May the distance that separates us from other believers not keep us from remembering them.

<sup>10</sup>always asking in my prayers if somehow now at last I may succeed to come to you in the will of God.

Paul had them in his thoughts, but he also had them in his prayers. The words "*always asking*" (MNEIA) mean: recollection, remembrance, mention. Because they were on his mind, he brought them automatically up in his prayers. Too often, people slip out of my mind and I forget to pray for them. The second aspect is:

v.10 ... if somehow now at last I may succeed to come to you in the will of God.

Paul calls on God to be his witness, not only that he has them in his heart and that he prays for them, but that he has a desire to finally come to see them. Please notice he writes "*in the will of God.*" Paul places his desire at the feet of the Lord and waits for the Lord to permit his desire to come true. This is very important because it often happens that believers mix THEIR desires with the LORD'S desire for them. How many times have I seen Christians say that they have a project or a ministry or something that they "know" is from the Lord and it fails miserably or never sees the day? One has to be listening to the Spirit.

An example of this is when the Holy Spirit actually STOPPED Paul from going to Asia and Bithynia because he wanted them to go to Macedonia (Acts 16:6-10). Paul had good intentions by wanting to evangelize Asia and Bithynia, and if he had not listened to the Holy Spirit, he would have gone against God's will. So Paul waits for "*the will of God.*" The word "*will*" (THELEMA) means: a determination, a choice, a desire. May we also wait for the Lord's will in our lives before moving forward.

<sup>11</sup>For I desire to see you, in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, in order to strengthen you, <sup>12</sup>that is, to be encouraged together with you through *our mutual faith*, both yours and mine.

The word "*desire*" is not as strong as it is in the Greek (EPIPOTHEO), for which it means "to crave intensely, earnestly desire, long after." In other words, Paul really, really wanted to go and see the believers in Christ in Rome, but why?

First of all, "*in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you*" The word "*impart*" (METADIDOMI) means: to give over, share, impart. He wanted to go to Rome not to receive but to give or share with the Romans. God is the greatest giver (John 3:16, Rom. 5:8) and so should be his children. He wanted to give them "*some spiritual gift*". We don't know exactly what Paul meant by this, but we do know it had nothing to do with something carnal or earthly. The word "*gift*" (CHARISMA) means: a divine gratuity, a spiritual endowment, or miraculous faculty. It may have been Paul's desire to lay his hands on certain people so that they might receive a spiritual gift or capacity.

v.11 ... *in order to strengthen you,*

This would be the first reason why Paul wanted to impart some spiritual gift. All spiritual gifts are given for the benefit of the church and not the individual who receives them. Here they would be given "*to strengthen you*". The word "*strengthen*" (STERIZO) means: to set fast, to confirm, to fix, to establish. Paul wanted the brethren to be strong in the Lord, and he knew they needed help from the Holy Spirit and the gifts He imparts.

<sup>12</sup>that is, to be encouraged together with you through *our mutual faith*, both yours and mine.

Please note that the word "*encouraged together*" (SUMPARAKALEO) means to console jointly. These spiritual gifts were not only given for the edification of the believers but also for their consolation. In other words, they were given to do "good" for them. Not for one's glory or reputation, but for the support of others on their pilgrimage. This encouragement was passed on or lived through "*our mutual faith*." Paul encourages the Romans to understand that their faith is the key to mutual encouragement and spiritual life in general. We know that there is only "one faith" (Eph. 4:5). The object of the faith Paul had was the same as the one the Roman believers had. The only question is, how deep is your faith in what the Bible tells us?

<sup>13</sup> Now I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, that often I intended to come to you, and was prevented until now, in order that I might have some fruit among you also, just as also among the rest of the Gentiles. <sup>14</sup> I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. <sup>15</sup> Thus *I am eager* to proclaim the gospel also to you who *are* in Rome.

There were many things that Paul wanted the believers to know, and this was one of them. He does not want them to be "*ignorant*" (AGNOEO), meaning: not to know through a lack of information. What Paul wanted them to know was that "*I intended to come to you, and was prevented until now.*" The word "*intended*" (PROTHESIS) means: to place before, to purpose, to set forth. So it seems that Paul had wanted or had planned many times before "*to come to you*". The desire was there, so why didn't Paul do it? He writes, "*and was prevented until now.*" Things happened, things that were out of his control, that prevented or opposed him from travelling to Rome. We don't know if the opposition came from man, evil spirits, or the Holy Spirit. But something or someone interfered with Paul's plans. It may have simply been Paul's desires and not the Lord's!

v.13 ... in order that I might have some fruit among you also, just as also among the rest of the Gentiles.

He not only wanted to give to the Romans, as we have seen in verse eleven, but he also hoped to "*have some fruit among you*". The word "*fruit*" (KARPOS) means fruit, literal or figurative. Since Paul wanted to travel to Spain, this might hint that he was hoping for some monetary support for his missionary voyage. We know, as he writes, that some Gentile churches helped him along the way. It is normal for the brethren to support in one way or another those who leave all behind to preach the gospel, God blesses those who do so (Isaiah 52:7, Rom. 10:15).

<sup>14</sup> I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.

Paul describes his calling and he says that he is "*under obligation*" (OPHEILETES), meaning: a person indebted, a debtor. He was indebted to the Lord God because He had sent him to be a messenger of the "Good News". But he was also a debtor to four different groups of people (which envelops everyone).

First, we see the "*Greeks*" (HELLEN) meaning: a Greek speaking person, a non-Jew, a Gentile. Since Rome was a cosmopolitan city, Paul explains that he was not only to evangelize a certain group of people, but all non-Jews. This might have frustrated certain Jewish believers (as it did in the past), but it was the truth. The gospel was for everybody (Acts 1:8). Second, we see the "*barbarians*" (BARBAROS), which means: a foreigner, a barbarian. He was obligated not only to those who were near but also to those who were far away. We can see that he did so through his many missionary voyages. Distance did not keep Paul from spreading the gospel. Third, we see he was obligated to "*the wise*" (SOPHOS), meaning: wise in a general sense. Since Paul knew his mission was world-wide, he knew he would encounter people of great knowledge or nobility. He did not shy away from doing so, even though he sometimes felt inadequate (1 Cor. 2:1; 2 Cor. 10:10; 11:6). May we never shy away from evangelizing simply because those who stand before us seem wiser and more intelligent. The fourth group is the "*foolish*" (ANOETOS), which means: unintelligent, foolish. This would be the opposite of "*the wise*". Paul did not regard the lack of intelligence as a sign that he could renounce his duty to evangelize. God's message of salvation is for everyone, which includes those who are less intelligent than you might be. Quite the contrary, we see that God uses fools to put to shame the wise (1 Cor. 1:18-31).

<sup>15</sup> Thus *I am eager* to proclaim the gospel also to you who *are* in Rome.

Paul ends by saying that "*I am eager*" (PROTHUMOS), meaning: forward in spirit, ready, willing. Whether they were Greeks, barbarians, the wise or the foolish, Paul was ready to evangelize them. We also see that he was ready to preach and encourage those who were already saved by the grace of God. This was a win-win situation. Wherever he was and with whoever he was, there was always an audience to hear the "Good News" - even in Rome, which was the capitol of the world in his day!

## 04 - Theme

Romans 1:16,17

<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For the righteousness of God is revealed in it from faith to faith, just as it is written, "But the one who is righteous by faith will live."

(LEB)

We might also call this section "The Power of the Living Gospel". These two verses should reside in the heart of every true believer. There may be different reasons why disciples of Christ are often a shadow of who they should be. I believe verse sixteen is one of the main reasons.

<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Paul declares that he is "*not ashamed*" (DEREK), meaning: a course of life, a mode of action, not ashamed. His entire life reflected this truth. Not a single time do we see that in any way, Paul was reluctant to be a witness of the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Wherever he went, in whatever circumstance, Paul stood like a beacon of light in the dreaded spiritual night of the Roman Empire. An example of Paul not being ashamed of the testimony of Christ and its consequences can be read in the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians:

2 Corinthians 11

23 Are they ministers of Christ? --I speak as a fool--I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.

24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.

25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings  
often, in cold and nakedness--  
28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all  
the churches.  
29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn  
with indignation?  
30 If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity.  
31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows  
that I am not lying.  
32 In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the  
Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me;  
33 but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from  
his hands.  
(NKJV)

Paul carried on being empowered by the Holy Spirit—nothing could stop him. He remained true until the very end—he definitely was "*not ashamed*". Now, what was Paul not ashamed of? Was it his nationality, or his upbringing? There is very little that we know about Paul and his background. He was a Roman citizen (Acts 22:28), born in Tarsus, of Cilicia (Acts 22:3). He was also a Pharisee (Acts 23:6) and had a sister (Acts 23:16) who is not named. Apart from a few other clues, very little is known about him. But what is known and stands out like a flame in the night is that he was definitely not ashamed of his Lord and Savior. He says, "*I am not ashamed of the gospel.*" The word "*gospel*" (EUAGGELION) means: a good message, the gospel. Paul was not ashamed of Jesus Christ and the message that is found in him—salvation through faith in his redeeming work.

v.16 ... for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,

This is another extremely important point that the Christian world needs to understand and deeply believe. Where does the "*power*" lie? Is it in numbers—big churches are better? Is it in church programs - always something for somebody? Is it in budgets and revenues - we can do so many things? Is it in a large church-- what a testimony to the community! That's not what Paul says! The Holy Spirit inspired him to write that "*power*" (DUNAMIS), which means force, miraculous power, or might, is in the "*gospel*."

God has placed his power and his might in the gospel story. If you want people to be saved, the most powerful way of doing it is by spreading the gospel. All the rest is nice, but it never saves anyone! So how important is it for us "*not to be ashamed of the gospel*"? It is crucial, absolutely essential - for no one can be saved but by hearing and receiving the gospel story. The early church believed this and spread the gospel wherever they went (Acts 8:25; 14:7,21; 15:7; 16:10; 20:24, etc..)

The gospel is given for mankind to obtain "salvation" (SOTERIA), which means: rescue, safety, deliver, and save. Salvation from what, one might ask? Salvation from the final judgment to come. There will come a time when the Lord God will bring everyone who has not received Christ as their Savior to judgment. Every single thought, word, or deed will be compared to God's holy standard of life. Condemnation will be given to anyone who breaks just a single aspect of the Law of God. As we will see, Paul will explain this extensively later on in his letter. An example of this coming judgment is explained by Jesus in Mat. 25:31-46. If you are a disciple of Christ, it is your sacred duty to tell others of the "Good News" that is found only in Jesus Christ.

Please note that this gospel is for "*everyone who believes*". The gospel is not limited to a certain race or ethnicity. It is for everyone, and that certainly was and still is a stumbling block for so many Jews. They had a difficult time accepting that forgiveness was also for non- Jews. They appropriated YAHWEH as their own, and all others were excluded. Yet from the very beginning of the Jewish nation, God told Abraham that from his seed would come a savior of ALL NATIONS (Gen. 18:18; 22:18) and also to Isaac (Gen. 26:1-5). God's plan was to bring salvation to all nations through his chosen people, the Jews.

Please do not refrain from evangelizing because the person in front of you is not "like" you, of the same tongue, nationality, or religion. Salvation at the cross is available for him as well.

v.16 ... to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

It is natural that Paul writes "to the Jew first" since they had first received the blessed message of forgiveness through faith in the Messiah. The Jews were set apart for the service of God, especially from the time of Moses and the giving of the Law and the ordinances. But they were not the only ones in the eyes of the Lord who would receive salvation. His promise had been given, Abraham was to be a blessing to all nations. The term "*Greek*" (HELLEN) means: a Greek speaking person, a non-Jew.

<sup>17</sup> For the righteousness of God is revealed in it from faith to faith, just as it is written, "But the one who is righteous by faith will live."

The first part of the theme of Romans is that a disciple of Christ should never be ashamed of the gospel. The second aspect of the theme is now given by Paul. He speaks of the "*righteousness of God*". In Paul's mind, "righteousness" (DIKAIOSUNE) meaning: equity, justification, is at the very center of the gospel. He will explain how man can become "right" with God. Isn't this what religion is all about - how to become one with God?

Notice that Paul does not speak of "man's righteousness" (for we have none, Rom. 3:23) but rather "the righteousness of God". God took the initiative not only to manifest but also to offer righteousness to all who would believe. What we believe to be "our righteousness" NEVER counts before the eyes of the Lord, for we lack holiness and our hands are stained with sin.

So, the righteousness of God is "*revealed*" (APOKALUPTO) meaning: to disclose, to reveal. In other words, God manifests his righteousness. The way mankind can be "right" with God is by "*faith*" (PISTIS), meaning: credence, moral conviction, assurance. Having faith in the gospel is the righteousness of God. Believing in the gospel message is the only way to forgiveness and peace with God. This will be explained more thoroughly as we continue with the book of Romans.

v.17 ... just as it is written,

The words "*just as*" (KATHOS) mean: just as, according to, as. I find this very important because Paul bases his entire theology about righteousness on what has already been written (for us, we would call it the Old Testament). He stands

on God's word and teaches from it to the believers in Rome. Never believe that what is important for disciples of Christ is only to be found in the New Testament. That would be a grave error. All of the word of God is equally important, as we see in a letter that Paul wrote to Timothy:

2 Timothy 3

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,  
17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.  
(NKJV)

Paul ends this section with a verse that is found in the Old Testament also:

“But the one who is righteous by faith will live.”

This theme is written, one way or another, over thirty times in the Scriptures. The one that Paul is referring to in verse seventeen is probably the following:

Habakkuk 2

4 "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.  
(NKJV)

So righteousness or being just before God is by faith and by faith (PISTIS), meaning: persuasion, moral conviction, assurance, that person "*will live*". His life will automatically reflect the saving faith that he has living inside of him. The fruits of his faith will be evident for all to see. Jesus said it this way:

John 15

4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.  
5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.  
(NKJV)

## 05 - *The manifestation of God's wrath*

Romans 1:18-25

<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all impiety and unrighteousness of people, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup> because what can be known about God is evident among them, for God made *it* clear to them. <sup>20</sup> For from the creation of the world, his invisible *attributes*, both his eternal power and deity, are discerned clearly, being understood in the things created, so that they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup> For *although they knew God*, they did not honor *him* as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasoning, and their senseless hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Claiming to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God with the likeness of an image of mortal human beings and birds and quadrupeds and reptiles.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them over in the desires of their hearts to immorality, *that* their bodies would be dishonored among themselves, <sup>25</sup> who exchanged the truth of God with a lie, and worshiped and served the creation rather than the Creator, who is blessed for eternity. Amen.

(LEB)

Because Paul's salutation and theme are now known, he begins what seems to be the greatest theological exposé ever given to mankind. Before we begin, I would like to say that I do not feel that I am capable of exploring all the nuances and intricacies of this epistle - far from it. By the grace of God, I will try to make known in a simple fashion what Paul is saying. All of my commentaries are meant to be read and understood by everyone, for the edification of all who read them.

<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all impiety and unrighteousness of people, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

Paul will begin by explaining that all of mankind is guilty before God. This is pivotal, for if mankind does not understand that it is guilty before God, it will not search for the Messiah. Paul speaks of "*the wrath*" (ORGE), meaning: violent passion, wrath, vengeance, punishment. You can say that God manifests his wrath against sinful humanity in the present (as with Sodom and Gomorrah) and in the future (with the final judgment). No one will be able to escape the coming wrath of God (Isaiah 13:9; Heb. 2:3; 12:25). Jeremiah wrote the following:

Jer. 10:10

But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, And the nations will not be able to endure His indignation.  
(NKJV)

The wrath of God is "*revealed*" (APOKALUPTO), meaning: to take the cover off, disclose, reveal. God very openly reveals his displeasure with the sons of Adam. He does so "*from heaven*" (OURANOS), meaning: the sky, by extension, the heavens. We know that God's abode is in the heavens, somewhere in the vast universe, maybe above it. It seems that it is in this realm that is the starting point of the manifestation of his wrath.

God's wrath is manifested and it is "*against all impiety and unrighteousness of people*". In other words, God opposes "*all impiety*" (ASEBEIA), meaning: impiety, wickedness, ungodly. Not just the big and terrible wickedness as we have seen with truly wicked people who, under their rule, have killed and tortured millions and millions of people - they will surely taste the wrath of God. But "ALL *impiety*". God detests what we may consider little ungodly things. Things that we accept or give an excuse for. You know, the things that we do or think that no one knows about. Or even the things that we do with others that they consent to but do not reflect the character of God. We may think that "it's not that bad - no one gets hurt," but God thinks otherwise. He is holy, and his standards are holy. Because his wrath is directed at "ALL impiety," we are all condemned because we all fail repeatedly.

God's wrath is also against all "*unrighteousness*" (ADIKIA), meaning: injustice, moral wrongfulness. This is the second important point that Paul will later describe. Man is "unrighteous". There is absolutely no righteousness in him. There is no justice, no virtue, and no spiritual rectitude that can be found. May we not forget that ALL of mankind is found guilty before God. The apostle James put it this way:

James 2

10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

(NKJV)

That's right, just one sin qualifies you as a transgressor of the entire law! We all need to be honest with God and with ourselves. I am a sinner. I have broken the Law of God one way or another, and God is not pleased with me!

v.18 ... who suppress the truth in unrighteousness

What the Holy Spirit tells us through the writings of Paul before us is that people "*suppress*" (KATECHO), meaning: to hold down, retain, seize on. As we will see, God expresses his being and his truth. But mankind does not receive it, as it did not receive the Messiah but for a few (John 1:10,11). Mankind has suppressed "*the truth*" (ALETHEIA), meaning: truth, verity. Here, Paul is speaking of God's truth. Men take hold of God's truth and modify it as they please. They reject who God is and what he says and transform it into something that they feel comfortable with. So man takes what is holy and right and changes it into some type of "*unrighteousness*" (ADIKA), meaning: injustice, moral wrongfulness. In other words, he demoralizes God and makes him into their own image.

<sup>19</sup> because what can be known about God is evident among them, for God made *it* clear to them. <sup>20</sup> For from the creation of the world, his invisible *attributes*, both his eternal power and deity, are discerned clearly, being understood in the things created, so that they are without excuse.

Paul explains that God manifested himself in a way for everyone to see. He writes "what can be known" (GNOSTOS), meaning: well-known, notable. God did not hide himself from mankind, making mankind wonder if a God existed - NO! Paul says that the existence of God "*is evident*" (PHANEROS), meaning: shining, apparent, appear. It's right there before your eyes - just look. It's like a fire in the night - so bright you can't miss it! Paul says that God made sure that you would know that he existed. He writes "*made it clear*" (PHANEROO), meaning: to render apparent, to manifest. But to whom did God make his presence apparent? The answer is "*to them*", to mankind, to you and me and all others who lived on earth.

<sup>20</sup> For from the creation of the world, his invisible *attributes*, both his eternal power and deity, are discerned clearly, being understood in the things created, so that they are without excuse.

Paul will explain how God has manifested himself to all of mankind. God did manifest himself "*from the creation of the world*". From the very beginning, God was determined to make himself known. One can never blame God for being unknown or anonymous. The word "*creation*" (KTISIS) means: original formation, creation. The starting point is when God created "the world" (KOSMOS), meaning: orderly arrangement, the world. Not only the earth on which we stand but the entire universe and all that it contains - ALL of creation is saying "There is a God."

Through creation, Paul states two things that can be seen. He speaks of God's "*invisible attributes*" (AORATOS), meaning: an invisible thing. It seems that what was invisible has been made visible. Here is the first "*his eternal power*". Please note that his "power" (DUNAMIS) meaning: force, especially a miraculous power, is "*eternal*" (AIDIOS) meaning: enduring, eternal, everlasting. God is not like a fire that, with time and self consumption, dies out. His power is everlasting, and that should be very encouraging for his adopted children. Since his power is eternal, that means that my God is still capable of bringing to pass ALL that he has promised. He will deliver me from evil, he will prepare a place for me, he will fully justify me through the righteousness of Christ, and so forth. I can always count on God whatever the situation I am in. God is not like a man who is getting feebler as time passes. Here is the second "*and deity*" (THEIOTES), meaning: divinity, godhead. This word is only used once in the New Testament. This word is important because it proclaims that the universe was created by God. It is not by the mix of misfortune, random chance, and time - which is the modern recipe for creation. So the power and deity of God are manifested through the creation of the universe.

v.20 ... are discerned clearly, being understood in the things created, so that they are without excuse.

All of this (the creation) and the power and deity of God "*are discerned clearly*" (KATHORAO), meaning: to behold fully, clearly seen. If you open your eyes and look at what surrounds you, - all that lives and exists, you can see that God exists. Paul writes that it can be "*understood*" (NOIEO), meaning: to exercise the mind, consider. Through "*the things created*" (POIEMA), meaning: a thing that is made, workmanship, in other words, I should clearly understand that God exists when I look at all the created things, whether they are things above me or next to me. Because God took time to create in order to manifest that he exists, "*they are without excuse*" (ANAPOLOGETOS), meaning: indefensible, inexcusable. No one will be able to say, "I did not know that you existed, I had no clue." God will answer: "My creation manifested my eternal power and my deity." It was right before your eyes. It is YOU that did not want to recognize the testimony I had given you." You and I are without excuse - God does exist. So what do we do with all the proof that God has given us?

<sup>21</sup> For *although they knew God*, they did not honor *him* as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasoning, and their senseless hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Claiming to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God with the likeness of an image of mortal human beings and birds and quadrupeds and reptiles.

Instead of accepting the testimony of God as the invisible deity, we will see that man has warped and twisted God's truth, and as a blacksmith forges metal into the form he desires, so did man do with God's truth.

Paul begins with "*although*" (DIOTI), meaning: on the very account that, therefore. We are entering the reaction of God towards mankind that had received God's testimony of his own existence. Paul writes that "*they knew God*" (GINOSKO), meaning: be aware of, be sure, understand. This is the accusation of God towards mankind; "You knew that I existed, you saw my power in creation," in return, they did two things. The first is that they did not "*honor him*" (DOXAZO), meaning: to render esteem, glory, honor. They refused to glorify the Living God in their lives. We can see how callous and impenitent the heart can be, even refusing what their eyes see! There is none blinder than the one who does not want to see. The second is that they did not "*give thanks*" (EUCCHARISTEO), meaning: to be grateful, express gratitude. If one can honor God with his life, here we see that their lips were also rebellious, refusing to "*give thanks*". Man, obstinately, refused to express gratitude to God through his actions and words.

God reacted and did not leave mankind unpunished. He had prepared the world to be their garden, he provided for all of their needs, and yet man turned his back on God. The consequence of this is two-fold. The first is:

v.21 ... they became futile in their reasoning

The consequence of not glorifying God and being thankful resulted in that they "*became futile*" (NATAIOO), meaning: to render foolish, wicked, vain. When we turn our backs on the Living God, we automatically walk AWAY from him and suffer its effect - we become foolish, wicked, and vain. We become like Nimrod, who wanted to build a tower that would reach the heavens (Gen. 10-11). Here we see that the foolishness was in their "*reasoning*" (DIALOGISMOS), meaning: internal discussions, thought. The way that they thought changed, and not for the better. They turned away from what was once honorable and godly thinking and began to walk on the "broad road" which leads to destruction (Mat. 7:13,14).

v.21 ... and their senseless hearts were darkened.

Their "*hearts*" (KARDIA) meaning: fig: the thoughts or feelings of the mind become "*senseless*" (ASUNETOS) meaning: unintelligent, without understanding. In other words, their hearts were transformed and now became "*darkened*" (SKOTIZO), meaning: to obscure, darken. The power of sin made them turn from God and, by

doing so, took a stronghold on their hearts. Obscurity veiled their hearts and their minds.

<sup>22</sup> Claiming to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God with the likeness of an image of mortal human beings and birds and quadrupeds and reptiles.

The darkening of their minds and hearts automatically touched the way they saw God. The further away they were from God, the more they thought they were "wise" (SOPHOS), meaning: to be clear, wise. Just like the devil told Eve to eat the fruit so that her eyes would open (Gen. 3:4,5), darkness made them think that they were intelligent. Mankind fell into the devil's snare and instead of becoming wise, they became "fools" (MORAINO), meaning: to become insipid, dull, and foolish. Still, today, mankind, for the most part, continues to believe that they are very wise and have no need of God.

<sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God with the likeness of an image of mortal human beings and birds and quadrupeds and reptiles.

The way they saw God, changed, and this is what mankind did. They "*exchanged*" (ALLASSO), meaning: to make different, change, the glory of God. But God had manifested himself as he was: powerful, eternal, and glorious. But man disliked this and began to make his own representation of who God was. They rejected the true God and made their own idols according to their darkened minds and hearts. They began to make representations of THEIR god (idol). First, we see that they uplifted mankind and placed him on a pedestal by making God into the "*likeness*" (EIKONO meaning: a likeness, representation, resemblance of "*mortal*" (PHTHARTOS) meaning: decayed, perishable, corruptible, "human beings" (ANTHROPOS) meaning: man-faced, a human being. They made God to be like them, making them to be like God!

v.23 ... and birds and quadrupeds and reptiles.

They did not stop there. They continued their descent into foolishness and declared that their god (idol) was also like a bird, quadruped, and reptile. We still see this across the world. Men imagine what God is like and make hideous representations of him. This is called idolatry. God had warned the Jews when he gave them the Ten Commandments, not to do such a thing:

Exodus 20

3 "You shall have no other gods before Me.

4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;  
 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,  
 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.  
 (NKJV)

It only took a short while of being without the leadership of Moses for the Jews to melt their jewellery and make their own representation of the invisible God - a golden calf (Ex. 32).

<sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them over in the desires of their hearts to immorality, *that* their bodies would be dishonored among themselves, <sup>25</sup> who exchanged the truth of God with a lie, and worshiped and served the creation rather than the Creator, who is blessed for eternity. Amen.

Seeing that man rejected God, the Lord took action and "*gave them over*" (PARADIDOMI), meaning: to surrender, to yield up, deliver. It is as though God's protection and shield against the darkness of evil were taken away and mankind was surrendered to their own hearts (KARDIA), meaning: fig: the thoughts or feelings of their mind. This is the fruit that came out of this. First we see "*immorality*" (AKATHARSIA), meaning: impurity, moral uncleanness. They became immoral in their thoughts and in their actions. Holiness was set apart and replaced by wickedness, depravity, and profanity. Second, they "*dishonored*" (ATIMAZO), meaning: to render infamous, shame, despise, their bodies. They did things with their bodies that were immoral in the eyes of the Lord. We will see this later on.

Because they had exchanged God's truth and made a lie of it, they became chained down by darkness and began, probably without first knowing it, to "*worship*" (SEBAZOMAI), meaning: to venerate, adore, worship; and also to "*serve*" (LATREUO), meaning: to minister, do the service, the "*creation*" (KTISIS), meaning: a building, a creation, a creature. Man was created to live in close harmony with the Lord God, to honor, glorify, and serve him. But now mankind was serving the created things instead of the creator (KTIZO), meaning: to fabricate, create, propriety of.

This is a total rejection and rebellion towards the Lord God, who should be "*blessed*" (EULOGETOS), meaning: adorable, blessed, and sanctified, in our hearts. Not only for

our present life here on earth, but for all "eternity" (AION), meaning: an age, perpetuity, forever and ever. You can say that mankind really messed-up!

## 06 - *The consequence of being guilty*

Romans 1:26-32

<sup>26</sup> Because of this, God gave them over to degrading passions, for their females exchanged the natural relations for those contrary to nature, <sup>27</sup> and likewise also the males, abandoning the natural relations with the female, were inflamed in their desire toward one another, males with males committing the shameless deed, and receiving in themselves the penalty that was necessary for their error. <sup>28</sup> And just as they did not see fit *to recognize God*, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do the things *that are not proper*, <sup>29</sup> being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greediness, malice, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malevolence. *They are gossipers*, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boasters, contrivers of evil, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> senseless, faithless, unfeeling, unmerciful, <sup>32</sup> who, *although they* know the requirements of God, that those who do such things are worthy of death, not only do they do the same *things*, but also they approve of those who do *them*.

(LEB)

We have seen in our last section that the minds and hearts of mankind have fallen into spiritual darkness. We have also seen that there are natural consequences when a person turns his back on the Lord and walks away from him. Paul continues to write concerning the fall of mankind and its effect on him.

<sup>26</sup> Because of this, God gave them over to degrading passions, for their females exchanged the natural relations for those contrary to nature, <sup>27</sup> and likewise also the males, abandoning the natural relations with the female, were inflamed in their desire toward one another, males with males committing the shameless deed, and receiving in themselves the penalty that was necessary for their error.

These verses deal with the depravity of man in the sexual domain. Although there are other deviations that are mentioned in the Old Testament, Paul places emphasis on one of them: homosexuality within both sexes. It may be that Paul chose to write about this consequence because of the moral perversion that dominated Rome in Paul's day. Here is an article taken from the website called "IMPERIUM ROMANUM":

*It was socially acceptable for a free-born Roman to have sex with a woman or a man assuming a dominant role. Both women and young men were perceived as natural objects of desire. Outside of marriage, a man could have sex with slaves (or slaves), prostitutes (who were usually slaves) and the so-called infames (the restricted man). It*

*did not matter with which gender the Roman indulged in, until he did not exceed certain social norms. For example, it was immoral to have sex with another citizen's free-born wife, his daughter by marriage, his underage son, or the man himself.*

<sup>26</sup> Because of this, God gave them over to degrading passions, for their females exchanged the natural relations for those contrary to nature,

When Paul writes, "*Because of this*" he is referring to the fact that mankind has changed the truth of God and worshipped the creatures instead of the creator (v.24,25). We have already seen that Paul opens up the subject of deviant sexuality in verse 24, and he now continues. God did something and that is "*gave them over*" (PARADIDOMI), meaning: to surrender, yield up, give over. This is the same Greek word that we find in v. 24. This time, God gave them over to "*degrading*" (ATIMIA), which means: disgrace, dishonor, shame, vile. We can see that this is a result of living in darkness rather than being in the light. It was their "*passions*" (PATHOS), meaning: a passion, affection, or lust that became "*degrading*".

Paul speaks of women who "*exchanged*" (MATALLASSO), which means: "to exchange, change). But what was changed? Their "*natural*" (PHUSIKOS) means: physical, natural, instinctive. So something that was natural changed and it was their natural "*relations*" (CHESIS), meaning: employment, especially of sexual intercourse. It had been ordained from the very beginning when God had created a man and a woman in the Garden of Eden. They were told to be fruitful (Gen. 1:26-28). This was, and still is, the model of sexual intimacy for the children of Adam to enjoy. Sin intervened and, among other things, changed what was originally perfect. Now their natural relations have changed for those "*contrary to nature*". The word "*contrary*" gives the idea of being "*against*" the natural course of things. No one can claim that female-to-female sexual intimacy is "*natural*"; God says it isn't.

<sup>27</sup> and likewise also the males, abandoning the natural relations with the female, were inflamed in their desire toward one another, males with males committing the shameless deed, and receiving in themselves the penalty that was necessary for their error.

Contrary to the Roman point of view (that a dominant male could have sexual relations with a submissive person, male or female, with certain exceptions), Paul now writes concerning men. He begins by writing "*Likewise*" (HOMOIOS), meaning: similarly, likewise, so. Verse 27 is the natural extension of verse 26, it is the flip side of the same coin. He speaks of "*the males*" (ARRHEN), meaning: male, man. It seems that they did

the same by "abandoning" (APIEIMI), meaning: forsaking, laying aside, leaving. So they left aside "natural relations". These are the same Greek words that Paul used for women. The men did as the women; they abandoned the natural use of sexual intercourse with the opposite sex "*with the female*".

What happened? How did this occur? Paul writes that men became "*inflamed*" (EKKAIO), meaning: to inflame deeply, burn in their "*desire*" (OREXIS), meaning: excitement of the mind, longing, lust. Their eyes turned to the same sex, and their sexual desires burned inside for one another. There is no mistake, for Paul writes "males with males" (ARRHEN), meaning: male, man. This led to "*committing*" (KATERGAZOMAI), meaning: to work fully, to finish, their burning lust for the same sex and pushed them to act upon their thoughts. Paul writes that they committed the "*shameless deed*" (ASCHEMOSUNE), meaning: indecency, shame. As we can see for a man to abandon the natural use of the female in sexual relationships by turning to our own kind, is both indecent and immoral.

v.27 ... and receiving in themselves the penalty that was necessary for their error.

When men or women have such relationships, there is a price to pay. Here, Paul writes that they will be "*receiving*" (APOLAMBANO), meaning "to receive in full". God will give them their "due reward" for sinning so greatly. This reward will be received "in themselves." We can see that this is a spiritual law, as Paul states in:

#### Galatians 6

7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. (NKJV)

Either their minds or their bodies will suffer the fallout of their desire to sin against the Holy God of Israel. Paul also speaks of the Corinthian believers who revolted against the Lord's Table ( 1Cor. 11:17-34). Because of this, Paul writes that many have become weak and sick and that some have even died!

So people who sinned in such a way (homosexuality) received "*the penalty that was necessary for their error*". The word "*penalty*" (ANTIMISTHIA) means: requital, recompense. Please note that this penalty "*was necessary*." But why was that so? It was necessary for the justice of God. God does not allow sin to go unpunished. If he did, he would not be holy and just.

<sup>28</sup> And just as they did not see fit *to recognize God*, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do the things *that are not proper*, <sup>29</sup> being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greediness, malice, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malevolence. *They are gossipers*, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, contrivers of evil, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> senseless, faithless, unfeeling, unmerciful, <sup>32</sup> who, *although they know the requirements of God*, that those who do such things are worthy of death, not only do they do the same *things*, but also they approve of those who do *them*.

In verses 26 and 27, we see that God gives the reward for man's idolatry by giving them over to their sensual sexual perversions and they reap the rewards that come with this. In our present section, we will see that God continues his judgment on those guilty of sinning.

We first see the act of condemnation. They did not "*see fit to recognize*" (DOKIMAZO), which means: to approve, to allow. So they did not approve of God and what is due to him as creator and sustainer of all things. In other words, they did not accept God. So God acted upon this and "*gave them over*" (PARADIDOMI), meaning: to surrender, to deliver, give up. We see the same word in verse 26 when God gives them over to their wicked sexual passions. This time, God gave them over to a "*debased mind*" (ADOKIMOS NOUS) meaning: an unapproved, worthless intellect or understanding. Their sexual passions became warped and now their minds were twisted. This was actually done so that they would go to

the very limit of their debased minds. To do the things that "*are not proper*" (KATHEKO), meaning: becoming, convenient, fit. In other words, God allowed them to continue to go deeper and deeper where their sins would take them.

Beginning with verse 29, Paul gives a list of examples of what he means by a "*debased mind*". We all know that Paul likes to "list" certain things, and this is one of his longest, if not the longest (I have never compared them for their length). He begins by writing that they were "*filled with all*" (PLEROO), meaning: to make replete, to cram, to level up. In other words, mankind has become fully filled with these sins. This does not mean that every person has all of these sins to a full level in their lives. It means that mankind manifests these sins in general.

Unrighteousness (ADIKIA) meaning: injustice, morally wrongfulness.

Wickedness (PONERIA) meaning: depravity, malice, iniquity, wickedness.

Greediness (PLEONEXIA) meaning: avarice, greediness.

Malice (KAKIA) meaning: badness, depravity, malice.

Full of envy (METOS PHTHONOS) meaning: replete of ill will, jealousy, envy.

Murder (PHONOS) meaning: to slay, murderer, slaughter.

Strife (ERIS) meaning: a quarrel, wrangling, contention.

Deceit (DOLOS) meaning: decoy, a trick, a bait, deceit.

Malevolence (KAKOETHEIA) meaning: bad character, malignity.

Gossipers (PSITHURISTES) meaning: a secret communicator, whisperer.

Slanderers (KATALALOS) meaning: to talk against, slanderers.

Haters of God (THEOSTUGES) meaning: hateful to God, impious.

Insolent (HUBRISTES) meaning: an insulter, injurious.

Arrogant (HUPEREPHANOS): meaning: appearing above others, haughty.

Boasters: (ALAZON) meaning: braggart, boaster.

Contrivers of evil (EPHEURETES KAKOS) meaning: inventors of evil, depraved, wicked things.

Disobedient to parents (APEITHES GONEUS) meaning: not perusable, contumacious to a parent.

Senseless (ASUNETOS) meaning: unintelligent, foolish.

Faithless (ASUNTHETOS) meaning: covenant breaker.

Unfeeling (ASTORGOS) meaning: hard-hearted towards family members.

Unmerciful (ANELEEMON) meaning: merciless.

<sup>32</sup> who, *although they* know the requirements of God, that those who do such things are worthy of death, not only do they do the same *things*, but also they approve of those who do *them*.

They "know" (EPIGINOSKO), meaning: to become fully acquainted with. No one can say "I did not know or I was not aware of". God says that you fully knew that what you were doing was wrong. In chapter two, Paul will speak of our conscience that "speaks" to us, telling us about our actions. The word "*requirements*" (DIKAIOMA) means: a statute, a decision, or an ordinance. This is what we know, as we will later see, that the Law of God is in our hearts.

Because they "*know the requirements of God*", it is written that they are "worthy" (AXIOS) meaning: desiring, due reward, worthy of "*death*" ( THANATOS) meaning: death. First is the spiritual death, which is the separation of man and God; and then there is the second death, which is hell (Rev. 2:11; 20:6,14; 21:8).

Imagine, they know that it is wrong before the Lord God and not only do they "do the same" (POIEO) meaning: to make or do, abide, agree that it is wrong, they also "*approve*" (SUNEUDOKEO) meaning: to assent, to have pleasure in those that "do them" (PRASSO) meaning: to practice, to accomplish, commit!

They encourage and applaud the sinfulness of others!

## 07 - *The Impartiality of God towards the moralists*

Romans 2:1-16

**2** Therefore you are without excuse, O man, every one *of you* who passes judgment. For in that which you pass judgment on someone else, you condemn yourself, for you who are passing judgment are doing the same *things*. <sup>2</sup> Now we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who do such things. <sup>3</sup> But do you think this, O man who passes judgment on those who do such things, and who does the same *things*, that you will escape the judgment of God? <sup>4</sup> Or do you despise the wealth of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? <sup>5</sup> But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you are storing up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, <sup>6</sup> who will reward each one according to his works: <sup>7</sup> to those who, by perseverance in good work, seek glory and honor and immortality, eternal life, <sup>8</sup> but to those *who act* from selfish ambition and who disobey the truth, but who obey unrighteousness, wrath and anger. <sup>9</sup> *There will be* affliction and distress for every *human being* who does evil, of the Jew first and of the Greek, <sup>10</sup> but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and to the Greek. <sup>11</sup> For *there* is no partiality with God.

<sup>12</sup> For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. <sup>13</sup> For it is not the hearers of the law *who are* righteous in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be declared righteous. <sup>14</sup> For whenever the Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature the things of the law, these, *although they* do not have the law, are a law to themselves, <sup>15</sup> who show the work of the law written on their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts *one* after another accusing or even defending them <sup>16</sup> on the day when God judges the secret things of people, according to my gospel, through Christ Jesus.

(LEB)

In this section, Paul brings arguments against those who see themselves as highly moral and above the judgment of God. There have always been people who see themselves as better than others while, at the same time, in the hidden realm, they commit the same sins that others do.

<sup>1</sup> Therefore you are without excuse, O man, every one *of you* who passes judgment. For in that which you pass judgment on someone else, you condemn yourself, for you

**who are passing judgment are doing the same *things*.<sup>2</sup> Now we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who do such things.<sup>3</sup> But do you think this, O man who passes judgment on those who do such things, and who does the same *things*, that you will escape the judgment of God?**

In our last section, we left mankind not only inclined to sin but also encouraging others to do so. So Paul continues by writing that man is "*without excuse*" (ANAPOLOGETOS), meaning: indefensible, without excuse. As we have already said, there will be no excuses before the Lord God at the judgment of the great white throne (or the last judgment if you prefer). If you think you can still get away with sinning because you are brighter than others, I have bad news because Paul writes (just for you to really understand) "*every one of you*"-that includes you and me.

Here Paul specifically speaks to those "*who passes judgment*" (KRINO), meaning: to distinguish, to try, condemn, and punish. Some people just love to look at the lives of others and condemn them for this and that. Not missing an opportunity to think of how they failed. Paul explains what happens to moral people who see people sin or fail and pass judgment.

**v.1 ... you condemn yourself, for you who are passing judgment are doing the same *things*.**

Paul writes, "you condemn" (KATAKRINOO), meaning: to judge against, sentence, damnation. When we judge others because we believe that we are morally better than they are, we are actually bringing judgment against ourselves! Why is that so? Because you "are doing" (PRASSO), meaning: to practice, perform repeatedly. Better watch out all of you moral people out there who think that you are better than others and are swift to point out their sins. It seems that you have forgotten that you do the same yourself! Unfortunately, we have seen this over and over again. Preachers who preach "hell and brimstone fire" against sin and then one day you find out that they were caught in some financial, sexual, or moral scandal!

**<sup>2</sup> Now we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who do such things.**

Here, Paul juxtaposes the judgment of these people with that of the Lord. Paul writes, "we know" (EIDO), meaning: to know, to be aware, to have knowledge. Paul was certain of what he was going to say, and there is no doubt "*that the judgment of God is according to truth*". The judgment of man is false because he sins just like the others,

but the judgment of God is according to "truth" (ALETHEIA), meaning: truth, true, verily. His judgment is "against", It is not in favor or favorable towards "*those who do such things*". This should dissuade people from judging others on moral grounds. They should listen to what Jesus said about this:

### Luke 6

**41 "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye?**

**42 "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye.**

**(NKJV)**

Please remember that this section is for people who believe that they are morally better than others. It does not say that we can never pass judgment on what we see others doing. It says that if you bring judgment make sure that when doing so you are not doing the same thing!

**<sup>3</sup> But do you think this, O man who passes judgment on those who do such things, and who does the same *things*, that you will escape the judgment of God?**

In verse one, Paul writes that men are without excuse. In verse two, there is the warning of God's judgment and in verse three, Paul, once more, speaks of judgment.

Paul writes, "Do you think" (LOGIZOMAI), meaning: to take an inventory of. Do you really think you have processed or analyzed your thoughts about this? You pass a moral judgment against those who sin and you "do such things" (TOIOUTOS), meaning: truly this, of this sort, such - you do exactly the same thing. The only difference is that it is not publicly known. Do you think you will "escape" (EKPHEUGO), meaning: to flee out, escape the "judgment" (KRIMA), meaning: a decision for or against, avenge, of the Lord God? One can see the stupidity of such thinking.

**<sup>4</sup> Or do you despise the wealth of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?**

Why would people do such a thing? It seems that one of the reasons is that they "despise" (KATAPHRONEO), meaning: to think against. They despise the Lord God and

the "wealth" (PLOUTOS), meaning: wealth, money, abundance, riches, all three things that he offers.

The first is "kindness" (CHRESTOTES), meaning: usefulness, gentleness, excellence in character. They don't consider or care about the Lord's kindness to them. The second is "forbearance" (ANOCHE), meaning: self-restraint, tolerance. In fact, they abused his self-restraint against their sins. They think that God doesn't see, or he doesn't really care, so he won't do anything. Third, "patience" (MAKROTHUMIA), meaning: longanimity, patience. They despise the fact that the Lord God is patient towards them;

One of the reasons why they think this way is "*not knowing*" (AGNOEO), meaning: not to know, to ignore. They willingly ignore the "*kindness*" (CHRESTOS), meaning: better, easy, good, kind, of the Lord God. The kindness of God has one purpose in this verse, and that is to "*leads*" (AGO), meaning: to lead, to bring, you to "*repentance*" (METANOIA), meaning: the reversal of one's decision. The kindness of God should touch the hearts of people and draw them to the Lord, but in the case that we have before us, people simply did not care. They even despised this.

This is a grave warning for everyone. May we understand that God's patience and kindness are given to us for us to draw near to him in repentance.

**<sup>5</sup> But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you are storing up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, <sup>6</sup> who will reward each one according to his works: <sup>7</sup> to those who, by perseverance in good work, seek glory and honor and immortality, eternal life, <sup>8</sup> but to those *who act* from selfish ambition and who disobey the truth, but who obey unrighteousness, wrath and anger. <sup>9</sup> *There will be* affliction and distress for every *human being* who does evil, of the Jew first and of the Greek, <sup>10</sup> but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and to the Greek. <sup>11</sup> For *there* is no partiality with God.**

Here we see that Paul brings a warning to those who do such things. He speaks of their "*stubbornness*" (SKLEROTES), meaning: callousness, hardness, stubbornness. And also their "*unrepentant*" (AMETANOETOS), meaning: unrepentant, impenitent. There was something about them that was callous and hard, something that was also unapologetic, and that was their "*heart*" (KARDIA), meaning: fig, the thought or feelings. As we have seen, sin has warped their hearts.

**v.5 ... , you are storing up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God,**

This is what happens when your heart is unrepentant towards the Living God. Through creation, he has manifested himself and his character. He has manifested his patience and kindness toward you, and your reaction is to turn your back on him. The natural consequence is that you are "*storing up*" (THESAURIZO), meaning: to amass or reserve, lay-up. Like a squirrel storing up nuts for the winter season, unrepentant hearts are storing up "wrath" (ORGE), meaning: fig, punishment, anger, vengeance, wrath. Paul is speaking of the coming "day" (HEMERA), meaning: the time space between dawn and dark. There is a coming day of wrath. Describing his vision of the end-times on the isle of Patmos, this is what the apostle John wrote about this great judgment day that Paul refers to:

**Revelation 20**

**11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**

**(NKJV)**

That which is called "the judgment of the great white throne" will manifest to all the "righteous judgment" (DIKAIOKRISIA), meaning: a just sentence, of the Lord God upon all sinners.

If you have not repented of your sins, I would like to encourage you to come to Christ and repent, asking him to come and save you.

**<sup>6</sup> who will reward each one according to his works: <sup>7</sup> to those who, by perseverance in good work, seek glory and honor and immortality, eternal life, <sup>8</sup> but to those *who act* from selfish ambition and who disobey the truth, but who obey unrighteousness, wrath and anger.**

At this judgment God will "reward" (APODIDOMI), meaning: to give away, deliver, give over. He will give everyone the fruits of their decision towards his patience and kindness, which calls them to repent. Again, we see that there is no escaping this judgment for it is written "each one" (HEKATOS), meaning: each or every. Your social standing, your riches, your intellect, your philanthropic deeds or your religion will DO YOU NO GOOD - you will be judged. Jesus said:

### John 3

**36 "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."  
(NKJV)**

Paul says that there are only two sides you can stand on, Jesus spoke of the separation between the sheep and the goats (Mat. 25:32-34). On one side you have those found in verse seven. Those who by "*perseverance*" (HUPOMONE) meaning: cheerful or hopeful endurance, in "good works" (AGATHOS EUPOII) meaning: good well-doing. These are the ones who have come to the Lord. They have been attracted by God's love, patience, and grace towards their sinful state and have become disciples of Christ.

They do good not to acquire salvation, for Christ has done that in their place. Rather, they seek "*glory*" (DOXA) meaning: glory in a wide application, and also "*honor*" (TIME) meaning "value, esteem, dignity. They also seek "*immortality*" (APHTHRISIA), meaning: incorruptibility, immortality, and also "*eternal life*" (AIONIOS ZOE), meaning: perpetual life.

To understand this verse, we must come back to verse six, where it is written "who will reward". Paul is speaking of the rewards of God to those who have answered his call to repentance. Those who have been "born again" receive the Spirit of God as promised. Being filled with the Holy Spirit, a change of heart occurs and true believers now seek differently in life. We see that they seek to do good deeds and live a life of glory and honor. The reward that the Lord God offers is immortality and eternal life.

**<sup>8</sup> but to those *who act* from selfish ambition and who disobey the truth, but who obey unrighteousness, wrath and anger.**

The second group, those who refuse God's calling, is found in verse eight. We can see the difference in lifestyles. They act with "selfish ambition" (ERITHEIA), meaning: strife, contentious. They lead a controversial life, thinking only of themselves and leaving God out of their lives. They also "*disobey*" (APEITHEO), meaning: to disbelieve, be

disobedient, the "truth" (ALETHEIA), meaning: true, verily, of the Living God. They live their lives as they wish, disobeying and rebelling against God. Their darkened hearts approve of this. What they obey are three things. The first is "*unrighteousness*" (THUMOS), which means: fierceness, passion, and wrath. Second is "*wrath*" (ORGE), meaning: desire, violent passion, punishment. The third word is "anger" (ORGE), which means "desire, violent passion, punishment." As you can see, both groups of people seek to live very different lives.

**<sup>9</sup> *There will be affliction and distress for every human being who does evil, of the Jew first and of the Greek,* <sup>10</sup> *but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and to the Greek.* <sup>11</sup> *For there is no partiality with God.***

Paul sums up what he just wrote. There will be a reward of "*affliction*" (THLIPSIS), meaning: pressure, affliction, anguish and "*distress*" (STENOCHORIA), meaning: narrowness of room, distress. Once again, there is no way out of this judgment if you reject salvation. For every "Human being" (PSUCHE ANTHROPOS) means: breath, soul spirit of a man-faced person who "does" (KATERGAZOMAI) meaning: to work fully, accomplish, "evil" (KAKOS) meaning: worthless, depraved, wickedness, evil. Now to manifest that this judgment is for everybody, Paul writes, "*of the Jew first and of the Greek*". As we have seen before, this embodies ALL OF MANKIND.

For the second group, which is found in verse ten, their reward is threefold. First, "*glory*" (DOXA), which means: dignity, honor, praise. The second is "*honor*" (TIME), which means: a value, esteem, and honor. The third reward is "*peace*" (EIRENE), which means: to be peaceful, to be at peace.

**v.10 ... to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and to the Greek. <sup>11</sup> For there is no partiality with God.**

These rewards are for the person who "*does good*" (ERGAZOMAI AGATHOS), which means: to be engaged in doing good. We have seen that this group of people are the ones who have embraced God because of his patience, kindness, and grace. Again, Paul writes "to the Jew first and to the Greek." Why does Paul write this last phrase? Because "there is no partiality with God". The word "*partiality*" (PROSOPOLEPSIA) means: favoritism, partiality. God is just and will do justice in a righteous and non prejudicial way.

**<sup>12</sup> For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. <sup>13</sup> For it is not the hearers of**

**the law *who are* righteous in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be declared righteous.** <sup>14</sup> For whenever the Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature the things of the law, these, *although they* do not have the law, are a law to themselves, <sup>15</sup> who show the work of the law written on their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts *one* after another accusing or even defending them <sup>16</sup> on the day when God judges the secret things of people, according to my gospel, through Christ Jesus.

Paul will now show in what way God is impartial with mankind. He will talk about sinners, which we all are.

**<sup>12</sup> For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.**

There is no numerical limit to "as many as" (HOSOS), meaning "as much as, all that. This first group of people that God is impartial with are the ones who "*have sinned*" (HAMARTANO), meaning: to miss the mark, offend, sin. This is the group of people who all have something in common, and that is that they are sinners. Their particularity is that they have sinned "*without law*" (ANOMOS), meaning: lawlessly, without law. Because God had not given them the Law, this group of people is known as the Greeks (non-Jews). So the people will "*perish*" (APOLLUMI), meaning: to destroy, die, perish, "*without law*" (ANOMOS), which is the same Greek word as above. The Gentiles who do not have the law will be judged without the law. We will see this explained in verse fourteen.

**v.12 ... and as many as have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.**

The second group of people mentioned are also sinners, but this time they have sinned. Notice again "*as many*" it is the same Greek word as in the first part of verse twelve; - it is limitless and all in this group fit in. These are the ones who have sinned "*under the law*" (NOMOS), meaning: regulations, a principle, law. So this group of sinners is the Jewish nation, for they are the ones that have received the law through Moses. These people will be "judged" (KRINO) meaning: to distinguish, decide, or condemn, by the "law" (NOMOS) meaning: regulations, a principle, or law. As for this group, they have received the law and they will be judged according to the law.

**<sup>13</sup> For it is not the hearers of the law *who are* righteous in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be declared righteous.**

Paul opens up what we could call a theological concept that might be new for his readers. He writes "IT IS NOT" which is easy to understand. It is not the "*hearers*" (AKROATES), meaning: merely hearing. Now this is VERY IMPORTANT, it is not those who only hear the "law", here we are speaking of the law of Moses, who are "*righteous*" (DIKAIOS), meaning: innocent, holy, or just in the sight of God. In other words: if you just hear the law of God, that DOES NOT make you right before God! Then what does make you just before the Lord? Paul writes, "*but the doers*" (POIETES) meaning: a performer of the "law" who will be "*declared righteous*" (DIKAIOS) meaning: to render just or innocent. Many are those in the past and in the present who believe that being in a synagogue and listening when the law is spoken is sufficient to be a "good Jew" and just before the Lord. The Bible says NO, this does not justify you. Just as going to church for a non-Jew does not make them just also. It is when you are actually doing what the law says that will bring justification. And we all know that no one is capable of perfectly keeping the law of God - no one. Amen that the Messiah came and lived a perfect life so he could give me his righteousness. Paul will explain this later.

**<sup>14</sup> For whenever the Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature the things of the law, these, *although they do not have the law, are a law to themselves, <sup>15</sup> who show the work of the law written on their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts one after another accusing or even defending them <sup>16</sup> on the day when God judges the secret things of people, according to my gospel, through Christ Jesus.***

Paul explains what he meant in the first part of verse twelve concerning the Gentiles being judged without the law. How can this be? Paul explains that when a Gentile "*who does not have the law*" (so he is without the law given to Moses), does by "*nature*" (PHUSIS), meaning: growth by germination, what the law says. then that Gentile is under "the law" (NOMOS): law, regulations, a principle, because it became a "law" to themselves naturally. Although the Gentiles have not received the law, they naturally abide by it without knowing it. They do not steal, kill, and so forth. They wouldn't even think about it.

**<sup>15</sup> who show the work of the law written on their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts one after another accusing or even defending them**

Paul continues to prove what he meant. Paul writes that Gentiles "*show*" (ENDEIGMA) meaning: an indication, manifestation, the "*work*" (ERGON) meaning: to work, toil, labor, of the law "on" (GRAPTOS) meaning: inscribed, written, their "hearts" (KARDIA)

meaning: the heart, fig: the thoughts or feelings of the mind. A Gentile is patient, loving, and caring. By doing so, he reflects that the law of God is printed in his heart, even though he is not Jewish.

Paul also writes that their "*conscience*" (SUNEIDESIS) means: co-perception, moral consciousness. Bear "*witness*" (SUMMARTUREO), meaning: to testify jointly, collaborate with their "*thoughts*" (LOGISMOS), meaning: computation, reasoning, thought. And they either "*accuse*" (KATEGOREO), meaning: to charge with some offense, accuse, or they "*defend*" (APOLOGEOMAI), which means to give an account, make a defense. The proof that the law of God is in their hearts is that when they do something, their conscience will either accuse the person or defend them.

**<sup>16</sup> on the day when God judges the secret things of people, according to my gospel, through Christ Jesus.**

This verse links back to the impartial judgment of God towards the Jews and Gentiles. The Gentile will not be able to say, "I did not know the law, I am not a Jew." The Lord God will say you are not a Jew but the law given to the Jews was inscribed in your heart. The proof of this is that your conscience troubled you when you did something that was against my law.

This is what will appear when God "judges" (KRINO) meaning: to distinguish, to decide, to condemn, the "secret things" (KRUPTE), meaning: a hidden place, a secret, of people. All things will come to the open before the Lord. No one will be able to hide anything from him or have an excuse for his sin.

Finally, Paul writes, "according to my Gospel". So it is according to the Good News that he received through Jesus Christ the Messiah.

## *08 - The impartiality of God towards the Jews*

Romans 2:17-24

<sup>17</sup> But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God <sup>18</sup> and know his will and approve the things that are superior, *because you* are instructed by the law, <sup>19</sup> and are confident *that* you yourself are a guide of the blind, a light of those in darkness, <sup>20</sup> an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth in the law. <sup>21</sup> Therefore, the one who teaches someone else, do you not teach yourself? The one who preaches not to steal, do you steal? <sup>22</sup> The one who says not to commit adultery, do you commit adultery? The one who abhors idols, do you rob temples? <sup>23</sup> Who boast in the law, by the transgression of the law you dishonor God! <sup>24</sup> For just as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

(LEB)

We will see in this section that it was not because the Jewish nation had been chosen to be God's light to the nations (Isaiah 46:2; 49:6) and had received the Law of Moses and God's oracles that they were automatically righteous before the Lord.

<sup>17</sup> But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God <sup>18</sup> and know his will and approve the things that are superior, *because you* are instructed by the law, <sup>19</sup> and are confident *that* you yourself are a guide of the blind, a light of those in darkness, <sup>20</sup> an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

In these verses, the apostle Paul describes what the Jews thought of themselves. Let us not forget that Paul took pride in his Jewish inheritance, as we see in:

Acts 22

1 "Brethren and fathers, hear my defense before you now."

2 And when they heard that he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, they kept all the more silent. Then he said:

3 "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.

4 "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women,

5 "as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.  
(NKJV)

So let's look at what the Jews of Paul's day identified themselves as:

1. *A Jew: A Jew*: This was very important because if they were of Jewish descent, they were children of Abraham, to whom God Almighty had given the promises of a land and a people. As Jews, they were the heirs promised by God, for they were of the seed of Abraham.

2. *Rely on the Law*: The word "*rely*" (EPANAPAUOMAI) means: to settle, to rest upon. This is the foundation of their religious and civil life. These laws directed every aspect of their lives. They knew that it was perfect (Ps. 19:7) and that they should walk in it to be blessed (Ps. 119:1). Unfortunately, by the time Jesus had come, the religious elite had twisted the law of God to a point where it had become a burden for the people. That is why Jesus called the people to him and said in Mat. 11:30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

3. *Boast in God*: Boast (KAUCHAOMAI) means: to vaunt, glory, boast. They were so proud to say that the God of Israel was the only true God (which is true). But their attitude towards non-Jews was not what God desired, as we see Jesus teach in his parable of the "Good Samaritan" (Luke 10:29-37). They boasted in God but were not the spiritual light to the nations.

4. *Know his will*: God's will had been revealed to his people, mainly through Moses and the prophets who were sent to them. They were told to search (Isaiah 34:16), to hear or read (Ex. 24:7), to remember (Joshua 1:13) and to treasure (Ps. 119:162) God's word (which is his will).

5. *Approve the things that are superior*: In other words, they were in accord with the revelation of God's word. For them, this was "*superior*" (DIAPHERO), meaning: to surpass, be better, excellence. They knew and accepted that God's word was far superior to anything in this world. They understood this.

6. *Because you are instructed by the law*: The word "*instructed*" (KATECHEO) means: to indoctrinate, instruct, teach. Since their very youth, they had been instructed in the

ways of the Lord God, either by their parents (Deut. 6:7) or through all the spiritual ceremonies and feasts (Ex. 23:14) they were called to attend.

7. *And are confident that you yourself are a guide of the blind*: Here we see that they really thought a lot about themselves. They were "*confident*" (PEITHO), meaning: to convince, have confidence. They were really convinced that they knew God and were the best nation in the world. They even saw themselves as a "*guide*" (HODEGOS), meaning: a conductor, leader guide, for the "*blind*" (TUPHLOS), which means opaque, blind. It must be understood that it is the spiritually blind that are spoken of. They might have thought that they were guides for the blind, but Jesus told them that they were "*blind guides*" (Mat. 5:16-19).

8. *A light of those in darkness*: The word "*light*" (PHOS) means: to shine, luminous, light. As Jesus told his disciples to be the "*light of the world*" (Mat. 5:14-16) so the Jewish nation was supposed to be a beacon of light for all the world to see. Again, this must be understood in a spiritual sense.

9. *An instructor of the foolish*: They also saw themselves as "*instructor*" (PAIDEUTES), meaning: a trainer, a teacher, of the "*foolish*" (APHRON), which means: mindless, stupid, foolish. Unfortunately, when they did this, their students became worse than they were! We see Jesus condemning the religious people for doing this:

#### Matthew 23

15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.  
(NKJV)

10. *A teacher of the immature*: The word "*teacher*" ( DIDASKALOS), means: an instructor, master, or teacher. They taught those whom they considered "*immature*" (NEPIOS), meaning "an infant or an immature person.

v.20 ... having the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

This last section is like a summary of the ten facets Paul just described. They saw themselves as being "*the embodiment*" (MORPHOSIS), meaning: formation, form, appearance. They saw themselves as the outward expression of "*knowledge*" (GNOSIS), meaning: knowing, science, knowledge, and also of the "*truth*" (ALETHEIA), which

means: truth, verily, in the "law" (NOMOS), meaning: regulations, principle, law. If you are the embodiment of knowledge and truth, then who can say that you are wrong - no one! You can see why Jesus called the religious elite hypocrites on many occasions (Mat. 22:18; 23:13,14,15,23,25,27,29)

<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the one who teaches someone else, do you not teach yourself? The one who preaches not to steal, do you steal? <sup>22</sup> The one who says not to commit adultery, do you commit adultery? The one who abhors idols, do you rob temples? <sup>23</sup> Who boast in the law, by the transgression of the law you dishonor God! <sup>24</sup> For just as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

The word "therefore" is a conjunction which directly relates what has been said in v.17-20 with v.21-24. In other words, Paul writes: because you see yourselves in such a way, why then do you act this way? Let's look at what irritated Paul about them.

<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the one who teaches someone else, do you not teach yourself?

This was the main problem. They taught others but refused to be taught by their own teachings. Paul writes: "do you not teach yourself?" It seems that the law that was taught applied ONLY to the ones they were teaching and not to themselves. We already saw that they were "puffed up" with the idea that they embodied knowledge and truth. The Corinthian believers also had this problem. On four occasions, the apostle Paul writes about not being "puffed up" (1 Cor. 4:6,18,19; 5:2). Paul goes on to give examples of what he is talking about.

1. "*The one who preaches not to steal, do you steal?*" There seemed to be people who were very righteous and taught others that they should not steal (Ex. 20:15). As a student what does it tell you when your teacher does the opposite of what he teaches you?

2. "*The one who says not to commit adultery, do you commit adultery?*" This is another one of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:14). It seems that it was easier for them to say "don't do this" than to refrain from doing it themselves. Another great example for a teacher.

3. "*The one who abhors idols, do you rob temples?*" They had done this in the past. In the past, those who should have taken care of the temple of God sometimes abandoned their sacred duties and, by doing so, profaned the House of the Lord (Neh. 13:4-11; Mal. 3:8,9; Mat. 21:12,13).

4. "*Who boast in the law, by the transgression of the law you dishonor God!*". This seems to be a general statement. They taught to be good, law abiding, and God fearing people. They said that they were the "light", yet they projected evil and darkness with their "*transgression*" (PARABASIS), meaning: violation, breaking, transgression. They broke the law of God and, by doing so, "*you dishonor*" (ATIMAZO), meaning: to render infamous, dishonor, shame, despise. They brought shame upon the holy name of God, not by teaching the law of God but by making a mockery of it with their lives.

<sup>24</sup> For just as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

This is a quote from the prophet Isaiah:

#### Isaiah 52

4 For thus says the Lord GOD: "My people went down at first Into Egypt to dwell there;  
Then the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.

5 Now therefore, what have I here," says the LORD, "That My people are taken away for nothing? Those who rule over them Make them wail," says the LORD, "And My name is blasphemed continually every day.

6 Therefore My people shall know My name; Therefore they shall know in that day That I am He who speaks: 'Behold, it is I.'"

(NKJV)

Not only was the name of God brought to shame by their actions within the Jewish community, but their spiritual hypocrisy brought Gentiles to mock it also! If the Jews mock or blaspheme the name of God, they will have their due reward as the Gentiles will also. God is not partial.

## *09 - Circumcised or not?*

Romans 2:25-29

<sup>25</sup> For circumcision is of value if you do the law, but if you should be a transgressor of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. <sup>26</sup> Therefore, if the uncircumcised person follows the requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be credited for circumcision? <sup>27</sup> And the uncircumcised person by nature who carries out the law will judge you who, *though provided with the precise written code and circumcision are* a transgressor of the law. <sup>28</sup> For the Jew is not *one outwardly*, nor *is* circumcision *outwardly*, in the flesh. <sup>29</sup> But the Jew *is one inwardly*, and circumcision *is* of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter, whose praise *is* not from people but from God.

(LEB)

In this section, Paul continues his criticism of those who glorified in the law while so easily breaking it. One thing that was certain was that Jews were very proud that they were circumcised. This "sign" that you were a Hebrew was first given to Abraham by the Lord God:

Genesis 17

10 "This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised;  
11 "and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you.

(NKJV)

Ever since Abraham, every male child of his descendants had to be circumcised. If you were a male, this was proof that you were part of God's covenant. It seems that Paul will shake the very foundation of what it means to be Jewish. He begins with a broad statement:

<sup>25</sup> For circumcision is of value if you do the law, but if you should be a transgressor of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

Paul writes concerning the "*value*" (OPHELEO), meaning: to be useful, the benefit of - circumcision. It seems that the value of circumcision is only found "*if you do*" (PRASSO), meaning: to perform repeatedly, to collect, the "*law*" (NOMOS), meaning: regulations, principles, law. This is easily understood. You can glory in the law as long as you abide

by it. The following is also easily understood. Paul writes: "but *if you should be a transgressor of the law,*" the word "transgressor" (PARABATES) means: a violator, transgressor, breaker. Paul declares that if you are circumcised but you break the law (as we have seen the religious elite and those proud of their Jewish inheritance do) something happens! He writes "*your circumcision*" (PERITOME), meaning: circumcision becomes "*uncircumcision*" (AKROBUSTIA), which means: uncircumcision, fig: unregenerate.

<sup>26</sup>Therefore, if the uncircumcised person follows the requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be credited for circumcision?

Led by the Holy Spirit, Paul asks a question that they need to think about. What happens when an "uncircumcised person" (Paul refers to all those who are not Jewish or have not become proselytes and do not bear the sign of the covenant in their flesh), what happens if these people "*follow*" ( PAULASSO), meaning: to watch, to be on guard and persevere, the "requirements" (DIKAIOMA) which means: judgment, righteousness and ordinance, of the law? Suppose a man is not circumcised but he follows what the law says - where does he stand before God? He concluded by saying that even though he is not circumcised, will his following the law be "credited" (LOGIZOMAI), meaning: recon, conclude, for "*circumcision*"? It is as though Paul is saying: you have two people here, one is circumcised and breaks the law, and the other is not circumcised but keeps the law - which one is right before God?

<sup>27</sup>And the uncircumcised person by nature who carries out the law will judge you who, *though provided with the precise written code and circumcision are a transgressor of the law.*

We can know his conclusion by this verse; it is obvious! The uncircumcised are justified before the Lord God because THEY DO what the law requires. This reminds me of one of the teachings of Jesus:

#### Matthew 21

28 "But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.'

29 "He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went.

30 "Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go.

31 "Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.

32 "For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.

(NKJV)

The brother that said he would do the work but did not do "the will of his father" is like the circumcised who also "make believe" they are doing what they ought to do but don't.

If these uncircumcised do by "nature" (PHUSIS), meaning: germination by expansion, nature and naturally, "carries out" (TELEO), meaning to: conclude, accomplish, finish, the law, they will do something astonishing!

v.27 ... will judge you who, *though provided with the precise written code and circumcision are* a transgressor of the law.

They "will judge" (KRINO) to distinguish, conclude, determine - you! This was probably one of the greatest insults that a Jewish person could receive! How could a Gentile, a Pagan at that, ever judge me? I am circumcised, a partaker of the covenant between God and Abraham. You certainly have no right to judge me!

They will, and Paul tells them why. It is because of three things. The first is that they were provided with the "*written code*," which is the Law and the Prophets that are found in the Old Testament. God had given it to them because they were his people. The second is that they also had received "*circumcision*" which we abundantly spoke of. Having these two provisions from God what did they do with it? They became "transgressor of the law". This means that they violated, broke and transgressed the divine Law. That is why the Gentiles who repented and have received Jesus as their Messiah will be able to judge those who "had it all" but were careless with these precious gifts from God.

<sup>28</sup> For the Jew is not *one outwardly*, nor is circumcision *outwardly*, in the flesh. <sup>29</sup> But the Jew is *one inwardly*, and circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter, whose praise is not from people but from God.

Paul ends these few verses by explaining what it really means to be a Jew. He first declares that a Jew is not "*one outwardly*" (PHANEROS), which means: shining, apparent, or external. He then writes, "*nor is circumcision outwardly*". He dares to write that true circumcision is not that which is "*outwardly*", in the flesh. In other words, it is not because you have been circumcised in the flesh that you are a true Jew. Then what is a TRUE Jew?

Paul gives the answer. A Jew "*is one inwardly*" (KRUPTE), which means: a hidden place, cellar, and secret. But where is this hidden circumcision that Paul speaks about? He writes that circumcision is of "*the heart*" (KARDIA), which means the heart and fig: the thoughts or feelings of the mind. This is where the true circumcision lies; it is of the heart and not of the foreskin. How could this be done? Who can circumcise the heart? Paul writes that it was done "*by the Spirit*". It is done by the Holy Spirit, who changes the minds and hearts of true believers. Ezekiel (Ez. 18:31 et 36:26) and Jeremiah (Jer. 31:31-33) both speak about this.

Circumcision was not done by the "*letter*" (GRAMMA), which means: a writing, a note, or a letter. Paul is referring to the law. The law can not change your heart; it only condemns you (Rom. 7:7, Gal. 3:10). If it was done "*by the letter*," man could brag about himself, demonstrating how good and righteous he is. Paul says "no"; it is not by the letter but by the Spirit, and the glory belongs to God who does all of this. May we remember what Paul wrote to the Galatians:

### Galatians 3

23 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

(NKJV)

## 10 - Paul defends God's judgments

Romans 3:1-8

**3** Therefore, what *is* the advantage of the Jew, or what *is* the use of circumcision? <sup>2</sup> Much in every way. For first, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. <sup>3</sup> *What is the result* if some refused to believe? Their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, *will it?* <sup>4</sup> May it never be! But let God be true but every human being a liar, just as it is written,

“In order that you may be justified in your words,  
and may prevail when you are judged.”

<sup>5</sup> But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? God, who inflicts wrath, *is* not unjust, *is he?* (I am speaking according to a human perspective.) <sup>6</sup> May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world? <sup>7</sup> But if by my lying, the truth of God abounded to his glory, why am I also still condemned as a sinner? <sup>8</sup> And *why* not (as we are slandered, and as some affirm that we say), “Let us do evil, in order that good may come *of it?* Their condemnation is just!

In our last section, Paul came to the conclusion that both Jews and Gentiles were no better because both groups of people break the law and, because of that, they will be judged. If you are a Jew, it will be with the law, and if you are a Gentile, with the law that you have in your conscience.

**3** Therefore, what *is* the advantage of the Jew, or what *is* the use of circumcision? <sup>2</sup> Much in every way. For first, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.

Paul asks if there is an "*advantage*" (PERISSOS), which means exceedingly abundant - of being a Jew. Or is the "*use*" (OPHELEIA), meaning usefulness, advantage, or profit, - of being circumcised if it is not the case? If their circumcision is nullified when they sin is there any advantage over the Gentiles? Paul says yes, there is. He writes "*much*" (POLUS), meaning: much, great, and many. Paul writes that they had the privilege of being "*entrusted*" (PISTEUO), meaning: to have faith, to entrust. God entrusted the Jewish nation with his "oracles" (LOGION), meaning: an utterance, oracle.

They were the ones who were entrusted with keeping the word of God. They had what no other nation possessed: the Holy Scriptures, the very words of the Almighty. They were to keep and protect it for future generations.

<sup>3</sup> *What is the result* if some refused to believe? Their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, *will it?* <sup>4</sup> May it never be! But let God be true but every human being a liar, just as it is written,

“In order that you may be justified in your words,  
and may prevail when you are judged.”

Paul continues with his thoughts and asks another question. The Jews had the oracles of God, but some "*refused to believe*" (APISTEO), meaning: to be unbelieving, believe not. Not everyone believed this, so what is "*the result*" of this? Does this mean that the plan of God is ruined? Please note that some believed it and some did not. Is it not the same today? Some people come to Christ and others reject him!

Will those who do not believe short-circuit, or "*nullify*" ( KATARGEO) meaning: abolish, cease, destroy - the "*faithfulness*" (PISTIS) meaning: credence, moral conviction of truth - of God? In other words, can the sin of unbelief deter God from doing what he has promised to do? If man breaks the covenant with God, does God break his covenant with man?

Paul writes "may it never be", which means "let not this be" in Greek. NEVER is the thought of Paul. Paul believed in the unfailing faithfulness of the Lord God to the promises he had given. If you compare humans with God, Paul writes, let God "*be true*" (ALETHES), meaning: true, verily, truth - and every human being called "*a liar*" (PSEUTES), meaning: a falsifier, a liar. In other words, if there is someone you can trust to keep his word, it is not mankind but God, as it is written:

#### Numbers 23

19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?  
(NKJV)

Then Paul quotes Ps. 51:4

“In order that you may be justified in your words,  
and may prevail when you are judged.”

Paul quotes this Psalm of David in which he repented of his sin with Bathsheba when the prophet Nathan confronted him. David was confessing that he was wrong and that God would be just in his judgment against him. God is always just and right in his judgments. The sins of David did not take anything away from God's faithfulness in keeping his covenant.

<sup>5</sup> But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? God, who inflicts wrath, *is* not unjust, *is he?* (I am speaking according to a human perspective.) <sup>6</sup> May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world? <sup>7</sup> But if by my lying, the truth of God abounded to his glory, why am I also still condemned as a sinner? <sup>8</sup> And *why* not (as we are slandered, and as some affirm that we say), "Let us do evil, in order that good may come *of it?*" Their condemnation is just!

Here we have what seems to be a rhetorical question - something to make us really think. In relation to what King David had written in Ps. 51:4, Paul comes up with a mind blowing question. We must remember that David had just testified that his sin was manifesting the righteousness of God. So if our "*unrighteousness*" (ADIKIA: which means a legal or moral injustice) manifests the "righteousness" (DIKAIOKRISIA: which means a just sentence) of God, "*what shall we say?*".

In other words, if God uses my sinful nature to glorify himself by demonstrating his righteousness and holiness, is he not "*unjust*" (ADIKOS: which means unjust, wicked, treacherous) when he inflicts his "wrath" (ORGE: meaning violent passion, anger, wrath) on me? After all, am I not, in a sense, a co-worker with the Lord?

<sup>6</sup> May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world? <sup>7</sup> But if by my lying, the truth of God abounded to his glory, why am I also still condemned as a sinner? <sup>8</sup> And *why* not (as we are slandered, and as some affirm that we say), "Let us do evil, in order that good may come *of it?*" Their condemnation is just!

Paul's answer to this rhetorical question is very strong: - "*May it never be!*". This gives the idea of "let God be found true" in Greek. The question is not what comes out of our sins, the results of them. but the very nature of what sin is - a rebellion against the very nature of God. God judges sin because it is sin, and not depending on whether the sin has, in some way, brought some good.

If this were so, God would not judge my sin of stealing if I would give the proceeds to the poor. Nor could he judge my killing of someone who was a treacherously evil

person because that would bring peace and stop suffering. Sin has to be judged no matter what, and that is what God does.

<sup>7</sup> But if by my lying, the truth of God abounded to his glory, why am I also still condemned as a sinner?

The answer to this question is simply because YOU ARE a sinner. As we will see later on in this chapter, all sins are to be judged. There is no such thing as a "good sin". When we grasp this concept, we should be moved to run to Jesus the Messiah, repent of our sins, and ask Him to become our Savior from the coming judgment. We must also remember that all of this is in the greater context of those who thought that they were righteous before the Lord.

<sup>8</sup> And *why* not (as we are slandered, and as some affirm that we say), "Let us do evil, in order that good may come *of it*?" Their condemnation is just!

Paul explains why he is posing this rhetorical question. It was because some people came to "*affirm*" ( PHEMI: meaning to show, or make known, our thoughts) the following statement: "*Let us do evil, in order that good may come of it?*" Here we see how a heart filled with sin can twist the truth to make oneself feel comfortable with their sin.

The twisted mind says: it's OK to do "*evil*" (KAKOS: meaning something that is worthless, depraved, bad, or evil). Let's do things that are against the desire of God. Let's live our lives the way we want to. Let's do all sorts of depraved and evil things AS LONG as in some way they will manifest the righteousness of God. If this were taken as acceptable, then King David should not have repented of his sin committed with Bathsheba because it manifested the righteousness of God.

Paul ends this section by saying, "*Their condemnation is just!*". The word "just" (ENDIKOS: means in the right, equitable, just) brings an end to the rhetorical question. God is just because he condemns the actual sin and not the result of it.

May we never believe that it is acceptable to sin if we consider that, in some way, it will bring some type of glory to the Lord.

## 11 - *The impartiality of God towards all of mankind*

Romans 3:9-20

<sup>9</sup>What then? Do we have an advantage? Not at all. For we have already charged both Jews and Greeks are all under sin, <sup>10</sup>just as it is written,

*“There is no one righteous, not even one;*  
<sup>11</sup> *there is no one who understands;*  
*there is no one who seeks God.*

<sup>12</sup> *All have turned aside together; they have become worthless;*  
*There is no one who practices kindness;*  
*there is not even one.*

<sup>13</sup> *Their throat is an opened grave;*  
*they deceive with their tongues;*  
*the venom of asps is under their lips,*  
<sup>14</sup> *whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.*  
<sup>15</sup> *Their feet are swift to shed blood;*  
<sup>16</sup> *destruction and distress are in their paths,*  
<sup>17</sup> *and they have not known the way of peace.*  
<sup>18</sup> *The fear of God is not before their eyes.”*

<sup>19</sup>Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those under the law, in order that every mouth may be closed and the whole world may become accountable to God. <sup>20</sup>For by the works of the law *no person will be declared righteous* before him, for through the law *comes* knowledge of sin.

(LEB)

It seems more and more evident that Paul is writing specifically to those who are Jewish, like he is.

<sup>9</sup>What then? Do we have an advantage? Not at all. For we have already charged both Jews and Greeks are all under sin,

The "we" are the descendants of Abraham. Do the Jewish people have an "*advantage*" (PROECHOMAI meaning: to hold ourselves before others.)? Again, Paul is straight forward and says: "*not at all*" (PANTOS meaning: in no event). He reminds his readers that he had already explained that both Jews and Greeks had broken the law of God, either by not following the written law or by breaking the natural laws that everyone

has stored in their hearts. Here we see that God is not partial to anyone who breaks the law, and everybody breaks the law in one way or another. Paul naturally included himself as also being a sinner:

1Tim. 1:15

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

(NKJV)

So, Paul does not want his readers to simply believe that all have sinned, both Jews and Gentiles, just because he says so! He begins to use the Holy Scriptures to prove the point he is making. So he writes: just as it is "*written*," (GRAPHO meaning: to grave, describe, write). We should all have the same attitude as Paul and search the Scriptures to see what they say. This is exactly what the people of Berea did:

Acts 17

10 Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

(NKJV)

So let's take a look at what is written in the Scriptures concerning mankind (Jews and Gentiles) and their sinful nature. Does anyone stand out in the crowd? Are there any exceptions - who do not sin? Paul begins with a general statement:

v.10... "*There is no one righteous, not even one;*

<sup>11</sup> *there is no one who understands;*

*there is no one who seeks God.*

<sup>12</sup> *All have turned aside together; they have become worthless;*

*There is no one who practices kindness;*

*there is not even one.*

Here Paul quotes Ps. 14:1-3

v.10 "*There is no one righteous, not even one.*" Please note that David, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, writes that NO ONE, NOT EVEN ONE, is "*righteous*"

(DIKAIOS meaning: innocent, holy, just). The case is closed. We should not have to go any further. The evidence is before us. This should suffice, but Paul has more to say.

v.11 "*there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God*". Twice it is written NO ONE, This time NO ONE "*understands*" (SUMIEMI meaning: to put together, comprehend). No one really understands God, for we would have to be God to be able to do so. NO ONE "*seeks*" (EKZETEO meaning: to search out, investigate). Our sinful nature naturally points to the things of the flesh and not of the Spirit. If it were not for God calling us to him (like we have seen), we would gladly live in darkness all of our lives.

v.12 "*All have turned aside together; they have become worthless; There is no one who practices kindness; there is not even one.*". This could not be said any better to make us understand that we are all sinners. The writer says: "ALL, NO ONE, NOT EVEN ONE." It's hard not to understand what's written! ALL 'have turned aside' (EKKLINO meaning: to deviate, to go out of the way). We all deviated from the path of holiness that the Lord had given us. Because of this, we have become "*worthless*" (ACHREIOO meaning: to render useless, unprofitable). In our sinful state, we are unprofitable for the service of the Lord. That is why angels, who are profitable for God, are called holy (Mat. 25:31, Luke 9:26, Rev. 14:10).

NO ONE who "*practices*" (POIEO meaning: to make or do) any "*kindness*" (CHRESTOTES meaning: usefulness, goodness, kindness). We need to remember that mankind is compared to the holy law of God, and according to his standard (not ours), we are not kind to one another.

<sup>13</sup>Their throat *is* an opened grave;  
they deceive with their tongues;  
the venom of asps *is* under their lips,

Here Paul refers to two other psalms (5 and 140) written by David. He begins to give a description of what ALL sinners spiritually look like.

v. 13 "*Their throat is an opened grave*". Notice how Paul employs all of the instruments of speech in this verse: throat, tongues, and lips. He is explaining what instrument sin uses to proclaim itself—our speech. Our speech is an "open grave" (ANOIGO TAPHOS meaning: to open a grave or tomb). The first thing you notice when you open a closed tomb is the stench of the rotting flesh. Do you remember when Jesus told people to open the tomb of Lazarus and what his sister told Jesus?

## John 11

38 So Jesus, deeply troubled in heart, came to the place of the dead. It was a hole in the rock, and a stone was over the opening.

39 Jesus said, Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said, Lord, by this time the body will be smelling, for he has been dead four days.

(BBE)

v.13 "*They deceive with their tongues;*" They use their tongues to "deceive" (DOLIOO meaning: to use deceit, to be guileful) people, as Satan did when he deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden. Using deception to lead her astray

v.13 "*The venom of asps is under their lips*" It is "venom" (IOS meaning: venom, poison, rust) that we find on their lips. Not only is their speech like an open grave filled with deceit, it is with poison that their tongues infect you.

v. 14 whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

Please note that the mouths of men and women are "full" (GEMO meaning: to fill entirely, be full). Our mouths could not be any fuller of "*cursing*" (ARA meaning: imprecations, curses) and "*bitterness*" (PIKRIA meaning: acidity, bitterness). This describes the stench (evil) that comes out of our mouths. Does this mean that we ALWAYS speak this way? No! It means that our mouth is an instrument that says these things. For some, it is when something terrible happens, and for others, it is as common as breathing.

<sup>15</sup> Their feet *are* swift to shed blood;

<sup>16</sup> destruction and distress *are* in their paths,

<sup>17</sup> and they have not known the way of peace.

These thoughts are taken from Isaiah 59:7,8. Paul now turns away from our sinful speech and to our feet. Our feet naturally follow the desires of our hearts. They bring us to where we want to be. As we will see, they also describe the state of our hearts.

V.15 "*Their feet are swift to shed blood;*" All we have to do is to look at the history of mankind, we see that wherever they went, there was war. To expand kingdoms, man has "shed blood" (EKCHEO HAIMA meaning: to pour forth or spill blood). From the killing of a noisy neighbor to world wars. Man is "swift" (OXUS meaning: rapid, sharp, swift) to kill his own kind.

v.16 "*destruction and distress are in their paths*". It seems that man destroys everything that is in his path. The word "*destruction*" (SONTRIMNA means: utter fracture, complete ruin). Because of mankind's greed and voracity, which is never satisfied with what he has, nature is being destroyed, and what the Lord gave us as a garden is now more resembling a garbage dump than anything else! This brings "*distress*" (TALAIPORIA meaning: calamity, misery) to the vast majority of mankind. The ways of man are so wicked that destruction and distress exemplify it!

v. 17 "*and they have not known the way of peace.*" Their sin, rather than satisfying them, drives them further and further away from what all of humanity seeks: "*peace*" (EIRENE meaning: quietness, rest, peace). Trying to find peace, they lie and shed blood, they destroy and sow distress. But they do not find it, they "*have not known*" (GINOSKO meaning: to know, to perceive) "*the way of peace*". The word "*way*" (HADOS means: a road) describes well the heart of man: he has lost his way, being cut off from the Lord God. True believers have found the "*way*" as Jesus said:

John 14

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

(NKJV)

Why and how did this happen? Paul refers to Ps. 36:1 to give an answer.

v.18 The fear of God is not before their eyes

Sin not only has an effect on our eyes, feet, tongues, and minds, it also touches our very heart and takes away the "*fear*" (PHOBOS meaning: to be frightened, be alarmed, be afraid) of God, who is the creator and sustainer of all things. This natural and deep respect for the One who has created the universe and tells us that there will be a day of reckoning-is gone! Sin has killed it, and mankind has no regard for the Holy One.

<sup>19</sup> Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those under the law, in order that every mouth may be closed and the whole world may become accountable to God. <sup>20</sup> For by the works of the law *no person will be declared righteous* before him, for through the law *comes* knowledge of sin.

Having proved that ALL OF MANKIND, Jews and Gentiles, are unrighteous before the Lord God, Paul ends this section with a conclusion. He speaks of the "*law*" (NOMOS meaning: regulations, principles, law) and what it says. We have seen that it says that

ALL are condemned because of their sinful ways - that's you and me. Because we are ALL under God's law, one way or another, our mouth "*may be closed*" (PHRASO meaning: to fence in, to block up, to stop). In other words, we (unless we are redeemed by the blood of the New Covenant) will not be able to say a single word in our defence when the great day of judgment comes. The "*whole world*" (KOSMOS meaning: orderly arrangement, the world) may become "*accountable*" (HUPODIKOS meaning: under sentence, condemned) to God. There will be a judgment and no one can escape it. Either Christ has paid for your transgression, or you will have to pay for your own guilt, as it is written:

### John 3

36 He who has faith in the Son has eternal life; but he who has not faith in the Son will not see life; God's wrath is resting on him.

(BBE)

Since this seems to be written mostly for Jewish people or believers, Paul once more makes a vital point.

<sup>20</sup> For by the works of the law *no person will be declared righteous* before him, for through the law *comes* knowledge of sin.

Remember how the Jews believed that their righteousness came from following the law? This was engrained in their minds. It seems that they had forgotten the grace, mercy, and compassion of God for his people. They had set aside God's grace and walked on the road of works of the law. NO PERSON will be "declared" (DIKAIOS meaning: to render just, to be righteous) "before him" by the works of the law (ERGON NOMOS meaning: to work the principles of the law). Why is this so? Why can't the law give me any righteousness before the Lord? First, as we have seen, because I constantly break the law, and second, because "knowledge of sin" (EPIGNOSIS HAMARTIA, meaning: the recognition or full discernment of sin) comes "through the law" or because of the law. In other words, the law can not save me, it can only condemn me because it shows me how great a sinner (breaker of the law) I am. Paul writes:

### Galatians 2

20 I have been put to death on the cross with Christ; still I am living; no longer I, but Christ is living in me; and that life which I now am living in the flesh I am living by faith, the faith of the Son of God, who in love for me, gave himself up for me.

21 I do not make the grace of God of no effect: because if righteousness is through the law, then Christ was put to death for nothing.

(BBE)

## *12 - Justification by faith alone*

Romans 3:21-31

<sup>21</sup> But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed, being testified about by the law and the prophets— <sup>22</sup> that is, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. For *there* is no distinction, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> being justified as a gift by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God made publicly available as the mercy seat through faith in his blood, for a demonstration of his righteousness, because of the passing over of previously committed sins, <sup>26</sup> in the forbearance of God, for the demonstration of his righteousness in the present time, so that he should be just and the one who justifies the *person* by faith in Jesus. <sup>27</sup> Therefore, where *is* boasting? It has been excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. <sup>28</sup> For we consider a person to be justified by faith apart from the works of the law. <sup>29</sup> Or *is God* the God of the Jews only? *Is he* not also *the God* of the Gentiles? Yes, also of the Gentiles, <sup>30</sup> since God *is* one, who will justify *those who are circumcised* by faith and *those who are uncircumcised* through faith. <sup>31</sup> Therefore, do we nullify the law through faith? May it never be! But we uphold the law.

(LEB)

In this last section of chapter three, the apostle Paul will show that justification, or righteousness, if you prefer, is obtained apart from the law, by faith alone.

<sup>21</sup> But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed, being testified about by the law and the prophets— <sup>22</sup> that is, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

After explaining the impartiality of God towards Jews and Gentiles, we will now learn that for both Jews and Gentiles, righteousness is obtained in the same way.

The following words "*apart from the law*" are extremely important. The word "apart" (CHORIS) means: separately or apart from, without. The "*law*" that is mentioned here is the same as we find elsewhere so far - it is the law that was given by God to Moses for the Israelites. Paul is very clear APART from the law. So we have to set aside the law for a moment and continue our reading. The "*righteousness*" (DIKAIOSUNE meaning: equity of character, righteousness) "*has been revealed*" (PHANEROO meaning: to render apparent, appear, manifest). So the righteousness of God can be seen or is manifest APART from the law. We need to remember that the Jewish people stood on

the law to become righteous before the Lord God. The Holy Spirit, through the pen of Paul, will demolish this misunderstanding.

v.21 ... being testified about by the law and the prophets

To do this, the apostle Paul will use the witness "*testified*" (MARTURO meaning: to be a witness) of both the "*law and the prophets*". This term is sometimes used to encompass the entire Scriptures of Paul's day. Jesus used this term in the following: Mat. 7:12; 22:40; Luke 16:16. Paul will use the Word of God to prove that righteousness is obtained for the Jew and the Gentile APART from the law.

<sup>22</sup> that is, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

This is the premise on which he will elaborate. If it is not through the law, how does a Jew or Gentile attain righteousness before the Lord? Paul gives the following answer: He first begins with this phrase: "*the righteousness of God*". Please note that the "*righteousness*" dearly desired is "of God". It is not "of man", "from man", or "obtained through man." This righteousness is not man-made, it can never be because it needs to be perfect and holy (1 Peter 1:15,16) and we have already understood that NO ONE is perfect - far from it!

If the righteousness of God is not man-made, then how can I become righteous? Paul writes, "*through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe*". The means is our "faith" (PISTIS meaning: persuasion, credence, belief), not in a religion, nor tradition, and certainly not through deeds, but through Jesus Christ. The word "*Christ*" (CHRISTOS) means: anointed, Messiah. The only one who can give us the "*righteousness of God*" is Jesus. Why is this so? Because he was the Christ, the Messiah that had been promised. This righteousness of God is not given to everyone but only to those "*who believe*" (PISTIS), which means: to have faith in.) That is why Jesus said:

John 14

1 Let not your heart be troubled: have faith in God and have faith in me.

(BBE)

v.22 ...For *there* is no distinction, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> being justified as a gift by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus,

Once more, Paul establishes the impartiality of God between the Jews and the Gentiles when he writes, "*For there is no distinction*". The word "*distinction*" (DIASTOLE means:

a variation, a difference.) Why is there no distinction? Verse twenty three gives us the answer: "for all" that includes everyone, as we have formerly seen (3:9-20) "*have sinned*" (HAMARTEMA meaning: a sin, to miss the mark, offend, trespass). Every single person that you can think of - has sinned. Every man of God, prophet, prophetess, apostle, earthly parents and family of Jesus, and countless others, ALL HAVE SINNED. They all missed the mark of perfection and holiness.

v. 23 ...and fall short of the glory of God,

Because people (Jews and Gentiles alike) sin and fail to be as God's standards require of them, something happens. They "*fall short*" (HUSTEREO meaning: to be later, inferior, to fall short) and can't reach the "*glory of God*". We are all sinners, and we all miss the mark that God has set out for us.

<sup>24</sup> being justified as a gift by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus,

This is what we have learned so far. The works of the law do not and will never justify us. God is impartial in this matter, Jews or Gentiles, it makes no difference. The righteousness that God gives is through the Messiah Jesus Christ for Jews and Gentiles alike. And now this is where grace is introduced in the process of becoming righteous before the Lord God. Paul writes "*being justified*" (DIKAIOS means: to render just or innocent) is "*a gift*" (DOREAN means: gratuitously, freely). This reminds us of the famous verses in Eph. 2:8-10. Since it is a gift, it can never be earned! The gift is "*his grace*" (CHARIS means: graciousness of manner or act). Grace is the unmerited favour of God toward man. This grace is given through Jesus Christ so we can receive "*redemption*" (APOLUTROSIS meaning: ransomed in full). It is important to note that the gift of grace provides FULL redemption, not partial redemption.

<sup>25</sup> whom God made publicly available as the mercy seat through faith in his blood, for a demonstration of his righteousness, because of the passing over of previously committed sins, <sup>26</sup> in the forbearance of God, for the demonstration of his righteousness in the present time, so that he should be just and the one who justifies the *person* by faith in Jesus.

God has made his redemption offer very "publicly" (PROTITHEMAI meaning: to place before, to exhibit). One can not deny that the public crucifixion of Jesus was hidden from people's knowledge! The Messiah had to be sacrificed hanging from "the tree" as Paul writes:

## Gal. 3:13

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),  
(NKJV)

Jesus has become the "mercy seat". The mercy seat was the cover of the arc of the covenant in the Old Testament, and it could only be approached by the High Priest with the blood of the sacrificed animal. The mercy seat was where the blood was sprinkled and forgiveness would be given. This was a figure of things to come - of Christ who would shed his blood and bring atonement for the true believers. Again, we see that all of this is attainable only "*through faith in his blood*". This refers to the sacrifice of Christ at the cross, where his blood was shed.

This is the "*demonstration*" (ENDEIXIS means: to declare, proof) of the righteousness of God - Christ at the cross. God had been very patient since the great flood. The sins of man have not been directly dealt with since then, at least not in this fashion! All the "*previously committed sins*" had been "covered" with the "*in the forbearance*" (ANOCHE meaning: self-restraint, tolerance) "*of God*". In other words, God had been extremely exceedingly patient.

v.26 ...for the demonstration of his righteousness in the present time, so that he should be just and the one who justifies the *person* by faith in Jesus.

When time came, the Son was given to mankind (Gal. 4:4). Now the time had come to satisfy the justice of God against all the sins that had been committed by the children of Adam. So now that sin has been dealt with, through the sacrifice of Jesus, God would be "*just*" (DIKAIOS meaning: equitable in character or act) in "*justifying*" (DIKAIOS meaning: to render just or innocent) the person "by faith" (PISTIS meaning: persuasion, credence, moral conviction), not by works, as you can see, but in Jesus.

<sup>27</sup>Therefore, where *is* boasting? It has been excluded. By what kind of law? Of works?  
No, but by a law of faith.

Can anybody boast about their salvation? As Paul writes: "*where is boasting?*" The word "boasting" (KAUCHESIS meaning: boasting in a good or bad sense). Well, can you and I boast about our salvation? Paul answers by saying, "It has been excluded" (EKKLEIO which means: to shut out, exclude). Like a big sign that says: "All boasting is forbidden since God has done it all for you!" The second question about salvation is

"how did you obtain it - by which law?" By the law of works - NO, as we have seen before. But by the law of faith (Acts 16:30,31) in Jesus Christ (Acts 4:10-12).

<sup>28</sup>For we consider a person to be justified by faith apart from the works of the law.

By saying that we "consider" (LOGIZOMAI meaning: to take an inventory, estimate), there is a lot of thought and a conclusion that needs to be made about the righteousness of God. That justification is obtained by "faith" (PISTIS meaning: persuasion, credence, or moral conviction) totally "*apart*" (CHORIS meaning: separately or apart from) from the works of the law. Paul emphasises this undeniable truth over and over: our salvation is obtained ONLY through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ!

<sup>29</sup>Or *is God* the God of the Jews only? *Is he* not also *the God* of the Gentiles? Yes, also of the Gentiles, <sup>30</sup>since God *is* one, who will justify *those who are circumcised* by faith and *those who are uncircumcised* through faith. <sup>31</sup>Therefore, do we nullify the law through faith? May it never be! But we uphold the law.

To end chapter three, he comes back to remind his readers that God is not only the God of the Jews - the direct descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But he is also the God of the Gentiles (ETHNOS, which means a race, tribe, or non-Jew). God created mankind through the first parents, Adam and Eve. Paul writes that "God is one", which is taken from Deut. 6:4. Paul is making the link between the God of Israel and the one who "will justify" (DIKAIOS meaning: to render just or innocent) those who are "*circumcised*", who are the Jews, and also the "*uncircumcised*" the non-Jews. Both will receive justification through faith in the Messiah Jesus Christ through (and only through) "*faith*" in him.

<sup>31</sup>Therefore, do we nullify the law through faith? May it never be! But we uphold the law.

So what happens to the law? Is it "*nullified*" (KATARGEO meaning: to render entirely idle, useless). Some might think that since salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ, we can do away with the law and now live a carefree life until we pass over to the other side, like some still believe today! Paul answers "May it never be" (GINOMAI meaning: God forbid or brought to pass). Rather, he says the contrary, we "*uphold*" (HISTEMI meaning: to stand, abide, hold up) the law. We shall see how this is done in the following chapters.

## 13 - Justification and Abraham

Romans 4:1-8

**4** What then shall we say *that* Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh, has found? <sup>2</sup>For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup>For what does the scripture say? "And Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness." <sup>4</sup>Now to the one who works, his pay is not credited according to grace, but according to his due. <sup>5</sup>But to the one who does not work, but who believes in the one who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited for righteousness, <sup>6</sup>just as David also speaks about the blessing of the person to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

<sup>7</sup>"Blessed *are they* whose lawless deeds have been forgiven,  
and whose sins are covered over.

<sup>8</sup>Blessed *is* the person against whom the Lord will never count sin."

Paul is setting out to once again prove what he has earlier explained - that righteousness is the fruit of faith and not of works. In this chapter, Paul mentions Abraham seven times. Why pinpoint Abraham? First because he was the father of all the Jews, and second because he is the perfect example of justification through faith.

v.1 What then shall we say *that* Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh, has found?

Paul brings Abraham as an example to prove his point concerning righteousness (or justification). He says that Abraham is "*our ancestor*" (PATER means a father near or remote). I continue to believe that Paul is speaking mainly to the Jewish believers since he uses the word "our." If he were speaking to Gentile believers, he could not use this word. He states that Abraham is their ancestor "*according to the flesh*" (SARX meaning: the flesh stripped from its skin). This is another proof that he was speaking to the Jewish believers in Rome. The question is, what did Abraham find?

<sup>2</sup>For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

Paul makes a bold statement concerning justification. He affirms that if Abraham was "*justified*" (DIKAIOS meaning: to render just or innocent) by "*works*" (ERGON meaning:

toil, act. deed, work), he had something to "*boast about*" (KAUCHEMA meaning: to boast in a good or bad sense).

If Abraham is justified by his own good deeds, he then could go around puffing up his chest! "Look how good I am! See how spiritual I am! I am worthy of being declared just because of all that I have done in my life. I worked so hard at this, day and night. I did all I could, and it paid off!"

But Paul writes, "*but not before God.*" Your life, as good or perfect as you think it is, does not impress the Lord God. This is a lesson concerning being good that Jesus once spoke of:

#### Matthew 19

16 Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

17 So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

(NKJV)

You can boast before your friends or your family. You can boast every time you walk to the village market or anywhere else in town. People might even be astonished by how good you are, but not so with the Lord. He knows who you really are inside.

<sup>3</sup>For what does the scripture say? "And Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness."

Paul quotes Gen. 15:6. Once again, he uses the Holy Scriptures to prove what he is teaching. Every true believer should follow Paul's model when they are making a theological point - use the Scriptures. So the Scriptures say that Abraham "*believed*" ( PISTEUO meaning: to have faith in, to entrust) God. He trusted in what God said and acted in concurrence with his faith. Abraham was very old and did not have an heir. God told him not to worry and he made a covenant with Abraham, and Abraham trusted God to keep his word.

What happened when Abraham simply "*believed God*"? The Scriptures say that "*it was credited*" (LOGIZOMAI meaning: take an inventory, estimate). God looked at his heart and saw his true faith, and because of this, God gave him "righteousness" (DIKAIOSUNE meaning: equity, justification, righteousness). Righteousness was imputed to Abraham because of his faith.

<sup>4</sup> Now to the one who works, his pay is not credited according to grace, but according to his due.

For the sake of reasoning, Paul now turns to an imaginary person. Abraham is on one side and righteousness is given without works but because of his true faith in the Lord God. This second person believes that he has to do "*works*" (ERGAZOMAI meaning: to toil, labor or work). For him, just believing is absurd; he thinks he needs to do something to be accepted by God. So he works and toils and does this and does that, thinking that the number of good things will surely allow him to be accepted. Paul writes that "*his pay is not credited according to grace*". This means that the person wants their work to be rewarded. 'I've worked for this, I've done the right things - I should get paid for all of that and receive your righteousness. You owe me,' is what he is truly saying to God. As we will see, this way of thinking only brings judgment upon you.

<sup>5</sup> But to the one who does not work, but who believes in the one who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited for righteousness,

When Paul refers to his example of Abraham, when he writes, "*But to the one who does not work*" This could also apply to anyone who does as Abraham did and simply (but honestly) believes in what God says. If you do no work, what are you asked to do then? Paul writes, "*but who believes in the one who justifies the ungodly.*" The word "*justifies*" (DIKAIOO meaning: to render just or innocent). If you believe God will render you just or innocent, He does this for all who are "*ungodly*" (ASEBES means: irreverent, wicked and ungodly). Jesus said the following to the Pharisees who believed that they were just before the Lord God:

#### Luke 5

30 And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

31 Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

32 "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

(NKJV)

If you are ungodly and do no work this is what is available if you have faith.

v.5 ...but who believes in the one who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited for righteousness.

Your faith will be "credited" (LOGIZOMAI meaning: to take an inventory, estimate). God will take an inventory of your heart and you will be seen as having "*righteousness*" (DIKAIOSUNE meaning: equity, justification, righteousness). You will become right with God because you believe in what he says:

#### John 6

29 Jesus, answering, said to them, This is to do the work of God: to have faith in him whom God has sent.

(BBE)

Paul, later on in this epistle will write it this way:

#### Romans 10

8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach):

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

(NKJV)

Paul ends this section by referring once more to the Holy Scriptures:

<sup>6</sup>just as David also speaks about the blessing of the person to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

<sup>7</sup>"Blessed *are they* whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins are covered over.

<sup>8</sup>Blessed *is* the person against whom the Lord will never count sin."

Paul points to King David and what he wrote in Psalm 32:1,2. He shows that David truly understood what the grace of God was. He sees God's grace as a "blessing" (MAKARISMOS meaning: an attribution of good fortune). This blessing is for the person whom God "*credits*" (LOGIZOMAI meaning: to take an inventory, an account of, estimate) his "*righteousness*" (DIKAIOSUNE meaning: equity, justification, righteousness) upon. Notice that Paul uses the very important word that we have spoken about, which is APART (CHORIS meaning: separately or apart from) from works (ERGON meaning: to work, toil, labor, deed). Once more, we see the emphasis on the

righteousness of God, which is given to the unrighteous because of their faith and not their works. This reminds me of what Jesus said:

#### Matthew 8

11 "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

12 "But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

This is what King David wrote concerning the blessing of being declared righteous.

<sup>7</sup> "Blessed *are they* whose lawless deeds have been forgiven,  
and whose sins are covered over.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed *is* the person against whom the Lord will never count sin."

The word "*blessed*" actually means "supremely blessed". There is no greater blessing than having been "*forgiven*" (APHIEMI meaning: forgive, lay aside) of our "*lawless deeds*" (ANOMIA meaning: violation of the law, wickedness) and our "*sins*" (HAMARTIA meaning: a sin, an offense). David writes that all of his lawless deeds and sins have been "covered over" (EPIKALUPTO meaning: to conceal, forgive, cover). This is because of God's freely given righteousness (v.6) APART from works.

The second "blessing" (MAKARIOS meaning: supreme blessed) is the person "whom the Lord will never count sin". God will NEVER "count" (LOGIZOMAI meaning: to take an inventory, impute) our sin! God no longer keeps a record of our sins because we have placed our faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ on Mount Calvary, where he was judged in our place. - AMEN!

## 14 - *Justification before the Law*

Romans 4:9-12

<sup>9</sup>Therefore, *is* this blessing for *those who are circumcised*, or also for *those who are uncircumcised*? For we say, "Faith was credited to Abraham for righteousness" <sup>10</sup>How then was it credited? *While he was circumcised* or *uncircumcised*? Not *while circumcised* but *while uncircumcised*! <sup>11</sup>And he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness by faith which *he had while uncircumcised*, so that he could be the father of all who believe *although they are uncircumcised*, so that righteousness could be credited to them, <sup>12</sup>and the father of *those who are circumcised* to those who are not only from the circumcision, but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham *which he had while uncircumcised*.

(LEB)

In our last section, Paul talked about the wonderful blessing of being righteous before God, even without any works, as long as we have true faith in the Lord God. He will continue to show the grace of God, using Abraham once more as an example.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore, *is* this blessing for *those who are circumcised*, or also for *those who are uncircumcised*? For we say, "Faith was credited to Abraham for righteousness"

Once again, Paul asks questions to encourage his readers to reflect on what has been said. The "*blessing*" (MAKARISMOS meaning: attribution of good fortune) from God that Paul earlier talked about: was this only for the circumcised (the direct descendants of Abraham) or was it also for the uncircumcised (the non-Jews)? There is a reason why this is asked. Because we know that, in general, the Jewish people had little to do with anyone outside their nation. An example of this can be found in the following text:

John 4

7 A woman of Samaria came to get water, and Jesus said to her, Give me some water.

8 For his disciples had gone to the town to get food.

9 The woman of Samaria said to him, Why do you, a Jew, make a request for water to me, a woman of Samaria? She said this because Jews have nothing to do with the people of Samaria.

(BBE)

The reason he asks this question is because the Holy Scriptures mention that "*faith was credited to Abraham for righteousness*". One could say, "you see, righteousness was

given to Abraham - the father of all Jews, not to Gentiles - God didn't give it to Gentiles, only to Abraham and his descendants."

<sup>10</sup>How then was it credited? *While he was circumcised or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised but while uncircumcised!*

By using the Scriptures, Paul will demolish this argument once again. He simply asks, "How then was it credited?" The word "credited" (LOGIZOMAI means: to take an inventory, to impute) is the key thought that must be understood. When did God declare that Abraham was righteous in his sight? There can only be two answers: "*While he was circumcised or uncircumcised?*" So which one is it? Did God wait for Abraham to be circumcised before he gave him to be just before his eyes, or was it before? Paul gives the answer, "Not *while circumcised* but *while uncircumcised!* ".

There it is! The proof was given by God himself! Abraham was declared righteous BEFORE he was circumcised. The Jews who gave pride in circumcision as an absolute necessity to become just before God just lost their case - this was not so! Abraham, their father, was proof of the opposite! It is so unfortunate that some people still hold tradition as more important than the Holy Scriptures! Jesus talked about this:

#### Matthew 15

- 1 Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying,
  - 2 "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."
  - 3 He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?"
- (NKJV)

That was one of the main problems that had developed with time. The "tradition of the elders" (which had no legal nor spiritual legitimacy) had come to be the equivalent of the Sacred Scriptures! The lack of true spiritual life had its roots in the Jewish nation a long time before Christ came, as we see in this verse:

#### Deut. 10:16

"Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer."

(NKJV)

If Abraham was already righteous before God why did God command Abraham to be circumcised as well as his household?

<sup>11</sup> And he received the sign of circumcision *as* a seal of the righteousness by faith which *he had while uncircumcised*, so that he could be the father of all who believe *although they are uncircumcised*, so that righteousness could be credited to them,

So Abraham was FIRST declared just before God. Then and only then did he "*received the sign of circumcision as a seal*". We see this in Genesis seventeen, where God says that circumcision will be a sign of the covenant between him and Abraham as well as his descendants (Gen. 17:10,11). We see that Abraham was circumcised at the age of ninety-nine (Gen. 17:26,27). Notice that circumcision was a "*seal*" (SPHRAGIS meaning: a signet, mark of privacy, seal) of "*righteousness*" (DIKAIOSUNE meaning: equity, justification, righteousness). This "*seal of the righteousness*" was given because of Abraham's "*faith*" (PISTIS meaning: credence, moral conviction, assurance, faith). Paul specifically points out that Abraham had this faith "*while uncircumcised*". Once more, the proof is laid out clearly for all to understand.

Abraham was declared to be the father not only of his natural descent (the Jewish nation) but also "*of all who believe although they are uncircumcised*". Remember that the Lord God had promised Abraham that all the nations would be blessed through him (Gen. 12:3) - circumcised or not! Also, God wanted his righteousness to be "*credited to them*" also. We all know that this was openly manifested through the Messiah, as it is written in John 3:16.

<sup>12</sup> and the father *of those who are circumcised* to those who are not only from the circumcision, but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham *which he had while uncircumcised*.

So Abraham became righteous before he was circumcised and is the father "*of those who are circumcised*." This is the Jewish nation. But not only "*but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised*". The word "*follow*" (STOICHEO meaning: to march in rank, to conform to virtue) This was for the uncircumcised who follow "*in the footsteps*" (ICHNOS meaning: a track, a step) of Abraham. In other words, Abraham was the father of all those who would do as he did - place their trust in God.

As for today, things have not changed. Whether a Jew or a Gentile, there is only one way to the Father, and that is through the atoning work of the Messiah. Remember what Jesus said:

John 14

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

(NKJV)

## 15 - Justification without the Law

Romans 4:13-25

<sup>13</sup> For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants, *that* he would be heir of the world, *was* not through the law, but through the righteousness by faith. <sup>14</sup> For if those of the law *are* heirs, faith is rendered void and the promise is nullified. <sup>15</sup> For the law produces wrath, but where *there* is no law, neither *is there* transgression. <sup>16</sup> Because of this, *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* according to grace, so that the promise may be secure to all the descendants, not only to those of the law, but also to those of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all <sup>17</sup> (just as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations") before God, in whom he believed, the one who makes the dead alive and who calls the things that are not as *though* they are, <sup>18</sup> who against hope believed in hope, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was said, "so will your descendants be." <sup>19</sup> And not being weak in faith, he considered his own body as good as dead, *because he was* approximately a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb. <sup>20</sup> And he did not waver in unbelief at the promise of God, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God <sup>21</sup> and being fully convinced that what he had promised, he was also able to do. <sup>22</sup> Therefore it was credited to him for righteousness. <sup>23</sup> But it was not written for the sake of him alone that it was credited to him, <sup>24</sup> but also for the sake of us to whom it is going to be credited, to those who believe in the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, <sup>25</sup> who was handed over on account of our trespasses, and was raised up in the interest of our justification.

(LEB)

This is the last segment of Paul's writings in which he, once again, deals directly with the Law in relationship with Abraham, the father of all believers.

<sup>13</sup> For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants, *that* he would be heir of the world, *was* not through the law, but through the righteousness by faith.

Please note that the "*promise*" (EPAGGELIA meaning: an announcement, pledge, promise) of God to Abraham was not only for him but it was also for "*his descendants*" (KLERONOMOS meaning: a sharer by lot, inheritor, heir). Was Paul only speaking about his descendants by the flesh - which would automatically exclude all the non-Jews? We will see that he answers this question in verse sixteen.

God had promised Abraham that he would be the heir of the "*world*" (KOSMOS meaning: orderly arrangement, the world). Since righteousness was appropriated

through faith and not by the Law, people from all nations could become the spiritual heirs of Abraham, and in turn, they would be his children. Thus, the entire world would be blessed through Abraham.

Paul reasserts once more that God's heritage (or righteousness, if you prefer) was not through the "Law" (NOMOS meaning: law, regulations, or principles). It could not have been since the Law was given through Moses. It is believed that Abraham was born somewhere in the 19th century BC, while Moses was born in the 14th century BC. Five hundred years (or so) separated the two. As you can see, it was totally impossible to say that Abraham was declared righteous because of the Law. The natural conclusion is to say that it was obtained "*through the righteousness by faith.*"

<sup>14</sup> For if those of the law *are* heirs, faith is rendered void and the promise is nullified.

This is an important statement because we know that God has made a promise to Abraham and his heirs that righteousness is given through faith. If somehow the promise was changed to be obtained through the Law of Moses, then the solemn promise of God would become "*nullified*" (KENOO meaning: to make empty, void). My question is, who has more power than the Lord God to force him to cancel the covenant he made with Abraham (Gen. 15)? This is an absurd thought, isn't it?

<sup>15</sup> For the law produces wrath, but where *there* is no law, neither *is there* transgression.

The Law can only produce "wrath" (ORGE meaning: violent passion, punishment, anger), but why? Because it is through the Law that we understand that we are sinners, we are unable to follow it perfectly. James explained it this way:

James 2

10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

(NKJV)

One of the reasons that God has given the Law is for the people: to make them understand that they are sinners and in need of a Messiah.

v.15 ... but where *there* is no law, neither *is there* transgression.

We are sinners by birth, our very nature is warped (as we have seen in Romans 3). God, in his grace, gives us the law so we understand that we are transgressors. The word "transgression" (PARABASIS means: violation, transgression).

<sup>16</sup> Because of this, *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* according to grace, so that the promise may be secure to all the descendants, not only to those of the law, but also to those of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all

There was no way out, and no way of becoming righteous if the Law was not dealt with. That is one reason why the grace of God intervened in our favor. Faith is the means through which grace can perform its saving work. Faith makes the promise of the covenant of God with Abraham "secure" ( BENAIOS means: firm, force, steadfast). It is secure "*to all the descendants*" to each and every person who (as Abraham) believes in God that he will keep his covenant. For us, this is the covenant of grace that God has made through the Messiah. If we believe that He was judged in our place and fully paid the penalty for our transgressions, we receive through grace the forgiveness of all our sins (Rom. 5:1; 8:1).

When Paul writes that Abraham is the "*father of us all*" it is understood that he is speaking in a spiritual sense. Our brother Paul will now give a description of the faith that our father Abraham had.

<sup>17</sup> (just as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations") before God, in whom he believed, the one who makes the dead alive and who calls the things that are not as *though* they are, <sup>18</sup> who against hope believed in hope, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was said, "so will your descendants be." <sup>19</sup> And not being weak in faith, he considered his own body as good as dead, *because he* was approximately a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb. <sup>20</sup> And he did not waver in unbelief at the promise of God, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God <sup>21</sup> and being fully convinced that what he had promised, he was also able to do.

The words "in whom he believed" (PISTEUO means "to have faith, to trust") paint a picture of the God in whom Abraham had placed his trust. He believed that God could make the "*dead alive*" (NEKROS ZOOPOIEO meaning: to make alive a corpse). He also believed in the God "*who calls the things that are not as though they are.*" His God could say anything, "*the things that are not*" (creation would be an example of this) "*as though they are*". There is no limit to the power of God! What he desires, he accomplishes.

<sup>18</sup> who against hope believed in hope, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was said, "so will your descendants be."

Here we see that his faith in God existed even against all odds: "*against hope, believed in hope*". For Abraham, God was a God of "*hope*" (ELPIS means: to anticipate usually with pleasure). He could anticipate the future. He saw it as being bright even when it seemed that there was no hope. The example which is set before us is his hope of becoming a father.

<sup>19</sup> And not being weak in faith, he considered his own body as good as dead, *because he was approximately a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb.*

His faith in God was not "*weak*" (ASTHENEIO means: to be feeble, impotent, sick). He could see the human impossibility because he "*considered*" (KATANOEIO meaning: to observe fully, behold) his body as good as "*dead*" (NEKROO meaning: to be dead, to be mortified). He knew that a man nearly one hundred years old could not possibly have a child. He also knew that his wife, Sarah, who was about ninety at the time, could not possibly have children. Both had bodies that could no longer reproduce.

<sup>20</sup> And he did not waver in unbelief at the promise of God, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God <sup>21</sup> and being fully convinced that what he had promised, he was also able to do.

All of this was evident in his mind. There was no possibility of having a child - none whatsoever! But this is where faith comes in and surpasses all human possibilities. Faith was not in what Abraham or Sarah could do, but in what the Living God could do. That is what Abraham believed. He did not "*waver*" (DIAKRINO means: to discriminate, withdraw from). His mind was set; he believed in the "*promise*" (EPAGGELIA meaning: an announcement, a promise) of God. He believed what God had told him he would do. This reminds me of the faith of the centurion (Mat. 8:5-10) and Jesus saying that he had not seen greater faith in Israel than his!

Not only did Abraham not waver from his faith, but it is written that he was "*strengthened*" (ENDUNAMOIO MEANING: To empower, to make strong). As it became more and more humanly impossible to have a child, his faith in God became greater and greater! He even gave glory to the Lord before Isaac was born!

<sup>21</sup> and being fully convinced that what he had promised, he was also able to do.

At this point, Abraham was "*fully convinced*" (PLEROPHOREO means: to carry out fully) that what God had "*promised*" (EPAGGELLO meaning: to profess, to make a promise) "*he was able to do*" (POIEO means: to make or do). This is the kind of faith that all children of God should have. Simply believing, against all odds, that God will do what he has promised.

<sup>22</sup>Therefore it was credited to him for righteousness.

This is Paul's conclusion in relation to the faith of Abraham. His faith was "credited" (LOGIZOMAI meaning: conclude, esteem, impute). To him for "*righteousness*" (DIKAIOSUNE means: equity, justification, righteousness). As you can see, the Law had ABSOLUTELY nothing to do with the righteousness of Abraham, and it is so with all of his spiritual descendants. Paul will now speak of the spiritual heirs of Abraham. What about them?

<sup>23</sup>But it was not written for the sake of him alone that it was credited to him, <sup>24</sup>but also for the sake of us to whom it is going to be credited, to those who believe in the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, <sup>25</sup>who was handed over on account of our trespasses, and was raised up in the interest of our justification.

Paul reassures us that this "*was not written*" (GRAPHO means: to grave, describe, write) only for Abraham's sake but also "*for the sake of us*". What was written was also to encourage all the true believers that would spring forth from the fountain of faith in the Messiah Jesus Christ! May we rejoice because it is going to also "*be credited*" (LOGIZOMAI meaning: conclude, esteem, impute) "*to those who believe*". These are the true believers.

But believers in what or in whom? It is "*in the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead*". Paul is speaking of God the Father who "*raised*" (EGEIRO meaning: to waken, rouse from sleep) Jesus "*from the dead*" (NEKROO means: to deaden, be dead). Just as Abraham saw his body as "dead" and believed in God. So we must believe that the Father raised the Son from death. This reminds me of when the people of Israel were in the desert and murmured against God, so He sent venomous snakes whose bite brought death. The solution was to look at the fiery serpent on the pole.

### Numbers 21

7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

8 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live."

9 So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

(NKJV)

They needed to believe that what God said was true, even though it seemed foolish and impossible for this to be true. After all, how could looking at a bronze serpent save someone from death? It just was, that's all!

<sup>25</sup> who was handed over on account of our trespasses, and was raised up in the interest of our justification.

This is what we must believe in to become righteous before the Lord God. Jesus was "*handed over*" (PARADIDOMI means: to surrender, give over) to become a living sacrifice. This would take place at the cross. Why was he handed over? It was "*on account of our trespasses*" (PARAPTOMA meaning: deviation, error, offense, sins). His death at the cross was because of ME, because of MY sins and MY transgression of the Law. But Jesus did not only die at the cross, for three days later he was "*raised up*" (EGEIRO meaning: to waken, rouse from sleep). In other words, he was resurrected from the dead. Why is this so? "*In the interest of our justification.*" He died and was raised from the dead for our "*justification*" (DIKAIOSIS meaning: acquittal, justification).

Because of the sacrifice of Jesus, Jesus can bring justification (righteousness) to those who believe in his atoning work. This is what Paul wrote to the Galatians about this unbelievable grace that is poured on believers:

#### Galatians 2

21 "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

(NKJV)

## 16 - *Justification and its consequences*

Romans 5:1-11

**5** Therefore, *because we* have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom also we have *obtained* access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we boast in the hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>And not only *this*, but we also boast in our afflictions, *because we* know that affliction produces patient endurance, <sup>4</sup>and patient endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, <sup>5</sup>and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

<sup>6</sup>For *while* we were still helpless, yet at the proper time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>For only rarely will someone die on behalf of a righteous person (for on behalf of a good person possibly someone might even dare to die), <sup>8</sup>but God demonstrates his own love for us, *in that while* we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup>Therefore, by much more, *because we* have been declared righteous now by his blood, we will be saved through him from the wrath. <sup>10</sup>For if, *while we* were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, by much more, having been reconciled, we will be saved by his life. <sup>11</sup>And not only *this*, but also *we are* boasting in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

(LEB)

Paul has finished making his point that righteousness is through faith because of the promise God had made to Abraham and not through the Law, since the Law came through Moses five centuries (or about) after Abraham was considered righteous before God. This point is CRUCIAL to understand since it is the stumbling block between true Christianity and all else. Now that Paul has made this very clear, he will lead us into the next logical subject concerning righteousness - what are the consequences (benefits) of receiving God's righteousness through faith in the Messiah?

**5** Therefore, *because we* have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom also we have *obtained* access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

This section of eleven verses contains two of my top ten favorite verses. The first is found in verse one. The thought of "*because*" is a direct link with what we have learned in the preceding chapters. By the grace of God, true believers have been "*declared*" to

have something. But first, who has "*declared*" this to be? It is the Lord God who declares, and he is the highest and final authority. No one can "undo" what the Lord declares, and because of this true believers can rest assured of what is being said. The affirmation is that believers have been declared "*righteous*" (DIKAIOS meaning: to render just or innocent). This righteousness, this declaration that believers have become innocent (of their transgressions), is given by grace because of the "*faith*" (PISTIS meaning: persuasion, credence, moral conviction, trust) they have in the Messiah.

v.1 ... we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

This is God's declaration of peace: "*we have peace*" (EIRENE meaning: to join, peace, rest) "*with God*". Since the Garden of Eden, after the fall, everyone had been cast out of the presence of the creator and sustainer. Sin has created an invisible wall between God and mankind (Isaiah 1:10-17) and we have been estranged from God. But now "*through our Lord Jesus Christ*" because of the perfect sacrifice of the Messiah (Heb. 10:10-14) we have peace - AMEN! Every child of God should rejoice and be eternally be grateful! The war has ended and the hostilities are no more. Have you noticed that Paul wrote that this peace is through Jesus and NO ONE or NOTHING else? Peace is never obtained through a religious system, or rites, or initiations. It is not obtained through a virtuous life - we have all been declared unrighteous before God. Peace is given to the believer because NO ONE CAN GET IT ON HIS OWN!

<sup>2</sup> through whom also we have *obtained* access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

This is the first consequence or benefit of being declared righteous—peace with God. The second benefit is found in verse two. Believers have "*obtained access*" (PROSAGOGE meaning: admission, access). Paul will speak about something that was impossible for us to have BEFORE receiving God's righteousness. This something can only be obtained "*by faith*" (PISTIS meaning: persuasion, credence, moral conviction, trust). We have seen that righteousness is obtained by faith, and now we learn that to be able to "*stand*" (HISTEMI meaning: to stand, abide, establish) in this "*grace*" (CHARIS meaning: benefit, favor, gift, grace). The believer is immersed in the grace of God, which brought him salvation. Knowing this, what should be our natural reaction? Paul writes, "*we boast*" (KAUCHAOMAI means: joy, rejoice, glory). We should rejoice with every fibre of our being "*in the hope*" (ELPIS meaning: to anticipate with pleasure) of the "*glory of God*". We are now declared righteous, and because of this, we have

peace, and we also stand in the grace of God. We look forward to fully seeing and standing in the glory of God.

<sup>3</sup>And not only *this*, but we also boast in our afflictions, *because we* know that affliction produces patient endurance, <sup>4</sup>and patient endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, <sup>5</sup>and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Paul writes that it's not all "not only this" (MONON means: merely, alone, only) as though that was not enough! The believer can also, and for a second time, "boast" (KAUCHAOMAI meaning: joy, rejoice, glory) in something. But what a contrast! The first boasting was in the Lord God, and this time it is in our "afflictions" (THLISIS meaning: pressure, affliction, persecution)! But why should we rejoice in our tribulations? Paul explains that our tribulations, if we pass through them with a Christ-like character, will begin a process in the believer that will change his character and his vision in life.

Paul is certain, for he writes, "we know" (EIDO means: to see, to know, to be aware of) that affliction "produces" (KATERGAZOMAI meaning: to work fully) certain things. God is not satisfied with only giving believers righteousness to stand before him, he also desires for them to become Christ-like in their daily lives. So he works in us by allowing afflictions to enter our lives.

So what does Paul know? He knows that afflictions will produce "patient endurance" (HUPOMONE meaning: cheerful endurance). Have you noticed that the first trait of the character of love is patience (1 Cor. 13:4). Note that affliction should bring not only endurance but cheerful endurance, as we see in Greek. This means that our hearts can be changed. Instead of being gloomy and depressed, our hearts can remain cheerful knowing that afflictions will make them grow.

<sup>4</sup>and patient endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope

Patient endurance in our trials and tribulations will bring a "proven character" (DOKIME meaning: test, trustiness, trial). Our character will be sharpened. Through trial, God will show us our true character, and from there we will be able to change it for the better. A proven character produces "*hope*" (ELPIS means: to anticipate usually with joy). We know that God is with us, whatever tribulation falls upon us, and we know that we can hope in God because he is faithful and true.

<sup>5</sup> and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

It is wonderful to see that hope "does not disappoint" (KATAISCHUNO means: to shame down, dishonor, be ashamed). Our hope and trust in God in our trials will never disappoint us. Paul tells us why. It is because of the "love" ( AGAPE meaning: love, affection, charity) that the Lord God has "*been poured*" (EKCHEO which means: to bestow, pour out, shed abroad) into our "*hearts*" (KARDIA meaning: heart, fig: our thoughts and feelings). So God gives us righteousness, grace, and now love; and there is one more thing that he gives his children- the Holy Spirit! It is written that the Holy Spirit "was given" (DIDOMI means: to give, to bestow, to grant). We did not earn the person of the Holy Spirit, nor did we go through a special initiation to receive him - he was given by the Father to his adopted child.

<sup>6</sup> For *while* we were still helpless, yet at the proper time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> For only rarely will someone die on behalf of a righteous person (for on behalf of a good person possibly someone might even dare to die), <sup>8</sup> but God demonstrates his own love for us, *in* that *while* we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

It is in this section that we come to the second of my "top ten" verses. Paul states that "*while*" (ON means: being, be, have) which gives the idea of living in the state of being "*helpless*" (ASTHENES meaning: without strength, feeble, sick), something happened. God acted in his "proper time" (KAIROS means: an occasion, proper time). The time (Gal. 4:4) had come for the Messiah to come to earth and minister among the children of Adam. The light came into the darkness (John 1:5,9) of this world. At the proper time, Christ "died" (APOTHNESKO meaning: to die off, be dead). For whom did Christ die? "For the ungodly" (ASEBES meaning: irreverent, impious, wicked). Christ died for you and for me, for we are ALL SINNERS (Rom. 3:23). No one is to be left out, because he came for sinners. Everybody is eligible or admissible to receive God's righteousness, but only through faith in Messiah Jesus. Remember what Jesus said:

Luke 5:32

"I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."  
(NKJV)

Paul bring forth a thought for his readers to reflect upon:

<sup>7</sup> For only rarely will someone die on behalf of a righteous person (for on behalf of a good person possibly someone might even dare to die),

Who would die for a "righteous person"? The word "rarely" (MOLIS means: with difficulty, hardly). Would you die in the place of another, even if that person is really nice? Paul answers that we would find such a person with great difficulty. Our instinct of self preservation would stop us from doing such a thing. Then Paul points to Christ and writes:

<sup>8</sup> but God demonstrates his own love for us, *in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Here is my second top ten verse from the Bible. Paul writes that we wouldn't do it but that God did something unbelievable. God "demonstrates" (SUNISTAO meaning: to constitute, to exhibit), in other words, God manifests or shows "*his own love*" (AGAPE means: love, affection, charity). Many people wonder how God manifests his love for them. Many think that it is with good health, a life without troubles, money or material blessings, a wonderful family or a great job. But this is false! The Holy Scriptures tell us that God manifests HIS love for us in this way. While we were "still sinners" (ETI HAMARTOLOS meaning: being yet, or being still a sinner or sinful), Christ "*died*" (APOTHNESKO meaning: to die off, be dead) for US. This is the ultimate proof that God truly loves you. He allowed or permitted that his Son would be your substitute at the cross. He agreed to punish his own Son instead of punishing you. His wrath was poured on his beloved Son so that you would remain intact. This is how God loves you—remember this through all of your life and you will be so much happier!

<sup>9</sup> Therefore, by much more, *because we have been declared righteous now by his blood, we will be saved through him from the wrath.* <sup>10</sup> For if, *while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, by much more, having been reconciled, we will be saved by his life.* <sup>11</sup> And not only *this*, but also *we are* boasting in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

This section is the conclusion that Paul comes to in relation with what has been written beforehand.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore, by much more, *because we have been declared righteous now by his blood, we will be saved through him from the wrath.*

This is the first conclusion. "*much more*" (POLUS MALLON means: much, much more, plenteous). We would say "way more than you can think" that since we "*have been*

*declared righteous*", by "*his blood*", in other words, his sacrifice at the cross, - "*we will be saved*" ( SOZO means: to save, deliver, protect). Salvation is not dependent upon anything other than the declaration of God to justify anyone who turns to his Son for salvation. Saved from what you might say, - "*from the wrath*" (ORGE meaning: punishment, anger, wrath). Paul is referring to the last judgment.

<sup>10</sup> For if, *while we were enemies*, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, by much more, having been reconciled, we will be saved by his life.

This is Paul's second conclusion. While we were the "enemies" ( ECHTHROS meaning: hateful, odious, adversary) of God and subject to his wrath. If during that time we were "*reconciled*" (KATALLASSO meaning:: to change mutually, reconcile) "*because of the death of his Son*", that is Jesus. How "*much more*" (POLUS MALLON meaning: much, much more, plenteous) because we are reconciled, "*we will be saved*" (SOZO meaning: to save, to deliver, to protect) "*by his life*". If God loved and saved us while we were sinners, how much more will he save us from the coming judgment now that we are his children? What can we add to this statement?

<sup>11</sup> And not only *this*, but also *we are* boasting in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

This is the third and final conclusion of the benefits that flow from justification through Jesus Christ.

"Not only" (MONON means: merely, alone, only) "this" which are the things that he just wrote about (being declared righteous and also reconciled), but also we are "*boasting*" (KAUCHAOMAI meaning: glory, joy, rejoicing) in God. This is not the first time Paul speaks of greatly rejoicing in the Lord. The word "justification" (KATALLAGE means: restoration to divine favor, atonement, reconciliation). The great joy that lives in the true believer's heart is knowing that he has been restored in God's favor through the reconciliation brought by the perfect sacrifice of the Messiah on the cross.

Do you possess this celestial joy?

## 17 - *Justification and condemnation*

Romans 5:12-21

<sup>12</sup> Because of this, just as sin entered into the world through one man, and death through sin, so also death spread to all people because all sinned. <sup>13</sup> For until the law, sin was in the world, but sin is not charged to one's account *when there* is no law. <sup>14</sup> But death reigned from Adam until Moses even over those who did not sin in the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who is to come. <sup>15</sup> *But the gift is not like the trespass*, for if by the trespass of the one, the many died, by much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, multiply to the many. <sup>16</sup> And the gift *is* not as through the one who sinned, for on the one hand, judgment from the one *sin led* to condemnation, but the gift, from many trespasses, *led* to justification. <sup>17</sup> For if by the trespass of the one *man*, death reigned through the one *man*, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> Consequently therefore, as through one trespass *came* condemnation to all people, so also through one righteous deed *came* justification of life to all people. <sup>19</sup> For just as through the disobedience of the one man, the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one, the many will be made righteous. <sup>20</sup> Now the law came in as a side issue, in order that the trespass could increase, but where sin increased, grace was present in greater abundance, <sup>21</sup> so that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(LEB)

This section could be called Adam and Jesus, or death and life. Paul compares Adam and the consequences of his sin and the Lord Jesus and the consequences of his obedience—even unto death (Phil. 2:8). Paul will show that we are ALL represented in the sin and death of Adam and that, if we believe, we can now be represented by Christ and the life he brings. I will split this section into four fragments. Each one will bring a different aspect of the Adam/Jesus account.

<sup>12</sup> Because of this, just as sin entered into the world through one man, and death through sin, so also death spread to all people because all sinned. <sup>13</sup> For until the law, sin was in the world, but sin is not charged to one's account *when there* is no law. <sup>14</sup> But death reigned from Adam until Moses even over those who did not sin in the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who is to come.

I named the first account "The Introduction of Sin". The Lexham English Bible opens verse twelve with "*Because of this*". This version's flow of thought may be more difficult to understand than some other versions. We see words like: therefore, for this cause, so then, which I find easier on the eyes and the mind. Paul will give his first example of the Adam -vs- Jesus cause. He begins with Adam and what he brings, "*sin*" (HAMARTIA means: a sin, an offense). That is Adam's legacy to all of humanity! Adam sinned and sin "*entered into*" (EISERCHOMAI meaning: to enter, to come in). So the sin of Adam spread into "*the world*" (KOSMOS means: orderly arrangement, the world).

The consequences of Adam's sin were that it spread into the world and caused "death" (THANATOS means: death, deadly) also. It had to, since the Lord God had warned that if the forbidden fruit was eaten, death would come.

### Genesis 2

17 But of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not take; for on the day when you take of it, death will certainly come to you.

(BBE)

Not only did sin spread to all men, but "*death spread to all people*". All became sinners, therefore all became spiritually dead, alienated from the presence and favor of God.

<sup>13</sup> For until the law, sin was in the world, but sin is not charged to one's account *when there is no law*.

This verse, read by itself, seems self-contradictory. We have to wonder what law Paul is writing about. It is not the law of Moses, for he writes, "*until the law*" and we know that this refers to the Law of Moses. Paul says that "*sin*" (HAMARTIA meaning: a sin, a transgression, an offense) was in the world. We know this happened when Adam sinned. But he also writes that sin is not "charged" (ELLOGEO meaning: to reckon, impute, attribute) "*to one's account*" because there is no "law" (NOMON meaning: regulations, principles, laws).

<sup>14</sup> But death reigned from Adam until Moses even over those who did not sin in the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who is to come.

To answer how men died and yet did not sin, according to a law that would not come for centuries, Paul went back to our first father, Adam. Paul agrees that sin and death are present but not the law. He refers us back to the first sin—"the transgression"

(PARABASIS meaning: violation, breaking, transgression) of Adam. Since Adam spiritually died because of his transgression, the following is written:

#### Genesis 5

3 Adam had been living for a hundred and thirty years when he had a son like himself, after his image, and gave him the name of Seth:  
(BBE)

All the descendants of Adam were born in his image - he had become a sinner and passed down (no one really knows how this is done) his sinful nature, and therefore they all died. They may not have sinned as Adam did, as Paul writes, "*did not sin in the likeness*" but they inherited a rebellious, disobedient and defiant nature and suffered the consequences.

As for Jesus in this section. We can see that Adam was "the dominion head" and in him all died and sinned. We see that another "head" will come to do something for mankind. We see that Adam was a "type of the one who is to come"—that is, Jesus Christ, the Messiah who will bring salvation.

<sup>15</sup> *But the gift is not like the trespass*, for if by the trespass of the one, the many died, by much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, multiply to the many. <sup>16</sup> And the gift is not as through the one who sinned, for on the one hand, judgment from the one *sin led* to condemnation, but the gift, from many trespasses, *led* to justification.

This is the second account, which I call "The Different Gifts.". Paul compares the "gifts" that Adam procured with those of Jesus. He begins by making it clear that the gift of God is not to be compared to the gift of the "*trespass*" (PARATOMA meaning: error, transgression, sin, offense). The "*trespass of one*" refers to Adam, and because of his gift, "*many*" (POLUS means: much, many, more, abundant) "*died*" (APOTHNESKO means: to die off, be dead). As we have seen in Rom. 3:23 all have sinned. Paul now turns to the gift of God. He first explains the quantity or value of this gift by writing "*much more*" (POLUS MALLON means: abundant in a greater degree, far more). The gift of God is not comparable to the gift of Adam. The gift of God is "*grace*" (CHARIS means: benefit, favor, gift, grace). Grace is a gift that is undeserved; no one deserved to receive it. We also see that his grace gift also passes through the "*one man*" which is Jesus Christ. This gift of righteousness is given or "multiply" (PERISSEUO means: to super abound, be in excess) to the many.

<sup>16</sup> And the gift *is* not as through the one who sinned, for on the one hand, judgment from the one *sin led* to condemnation, but the gift, from many trespasses, *led* to justification.

The gift from God is totally the opposite of the one from Adam. It is "*not as though*", so it is not like "*the one who sinned*", that is Adam. But how is it so different? Paul writes that the gift from Adam led to "*condemnation*" (KATAKRIMA means: an adverse sentence, condemnation). While the gift from God is given even though there are many "*trespasses*" (PARAPTOMA means: deviation, error, fault, sin) that lead to "*justification*" (DIKAIOMA means: a statute, a decision, justification). By the gift of Adam, we are condemned, and by the gift of God, we are forgiven. Which gift do you prefer?

<sup>17</sup> For if by the trespass of the one *man*, death reigned through the one *man*, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ.

This is the third account in this section, which I call "the two reigns." Paul begins by speaking about what happened because of the sin of "*the one man*" which is Adam. When sin entered the world, "*death reigned*" (BASILEUO means: to rule, a king, reign). This means that the consequence of the sin of Adam, which was spiritual death, befell all of his descendants. Because of this, all of his descendents were excluded from the presence of God and were under his condemnation. There is another reign that is also mentioned. Not a reign of death but a reign of "*abundance*" (PERISSEIA means: super abundance) of two things. The first is a reign of super abundant "*grace*" (CHARIS means: benefit, favor, gift) and "*righteousness*" (DIKAIOSUNE means: equity, justification, righteousness). Note that the gifts of God are only through Jesus Christ. One can be under the reign of death or under the reign of grace and righteousness. Under which reign do you prefer to be for all eternity?

<sup>18</sup> Consequently therefore, as through one trespass *came* condemnation to all people, so also through one righteous deed *came* justification of life to all people. <sup>19</sup> For just as through the disobedience of the one man, the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one, the many will be made righteous.

This is the fourth account, which I call "obedience and disobedience". Paul is drawing a conclusion from what has been previously said when he writes "*consequently*" (ARA means: to draw a conclusion). His first conclusion deals with the "*disobedience*" (PARAPTOMA means: deviation, error, fault, sin) of Adam. His disobedience brought "*condemnation*" (KATAKRIMA means: an adverse sentence, condemnation) to "all

people". This speaks of the descendants of Adam. For we were all "in Adam" when he sinned. As for the "last Adam," which is Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:45) because of his obedience and his "*righteous deed*", his sacrifice at the cross, "justification" (DIKAIOSIS means: acquittal, justification) was given. So, through Adam, people are made sinners, and through Jesus, people are made righteous. It all depends under whose reign or dominion you belong.

<sup>20</sup> Now the law came in as a side issue, in order that the trespass could increase, but where sin increased, grace was present in greater abundance, <sup>21</sup> so that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Here we see the role of both the Law given by Moses and the Grace of God. Why did the Law come about? One of the reasons is that the "trespass" (PARATOMA means: deviation, error, fault, sin) could "increase" (PLEONAZO means: make more, abundant). With the Law, people could actually see how much they were sinning. It is very easy for us to think that we are acceptable before the Lord. The more you know the Law, the more you see yourself as a sinner. It is at this point that one can realize that the "grace" (CHARIS means: graciousness, benefit, favor, gift) of God is truly in "*greater abundance*" (HUPERPERISSEUO means: to super abound). Again, we see how the grace of God abounds beyond all imagination towards all true believers. As we have seen, sin brought the reign of death, but grace brings the reign of "*eternal*" ( AIONIOS means: perpetual, eternal, forever) "*life*" (ZOE means: life, life time). All of this grace is possible only through Jesus Christ and only if he is your "*Lord*" (KURIOS means: supreme in authority, master, lord).

## 18 - Freedom from Sin

Romans 6:1-14

What therefore shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, in order that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup>May it never be! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup>Or do you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we may live *a new way of life*. <sup>5</sup>For if we have become identified with *him* in the likeness of his death, certainly also we will be *identified with him in the likeness of his* resurrection, <sup>6</sup>knowing this, that our old man was crucified together with *him*, in order that the body of sin may be done away with, *that* we may no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup>For the one who has died has been freed from sin. <sup>8</sup>Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him, <sup>9</sup>knowing that Christ, *because he* has been raised from the dead, is going to die no more, death no longer being master over him. <sup>10</sup>For that *death* he died, he died to sin once and never again, but that *life* he lives, he lives to God. <sup>11</sup>So also you, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. <sup>12</sup>Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, so that *you* obey its desires, <sup>13</sup>and do not present your members to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and your members to God *as* instruments of righteousness. <sup>14</sup>For sin will not be master over you, because you are not under law, but under grace.

(LEB)

Beginning in this chapter, the apostle Paul will shift away from the question of righteousness and its benefits to another very important subject, and that is the sin factor in our lives.

What therefore shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, in order that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup>May it never be! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup>Or do you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

In this sub-section, Paul asks three questions to get our minds going. He wants the Roman believers not only to read the text but also to reflect on the truths that are shown. Now that true believers have become righteous before the Lord, how are they supposed to live? Paul asks: shall we "continue" (EPIMENO means: to stay over, remain, continue) to live as we once did? Paul taught that where there is sin, God's grace abounds (5:15-17). It seems that some believers may have taken that to the point

of believing that sinning can be acceptable for one reason: in order that "*grace*" (CHARIS means: benefit, favor, gift, grace) "*may increase*" (PLEONAZO means: increase, super abound). Let's keep on sinning since sin will bring grace to our lives! As you might think, Paul was not pleased with this erroneous teaching.

<sup>2</sup> May it never be! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

His answer is sharp and to the point: "May it never be" (GINOMAI means: to become, God forbid), this means ABSOLUTELY NOT. Paul brings a question: how can we do this? Then he gives the theological reason why we should not think this way. He writes, "*we who died*" (APOTHNESKO means: to die off, be dead) to "*sin*" (HAMARTIA means: a sin, an offense). He affirms a theological truth: believers are dead to sin. If we are dead to sin, how can we desire to "*still*" (ETI means: yet, after that, henceforth) "*live in it*"? Paul is saying that there is something wrong if you desire to live in sin after you are born-again.

<sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

In verse three, Paul gives a reason why you might have this desire in you. He writes, "do you not know" (AGNOEO means: not to know, be ignorant). Could it be that they felt that way simply because they did not know what happened to them when they became true believers? Paul will introduce a picture which they all know of-baptism. He brings them back to their baptisms- as many as were "*baptized*" (BAPTIZO means: to immerge, submerge). He tells them that when they were baptized "*into Christ Jesus*," it was a baptism into his "death" (THANATOS means: death, deadly). Paul wrote it another way:

#### Galatians 2

20 I have been put to death on the cross with Christ; still I am living; no longer I, but Christ is living in me; and that life which I now am living in the flesh I am living by faith, the faith of the Son of God, who in love for me, gave himself up for me.

(BBE)

Ignorance is never a good thing in our spiritual life. These believers ignored the true meaning of their baptism—that they had died with Christ.

<sup>4</sup> Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we may live *a new way of life*. <sup>5</sup> For if we have become identified with *him* in the likeness of his

death, certainly also we will be *identified with him in the likeness of his resurrection*, <sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old man was crucified together with *him*, in order that the body of sin may be done away with, *that* we may no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup> For the one who has died has been freed from sin.

Paul will explain what he means by being baptized into the death of Christ. He begins with "therefore," which is a conjunction—it connects what has been said to what will be said. He begins with an affirmation, "*we have been buried*." This is irrefutable. If you have not died with Christ, then you do not receive the benefits of his death, which is righteousness! We have been "buried" (SUNTHAPTO means: to enter into company with, bury. This is a wonderful Greek word which says it all - we have entered into company with the Lord Jesus into his death. So Paul gives one reason why this is, "*so we may live*" (ZOE means: life, life-time) "*in a new way*" (KAINOTES means: renewal, newness) "of life". As we have seen in Gal. 2:20, we died with Christ and live anew with Christ. The main reason for this is "*the glory of the Father*". We walk in the newness of life so that it will bring "*glory*" (DOXA means: glory, dignity, praise, worship) to our heavenly Father.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have become identified with *him* in the likeness of his death, certainly also we will be *identified with him in the likeness of his resurrection*,

Paul is reasoning with the Roman believers and speaks of our identification with Christ. He writes: if we have become "identified" (SUMPHTOS means: to grow along with, closely united) with Christ, if we see ourselves as being "one" with him in "*likeness*" (HOMOIOMA means: made like to, similitude) of him, we should also be capable of identifying ourselves with another spiritual aspect. The first spiritual truth is that believers have died with Christ, and the second is that believers have been resurrected with Christ!

As you identify yourselves with the death of Christ, you also need to identify yourselves with "his resurrection" (ANASTASIS means: standing up again, raised to life). Therefore, we walk in the newness of life for the Father's pleasure and glory.

<sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old man was crucified together with *him*, in order that the body of sin may be done away with, *that* we may no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup> For the one who has died has been freed from sin.

In verse three, Paul speaks of being ignorant of spiritual truth. Once more, Paul desires that spiritual knowledge be understood. He writes: "knowing this" (GINOSKO means: to

know, be aware of, understand). This is one point that Paul points out for our understanding. Our "*old man*" (PALAIOS ANTHROPOS means: our worn out, old person). Paul introduces a new thought, the old man. The old man represents our old nature, our past sinful nature that constantly desired the things of the flesh. He wants believers to know that this "old man" was "crucified" (SUNTRIBO means: to crush completely, shatter, break). The "old man" was stripped of his dominion and power over the believer because he had died in Jesus Christ. The "old man" was crucified so that the "*body of sin*", the living instrument through which sin lived, was "*done away with*" (KATARGEO means: useless, abolish, destroy). The consequence of this is that believers are no longer "enslaved" (DOULEUO means: to be a slave to, in bondage) to sin. The power of sin no longer has the same effect upon the believer as Paul writes.

<sup>7</sup> For the one who has died has been freed from sin.

If you have "died" (APOTHNESKO means: to die off, be dead) with Christ, you have been "freed" (DIKAIIOO means: to render just or innocent) from sin. We all know that we all continue to sin, for it is not our body but our soul that has become righteous before God. In the following text, John writes about believers sinning:

#### 1 John 1

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

(NKJV)

But the enslaving power of sin has been defeated by the death and resurrection of Christ. This opens the door for believers to walk in the newness of life.

<sup>8</sup> Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him, <sup>9</sup> knowing that Christ, *because he* has been raised from the dead, is going to die no more, death no longer being master over him. <sup>10</sup> For that *death* he died, he died to sin once and never again, but that *life* he lives, he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So also you, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Now consider the following truth: If you believe you have died with Christ, then you also need to "*believe*" (PISTEUO means: to have faith, to entrust, to believe) that you will also "*live*" (SUZAO means: to continue to live in common with) with Christ. I never understood how believers could appropriate having died with Christ and rejoicing in it

while at the same time having such a difficult time also rejoicing in living a new life with him for the glory of God!

<sup>9</sup> knowing that Christ, *because he* has been raised from the dead, is going to die no more, death no longer being master over him.

Here is another fact that Paul desires believers to be certain about: "*knowing*" (EIDO means: to see, to know, to be aware of) that because Christ was "*raised*" (EGEIRO means: to waken, rouse, raise up) from the dead, he would "die no more" (ETI means: yet, still, any longer). He has been brought back to life and death can no longer be "master" (KURIEUO means: to have dominion over, lord of) over him. Our dominion head has victory over death, and since believers are "in him", we also have victory over death and sin.

<sup>10</sup> For that *death* he died, he died to sin once and never again, but that *life* he lives, he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So also you, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Paul confirms this victorious reality that he desires the Roman believers to appropriate for themselves. Death and sin will no longer reign - "*never again*"! Paul writes that Jesus has true "*life*" (ZOA means: to live, life-time) and that he now "*lives to God*", just as Christ died and is living for the glory of the Father. Believers must also "*reckon*" (LOGIZOMAI means: estimate, conclude, consider) "*yourselves to be dead*" (NEKROS means: a corpse, dead) to sin. But we don't live in a cave or on the top of a mountain for the rest of our lives just waiting to be with God for all time. Paul writes, "but alive" (ZOA means: to live, life-time) "*to God in Christ Jesus*". Be ALIVE for the Lord God. Live for him and for his glory. Leave sin behind. You are dead in Christ and have been brought back to live a new life.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, so that *you* obey its desires, <sup>13</sup> and do not present your members to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and your members to God *as* instruments of righteousness. <sup>14</sup> For sin will not be master over you, because you are not under law, but under grace.

Paul brings this section to a conclusion. If I have died with Christ, resurrected and given a new life with Christ, this is what I have been called to do. The first is found in verse twelve:

<sup>12</sup>Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, so that *you* obey its desires

Don't let sin "*reign*" (BASILEUO means: to rule, king, reign) in your "mortal" (THNETOS means: liable to die, mortality) body. Sin is no longer to rule and have dominance in your life. Note that Paul speaks of sin in your body. As Jesus said, it is the flesh that is weak.

#### Mark 14

38 Keep watch with prayer, so that you may not be put to the test; the spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is feeble.

(BBE)

To be able to not let sin reign in our mortal bodies, Paul shows us how to be victorious.

<sup>13</sup>and do not present your members to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and your members to God *as* instruments of righteousness.

We are told "*do not present*" (PARISTEMI means: aid, assist, yield) your "*members*" (MELOS means: a limb or part of the body). In other words, we must not place ourselves in a situation which will encourage our members (our body) "*to sin*" (HAMARTIA means: an offense, to sin) and become "*instruments*" (HOPLON means: to be busy about, instrument, utensil, tool) of unrighteousness. On the contrary, we must present (PARISTEMI ) the same word in Greek ourselves to God. Do not present yourself to sin, but rather to God. Remember that you are "*alive*" (ZAO means: to live, life-time) from the dead. You no longer belong in the domain of spiritual death! Because of this, present your members (your body) to God as "*instruments*" (HOPLON means: to be busy about, instrument, utensil, tool) of "*righteousness*" (DIKAIOSUNE meaning: equity, justification, righteousness).

Believers now have a choice: either to present themselves to sin, which will dishonor the Lord God, or to present themselves to God and live a life that will glorify him. We were NOT ABLE to do this in the past because we were dead in our sins, but now we have died in Christ and are resurrected to live for God's glory.

## 19 - Freedom that leads to righteousness

Romans 6:15-23

<sup>15</sup>What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! <sup>16</sup>Do you not know that to whomever you present yourselves *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves to whomever you obey, whether sin, *leading* to death, or obedience, *leading* to righteousness? <sup>17</sup>But thanks *be* to God that you were slaves of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart the pattern of teaching to which you were entrusted, <sup>18</sup>and having been set free from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness. <sup>19</sup>(I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh.) For just as you presented your members *as* slaves to immorality and lawlessness, *leading* to lawlessness, so now present your members *as* slaves to righteousness, *leading* to sanctification. <sup>20</sup>For when you were slaves of sin, you were free with respect to righteousness. <sup>21</sup>Therefore what sort of fruit did you have then, about which you are now ashamed? For the end of those *things is* death. <sup>22</sup>But now, having been set free from sin and having been enslaved to God, you have your fruit *leading* to sanctification, and its end *is* eternal life. <sup>23</sup>For the compensation due sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(LEB)

Paul continues his arguments in favor of a holy life. In our last section, he asked if it was permissible to sin because more grace would come out of it and his answer was ABSOLUTELY NOT. Here Paul will touch on another question concerning the life of sin.

<sup>15</sup>What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! <sup>16</sup>Do you not know that to whomever you present yourselves *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves to whomever you obey, whether sin, *leading* to death, or obedience, *leading* to righteousness?

Again, we see a link with what had been previously said in "*what then?*" Rarely does one single verse stand alone, there has to be a context in which it is placed. Paul asks this question: "Shall we sin" (HAMARTANO means: to miss the mark, sin, trespass) because we are not under "the law" (NOMOS means: law, regulation, principle). Why not sin because we have been freed from the condemnation of the Law because of the Messiah? Let's live the way we want! After all, we are "*under grace*" (CHARIS means: benefit, favor, gift, grace). We have no more worries. As before, Paul is trying to curb a way of thinking that was warped! His answer is definite and unambiguous - "MAY IT

NEVER BE" (GINOMAI means: to cause, to become, God forbid). Absolutely not, is Paul's answer. Being under grace does not give you permission to sin.

<sup>16</sup>Do you not know that to whomever you present yourselves *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves to whomever you obey, whether sin, *leading* to death, or obedience, *leading* to righteousness?

To provide substance to his answer, Paul, once more, speaks of knowledge: - "Do you not know" (EIDO means: to see, to know, to understand). This is what the Roman believers should have instinctively understood. When you "*present*" (PARISTEMI means: aid, assist, provide, yield) yourselves as "slaves" (DOULOS means: a slave, subjection, servant) for "*obedience*" (HUPAKOE means: submission, obedience, compliance) then you become a slave to whomever you obey. Obedience to "sin" (HAMARTIA means: a sin, an offense) will lead you to "death" (THANATOS means: death, deadly) It is spiritual death that is implied here that will bring you to eternal punishment. Alternatively, obedience to God leads to righteousness (DIKAIOSUNE means equity, justification, and righteousness). If you are a Christian, why follow the lead of sin, which is the road (for the unconverted) to judgment?

<sup>17</sup>But thanks *be* to God that you were slaves of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart the pattern of teaching to which you were entrusted, <sup>17</sup>But thanks *be* to God that you were slaves of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart the pattern of teaching to which you were entrusted, <sup>18</sup>and having been set free from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness.

Paul reminds them of what has happened in their lives. They should be filled with "*thanks*" (CHARIS also means: gratitude) to God. But why? Because they were once "slaves of sin" (DOULOS HAMARTIA means "slave or subject to sin"). The Holy Spirit intervened and opened their minds to their sinful state (John 16:8) and they turned to the gospel truth. They "*obeyed*" (HUPAKOUO means: to hear under, to heed, to conform) from the "*heart*" (KARDIA means: the heart, the thoughts and feelings) the "*teachings*" (DIDACHE means: an instruction, a doctrine) they had received. This is what they should be thankful to the Lord God for - their salvation!

<sup>18</sup>and having been set free from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness.

We have been "*set free*" (ELEUTHEROO means: to liberate, deliver, make free) from sin. But this freedom does not allow us to do as we please. This new found freedom opens

the door of sin's prison and allows us to become "enslaved" (DOULOO means: to enslave, bring into bondage) to righteousness, which makes true believers to be in harmony with God for all eternity.

<sup>19</sup> (I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh.) For just as you presented your members *as* slaves to immorality and lawlessness, *leading* to lawlessness, so now present your members *as* slaves to righteousness, *leading* to sanctification.

It is as though Paul excuses himself for using such simple language and examples to bring forth his spiritual truth. The words "human terms" (ANTHROPINOS means: common to man) he uses them because of the "*weakness*" (ASTHENEIA means: feebleness, malady, weakness) of your flesh. It seems that some Roman believers were not capable of understanding more than just simple theology. It seems that the writer of Hebrews also had the same problem:

#### Hebrews 5

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

(NKJV)

Paul states that in the past, they had "presented" (PARISTEMI means: yield) their bodies as slaves to "*immorality*" (AKATHARSIA means: impurity, uncleanness) and also "*lawlessness*" (ANOMAI means: violation of the law) which led to the breaking of the Law. That was before, but "*now*" (NUN means: present time) this is what you have to do "*present*" (PARISTEMI means: yield) your members to "*righteousness*" (DIKAIOSUNE means: equity, justification, righteousness). When you do this, the outcome will be "sanctification" (HAGIASMOS means: purification, holiness). Paul is saying, don't be like children who do not understand the depth of what they are doing. Stop living in the flesh and live a life of newness in the Lord Jesus!

<sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of sin, you were free with respect to righteousness.

<sup>21</sup> Therefore what sort of fruit did you have then, about which you are now ashamed? For the end of those *things* is death. <sup>22</sup> But now, having been set free from sin and

having been enslaved to God, you have your fruit *leading* to sanctification, and its end *is* eternal life. <sup>23</sup> For the compensation due sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul wants the Roman believers to think about their past and the way that they acted. Think about the times you were "*slaves of sin*" or under the power of sin. Think about the time when you were hopelessly sold to sin and had no real power to conquer your evil ways. You were "*free*" (ELEUTHEROS means: unrestrained, at liberty) in respect to righteousness. You lived the way your flesh guided you to live and had no thought concerning the holiness of the Lord God. Paul asks this question: When you lived this way what "sort of fruit" (KARPOS means: a fruit) were you producing? I know that you are now "*ashamed*" (EPAISCHUNOMAI means: to feel shame for something) of them. Do you understand that those fruits only bring "*death*" (THANATOS means: death, deadly)?

<sup>22</sup> But now, having been set free from sin and having been enslaved to God, you have your fruit *leading* to sanctification, and its end *is* eternal life.

It seems as though Paul is repeating himself, seeing how spiritually slow these believers seemed to be! He repeats, you have been "*set free*" (ELEUTHEROO means: to liberate, to deliver) from sin. Christ has liberated you from the power and condemnation of sin. The act that condemned you has been destroyed, as Paul wrote to the Colossians:

#### Colossians 2

13 And you, being dead through your sins and the evil condition of your flesh, to you, I say, he gave life together with him, and forgiveness of all our sins;

14 Having put an end to the handwriting of the law which was against us, taking it out of the way by nailing it to his cross;  
(BBE)

Now that you have been set free from sin, you now belong to God and your new fruits "*are leading to sanctification*" (HAGIASMOS means: purification, holiness). The end of living a life of fruits of holiness is "*eternal life*" (AIONIOS ZOE means: a never ending life) in the presence of your beloved Savior. Jesus said it this way:

#### John 14

1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

2 "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself;  
that where I am, there you may be also.  
(NKJV)

Paul closes this section with this thought:

<sup>23</sup> For the compensation due sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus  
our Lord.

The "*compensation*" (OPSONION means: wages). The wages people will receive for their life of sin is "*death*" (THANATOS means: death, deadly). On the other hand, the "*gift*" (CHARISMA means: divine gratuity) of God is eternal life in "Christ Jesus". Eternal life is NEVER GIVEN outside of the person of the Messiah Jesus of Nazareth - never! No religion or philosophy can make you righteous before God. Only the perfect sacrifice of Jesus can do that. His name is the only name through which we can be saved:

#### Acts 4

12 "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given  
among men by which we must be saved."  
(NKJV)

## 20 - Freedom through the death of Christ

Romans 7:1-6

**7** Or do you not know, brothers (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law is master of a person for as long a time *as* he lives? <sup>2</sup>For the married woman is bound by law to *her* husband while he lives, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of the husband. <sup>3</sup>Therefore as a result, if she belongs to another man *while* her husband is living, she will be called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress *if she* belongs to another man. <sup>4</sup>So then, my brothers, you also were brought to death with respect to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to the one who was raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. <sup>5</sup>For when we were in the flesh, sinful desires were working through the law in our members, to bear fruit for death. <sup>6</sup>But now we have been released from the law, *because we have died to that* by which we were bound, so that we may serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter *of the law*.

(LEB)

Paul will continue to write about our newfound freedom from sin. He will use the analogy of a marriage to help us clearly understand what our death with Christ really means.

**7** Or do you not know, brothers (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law is master of a person for as long a time *as* he lives?

Have you noticed how the word "know" (AGNOEO means: not to know, ignore, not understand) and the principles of knowledge are very important so far in his epistle? In his opening statement, "*Or do you not know*", it seems that he was surprised by the lack of knowledge of these Jewish believers. I say they are Jewish simply because of the next phrase he wrote. I am "*speaking*" (LALEO means: to talk, say, utter, preach) to those who "*know*" (GINOSKO means: to know, be aware of) the "*law*" (NOMOS means: law, regulation, principle). This seems to point directly to the Jewish believers in the Messiah Jesus Christ. For they were the ones who knew the law, while the Gentiles were not brought up in it. As I said before, I believe that this epistle was written much more for Jewish believers than for those from a Gentile background.

What did Paul ask if they knew?

v.1 ... that the law is master of a person for as long a time *as* he lives?

He brings in the notion of the law in relationship with death. He writes that the law (which is the law of Moses) is "*master*" (KURIEOU means: to rule, exercise lordship). This ruling power is not eternal; it only lasts "*as long*" (HOSOS means: as much, as long as) as the person "*lives*" (ZAO means: to live, life-time). This is the same with ALL laws. They have power over you, but when you die, they no longer hold you in their grasp.

<sup>2</sup> For the married woman is bound by law to *her* husband while he lives, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of the husband.

With this concept in mind, Paul uses the analogy of a woman and her husband. Paul speaks of a "*married woman*" (GUNE HUPANDROS which means: a married woman). As with all married women, she is "*bound*" (DEO means: to bind, be in bonds) to her "*husband*" (ANER means: a man, a husband). It would be the same case if Paul spoke about a man being bound to his wife in matrimony. She is bound by "*law*" (this is important) as long as her husband "*lives*" (ZAO means: to live, life-time). Please remember that in this analogy, the woman represents you and the law represents the power of sin on you).

The law has power over her (as a married person), but if her husband "*dies*" (APOTHNESKO means: to die off, be dead), then something automatically happens. It is written that she is "*released*" (KATARGEO means: to render idle, abolish, useless) from the "*law*" (NOMOS means: law, regulations, principle) of the law binding her to her husband. In other words, she is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if he dies, she is no longer under this rule and she is set free.

<sup>3</sup> Therefore as a result, if she belongs to another man *while* her husband is living, she will be called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress *if she* belongs to another man.

In this passage Paul teaches that there is only one condition for this woman to be set free, and that is the death of her husband. As we are only set free from the Law by dying with Christ.

Therefore, is a conjunction that attaches what has been said to what will be said. If a woman "*belongs*" (GINOMAI means: be made, be married, be ordained) to another man while she is married to a man who is still "*living*" (ZAO means: to live, life-time)

she becomes an "*adulteress*" (CHEMATIZO means: an adulterous woman). She broke the law and will suffer the consequences. But "*if her husband dies*" something happens, "*she is free from the law*". The law no longer applies to her since her husband died. This opens the door for her to legally re-marry and not be considered an adulterous person.

<sup>4</sup>So then, my brothers, you also were brought to death with respect to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to the one who was raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.

Paul is introducing the conclusion to the premise he has brought us to. I am under the law and its consequences (judgment), but now I have spiritually died with Christ - what is my standing in relationship with the law? Please note that Paul writes to "my brothers" (ADEPHOS means: a brother near or far) and this is very important to understand. He is not writing to everyone at large. This IS NOT for the general public; it is only for his brethren in the faith. Paul was not a universalist; he did not believe that Christ died for every single soul but only for the ones that were "in Him"-in Christ Jesus.

He tells them of the great miracle that happened when they turned to Christ for salvation. They were "*brought to death*" (they died) with respect to the "law" (NOMOS means: law, regulation, principle). It is ALWAYS the same law that Paul is writing about- do not forget this! How did this death to the law happen? Paul writes, "through the body of Christ". When Christ died at the cross, when sin was judged in his body, that is when believers also died.

## 2 Corinthians 5

21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

(NKJV)

So believers have "died" with Christ. Because of this spiritual death, we (just like the widow spoken of above) can re-marry (or be re-attached to). This time it's not to the law but to Christ.

v.4... so that you may belong to another, to the one who was raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.

Death broke the bond between the law (which we were under) and ourselves. We may now "belong to another". Paul tells believers to whom they now belong, "*to the one who was raised from the dead*". Believers have died to the law and can now be "one"

with Jesus, who was raised from the dead. Believers have become the bride of the risen Lamb (Rev. 19:6-9). Now that true believers have died with Christ, they can now "*bear fruit*" (KARPOPHOREO means: to be fertile, bear fruit) for the Lord God.

<sup>5</sup> For when we were in the flesh, sinful desires were working through the law in our members, to bear fruit for death.

Paul once more refers to the fruits (Rom. 6:21,22). Here Paul speaks of the days BEFORE being born-again and the fruits that were brought forth by our lives. They were fruits of the "*flesh*" (SARX means: flesh that is stripped away from its skin, carnality). They were also fruits of "*sinful desires*" that were "*working*" (PATHEMA means: something undergoing, motion) through the law "*in our members*" (MELOS means: a limb or part of the body). These fruits were alive in us and brought forth "*death*" (THANATOS means: death, deadly).

<sup>6</sup> But now we have been released from the law, *because we have died to that* by which we were bound, so that we may serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the *letter of the law*.

But "now" (NUNI means: just now, now) we see that something has changed. First, we see that believers have been "*released*" (KATARGEO means: rendered entirely idle, do away, to destroy) from the "*law*". The power or the claim of the law on us has been destroyed; it is now nonexistent. Paul, once more, explains why: because we have "*died*" (APOTHNESKO means: to die off, be dead) "*to that which we were bound*". We have already seen that this is the law to which we are bound. Paul really wants to make this VERY CLEAR. We are no longer bound by the law because of the death and victory of Jesus on the cross. Since believers have "*died*" in Him, we have also become victors and have been set free.

v.6... so that we may serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the *letter of the law*.

One of the reasons that believers have been set free is "*so that we*." As you can see, Paul includes himself in this statement. We "*may serve*" (DOULEUO means: to be a slave of, serve) in the "*newness*" (KAINOTES means: renewal, newness) of the Spirit (the Holy Spirit). This contrasts how we serve and who we have served in the past. Before, it was in the "*oldness*" (PALAIOTES means: antiquated, oldness) "*of the letter of the law*".

True believers can now serve a new master, no longer the law, but the Lord God. He can also serve with a new spirit, not of the flesh but of the Holy Spirit.

## 21 - Law, sin and death

Romans 7:7-13

<sup>7</sup>What then shall we say? *Is* the law sin? May it never be! But I would not have known sin except through the law, for I would not have known covetousness if the law had not said, "Do not covet." <sup>8</sup>But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all *kinds of* covetousness. For apart from the law, sin *is* dead. <sup>9</sup>And I was alive once, apart from the law, but *when* the commandment came, sin sprang to life <sup>10</sup>and I died, and this commandment which *was to lead to* life was found with respect to me to *lead to* death. <sup>11</sup>For sin, seizing the opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed *me*. <sup>12</sup>So then, the law *is* holy, and the commandment *is* holy and righteous and good. <sup>13</sup>Therefore, *did that which is* good become death to me? May it never be! Rather *it was* sin, in order that it might be recognized *as* sin, producing death through *what is* good for me, in order that sin might become sinful to an extraordinary degree through the commandment.

(LEB)

In our last section, we have learned that because of our death with Christ, we have been freed from the power and also the final consequence of our trespasses, which is the last judgment. We also saw that sin took advantage of the law in us and brought condemnation.

<sup>7</sup>What then shall we say? *Is* the law sin? May it never be! But I would not have known sin except through the law, for I would not have known covetousness if the law had not said, "Do not covet."

Some might say, "If sin works along with the law to make us sinners, is the "*law*" (NOMOS means: law, regulation, principle) also "*sin*" (HAMARTIA means: offense, sin)? If a person came to this conclusion, then the person who gave the law (God) would have given us the law as a trap to make us sin. This would make God the originator of sin, which is blasphemous!

So "*is the law sin*"? The apostle Paul answers: may it "*never be*" (GINOMAI means: to cause to be, as well as God forbid). The answer is ABSOLUTELY NOT - the law is not sin! Then Paul continues to explain the role of the law in our salvation.

V.7 ... But I would not have known sin except through the law, for I would not have known covetousness if the law had not said, "Do not covet."

Paul writes that he would not "*have known*" (GINOSKO means: to know, to understand, to be aware of) "*sin*" (HAMARTIA means: sin, offense). There was no other way he would have known he had broken the law unless he knew about the law. One might go to another country and end up in jail because one went to a place that was restricted or off-limits to visitors. He would only find out that he broke the law when he was arrested, not before!

Paul writes "*except*" (EI means: if not, but, save only) "through the law". Then Paul gives an example of what he means. "I would not have known" the sin of "*covetousness*" (EPITHUMIA means: a desire for what is forbidden) unless the law did not say "Do not covet". This is one of the Ten Commandments, taken from Exodus 20:17.

<sup>8</sup> But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all *kinds of covetousness*. For apart from the law, sin *is* dead.

Paul teaches us that sin is "*seizing*" (LAMBANO means: to take, to seize, to accept) an "*opportunity*" (APHORME means: a starting point, an opportunity) through the "*commandment*" (ENTOLE means: commandment, precept). Sin, that is in our flesh, takes the holy law of God and changes it into a trap to "*produce*" (KATERGAZOMAI means: to work fully, to finish) all kinds of "*covetousness*" (EPITHUMIA means: desires, to lust after). A typical example would be "food". Food is good and is needed if we want to remain alive. Eating food is not sinful. But, if you covet food and eat too much, then the good food will become a stumbling block and make you sin (gluttony). Paul reminds the Roman believers that the power of sin apart from the law does not exist.

<sup>9</sup> And I was alive once, apart from the law, but *when* the commandment came, sin sprang to life <sup>10</sup> and I died, and this commandment which *was* to *lead to* life was found with respect to me to *lead to* death.

What Paul is saying about himself in these verses is also true for everyone. Before his conversion, Paul, being self-righteous (Phil. 3:6) had no difficulty doing abominable things against the children of God. But when the Lord met him on the Road to Damascus (Acts 9) and made him know his sin of persecuting Him (his church) only then did he repent. He saw himself as a sinner and realized that instead of the law bringing him life, it had actually brought him death, because sin had used the law to make him do unholy things.

<sup>11</sup> For sin, seizing the opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed *me*.

There is a very important thought that Paul brings to us, and it is embodied in the word "*deceived*" (EXAPATAO means: to seduce wholly, deceive). Sin deceives people profoundly. This is how it works: it twists the holy law or truth of God and makes it attractive to the flesh. When we act upon this warped and perverse understanding, we sin and fall under judgment. A perfect example of this is with Eve in the Garden of Eden. The devil deceived Eve by telling her that "surely you will not die" (Gen. 3:4). She ate of the fruit and sinned and was judged by God. Paul writes that through the deception of sin "it killed me" (APOKTEINO means: to kill outright, to destroy). Jesus tells his disciples to take heed not to be deceived (Luke 21:8).

<sup>12</sup> So then, the law *is* holy, and the commandment *is* holy and righteous and good.

Paul answers directly to the question that is found in verse seven. The "law is holy" (HAGIOS means: sacred, pure, morally blameless). Not only is the law holy but the "commandment" (ENTOLE means: prescription with authority) is also "holy". Not only is it holy, it is also "*righteous*" (DIKAIOS means: innocent, just, righteous) and "*good*" (AGATHOS means: good, benefit, well). Paul destroys the thought that some may of had, to believe that the law had become sin (verse seven).

<sup>13</sup> Therefore, *did that which is good* become death to me? May it never be! Rather *it was sin*, in order that it might be recognized *as sin*, producing death through *what is good* for me, in order that sin might become sinful to an extraordinary degree through the commandment.

Paul is bringing another thought that some might have had: Is, that which is good, (the law) brings death (THANATOS means: death, deadly). If the law is good, why does it bring death? Again, Paul writes: "*May it never be*" (GINOMAI is used with great latitude and, in this case, means: God forbid). It is not the law that brings death but "*rather sin*" (HAMARTIA means: offense, sin). The law is there for us to "recognize" (PHAINO means: to lighten, shine, show) sin as it truly is: sin!

As we have said, sin deceives people. Paul says that sin "*produces death*" (KATERGAZOMAI THANATOS, which means: to work fully in bringing death) but this is through "*what is good*" (AGATHOS means: good, benefit, well) for me! An example of this is when Eve saw the fruit as being good for her but brought spiritual death. This sin is pictured as being of an "*extraordinary degree*" (HUPERBOLE means: supereminence,

beyond measure). Yes, sin KILLS but the law makes you understand the gravity of sinning.

## 22 - *The battle within*

Romans 7:14-25

<sup>14</sup> For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, *sold into slavery to sin*. <sup>15</sup> For what I am doing I do not understand, because what I want *to do*, this I do not practice, but what I hate, this I do. <sup>16</sup> But if what I do not want *to do*, this I do, I agree with the law that *it is* good. <sup>17</sup> But now I am no longer the one doing it, but sin that lives in me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that good does not live in me, that is, in my flesh. For the willing is present in me, but the doing *of* the good *is* not. <sup>19</sup> For the good that I want *to do*, I do not do, but the evil that I do not want *to do*, this I do. <sup>20</sup> But if what I do not want *to do*, this I am doing, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin that lives in me. <sup>21</sup> Consequently, I find the principle with me, the one who wants to do good, that evil is present with me. <sup>22</sup> For I joyfully agree with the law of God in my inner person, <sup>23</sup> but I observe another law in my members, at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that exists in my members. <sup>24</sup> Wretched man *that I am!* Who will rescue me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks *be* to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself with my mind am enslaved to the law of God, but with my flesh *I am enslaved to the law of sin*.

(LEB)

This may be one of the most personal insights into the very heart and mind of Paul that we see in any of his epistles. What is truly wonderful about this section is that every true believer can relate to what Paul is confessing. Paul begins with an opening statement.

<sup>14</sup> For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, *sold into slavery to sin*.

This is an affirmation "we know" (EIDO means: to see, to know, to be aware of). I would venture to say that all those who are born-again reading this section would also confirm the same thought. The law is "*spiritual*" (PNEUMATIKOS means; non-carnal) it is not the fruit of the flesh but of the spiritual realm. It has been given by God to his people (Neh. 8:8,18) and it is often called the law of the Lord (Ps. 1:2; 19:7; 119:1). In contrast, we see how the apostle Paul sees himself as "*fleshly*" (SARKIKOS means: pertaining to flesh, carnal) in contrast with spiritual. He goes as far as to say that he is "*sold*" (PIPRASKO means: deposed of as merchandise, to sell) into the "*slavery to sin*". This phrase means "sold under sin." His flesh is like a junkie who needs a fix of sin!

<sup>15</sup> For what I am doing I do not understand, because what I want *to do*, this I do not practice, but what I hate, this I do.

In this verse, Paul will begin to explain what he means by being "*sold into slavery to sin*". He begins by saying that what he is "*doing*" (KATERGAZOMAI means: to work fully, accomplish) he does not "understand" (GINOSKO means: to know, to allow, to understand). There is a driving force that is in him that is difficult for him to comprehend. This is because it goes against his will! He writes "*what I want to do*" (THELO means: to determine, to choose or prefer). There are things that he wants to do but he is blocked from doing them—"this I do not practice" (PRASSO means: to execute, to accomplish). Paul sees himself doing just the opposite of what his inner man desires-but "*what I hate*" (MISEO means: to detest, to hate) "*this I do*" (POIEO means: to make or do, to agree). Paul is describing the war that is battling within him. He wants to do the good or right thing, but his flesh is sold into slavery to sin.

<sup>16</sup> But if what I do not want *to do*, this I do, I agree with the law that *it is* good.

His reasoning brings him to this conclusion. If I do what I do not want to do, I come to the conclusion that the "law" (NOMOS means: law, regulation, principle), which is mentioned in verse fourteen, "is good" (KALOS means: beautiful, good, virtuous). Why is it good? It is good because it is battling his "flesh" or carnal nature, if you prefer. Is it not the same with all true believers? Does the law of God not battle in us, therefore showing us that our sinful desires are not holy?

<sup>17</sup> But now I am no longer the one doing it, but sin that lives in me.

It is evident that the apostle Paul, when he writes, "*I am no longer the one*" he is speaking of his renewed spirit. Obviously, it is not the Holy Spirit living in him that is sinning. It is not his new nature, for it desires to do the things of the Lord. Paul is referring to what he calls "*the old man*," or the old nature that is still alive in the flesh. Paul speaks about this to the believers living in Ephesus:

#### Ephesians 4

21 If in fact you gave ear to him, and were given teaching in him, even as what is true is made clear in Jesus:

22 That you are to put away, in relation to your earlier way of life, the old man, which has become evil by love of deceit;

(BBE)

Believers are called to "*put away... the old man*" because it is evil and filled with deceit. This is the battle which Paul writes about. He understands that it is his old sinful nature that battles with his new nature, and sometimes it wins and he sins. But Paul writes, "*but sin that lives in me.*" I have died to the consequence of sin and to the grip that sin had on me. But sin still "*lives*" (OIKEO means: to occupy a house, to dwell) "*in me*". Surely we understand Paul. For we also sometimes do things that we wish we would not do. We are against it, but our flesh is weak (Mat. 26:41).

<sup>18</sup> For I know that good does not live in me, that is, in my flesh. For the willing is present in me, but the doing *of* the good *is* not.

Paul makes a bold statement that we all should understand "*good*" (AGATHOS means: good, benefit, well) does not "*live*" (OIKEO means: to occupy a house, to reside) "*in me*". He explains what he means by this: that is in my "*flesh*" (SARX means: flesh stripped away from its skin, carnality). This explains it all-the body, which is the instrument of life in which his soul (spirit) lives, has not an iota of good in it. This is what he wrote to the Galatians:

#### Galatians 5

16 But I say, Go on in the Spirit, and you will not come under the rule of the evil desires of the flesh.

17 For the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; because these are opposite the one to the other; so that you may not do the things which you have a mind to do.

18 But if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law.  
(BBE)

Paul describes the daily battle warring in him.

v.18 ... For the willing is present in me, but the doing *of* the good *is* not.

The "*willing is present*" (THELO means: to determine, to choose or prefer). He knows what is good by God's standards and he is determined to do it - his mind wants to! But when it comes to "*the doing*" (KATERGAZOMAI means: to work fully, accomplish) "*is not*". Does Paul always fail? Of course not. We can see this from his life. But sometimes he does, his flesh takes over and Paul sins.

<sup>19</sup> For the good that I want *to do*, I do not do, but the evil that I do not want *to do*, this I do.

Paul is being very transparent, which is a good lesson for all of us. The great apostle Paul, the miracle worker, the missionary, the one personally called by Jesus Christ himself, is not perfect and does not hide from this truth. He repeats himself as if he really wants his readers to understand. The good that I want to do "*I do not do*". Paul seems to be a very humble man, for he has done so much for the kingdom of God! But the evil that I don't want to do "*this I do*" (PRASSO means: to practice, perform repeatedly). I believe that the light of Christ that blinded him when he was on the road to Damascus truly pierced his heart and for the first time he really saw himself as he truly was-filled with evil and darkness.

<sup>20</sup> But if what I do not want *to do*, this I am doing, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin that lives in me.

Paul is repeating a statement that he had made in verse seventeen (But now I am no longer the one doing it, but sin that lives in me). His carnal appetite is at war with his renewed mind. He may be saying this to place emphasis on the ever going battle within all true believers.

<sup>21</sup> Consequently, I find the principle with me, the one who wants to do good, that evil is present with me. <sup>22</sup> For I joyfully agree with the law of God in my inner person, <sup>23</sup> but I observe another law in my members, at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that exists in my members.

Paul speaks of the "*principle*" (NOMOS means: law, regulation, principle) living in him. The things Paul does "*not want to do*", what he is determined not to do - this is what he does! Because "*evil*" (KAKOS means: worthless, depraved, wicked) "*is present*" (PARAKEIMAI means: to lie near, be at hand). Sin is never far away from the believer, it actually lives in him - in his flesh!

<sup>22</sup> For I joyfully agree with the law of God in my inner person, <sup>23</sup> but I observe another law in my members, at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that exists in my members.

Paul continues to explain what is going on in his life. He begins by stating that "*I joyfully agree*" (SUNEDOMAI means: to feel satisfaction, delight) with the "*law of God*". He loves and cherishes the law of God. We have seen this from the beginning of the

epistle. This joyfulness resides in my "*inner person*" (ESO means: inside, within, inward). The part of him that has been renewed (heart, mind, and spirit) rejoices in the Lord.

But I "*observe*" (BLEPO means: to look at, behold) another law. This new law that he speaks of is not the law of God. We can see this because it is "*at war*" (ANTISTRATEUOMAI means: to attack, destroy, war against) with the law of "*my mind*" (NOUS means the intellect, the mind). There is another law in him that is warring against what is in his renewed mind. That is against all that the law of God is teaching him to do. This law, which is the law of "*sin*" (HAMARTIA means: a sin, an offense) renders Paul "*captive*" (AICHMALOTIZO means: to make captive, bring into captivity) to sin that "*exists in my members*". Please note that once more, Paul says that sin is in his "*flesh*".

<sup>24</sup> Wretched man *that I am!* Who will rescue me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks *be* to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself with my mind am enslaved to the law of God, but with my flesh *I am enslaved* to the law of sin.

This is Paul's final conclusion. Please note that his conclusion is not that one day he will master the power of sin or that he will acquire enough wisdom or spiritual knowledge to have final victory over sin. Quite the opposite! In his conclusion, Paul places his life in the hands of the Living God to come to his aid.

He declares himself to be a "*wretched*" (TALAIPOROS means: enduring trial, miserable, pitiful, abject) person. This is Paul's first confession: - he is a miserable sinner who cannot fully control his fleshly desires. Then he declares that he needs "*rescue*" (RHOUMAI means: rescue, deliver). He knows that he can not rescue himself from this sinful state. He needs rescuing from "*this body of death*". Please note that death is in the flesh because it is the instrument of sin.

<sup>25</sup> Thanks *be* to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself with my mind am enslaved to the law of God, but with my flesh *I am enslaved* to the law of sin.

Paul gives ONLY ONE SOLUTION for his sorrowful state and that is why he gives thanks to "*God*" (THEOS means: the supreme God creator and sustainer) but it is "*through Jesus Christ*" who is "*Lord*" (KURIOS means: supreme in authority, Master). The rescue is from God but passes only through the Messiah and no one or nothing else.

In his final statement, Paul gives a closing picture of his theology concerning the "old and new" man. On the one hand, he is "enslaved" (DOULEUO means: to be a slave, be in bondage) to the law of God in his "mind" (NOUS means: the intellect, the mind). On the other hand, his "flesh" (here SARX means: the human nature) is "enslaved" to the law "of sin" (HAMARTIA means: a sin, an offense).

The battle which Paul speaks of in this section is one that will be fought by the true believer for all of his life. Until his flesh is separated from his soul (spirit), when he dies, conflict between these two laws (law of sin and the law of God) will always exist.

## 23 - Victory by the Holy Spirit

Romans 8:1-4

**8** Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation for those *who are* in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup>For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup>For what *was* impossible for the law, in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did*. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup>in order that the requirement of the law would be fulfilled in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

(LEB)

In our last section, we saw that Paul declares that he is a wretched man who has absolutely no power to escape the law of sin that is in his flesh. He concludes that the only thing he can do is to turn to God for rescue through the atoning work of Jesus Christ the Messiah.

<sup>1</sup>Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation for those *who are* in Christ Jesus.

This verse is like an oasis in the desert. For all the souls who suffer, knowing they are sinners before a holy God. This verse brings hope and consolation. There is a way out, we can become righteous, our sins can be washed away, peace is attainable, all because of Jesus Christ. Amen! "*Consequently*" (ARA means: drawing to a conclusion). The conclusion of all of the theology that Paul has taught so far is that there is "*now*" (NUN means: now, henceforth, present), right now, in the present, there is "no condemnation" (KATAKRIMA means: an adverse sentence, condemnation). There is no judgment for those who are in "*Christ*" (CHRISTOS means; the Messiah) "*Jesus*" (IESOUS means: Jehoshua, the name of our Lord).

True believers have received forgiveness of all their transgressions! John wrote it this way:

1 John 2

12 I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.  
(NKJV)

David exploded in gratitude when he wrote:

Psalms 32

1 "A Psalm of David. A Contemplation." Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,  
Whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit  
there is no deceit.

(NKJV)

And Paul writes: "*There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*" We have seen that the law only brings condemnation, and the wrath of God awaits those who have not humbly repented of their sins and asked Jesus to become their Savior. A terrible judgment awaits those who mock God's Messiah.

#### Revelation 20

10 And the Evil One who put them in error was sent down into the sea of ever-burning fire, where the beast and the false prophet are, and their punishment will go on day and night for ever and ever.

11 And I saw a great white seat, and him who was seated on it, before whose face the earth and the heaven went in flight; and there was no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, great and small, taking their places before the high seat; and the books were open, and another book was open, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged by the things which were in the books, even by their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and Hell gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man by his works.

14 And death and Hell were put into the sea of fire. This is the second death, even the sea of fire.

15 And if anyone's name was not in the book of life, he went down into the sea of fire.

(BBE)

But now there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. We are safe. Christ has received our judgment and has been condemned in our place! He has died, so we can be set free! May true believers be eternally grateful for their salvation and live a life that glorifies their Lord.

<sup>2</sup>For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Paul explains why there is no more condemnation for those (and only those) who are in Christ. He explains that "*the law of the Spirit of life*" is a new "law" which the Holy Spirit ushers into the life of the true believer. The "law of the Spirit of life" does a marvellous thing for the repentant soul; it sets "*you free*" (ELEUTHEROO means: to

liberate, make free). Remember that, like Paul, we were "carnal, sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14) and judgment was waiting for us. Having repented of our sin, we have died with Christ, and the Holy Spirit comes to us and "*sets you free.*"

The Holy Spirit sets us free from two things. The first is from the "*law of sin*". Sin is the fruit of breaking the holy law of God. Sin works through our flesh and entices it to rebel against the Lord God, which automatically brings condemnation. We have now been set free from the "*law of sin*". Second, we have been set free from "*death*" (THANATOS means: death, deadly). We know that there are two deaths. The first is physical. When our body dies, it was a judgment of God upon Adam and Eve and their descendents because they had eaten the forbidden fruit. The second is eternal spiritual death, which is mentioned four times in the book of Revelation (2:11; 20:6,14; 21:8). This is eternal punishment in hell. The "death" mentioned here is the second death, the spiritual death that awaits all who neglect the salvation offered through Christ.

<sup>3</sup> For what *was* impossible for the law, in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did*. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> in order that the requirement of the law would be fulfilled in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

In verses three and four, the apostle Paul explains the process used by God to be able to offer peace through Jesus Christ. He had to deal first of all with the law. It is written that the law, although we have seen that it is holy (7:12), was not capable of bringing man to righteousness. For "*what was impossible*" (ADUNATOS means: unable, weak, not possible). There was something that the law was not able to do for man. It was rendered "*weak*" (ASTHENEIO means: to be feeble, impotent, sick) "*through the flesh*" (SARX means: carnal-minded, fleshly). We have seen this before: it is the flesh, the carnal mind of man, that keeps the law from doing its work. Sin takes hold of the law in our flesh, and instead of keeping us in the Lord's path, it makes us take another road. Jesus spoke about this.

#### Matthew 7

13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

14 "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

(NKJV)

To solve the problem of the law being incapable of bringing righteousness because of our flesh, God did the following:

v.3 ... *By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,*

God "sent" (PEMPO means: to dispatch, a temporary errand) his own Son. This reminds me of John 3:16. But because of our weakness, which is found in the flesh, God sent his Son also "*in the likeness*" (HOMOIOMA means: resemblance, likeness, similitude) of our "*sinful*" (HAMARTIA means: a sin, offense) "*flesh*" (SARX means: carnal minded, fleshly).

The body which Christ was incarnated in was exactly like ours. In the sense that it had the same possibility of drawing Jesus to sin as our flesh pulls us towards breaking the law and sinning. That is why the writer of Hebrews was able to say that Jesus had also been tempted as we were but without sin.

#### Hebrews 4

14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(NKJV)

Instead of being condemned because of his own sin, Jesus had victory over sin and never broke the law.

v.3 ... and concerning sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

Quite the opposite. Jesus "*condemned*" (KATAKRINO means: to judge against, sentence, condemn) "*sin in the flesh*"! Instead of the flesh condemning Jesus, it was the holiness of Jesus that condemned sin. The Lord God used the same means "the flesh" as sin does. Sin uses the flesh as a means of condemnation, while Jesus uses the flesh as a means of liberation from the law of sin and death.

<sup>4</sup> in order that the requirement of the law would be fulfilled in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Christ fulfilled the "*requirement*" (DIKAIOMA means: justification, righteousness) of the law (NOMOS means: regulation, law, principle) of God. Every single one of the 613 laws that we find in the Old Testament, every single one of them Jesus "*fulfilled*" (PLEROO means: to cram, level up, complete) them "in us" or for us if you prefer. The righteousness of Christ is now "in us" because we are in Christ (Eph. 2:6,10,13). The Father no longer sees our trespasses and iniquities. What he sees is the righteousness of his Son, which covers us. In John 14:20, Jesus says the following:

John 14

20 At that time it will be clear to you that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I in you.  
(BBE)

We are not only in Christ, but the Lord says that He is in us. So the Father sees the Son "in us". His holiness also brings us his righteousness. And that is why we now have peace with God (Rom. 5:1) and also no condemnation (Rom. 8:1). Jesus does everything for us, so we can now rest in him. The war has ended!

v.4 ... who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Now that we have peace and the condemnation no longer exists against us, what should believers do? Paul does not hesitate and tells us what to do. The first is "*not to live according to the flesh*". Let us not forget that we have been liberated from the power of the flesh upon us. We can now choose to say no to the evil desires that our flesh brings upon us. Before, we were slaves to the flesh, but now we have become slaves to the Lord God. We may fail (we all do), but the power of the Holy Spirit is now in us, and we don't have to yield to our fleshly desires. So we are told to turn away from the flesh and the sin it produces. The second thing we are told to do is to live "*according to the Spirit*." Being liberated from the power of sin in our flesh, we can now walk anew in the ways of the "Spirit"—the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives in the believer and empowers him (Acts 1:8) to walk in righteousness. This is what we are told to do now that we have been declared righteous because of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 5

16 But I say, Go on in the Spirit, and you will not come under the rule of the evil desires of the flesh.  
(BBE)

Galatians 5

25 If we are living by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us be guided.  
(BBE)

## 24 - Victory over the "old man"

Romans 8:5-13

<sup>5</sup>For those who are *living* according to the flesh are intent on the things of the flesh, but those *who are living* according to the Spirit *are intent on* the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>For the mindset of the flesh *is* death, but the mindset of the Spirit *is* life and peace, <sup>7</sup>because the mindset of the flesh *is* enmity toward God, for *it is* not subjected to the law of God, for *it is* not able *to do so*, <sup>8</sup>and those who are in the flesh are not able to please God. <sup>9</sup>But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, this person *does not belong to him*. <sup>10</sup>But if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>And if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, the one who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also make alive your mortal bodies through his Spirit who lives in you. <sup>12</sup>So then, brothers, we are obligated not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup>For if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

(LEB)

In this section, Paul elaborates on his concept of flesh -vs- spirit. He will explain how a true believer is to live by the Spirit and why he should do so.

<sup>5</sup>For those who are *living* according to the flesh are intent on the things of the flesh, but those *who are living* according to the Spirit *are intent on* the things of the Spirit.

As in other sections, Paul opens with an opening statement, which he will develop throughout the segment. He speaks of two types of people. The first are those who are "*living*" (ON means: being, be, come, have). This gives an idea of how a person would daily walk about. Paul writes that his lifestyle is according to the "flesh" (SARX means: the flesh, carnal minded). What does it mean to be carnally minded? It means being "*intent*" (PHRONEO means: to exercise the mind, opinion) "on the things of the flesh". Paul gives an example of what the desires of the flesh are in his letter to the Galatians when he writes:

Galatians 5

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.  
17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication,  
uncleanness, lewdness,

20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish  
ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand,  
just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit  
the kingdom of God.

(NKJV)

The second group of people are the following:

v.5 ... but those *who are living* according to the Spirit *are intent on* the things of the  
Spirit.

The first group is "*living*" under the influence of the flesh, and the second group is also  
"living," but this time it is according to the Spirit. Paul also gives an example of what  
that means:

#### Galatians 5

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness,  
faithfulness,

23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

(NKJV)

Paul will continue and speak about the consequences of "living in the flesh". We have  
seen that sin is deceitful, it gives the idea that pleasure is to be found when it is applied  
in our life. But it never tells you the spiritual consequences that you will have to  
endure.

<sup>6</sup>For the mindset of the flesh *is* death, but the mindset of the Spirit *is* life and  
peace, <sup>7</sup>because the mindset of the flesh *is* enmity toward God, for *it is* not subjected  
to the law of God, for *it is* not able *to do so*, <sup>8</sup>and those who are in the flesh are not  
able to please God.

In a single phrase, Paul distinguishes the outcome between those who live in the flesh  
and those who live in the Spirit. As for those who have a "mindset" (PHRONEMA  
means: to be minded, purpose) on the things of the flesh, the natural consequence is  
"*death*" (THANATOS means: death, deadly). This is spiritual death, being separated

from God and all of his blessings, and later on, the "second death," an eternity in hell fire. This is where your carnal mind will usher you.

But for those who have a mindset of the Spirit, the natural consequence is "life" (ZOE means: life, life-time). Paul is speaking of the true life that is to be found in the Living God—eternal life in his presence in a home that he has prepared for his children (John 14:2,3). John also gives a description of this:

#### Revelation 21

3 And there came to my ears a great voice out of the high seat, saying, See, the Tent of God is with men, and he will make his living-place with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them, and be their God.

4 And he will put an end to all their weeping; and there will be no more death, or sorrow, or crying, or pain; for the first things have come to an end.

(BBE)

For all time, life and peace will overflow in the lives of the children of God. Paul now explains why this is so. Why living in the flesh and living in the Spirit are so different.

<sup>7</sup> because the mindset of the flesh *is* enmity toward God, for *it is* not subjected to the law of God, for *it is* not able *to do so*, <sup>8</sup> and those who are in the flesh are not able to please God.

Paul says that the "*mindset of the flesh*" or the "carnal minded" if you prefer, is "enmity" (ECHTHRA means: hostility, opposition, hatred) towards God. In other words, the flesh is at war against the Lord God. We have seen that if we are in Christ, we are now at peace with God (5:1). But there is NO PEACE for those who live in the flesh and resist God. Paul says that the flesh "*is not subjected*" (HUPOTASSO means: put under, subdued) to the law of God. The carnal mind refuses to bend the knee before the authority and Lordship of the Creator. He even goes further by saying that "*it is not able to do so*"! The power of sin in our flesh dominates our own un-regenerated desires. That is why God has to intervene in our lives so that we can turn to him. We will see this later on.

<sup>8</sup> and those who are in the flesh are not able to please God.

Because of our rebellious flesh, we "*are not able*" (DUNAMAI means: can not do). We are totally incapable to "please" (ARESKO means: to be agreeable, please) God. There is

nothing that a person can do that will please God unless that person is "in Christ" (born-again) and has the mindset of the Spirit.

<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, this person *does not belong to him*.

Paul makes a clear distinction between believers and non-believers. "But you are not in the flesh." The Roman believers no longer had the mindset of the flesh. They were "in the Spirit." Their mindset had changed. Their new life in Christ brought new fruits that were in accordance with the will of God and for his good pleasure.

Suddenly Paul gives a stern warning:

v.9 ...But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, this person *does not belong to him*.

As in ALL CHURCHES, I believe that there is a percentage of people who are not truly born-again. They say that they know Christ and have received him as their Savior. But when you look at their lives and hear what they say, you wonder! Paul writes that if you "*do not have the spirit of Christ*", this gives the idea that the born-again mindset should be fixed on Christ. We see in Colossians:

#### Colossians 3

1 If then you have a new life with Christ, give your attention to the things of heaven, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

2 Keep your mind on the higher things, not on the things of earth.

3 For your life on earth is done, and you have a secret life with Christ in God.

(BBE)

If this type of person says he believes but does not live what he says, then Paul writes that " this person *does not belong to him*". In the Greek, this means "*is not of him*". The epistles warn believers about those who say they are believers but are not. They are false teachers and preachers who prey on naive Christians. This is what Jesus had to say about them:

#### Matthew 7

15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

16 "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?"

17 "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

18 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

20 "Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

(NKJV)

In the following two verses, Paul gives another insight into the benefits of having the victory of the Spirit over the flesh (the old man).

<sup>10</sup> But if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> And if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, the one who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also make alive your mortal bodies through his Spirit who lives in you.

Paul wants the believers to look towards their eternal future and see the grace that they will receive in the future. He begins by writing, "*But if Christ is in you...*" We have just seen that some people may not have been true believers, but for those who are in Christ, he encourages them. He writes that "*the body*" (SOMA means: the body as a whole) is "dead" (NEKROS means: a corpse, dead). Their flesh is now dead, it is spiritually worthless because of "*sin*" (HAMARTIA means: a sin, an offense). We have seen this in the past. On the other hand, and this is encouraging, "the Spirit is life". The Holy Spirit living in you brings forth true life because of the "*righteousness*" (DIKAIOSUNE means: equity of character, justification, righteousness) of Christ in you. Yes, we have a much better life right now because we take pleasure in living for the glory of God, but there is another aspect of having the Spirit of Christ in us.

<sup>11</sup> And if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, the one who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also make alive your mortal bodies through his Spirit who lives in you.

Who is the "Spirit of the one"? It is God-the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit "*raised*" (EGEIRO means: to waken, rouse, raise up) Jesus from the "dead" (NEKROS means: a corpse, dead). If the same Holy Spirit "*lives in you*" (OIKEO means: to occupy a house, dwell), if you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13; 4:30) he will "*also make you alive*" (ZOOPOIEO means: to be re-vitalized, make alive). The believer has the assurance that he will be raised from the dead, just as Christ was raised from the dead, because they both have the same Holy Spirit living in them. What a great victory is given to the child of God! His flesh may have died because of sin, but his spirit will rise once more to be with his Lord.

<sup>12</sup>So then, brothers, we are obligated not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup>For if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

His conclusion is that "*we are obligated*" (OPHEILETES means: an owner, indebted) "not to the flesh" and not to our carnal mind to "*live according to the flesh*". The flesh is no longer the driving force in your life. It is no longer the essence of who you are. Things have changed! You have passed from death unto life, from the power of darkness to the kingdom of the Son of his love (Col. 1:13).

<sup>13</sup>For if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

This is Paul's last exhortation in this section. Beware how you live, because if you live "*according to the flesh*," you are going to "die." (APOTHNESKO means: to die off.) Paul is speaking of temporal death. If a Christian decides to live a life according to the flesh, he will surely spiritually die and live a life that is characterized by the fruits of death. The unbeliever finds pleasure in his sins, but the born-again believer finds no such joy because the Holy Spirit in him accuses him of the sins he is committing. He may try to flee from God (as the prophet Jonah did), but the Living God will find him out.

On the other hand, if you live "*by the Spirit*", if you allow yourself to be filled and guided by the holy Spirit, if you now look towards the things that are from above (Col. 3:1) and by doing so, "*put to death the deeds of the body*". If you choose the narrow gate and walk along its path, you will automatically stop doing the deeds of the flesh and "*you will live*." Jesus said:

#### John 7

37 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

(NKJV)

## 25 - Victory by adoption

Romans 8:14-17

<sup>14</sup> For all those who are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. <sup>15</sup> For you have not received a spirit of slavery *leading* to fear again, but you have received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, "Abba! Father!" <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself confirms to our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer together *with him* so that we may also be glorified together *with him*.

(LEB)

In our last section, we saw that believers in Christ have victory over what Paul calls the "old man" which is our sinful nature. In this section, Paul will encourage the Roman believers to understand that the Lord God has adopted them as his children.

<sup>14</sup> For all those who are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

I would like you to take note that Paul says "*for all*" (HOSOS means: as much as, all that). What he writes about is for ALL true Christians. Not just a chosen few, or an elite, or those who have been initiated into special "knowledge". As we will see, being adopted by the Lord is for every single person who has been born-again. If you have received a new life in Christ, then you are the Lord's child.

Once more, Paul speaks of those who are "*led*" (AGO means: to lead, to bring) by the Spirit of God. He places those who are led by the Spirit in contrast with those who are led by the flesh. Only those who are led by the Spirit are the "*sons*" (HUIOS means: as son, a child) of God. Remember what Paul wrote in our last section? He said that if you do not have the Spirit of Christ, you do not belong to him (v.9).

<sup>15</sup> For you have not received a spirit of slavery *leading* to fear again, but you have received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

One way you can identify the spirit that you have dwelling in you is simple. If the "*spirit*" (PHEUMA means: current of air, breath, spirit) in you leads to "slavery" (DOULEIA means: slavery, bondage) that leads to "fear" (PHOBOS means: to be put in fear, alarm, fright) this is not from the Lord God. I do not believe that I have ever read that God sent a spirit of fear to encourage his people. Fear does not lead to encouragement. God does not support his child by making him live in fear. I am not

speaking of the "fear of the Lord," which we should all have. But the fear that makes you as a bondsman no longer capable of moving forward in life and doing what you should do.

What true believers in Christ have "*received*" (LAMBANO means: to take hold, obtain) is the Spirit of "*adoption*" (HUIOTHESIA means: the placing as a son, adoption). Paul speaks about this when he wrote to the Galatians:

#### Galatians 4

4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,  
5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.  
(NKJV)

And also to the Ephesians:

#### Ephesians 1

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,  
5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,  
(NKJV)

We have the Spirit of adoption, and because of this, we can cry out "Abba! Father!" The Lord God is now very personal and near to you. He has become YOUR heavenly Father, and great privileges come with that. It also means that you can openly speak to him. Your access to his Majesty is guaranteed since you are a child of the Almighty.

<sup>16</sup>The Spirit himself confirms to our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup>and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer together *with him* so that we may also be glorified together *with him*.

In verse sixteen, we see how spiritual communication functions. First of all, we see that it is the Holy Spirit who "confirms" (SUMMARTUREO means: to testify jointly, corroborate). It is the Holy Spirit who speaks or communicates with you. But it is through "*our spirit*" (PNEUMA means: breath, breeze, spirit). The Holy Spirit does not speak to your flesh; he speaks to your spirit that has been revived through your second

birth. Remember that there is nothing good in our flesh and that it hates everything good from the Lord.

What the Holy Spirit confirms to our spirit is that "we are", not that we will be, we might be depending on this or that. It is an affirmative "we are" children of God. Making God our heavenly Father through adoption. We are his, and he is ours.

#### 1 John 3:1

See what great love the Father has given us in naming us the children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not see who we are, because it did not see who he was.

(BBE)

May we never doubt the love of God for us; for he has made us his adopted children at a great price—the death of his only begotten Son!

<sup>17</sup> and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer together *with him* so that we may also be glorified together *with him*.

Being a child of God grants us many things, and one of them is that we become his "*heirs*" (KLERONOMOS means: a sharer by lot, inheritor). We have become "fellow heirs" (SUGKLERONOMOS means: co-heirs, fellow-heirs) with Christ. I do not believe that we can fully understand the extent of what that means. What is the heritage that awaits the child of God? Peter gives us a glimpse of this when he writes:

#### 1 Peter 1

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

(NKJV)

Paul ends the section speaking about our adoption with this phrase:

v.17 ...if indeed we suffer together *with him* so that we may also be glorified together *with him*.

The heritage of the child of God is a thing to come and will last forever. Until we are with our heavenly Father we are in the flesh, in a world that loves darkness and hates light. A child of God will "suffer" (SUMPASCHO means: to experience pain jointly, suffer with) with Christ. Jesus foretold that his disciples would be hated so that they would be prepared:

John 15

18 If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.  
(NKJV)

History has proven that Jesus was right. His followers have been hated one way or another throughout history, and this hate for Christians will continue until the very end, when the Anti-Christ, the False Prophet, and the Beast will try to destroy all of Jesus' disciples.

Why is there suffering for the children of God? Paul answers, "so that we may also be glorified together with him". This is what Paul wrote to the Philippians concerning suffering for the sake of Christ:

Philippians 1

29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,  
(NKJV)

If we participate in his glory, we are also called to participate in his sufferings.

## 26 - *The glory to come*

Romans 8:18-25

<sup>18</sup> For I consider that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory that is about to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup> For the eagerly expecting creation awaits eagerly the revelation of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup> For the creation has been subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of the one who subjected *it*, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself also will be set free from its servility to decay, into the glorious freedom of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groans together and suffers agony together until now. <sup>23</sup> Not only *this*, but we ourselves also, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves *while we await eagerly our adoption*, the redemption of our body. <sup>24</sup> For in hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he sees? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, we await *it* eagerly with patient endurance.

(LEB)

In our last section, Paul left us speaking about suffering with Christ and being glorified with Christ. In this section, Paul will speak about this glory to be, for the children of God.

<sup>18</sup> For I consider that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory that is about to be revealed to us.

Paul begins with an opening statement, "*For I consider*" (LOGIZOMAI means: to estimate, conclude, reckon). These are his thoughts in relation with the suffering believers in Christ endure. Here are some persecutions that believers faced that we find in the New Testament:

Acts 5:33 (The apostles)

When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them.(NKJV)

Acts 7:57,58 (Stephen)

But with loud cries, and stopping their ears, they made an attack on him all together, Driving him out of the town and stoning him: and the witnesses put their clothing at the feet of a young man named Saul. (BBE)

Acts 12:1,2 (James)

Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. (NKJV)

An example of Christian persecution on a large scale is when Rome burned in 64 A.D. and the emperor Nero blamed the Christians. In the Annals of Tacitus (15:44), this is what he wrote: "*Nero punished Christians by nailing them to crosses, burning them as torches for light after sundown, and covering them in animal skins so they could be eaten by dogs. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft.*"

These are the types of "*sufferings*" (PATHEMA means: hardship, pain, affliction) of the "present time" (NUN KAIROS MEANS: now, the present occasion). The Roman authorities took pleasure in martyring and viciously mutilating the followers of Christ. It is said that the Roman Coliseum was not destroyed in the Middle Ages because it had become "a shrine" to the Christian Martyrs!

v.18 ... are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory that is about to be revealed to us.

All of these horrible sufferings are "*not worthy*" (AXIOS means: deserving, suitable) to be compared to something that the children of God will one day receive. All of these atrocities and sufferings are like a grain of sand in the desert compared to "*the glory*" (DOXA means: glory, dignity, honor) that is about to be "*revealed*" (APOKALUPTO means: to take the cover off) to us. John also speaks of this future revelation:

### 1 John 3

1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.  
(NKJV)

Paul will now speak of another aspect of the future revelation of the children of God.

<sup>19</sup> For the eagerly expecting creation awaits eagerly the revelation of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup> For the creation has been subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of the

one who subjected *it*, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself also will be set free from its servility to decay, into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

Paul speaks of the creation in relationship with the complete revelation of what the children of God will become. He speaks of the creation as though it were a living being who was "*eagerly expecting*" (APOKARADOKIA means: intense anticipation). The world anticipates with joy the "revelation" (APOKALUPSIS means: disclosure, appearing, coming) of the "sons of God".

We know that the earth has been cursed because of the sin of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:17-19). It is no longer what it was meant to be. And in a sense, Paul is saying that the earth is waiting and hoping for the revelation of the sons of God. But why is this so? In the end times, God will annihilate this cosmos infected by sin and create a new one, sinless as it was in the beginning (2 Peter 3:10-13). It is also at this time period that the sons of God will be revealed as who they truly have become: "we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2), like Jesus.

<sup>20</sup> For the creation has been subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of the one who subjected *it*, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself also will be set free from its servility to decay, into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

Paul writes that the creation has been "*subjected*" (HUPOTASSO means: to subordinate, be put under) to "*futility*" (MATAIOTES means: depravity, vanity). When sin entered the cosmos, it changed the face of God's sinless universe. It is not creation that desired this "*NOT willingly*" (HEKON means: voluntary, willingly). Sin imposed itself on its new domain. The "*one who subjected it*" is the Lord God. He had warned our first parents what would happen, and since God does not lie, death came not only into the lives of Adam and Eve but also into the entire universe.

But there is "hope" (ELPIS means: to anticipate with pleasure). This situation will one day change. This will come back to what it once was. The creation will be "set free" (ELEUTHEROO means: to liberate, make free), like a slave whose chains are no more! The creation will be set free from "servility" (PTHORA means: decay, ruin, corruption). The effect of sin on creation can be compared to the effect of a sickness on the human body. Both creation and our body are dying.

v.21 ... into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

The hope is the coming of the "glorious freedom" (DOXA ELEUTHERIA means: honorable liberty) of the children of God. What an event this will be when the children of God will be transformed into the image of the beloved Son and the universe will be washed away from all the effects of sin.

<sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groans together and suffers agony together until now. <sup>23</sup> Not only *this*, but we ourselves also, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves *while we await eagerly our adoption*, the redemption of our body.

Paul states that the creation "groans" (SUSTENAZO means: to moan jointly) "together and suffers agony". There are different views on this thought. Is it that the living beings of creation also suffer under sin along with the descendants of Adam and Eve? It may be so since they also get sick, suffer pain and hunger, and die just like the sons of Adam. This may be so since Paul now describes the children of God "*we ourselves*" who are the "first fruits of the Spirit," as those who also "*groan*" (STENAZO means: to sigh, murmur, groan) within ourselves. So both nature and man groan under the weight of sin. Believers groan as they "wait" (APEKDECHOMAI means: to expect fully) for their "*adoption*" (HUIOTHESIA means: the placing as a son). The present adoption is not complete because the sinful nature is still within the true believer. But one day there will be a "redemption" (APOLUTROSIS means: ransom in full) of our bodies. Paul speaks of this in his first letter to the Corinthians:

#### 1 Corinthians 15

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

(NKJV)

Paul ends this section concerning the glory to come by speaking about the hope that we have as believers in Christ.

<sup>24</sup> For in hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he sees? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, we await *it* eagerly with patient endurance.

It is our hope in Christ that brings salvation. Hope extends to things that have not yet been obtained. Believers "*hope*" (ELPIS means: to anticipate with pleasure) in the future salvation (SOZO means: to save, deliver, protect). It is not presently "seen" (BLEPO means: to look at, behold, perceive), I cannot see my salvation. I know I have it and that one day I will fully be saved from this sinful state. So, what should believers do until the final salvation is granted? Paul says that we "wait" (APEKDECHOMAI means: to expect fully) with "*patience*" (HUPOMONE means: cheerful and hopeful endurance).

Both creation and mankind are waiting for the glory to come. May this thought sustain all true believers throughout their lives.

## 27 - *The intercession of the Holy Spirit*

Romans 8:26,27

<sup>26</sup> And likewise also, the Spirit helps *us* in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as one ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes *for us with* unexpressed groanings. <sup>27</sup> And the one who searches our hearts knows what the mindset of the Spirit *is*, because he intercedes on behalf of the saints according to *the will of God*.  
(LEB)

In our last section, we learned that creation is groaning because it is under the judgment of sin. We have seen that mankind is also groaning because of the effects sin has had on the world and their lives. Sometimes believers are affected so deeply by the circumstances that sin brings us, that when we turn to God, we do not know how to express what is in our hearts. In this section, we will see another aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>26</sup> And likewise also, the Spirit helps *us* in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as one ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes *for us with* unexpressed groanings.

It is wonderful to understand that the Holy Spirit "*helps us*" (SUNANTAO means: to meet with). He is there for the child of God in "our weakness" (ASTHENEIA means: feebleness, malady). When we are downtrodden, broken, and oppressed, the Holy Spirit is right there with us. This is one of his many ministries towards us. On four occasions, Jesus told his disciples that the Holy Spirit whom they would receive would become their *helper*.

John 14

16 And I will make prayer to the Father and he will give you another Helper to be with you for ever,  
(BBE)

John 14

26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will be your teacher in all things and will put you in mind of everything I have said to you.  
(BBE)

John 15

26 When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father even the Spirit of true knowledge who comes from the Father--he will give witness about me;

(BBE)

John 16

7 But what I am saying is true: my going is for your good: for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

(BBE)

This section of Romans eight is all about the Holy Spirit helping the child of God when he is incapable of praying as he should because his heart is too heavy.

v.26 ... for we do not know how to pray as one ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes *for us with* unexpressed groanings.

We "*do not know*" (EIDO means: to see, to know, to perceive). There are times when we no longer have this capacity "*to pray*" (PROSEUCHOMAI means: to pray to God). Have you noticed that disciples of Christ who know how to pray and do pray can lose the capacity to do this because of the great pressure they are under? Sometimes it's "just too much" and we become flooded with emotions which we can hardly bear.

When this happens and we are no longer capable of speaking to our heavenly Father as we normally can, do not become discouraged, for the Holy Spirit is present in you. It is written that the Holy Spirit "*intercedes*" (HUPERENTUGCHANO means: to intercede on behalf of) for us. When we can no longer pray to the Father, the Holy Spirit helps us, comes to our side, and speaks on our behalf. The Holy Spirit takes our groanings and gives them form, making sense of our groanings and presents them to the Father.

<sup>27</sup> And the one who searches our hearts knows what the mindset of the Spirit *is*, because he intercedes on behalf of the saints according to *the will of God*.

Who is the "one who searches our hearts?" It is God the Father. King David called upon God to search his heart.

Psalms 26

1 <<A Psalm of David.>> Vindicate me, O LORD, For I have walked in my integrity. I have also trusted in the LORD; I shall not slip.

2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; Try my mind and my heart.

3 For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, And I have walked in Your truth.

(NKJV)

In verse twenty-seven, Paul writes that God the Father "*knows*" (EIDO means: to see, to know, to perceive) the "*mindset*" (PHRONEMA means: mental inclination or purpose) of the Holy Spirit. God the Father knows God the Spirit perfectly and vice versa. He knows that the Holy Spirit "*intercedes*" (ENTUGCHANO means: to entreat in favor of) in favor of his children, and that is "*according to the will of God*". This is what the Father wants of the Holy Spirit, and that is what the Spirit is doing-interceding in favor of true believers when they can no longer pray for themselves.

## 28 - *The eternal objectives of God*

Romans 8:28-30

<sup>28</sup>And we know that all *things* work together for good for those who love God, for those who are called according to *his* purpose, <sup>29</sup>because *those* whom he foreknew, he also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, so that he should be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup>And *those* whom he predestined, these *he* also called, and *those* whom he called, these *he* also justified, and *those* whom he justified, these *he* also glorified.

(LEB)

In our last section, we saw the intercessory work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the children of God. One might wonder why God has declared righteous those who place their faith in the Messiah. Why does the Holy Spirit encourage his children when they are in need? In this section, we will see what the ultimate objective of God has planned for his children by adoption.

<sup>28</sup>And we know that all *things* work together for good for those who love God, for those who are called according to *his* purpose,

We saw in section twenty-six that Paul was speaking about the harsh sufferings that the children of God can pass through—persecution could be found almost everywhere. In section twenty-seven we see that the Holy Spirit intervenes towards the Father when it seems that it is too much to bear. So one might ask, why all of this? How do I make sense of my suffering? Is there any sense to it? To encourage and comfort true believers, the apostle Paul writes what are probably two of the most well-known verses in his writings. They bring so much blessing to the soul that they stand out through all these centuries.

He begins by writing, "and we know" (EIDO means: to see, to know, to perceive). Paul wasn't guessing or taking a chance by writing these words; he knew! Then he writes, "*that all things*", does Paul refer only to the persecution that was mentioned before or ALL THINGS? As we will see later, Paul means "*all things*", any circumstance that life brings, all difficulties, all temptations. All these things "*work together*" (SUNERGEIO means: to be a fellow worker). They are there to work in your life. This reminds me of what the Lord God said to Israel through the prophet Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 18

1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying:

2 "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words."

3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel.

4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.

5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the LORD. "Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!

(NKJV)

v.28 ... *things* work together for good for those who love God, for those who are called according to *his* purpose,

All circumstances work together "for *good*" (AGATHOS means: good in any sense, well). Circumstances in your life work for your good. The next phrase is very important for us to understand what has just been said: "*for those who love God.*" If you do not love God, then you will not be able to see where God is going with this circumstance. You will not see the new doors that are opening, the opportunities you now have that you did not use to glorify God and later be glorified by him in eternity.

These circumstances are working together not for everyone, but for only those who are "*called*" (KLETOS means: invited, appointed, called). Some are called, others are not, as Jesus said:

Matthew 22

14 "For many are called, but few are chosen."

(NKJV)

As we will see, the end of chapter eight and the entire chapter nine will bring up the subject of predestination, which is difficult to understand or even accept for some believers.

The people Paul is talking about - those who are "called" and are called according to "*his purpose*" (PROTHESIS means: a setting forth, intent, purpose.) As we will see in chapter nine, God has a plan for salvation that includes the calling of certain people to participate in it.

<sup>29</sup> because *those* whom he foreknew, he also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, so that he should be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup> And *those* whom he predestined, these *he* also called, and *those* whom he called, these *he* also justified, and *those* whom he justified, these *he* also glorified.

Paul explains the process of the "*calling*" of God. Remember that we are entering into one of the greatest mysteries that the Bible offers us. We are very limited in our understanding of spiritual matters, and it is no wonder that we don't fully understand what is written before us.

Let's just look at the meaning of the words and try to follow the thoughts that are given to us. Paul begins with God and those he "*foreknew*" (PROGNINOSKO means: to know before-hand.) When was this "*foreknowledge*" in time? Here are a few examples:

God had prepared his kingdom as an inheritance for those to be saved "from the foundation of the world"—before time began. (Mat.25:34)

God chose us in him (Jesus) before the foundation of the world-before time began. (Eph.1:4)

The Book of Life with the names of the saved ones was written from the foundation of the world-before time began (Rev. 13:8; 17:8)

The foreknowledge of God did not begin when people were saved, RATHER because their names were written in the Book of Life before the world existed. So God knew not only every single person that would be born but, more precisely, all those who would become his children by adoption.

Those whom God "*foreknew*," he also "*predestined*" (PROORIZO means: to limit in advance). God knew and chose to limit those who would become "*righteous*" before him. I told you this would be difficult for some to accept, but we must remember that God is the supreme authority and our way of thinking is certainly not his!

#### Isaiah 55

8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.

9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

(NKJV)

When God predestined people, it was to make certain that they would be saved by becoming "righteous" before him. Remember that NO ONE is righteous before the Lord (Rom. 3:10-19,23). No one by himself would come to the Lord and repent. These people are predestined to "*be conformed*" (SUMMORPHOO means: to render like). Our final metamorphosis is to be rendered like Christ to the "image" (EIKON means: a likeness, image, representation) of his Son. John writes:

1 John 3:2

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.  
(NKJV)

To be conformed to his image is to be like him—like Jesus. Not a "little Jesus"-NEVER. Children of God will never become "little gods," as some cults say! But we will become Christ-like, reflecting the light as we should. Why does the Father do this? Why will there be so many who become "in his image?"

v.29 ...so that he should be the firstborn among many brothers.

It seems that the Father desires to have a large family! Paul speaks of "many brothers" (POLUS ADELPHOS means: much or many brothers). There will be a countless number of brothers and sisters who will participate in the wedding of the Lamb. The bride of the Lamb will be from different tribes, nations, and peoples. All through the ages, those who have sincerely repented of their sins and have asked Christ to become their only Savior will participate (Mat. 22:1-13; Rev. 19:6-9).

<sup>30</sup> And *those* whom he predestined, these *he* also called, and *those* whom he called, these *he* also justified, and *those* whom he justified, these *he* also glorified.

Paul continues his explanation of how the Lord God works out his plan of salvation. So those whom he "predestined" ( we saw this) he also "*called*" (KALEO means: to call forth). At the precise timing of the Lord, the name of that person is called, his mind is opened by the work of the Holy Spirit, and the person repents of his wicked ways, turns to Christ, and is born-again. I remember the precise moment that I was "*called*" by God—a blessed moment I will never forget! When you are "*called*," you are "*justified*" (DIKAI00 means: to render just or innocent). At that precise moment, the person who is called is imputed with the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, the

righteousness of Christ envelops the new believer and he instantly becomes "just" before the Father. Not because he has any justice or righteousness of his own, but because of the grace that is given to the repentant sinner.

The last step in redemption is the fact that each child will be "*glorified*" (DOXAZO means: glory, honor, magnify). The redemption story will culminate at the wedding of the Lamb, where Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all true believers will be present (Mat.8:11). This is unquestionably THE moment of glory.

## 29 - *The total security of the believer*

Romans 8:31-39

<sup>31</sup>What then shall we say about these *things*? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? <sup>32</sup>Indeed, *he* who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also, together with him, freely give us all *things*? <sup>33</sup>Who will bring charges against God's elect? God *is* the one who justifies. <sup>34</sup>Who *is* the one who condemns? Christ *is* the one who died, and more than that, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. <sup>35</sup>Who will separate us from the love of Christ? *Will* affliction or distress or persecution or hunger or lack of sufficient clothing or danger or the sword? <sup>36</sup>Just as it is written,

“On account of you we are being put to death the whole day *long*;  
we are considered as sheep for slaughter.”

<sup>37</sup>*No*, but in all these *things* we prevail completely through the one who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(LEB)

In our last section, we were told about the eternal objectives of God in regards to his children. In this section, we will learn that there is absolutely no one or anything that can hinder the Lord from reaching his goal. Paul wants the believers to understand that they have total security concerning their eternal salvation.

<sup>31</sup>What then shall we say about these *things*? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?

As he often does, Paul begins with an opening statement on which he will build his arguments. What are "*these things*"? They are all the difficulties, sufferings, and adversities that believers face. They are also the purpose of God and his work within the chosen person to bring him to righteousness. All of what Paul has been talking about in chapter eight, including the fight between the old and new nature that is in us, taking all of this into consideration, "*What shall we say about these things?*" In other words, what should we conclude? This is Paul's conclusion:

v.31 ... If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?

"If God is for us" and we have seen that he truly is. We do not have to wonder about this any longer. The logical conclusion is "*who can be against us?*" The obvious answer is: NO ONE!

Paul will begin to explain why he came to that conclusion.

<sup>32</sup> Indeed, *he* who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also, together with him, freely give us all *things*?

This is his first argument in favor of our total security in Christ. If God did not "*spare*" (PHEIDOMAI means: to treat leniently, to spare) his own Son, who is Christ, but rather "*gave him up*" (PARADIDOMI means: to surrender, yield up) for "us". His first thought is that the Father gave up the Son to be a perfect and eternal sacrifice (Heb. 10:10-14). As with Abraham, God provided the sacrifice. God has provided, and his provision suffices. The proof of this is in the resurrection of Jesus.

If God has given his Son, Paul argues, how will he not also "*together with him*", together with Jesus "*freely give*" (CHARISOMAI means: to grant as a favor) us all things? In other words, God the Father could not give anything greater than his own Son - that is how much he loves and cares for "us". I just want to give a quick note about the "us" in this verse. The "us" are the true believers in the Messiah, the redeemed, the bride of Christ, and no one else.

<sup>33</sup> Who will bring charges against God's elect? *God is* the one who justifies.

In his second argument, Paul brings up the thought of justification. When Paul writes "who", he includes any living creature, but the one who is THE accuser of believers is Satan. We see this in Job 1 & 2, in Zechariah 3:1-5 and Rev. 12:9,10. We also see that there is another important accuser and that is the Law of Moses. This is what Jesus said:

#### John 5

45 "Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you--  
Moses, in whom you trust.

46 "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.

47 "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

(NKJV)

So, who has the authority to bring "charges" (EGKALEO means "to bring to account, to accuse) against the believer? Can Satan or even the Law of Moses?

v. 33 ... God *is* the one who justifies.

Paul's answer is NO ONE because God (THEOS means: the supreme God, creator and sustainer of all things) is the one who "*justifies*" (DIKAIIO means: to render just or innocent). God has declared peace with the believer because of Christ (Rom. 5:1). He also declares that there is no longer any condemnation for those who are "in Christ" (Rom. 8:1). God is the ultimate authority, and he declares those whom he has chosen in Christ to be blameless from all iniquities.

<sup>34</sup> Who *is* the one who condemns? Christ *is* the one who died, and more than that, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

His third argument is about condemnation. Who is the one who "*condemns*" (KATAKRINO means: to judge against, condemns)? In a court of law, there is a prosecutor and an attorney for the defense. The job of the prosecutor is to bring accusations against a person. Not only that, he has to bring proof to be able to ask the judge to condemn that person to a fine or a prison sentence. As with the example of Joshua the high priest (Zechariah 3:1-5) the devil brings accusations against him. As proof, we can see that Joshua (who represents Israel) was clothed in filthy garments (symbol of sins). But the devil could not get a condemnation as the Lord rebukes Satan and takes away Joshua's filthy clothes and he was given clean clothes and a turban.

v.34 ... Christ *is* the one who died, and more than that, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Believers cannot be condemned because "*Christ is the one who died*". The death of Christ takes away all of the believer's iniquities. Then Paul writes that Christ "*was raised*" (EGEIRO means: to waken, raise from sleep), death could not keep hold of him since he had never sinned. He brings a third thought, and that is the fact that Jesus is "*at the right hand of God*" (Mat. 26:64; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3). There is no higher position or symbol of power than being at the Father's right hand. With a fourth thought, Paul writes that no one can condemn believers because Jesus "*intercedes*" (ENTUGCHANO means: confer with, make intercession) for them. So believers can rest assured because no one can bring any condemnation against us. Amen! Paul wrote it this way:

## Colossians 2

13 And you, being dead through your sins and the evil condition of your flesh, to you, I say, he gave life together with him, and forgiveness of all our sins;

14 Having put an end to the handwriting of the law which was against us, taking it out of the way by nailing it to his cross;

(BBE)

Paul's fourth argument in establishing the total security of the believer in Christ is the following.

<sup>35</sup> Who will separate us from the love of Christ? *Will* affliction or distress or persecution or hunger or lack of sufficient clothing or danger or the sword? <sup>36</sup> Just as it is written,

“On account of you we are being put to death the whole day *long*;  
we are considered as sheep for slaughter.”

If no one can be against us, if no one can bring any charge against us, and if no one can condemn us, maybe someone can "*separate*" (CHORIZO means: to place room between, to part) us from the "*love*" (AGAPE means: affection, love) of Christ. Christ can save us from any charge or condemnation or anyone being against us, but maybe he doesn't love us because of all our sins and we become separate from him. As you will see, Paul gives a list of things that can never separate us from the love of Christ.

Will "*affliction*" (THLIPSIS means: anguish, trouble, tribulation) separate us from the love of Christ? We will have tribulations (Rom. 5:3) but we also glory in them, knowing that we have victory in Christ (John 16:33).

Will "*distress*" (STENOCHORIA means: calamity, anguish, distress) separate us from the love of Christ? Paul says NO as we see in 2 Cor. 6:3-10. The Holy Spirit is with us when we are in distress.

Will "*persecution*" (DIOGMOS means: persecution, hounding, maltreatment) separate us from the love of Christ? Paul writes in 2 Cor. 4:9 that he was persecuted but not forsaken.

Will "*hunger*" separate us from the love of Christ? Paul writes in 2 Cor. 11:27 that he suffered hunger and thirst during his ministry, but that didn't stop Christ from loving and caring for him, Jesus delivered him from all difficulties!

Will "*lack of sufficient clothing*" (GUMNOTES means: nudity, nakedness) separate us from the love of Christ? Again, "NO" is the answer; clothing makes no difference in the way Christ loves his disciple (James 2:1–5).

Will "*danger*" (KINDUNOS means: danger, peril) or the "*sword*" (MACHAIRA means: a knife, a sword) separate us from the love of Christ? All the disciples of Christ were, one day or another, in danger of banishment, imprisonment, stoning, and death sentences. Some had to flee as the believers Peter wrote to, and some died as Stephen, James, and Paul. But none of that separated them from the love of Christ for them.

<sup>36</sup> Just as it is written,

“On account of you we are being put to death the whole day *long*;  
we are considered as sheep for slaughter.”

Here Paul quotes from Ps. 44:22 as though he wants to confirm by the Holy Scriptures that suffering in its different forms is not something that is unusual and not something that the Lord turns his head from when he sees we are suffering. How many times do we see David cry to the Lord when he is in danger or great distress? God is always with him.

<sup>37</sup> *No*, but in all these *things* we prevail completely through the one who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So, can all these things separate us from the love of Christ? In these three last verses, Paul gives his final answer and examples. His answer is "NO!" NO ONE can do that. He continues to write that although these things look like we are no longer loved or even abandoned by the Lord, Paul writes just the opposite! In ALL these things (what we see in verses 31-36) we "*prevail completely*" (HUPERNIKAO means: to gain a decisive victory). We are not only continuously loved by Christ in all our troubles, but we are totally victorious "*through the one who loved us.*" through Jesus Christ! What may seem to be a great defeat in our human eyes, the word of God tells us not to worry because we are in Christ and have won the final victory.

<sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height, nor depth, nor any other

created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul now gives us a second list of things that cannot separate us from our beloved Savior. Again, we see that he is "convinced" (PEITHO means: to convince, to assent, have confidence) None of the following will ever be able to separate us from the love of Christ. May this second list encourage the believer.

Can "*death*" (THANATOS means: death, deadly) separate us from the love of God? No, because death has been conquered by Christ (1 Cor. 15:55-58).

Can "*life*" (ZOE means: life, life-time) separate us from the love of God? No, because we have died to this life of sin and have been re-born in Christ (John 3:36).

Can "*angels*" (AGGELOS means: a messenger especially an angel) separate us from the love of God? No, because they are sent to minister to the children of God (Heb. 1:13,14) not to separate them from the Lord Almighty.

Can "*rulers*" (ARCHE means: chief, magistrate, the first) separate us from the love of God? Since Paul uses opposites (death and life) in this list, I believe that he is referring to evil spirits that might want to hinder the child of God. But we know that Satan and the fallen spirits have no power over the redeemed (1 John 5:18)

Can "*things present*" (ENISTEMI means: to be at hand, present) separate us from the love of God? There are no circumstances that can separate us from the love of God because all circumstances are God given for our benefit (Rom. 8:28).

Can "*things to come*" (MELLO means: about to be, to come) separate us from the love of God? No, because we are now resting in the hands of the Father (John 10:28,29).

Can "*powers*" (DUNAMIS means: force, miraculous powers, might) separate us from the love of God? No, no human authority can do this. They may be able to kill the body but have no power over the soul (Mat. 10:28).

Can "*height*" (HUPSOMA means: an elevated place or thing) or "*depth*" (BATHOS means: profundity, deepness, depth). Here, Paul seems to speak of the dimensions in life. Nothing far above or far below, nothing you can think of regarding distance (Ps. 139:8) can separate you from the love of God.

Can " *any other created thing*" (KTISIS means: creation, creature, thing) separate us from the love of God? No, because the believer is already with God in Christ at his right hand (Eph. 2:6,7).

v.39 ... will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

NOTHING, ABSOLUTELY NOTHING "*will be able*" (DUNAMAI means: to be able, be of power). Nothing has enough power to "*separate*" (CHORIZO means: to place room between, to separate) or distance us from the "*love*" (AGAPE means: affection, love) that is in Christ Jesus our "*Lord*" (KURIOS means: supreme in authority).

If you are a true child of God, you are then safe and loved.

## 30 - Paul and Israel

Romans 9:1-5

<sup>1</sup> I am telling the truth in Christ—*I am* not lying; my conscience bears witness to me in the Holy Spirit— <sup>2</sup>that my grief is great and *there is* constant distress in my heart. <sup>3</sup> For I could wish myself to be accursed from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my fellow countrymen according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> who are Israelites, *to whom belong* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the *temple* service, and the promises, <sup>5</sup> *to whom belong* the patriarchs, and from whom *is* the Christ according to human descent, who is God over all, blessed *forever!* Amen.

(LEB)

In this section, Paul reflects on Israel, his brothers in the flesh. He knows how they have vastly rejected the Messiah they had been waiting for. We also see Paul's un-surpassing love for his countrymen.

<sup>1</sup> I am telling the truth in Christ—*I am* not lying; my conscience bears witness to me in the Holy Spirit—

It seems as though Paul was asked to be a witness in court. He says, "I am telling the truth" (ALETHEIA means: true, truly, verity). To add to this statement, he says "*in Christ*" (CHRISTOS means: anointed, Messiah). He takes Jesus to be his witness to what he is about to say. Knowing the great respect Paul has for his Messiah, we understand that he is not lying to the Roman believers. He makes a bold statement, "*I am not lying*" (PSEUDOMAI means: to utter an untruth, a falsehood). This should capture the attention of those who are reading or listening to what is written.

Paul states that his "*conscience*" (SUNEIDESIS means: moral consciousness, co-knowledge with oneself) "*bears witness*" (SUMMARTUREO means: to testify jointly). Of the 32 times that this word is used in the New Testament, Paul uses it 21 times. The conscience is "the faculty by which we apprehend the will of God" (W.E. Vine). It brings a sense of guilt before the Lord (Heb. 10:2). The conscience processes the difference between what is good and what is not, before the Lord. What Paul is saying is that his conscience is not bothering him (for it is the truth) and neither does the Holy Spirit.

<sup>2</sup> that my grief is great and *there is* constant distress in my heart.

This is the truth that he is speaking of-his "*grief*" (LUPE means: sadness, grief, sorrow). This grief in him is "*great*" (MEGAS means: big, great, large). There is this weight in his heart and we see that it is described as a "*constant*" (ADAILEIPTOS means: without omission) "*distress*" (ODUNE means: grief, sorrow). Paul's heart is very heavy and this state of being is un-releasing. It is always on his "heart" (KARDIA means: fig. the thoughts and feelings of the mind).

<sup>3</sup> For I could wish myself to be accursed from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my fellow countrymen according to the flesh,

Every time I read this verse, it reflects my lack of true spiritual love for my own countrymen! This is the "*wish*" (EUCHOMAI means: to wish, to pray) of Paul. This is in the imperfect tense, which gives the idea of "if Christ would permit." This is the desire of his heart. He wishes that he would be "*accursed*" (ANATHEMA means: a religious band, accursed) from Christ! For the "*sake of my brothers*" (ADEPHOS means: a brother, near or remote). Moses had the same thought (Ex.32:32) in regards to Israel. According to the flesh, Paul also calls them "*my fellow countrymen*" (SUGGENES means: a relative, cousin, or kinfolk). He is naturally speaking of the Jewish people.

I can not fathom the depth of the love of Paul and Moses for their fellow men. They were both ready to set aside their eternal futures for the benefit of God's people. It is not like giving their life to save others, because once dead, you are with the Lord. They were ready to go to hell and suffer eternal punishment to save others. This type of love is far above all I can comprehend and would be willing to do. Imagine how infinitely endless is the love of Christ, who went to the cross in our place and tasted the wrath of the Father!

<sup>4</sup> who are Israelites, *to whom belong* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the *temple* service, and the promises, <sup>5</sup> *to whom belong* the patriarchs, and from whom *is* the Christ according to human descent, who is God over all, blessed *forever!* Amen.

In these two verses, the apostle Paul will give a description of the grace that God has given to the Israelites to be his people. The first statement is that they received "*adoption*" (HUIOTHESIA means: the placing as a son). God adopted the Israelites as his own children. They were THE nation of God's choice. They were the apple of his eye (Deut. 32:10-14). This has not changed. Israel is still in the plans of God and the Messiah will come again for them. They also received the "*glory*" (DOXA means: glory,

dignity, praise). In Micah 1:15, God is referred to as the "glory of Israel". It just may be that Paul is describing how Israel has been chosen to receive the Lord God himself and to walk among them. Please note that adoption and glory are set together as the next two pairs of correlatives.

The second pair of correlatives are the "*covenants*" (DIATHEKE means: a disposition, testament, covenant) and the "*Law*" (NOMOTHESIA means: giving of the law, legislation). To Israel was given the Law through Moses, but also a new covenant, which we find in the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

#### Jeremiah 31

31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-

32 "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.

33 "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

(NKJV)

The third pair of correlatives are the "*temple service*" (LATREIA means: ministration of God, divine service). This speaks of the entire service of the temple. This includes its upkeep, musicians, sacrifices, and all the rest. There are also the "*promises*" (EPAGGELIA means: an announcement, a promise). Both the temple service and the promises flow from the giving of the Law. The Israelites had the great privilege of being able to actually take care of and manifest God's presence with humanity through the temple service and the keeping of the Law concerning it.

<sup>5</sup> *to whom belong the patriarchs, and from whom is the Christ according to human descent, who is God over all, blessed forever! Amen.*

Here we see that to the six previous privileges that were mentioned in verse four, Paul adds two more. The first are the "*patriarchs*" ( PATER means: a father, a parent). God had personally manifested himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Through the seed of the Patriarchs, the nation of Israel was born out of it. Abraham begot Isaac, who begot Jacob, who begot twelve sons who later became known as the twelve tribes of Israel. The second is the "Christ" (CHRISTOS means: anointed, messiah). To Israel belonged

the Messiah, who would be a direct descendant of King David and who would sit on his throne (Jer. 33:17, Mat. 25:31).

who is God over all, blessed *forever!* Amen.

Here the apostle Paul calls Christ "who is God" (THEOS means: the supreme God creator and sustainer). He also calls Jesus God in the following verse:

#### 1 Timothy 3

16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.  
(NKJV)

In the book of Revelation, Jesus is also described as being God. On three occasions, he is called the "Alpha and the Omega"—the beginning and the end, the first and the last (Rev. 1:8; 21:6; 22:13). This is a reference given only to the Almighty.

#### Isaiah 41

- 1 "Keep silence before Me, O coastlands, And let the people renew their strength! Let them come near, then let them speak; Let us come near together for judgment.
- 2 "Who raised up one from the east? Who in righteousness called him to His feet? Who gave the nations before him, And made him rule over kings? Who gave them as the dust to his sword, As driven stubble to his bow?
- 3 Who pursued them, and passed safely By the way that he had not gone with his feet?
- 4 Who has performed and done it, Calling the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first; And with the last I am He.'  
(NKJV)

May our Lord and Savior be blessed by his redeemed forever and ever. May they glorify his name until their very last breath.

## 31 - *The natural and spiritual posterity*

Romans 9:6-13

<sup>6</sup> But *it is* not as if the word of God had failed. For not all those *who are descended* from Israel *are truly* Israel, <sup>7</sup> nor *are they* all children because they are descendants of Abraham, but “In Isaac will your descendants be named.” <sup>8</sup> That is, *it is* not the children *by human descent who are* children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as descendants. <sup>9</sup> For the statement of the promise *is* this: “At this time I will return and *Sarah will have* a son.” <sup>10</sup> And not only *this*, but also *when* Rebecca conceived children by one *man*, Isaac our father— <sup>11</sup> for *although they* had not yet been born, or done anything good or evil, in order that the purpose of God according to election might remain, <sup>12</sup> not by works but by the one who calls—it was said to her, “The older will serve the younger,” <sup>13</sup> just as it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”  
(LEB)

In the section before us, the apostle Paul will continue and deepen his teachings concerning one of the most controversial subjects found in the New Testament: predestination.

<sup>6</sup> But *it is* not as if the word of God had failed. For not all those *who are descended* from Israel *are truly* Israel, <sup>7</sup> nor *are they* all children because they are descendants of Abraham, but “In Isaac will your descendants be named.”

Paul begins with a bold statement in regards to who is the true Jew. We will see that not all Jews are children of God, and because of this, Paul states that God has not “*failed*” (EKPIPTO means: to drop away, become inefficient). The Word cannot fail because it is of God. The very words of God bear the unlimited power of the one who spoke them. Keep this in mind, “*it is not as if the word of God had failed.*” If ALL of Israel had failed to recognize its Messiah, then the Word of God would have failed. But praise God, a portion of Israel did and continues to receive its true Messiah.

Let us not forget that we are the ones who fail to recognize and understand the plan of God for fallen humanity and sometimes believe that his Word fails. Remember these words spoken by the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 55

<sup>8</sup> For my thoughts are not your thoughts, or your ways my ways, says the Lord.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways,  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.  
(BBE)

We are confronted with a spiritual truth that is difficult to understand if we do not allow ourselves to be taught by the Holy Spirit.

v.6 ... For not all those *who are descended* from Israel *are truly* Israel,<sup>7</sup> nor *are they* all children because they are descendants of Abraham, but "In Isaac will your descendants be named."

Paul begins by saying that there is a difference between being a descendent of Israel and a true descendant of "*Israel*" (ISRAEL: the adopted name of Jacob, including his descendants). The Greek wording for v.6,7 is:

"For all those of Israel, these Israel nor because they are seed of Abraham all children  
but in Isaac will be called to you seed."  
(The interlinear Hebrew/Greek English Bible)  
(Jay Green, general editor and translator)

These descendants of Israel are not all "descendants" (SPERMA means: seed, offspring) of Abraham. We know that Abraham is the father of what became the great nation of Israel, according to the promise of God (Gen.22:16-18). We all know that Abraham had two children. The first is Ishmael, whom he had with Hagar, the maidservant of his wife Sara. The second was Isaac, whom Sarah had in her old age. Since there can be two lineages of the descendants of Abraham, Paul quotes Gen. 21:22, to demonstrate which one is the true inheritance of God's promises.

<sup>8</sup>That is, *it is* not the children *by human descent who are* children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as descendants.

There is a separation in the lineage of Abraham. Paul writes that the lineage of "*human descent*" (SARX means: the flesh, the body) are not "*children*" (TEKNON means: a child) of "God" (THEOS means: the supreme God, creator and sustainer). So, who are God's children? The children of God are the children "*of the promise*" (EPAGGELIA means: an announcement, a pledge). They are the ones who are "*counted*" (LOGIZOMAI means: to make an inventory, an estimate), they are the "*descendants*" (SPERMA means: seed, offspring)-the true children of Abraham are the children of the promise.

<sup>9</sup> For the statement of the promise *is* this: “At this time I will return and *Sarah will have a son.*” <sup>10</sup> And not only *this*, but also *when* Rebecca conceived children by one *man*, Isaac our father—

In these two verses, Paul will explain why those of the "true Israel" are the children of the promise. He first speaks of Sarah, the wife of Abraham, and quotes Gen. 18:10,14. This is where the Lord promises to return the next year and Sarah will have a child. Then he speaks of Rebecca, who also could not conceive (Gen. 25:21), but also had a child. Both children were children not of the flesh but of the faith in the Lord God and of his steadfast promise.

<sup>11</sup> for *although they* had not yet been born, or done anything good or evil, in order that the purpose of God according to election might remain, <sup>12</sup> not by works but by the one who calls—it was said to her, “The older will serve the younger,” <sup>13</sup> just as it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

In these verses, Paul will prove that predestination is of the Lord's doing. He speaks of "*they*". These are the twins that Rebecca will give birth to. BEFORE they had "been born" (GENNAO means: to procreate, conceive, be born,) or "*done*" (PRASSO means: to practice, perform repeatedly) anything good or evil, God made a choice. Please remember that this is BEFORE they were born, BEFORE they could do any good or evil in their lives. This is all to manifest (or prove) the "*purpose*" (PROTHESIS means: a setting forth, a purpose) of God. This purpose ( the goal or intention of God) is "*according to election*" (EKLOGE means: divine selection, chosen). The purpose of God is to "*remain*" (MENO means: to stay, abide, endure) by the means of election. If God had not intervened, his promise would not have come true since both Sarah and Rebecca could not have children. When Rebecca conceived twins, God not only intervened to open her womb but also elected which child would be the carrier of the promise as well as his descendants. God, determined to keep his promise, intervenes in the lives of Abraham and Isaac, and they both become parents.

<sup>12</sup> not by works but by the one who calls—it was said to her, “The older will serve the younger,” <sup>13</sup> just as it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

Both Esau and Jacob, who were twins, were predestined before they were born to follow two different paths. These two different paths of election were not given because of any "works". Their election had nothing to do with anything that they did in their lives (as we have already seen) since the election was held while they were still in the womb. Their election depended on the "*one who calls*". This can only be the Lord

God. When Rebecca was pregnant, the twins in her "struggled together" so she inquired of the Lord, and this was his response:

#### Genesis 25

23 And the Lord said to her, Two nations are in your body, and two peoples will come to birth from you: the one will be stronger than the other, and the older will be the servant of the younger.  
(NKJV)

This is the quote that Paul uses to manifest predestination through the election of Jacob as the spiritual heir of Abraham and Isaac. By tradition, Esau was the first born, and by that tradition, he is the one who should have been chosen as the heir of his father and continued in his father's name once he had passed away. But the Lord God, to show that he chooses as he pleases, made Jacob, the second son, the heir of his father. The younger should have served the older, not the other way around! But God had chosen Jacob, and nothing could change that.

” <sup>13</sup> just as it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

This is a quote from Malachi 1:2,3 which says:

#### Malachi 1

2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. "Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?' Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" Says the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved;  
3 But Esau I have hated, And laid waste his mountains and his heritage For the jackals of the wilderness."  
(NKJV)

These two verses are difficult, as is the entire subject of predestination and election. The context is that the Jews no longer believed that God loved them. God says that he does love them and proves it by saying that he "*loved*" (AGAPAO means: to love in a social or moral sense) Jacob, of whom they were descendents, and that he "*hated*" (MISEO means: to detest, to love less, hateful) Esau. To prove that this was true, God told Israel to take a look at the land of Esau and how it had become a wasteland while the country of Israel was a good land.

God actually manifested his love for Jacob because in his sovereignty he elected Jacob and his descendents to enter into a personal covenant with him (Gen. 29:31-35; Deut.

21:15-17) so that they would become his special possession (Deut. 4:37; 5:10; 7:6-9). Since God refrained from blessing Esau in this fashion, it would be considered that he did not like him.

Election is seen everywhere in the Scriptures if we take time to notice. Here are some examples:

- God chose Abraham to become father of a great nation.
- God chose Jacob even though he was the second son.
- God chose Moses to lead his people out of Egypt
- God chose David out of all the young men in Israel.
- God personally chose all the prophets who have a book named after them in the Bible.
- God chose Mary to give birth to the Messiah
- The apostles were all personally chosen.

This list could go on and on. The election and predestination by God of certain people is evident. Do we completely understand this? I cannot say that anyone truly understands the ways of the Lord.

## 32 - *The mercy and sovereignty of God*

Romans 9:14-24

<sup>14</sup>What then shall we say? *There is no injustice with God, is there?* May it never be! <sup>15</sup>For to Moses he says, "I will have mercy on whomever I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I have compassion." <sup>16</sup>Consequently therefore, *it does not depend on the one who wills or on the one who runs, but on God who shows mercy.* <sup>17</sup>For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very *reason* I have raised you up, so that I may demonstrate my power in you, and so that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." <sup>18</sup>Consequently therefore, he has mercy on whomever he wishes, and he hardens whomever he wishes. <sup>19</sup>Therefore you will say to me, "Why then does he still find fault? For who has resisted his will?" <sup>20</sup>On the contrary, O man, who are you who answers back to God? Will what is molded say to the one who molded *it*, "Why did you make me like this?" <sup>21</sup>Or does the potter not have authority over the clay, to make from the same lump a vessel that *is for honorable use* and *one that is for ordinary use*? <sup>22</sup>And *what* if God, wanting to demonstrate his wrath and to make known his power, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? <sup>23</sup>And *he did so* in order that he could make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy that he prepared beforehand for glory, <sup>24</sup>us whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

(LEB)

In our last section, Paul explained that God chooses people according to his plan. In this section, Paul will write concerning the thought that some might have that God is therefore unjust by not choosing everybody to be in his eternal plan.

<sup>14</sup>What then shall we say? *There is no injustice with God, is there?* May it never be!

The phrase "*What shall we say then*" refers to what has been said in our last section about the natural and spiritual posterity of Israel. Paul explained that it is not because you are a Jew by the flesh that you are a spiritual descendant of Abraham. This is where election and predestination come into play to explain this truth. To many back then, and still today, there is a negation of this thought because, to them, it seems unfair and does not seem to fit the loving character of the Lord God Almighty. If this theology were to be true, then God would be unjust in his dealings with Adam's race.

v.14 ... *There is no injustice with God, is there?* May it never be!

The Greek phrase is: "Not unrighteousness with God?" This is a negative construction, which should conclude with a negative answer such as "No, there is no injustice with God." The word "injustice" (ADIKIA means: legal injustice, wrongfulness, unjust) and for the people that might think so, Paul adds "*may it never be*" (GINOMAI means: to cause to be, to become, God forbid). The Greek word "GINOMAI" is used in many different English references. One of them is "God forbid" (may it not be). It seems to be used on ten different occasions in the Book of Romans (3:4,6,31; 6:2,15; 7:7,13; 9:14; 11:1,11). There is NEVER any injustice with God-never!

<sup>15</sup> For to Moses he says, "I will have mercy on whomever I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I have compassion."

To prove that there is no injustice in the Lord God, the apostle Paul uses the Holy Scriptures to make a point by using the text found in Ex. 33:19. Moses wanted to see the glory of God, and this was his response. I will have "mercy" (ELEEO means: compassionate, mercy) on whomever I have "mercy" (ELEEO means: compassionate, mercy). It gives the idea to help one that is afflicted or to bring help to the wretched. This is God's own statement: I will have mercy on whom I desire to have mercy. We need to remember that the Almighty is the ULTIMATE and SUPREME authority. It is also written: and I will have "*compassion*" (OIKTEIRO means: to exercise pity) for whomever I have "compassion" (OIKTEIRO means: to exercise pity). In both instances, we see that God does as he wills and we know that his will is just in all things (Ps. 145:17) and holy (Isaiah 6:3, Rev. 4:8).

<sup>16</sup> Consequently therefore, *it does not depend on the one who wills or on the one who runs, but on God who shows mercy.* <sup>17</sup> For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very *reason* I have raised you up, so that I may demonstrate my power in you, and so that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."

Therefore, Paul continues his explanation of election and predestination and says, "therefore" (ARA means: therefore, truly, what manner). If God says that he will have mercy and compassion on whom he desires, therefore, it means that it does not depend on either "*the one who wills*" (THELO means: to determine, choose, prefer), giving the idea of a person who wills that something happens as though his decision prevails. Nor does it depend on "*the one who runs*" (TRECHO means: to run or walk hastily). Both, willing and running, manifest an energy that is spent on obtaining something. The Bible calls these "works of the flesh," which makes you falsely believe that you are eligible to obtain salvation through them.

v.16 ... but on God who shows mercy.

The mercy and compassion of God are NOT obtained through willing and doing things to obtain them. It is ONLY obtained through God who "*shows mercy*" (ELEEO means: compassion, mercy). Let us not forget that salvation is an act of the grace of God towards an undeserving and unjustified person.

<sup>17</sup> For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very *reason* I have raised you up, so that I may demonstrate my power in you, and so that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."

Paul gives an example of God showing mercy and compassion to whom he desires. Once more, Paul uses the Holy Scriptures as the foundation of his argument, this time it is Ex. 9:16. The subject is Pharaoh, who was king of Egypt. For this "*very reason*" (AUTOS means: same, together). The same reason why he exercises his compassion and mercy with certain people is also used with Pharaoh, whom God "raised up" (EXEGEIRO) means: to rouse fully, resuscitate). In other words, God made Pharaoh into who he had become—sovereign, monarch, and king over the land of Egypt. There was a reason for this: "*that I may demonstrate*" (ENDEIKNUMI means: to indicate, show forth) my "*power*" (DUNAMIS means: force, might, ability) in you. God chooses certain people through whom he will demonstrate his compassion and mercy, and he chooses some people to demonstrate his power.

v.17 ...and so that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.

In one way or another, the holy name of God "*will be proclaimed*" (DIAGGELLO means: to herald thoroughly, declare). I believe that it is a great fault of modern times to mostly proclaim the love, mercy, and compassion of God while forgetting his wrath, holiness, and the judgment to come. God wants his name to be known as it truly should be: holy, just and compassionate.

<sup>18</sup> Consequently therefore, he has mercy on whomever he wishes, and he hardens whomever he wishes.

This is Paul's conclusion on the subject of election and predestination. It is simple, if you have the heart to receive it. God "*has mercy*" (ELEEO means: compassion, mercy) on whomever "*he wishes*" (THELO means: to determine, choose, prefer). God also "*hardens*" (SKLERUNO means: to indurate, render stubborn, harden) the heart of whomever "*he wishes*" (THELO means: to determine, choose, prefer).

<sup>19</sup>Therefore you will say to me, “Why then does he still find fault? For who has resisted his will?”

This is another question that he proposes in order to carry on his arguments in favor of the Lord. This is a heavy question for the conscience, and it is one that many people have asked. If God chooses as he pleases, if it does not depend on if you "will" or if you "run," why does God still "*find fault*" (MEMPHOMAI means: to blame, to find fault). How can I be blamed when I do not have the capacity (because of my sinful nature) to change? A very good question, isn't it? Paul adds: For who has "*resisted*" (ANTHISTEMI means: to stand against, oppose, resist) his "*will*" (BOULEMA means: a resolve, purpose, will)?

<sup>20</sup>On the contrary, O man, who are you who answers back to God? Will what is molded say to the one who molded *it*, “Why did you make me like this”? <sup>21</sup>Or does the potter not have authority over the clay, to make from the same lump a vessel that *is* for *honorable use* and *one* that *is* for *ordinary use*?

PAUL DOES NOT ANSWER THIS QUESTION! This has always troubled me. How I wish he would have given an answer to his own rhetorical question. What he does is to call to mind who we are in relationship with the Lord.

<sup>20</sup>On the contrary, O man, who are you who answers back to God? Will what is molded say to the one who molded *it*, “Why did you make me like this”?

He reminds his readers that they are just men. "O man" (O ANTHROPOS means: O, human being). Then he adds, "who are you who answers back to God?" Giving the modern idea of "who do you think you are to "*answer*" (ANTAPOKRINOMAI means: dispute, contradict) back to God? On what authority do we stand to dispute with God? Are you greater than him? Then Paul gives an example of what he means.

v.20 ... Will what is molded say to the one who molded *it*, “Why did you make me like this”?

He mentions the clay and the potter. What is "molded" (PLASMA means: something molded). We are the ones that have been formed by the very hand of God!

Genesis 2

7 then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

(RSV)

So we are the molded. Can the molded say to the one who "*molded it*" (PLASSO means: to mould, to shape) which would be God: "*Why did you make me like this?*" Paul is referring to what the Lord said to Isaiah in chapter 29 concerning Israel being like clay in his hands. The clay certainly cannot tell the potter what to do with the lump that he is. The clay has no authority over the potter.

<sup>21</sup> Or does the potter not have authority over the clay, to make from the same lump a vessel that *is* for *honorable use* and *one* that *is* for *ordinary use*?

Paul tells us that it is the potter (God) who has "authority" (EXOUSIA means: force, capacity, power, mastery) over the clay (human beings). The authority of the potter is to make, out of the "*same lump*", (PHURAMA means: to mix a liquid with a solid) two different types of "*vessels*" (SKEUOS means: a vessel, implement). The first type is for "*honorable use*" (TIME means: a value, esteem, honor). The second is for "*ordinary use*" (ATIMIA means: infamy, disgrace, shame).

<sup>22</sup> And *what* if God, wanting to demonstrate his wrath and to make known his power, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? <sup>23</sup> And *he did* so in order that he could make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy that he prepared beforehand for glory, <sup>24</sup> us whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

Do you recall how God raised up Pharaoh to demonstrate his power to the entire world in order for his name to be known (v.17)? We see that Paul brings this reasoning back and writes: "what if God, "*wanting*" (THELO means: to determine, choose, prefer) to "*demonstrate*" (ENDEIKNUMI means: to indicate, to show forth) his "*wrath*" (ORGE means: violent passion, anger, wrath) and "*to make known*" (GNORIZO means: to make known, declare) his "*power*" (DUNATOS means: powerful, mighty, strong) to the world does the following: Paul brings up a question that sounds like this: What if God, wanting to demonstrate his wrath and power, does the following? After he "*endured*" (PHERO means: to bear, to carry) with "*much patience*" (POLUS MAKROTHUMIA means: great forbearance) the "*vessels*" (this is the human race) of "*wrath*" (ORGE means: violent passion, anger, wrath) to make known his power, he brings "*destruction*" (APOLEIA means: ruin, damnable, perdition) unto them. Would that be wrong?

<sup>23</sup> And *he did so* in order that he could make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy that he prepared beforehand for glory, <sup>24</sup> us whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

Paul affirms that the Lord God does pour out his wrath on certain "vessels" so that "*he could make known*" (GNORIZO means: to make known, declare) not his wrath and fury, but the "riches" (PLOUTOS means: wealth, abundance, riches) of his "*glory*" (DOXA means: glory, dignity, honor) upon the "vessels of mercy". Those are the redeemed, those who have been made righteous through Christ Jesus. Now the elect, or predestined in Christ, have been "*prepared*" (PROETOIMAZO means: to fit up in advance, prepare) beforehand for "glory" (DOXA means: glory, dignity, honor).

Here we see that certain vessels are there to manifest the holiness and judgment of God upon their sinful state, while other vessels were prepared in advance to manifest his mercy and the riches of his glory.

<sup>24</sup> us whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

Once more, we see the election and predestination "*he also called*" (KALEO means: to call, to call forth) as we have seen in Rom. 8:29,30. This calling is not only from the "Jews" (IOUDAIOS means: belonging to Jehudah) but also from the "Gentiles" (ETHNOS means: a race, a non-Jew, a heathen nation). From the beginning of time, God had called both Jews and Gentiles to form one people in the Messiah (1 Cor. 1:23,24).

### Colossians 3

11 Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

(RSV)

### 33 - *Israel and the non Jews*

Romans 9:25-33

<sup>25</sup> As he also says in Hosea,

“I will call those *who were* not my people, ‘My people,’  
and those *who were* not loved, ‘Loved.’

<sup>26</sup> And it will be in the place where it was said to them, ‘You *are* not my people,’  
there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’”

<sup>27</sup> And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel,

“*Even* if the number of the sons of Israel is like the sand of the sea,  
the remnant will be saved,

<sup>28</sup> *for the Lord will execute his sentence thoroughly and decisively* upon the earth.”

<sup>29</sup> And just as Isaiah foretold,

“If the Lord of hosts had not left us descendants,  
we would have become like Sodom  
and would have resembled Gomorrah.”

<sup>30</sup> What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness—even the righteousness *that is* by faith. <sup>31</sup> But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, did not attain to the law. <sup>32</sup> Why that? Because *they did not pursue it* by faith, but as *if* by works. They stumbled over the *stone that causes people to stumble*, <sup>33</sup> just as it is written,

“Behold, I am laying in Zion *a stone that causes people to stumble*,  
and *a rock that causes them to fall*,  
and the one who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

(LEB)

In our last section, we have seen the sovereignty of God over not only Israel but all of humanity. As a potter, he does with the lump of clay that is before him what he wills. In this section, we will see that the Lord God keeps his covenant with Abraham even though the Israelites (as a whole) no longer yearn for their God.

<sup>25</sup> As he also says in Hosea,

“I will call those *who were* not my people, ‘My people,’  
and those *who were* not loved, ‘Loved.’

<sup>26</sup>And it will be in the place where it was said to them, ‘You *are* not my people,’  
there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’”

In these verses, the apostle Paul will assert the inherent right of God to bring redemption to whomever he desires. To do so, he quotes the prophet Hosea 2:23. The full version of this verse is as follows:

#### Hosea 2

23 and I will sow him for myself in the land. And I will have pity on Not pitied, and I will say to Not my people, 'You are my people'; and he shall say 'Thou art my God.'"

(RSV)

Paul focuses on the second part of the verse and writes, "*I will call*" (KALEO means, to call, call forth) those who were NOT my people. This refers to people who were outside of the twelve tribes of Israel. God will call Gentiles from different nations "*My people*" (LAOS means: a people). The Gentiles will now also be called "my people" alongside the descendants of Abraham. Paul explains this wonderfully in the following verses:

#### Ephesians 2

11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands--

12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ.

14 For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility,

(RSV)

And also in:

#### Ephesians 2

19 So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

(RSV)

Paul reports what Hosea wrote about the Gentiles: "and those *who were* not loved, 'Loved.'" Israel was loved by God, they had received the promise, the covenants, the prophets, the oracles and the Law. This is how God manifested his love for them. But at the same time, God tells his people that the Gentiles will also be loved by him. For those "*who were NOT loved*" (AGAPAO means: to love in a social or moral sense), they will be "loved" (AGAPAO).

<sup>26</sup> And it will be in the place where it was said to them, 'You *are* not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"

This is a quote from Hosea 1:9. In this section of Hosea, the Lord rejects Israel because of her evil ways but loves Judah for her attachment to him. Then he reminds Israel that even though they were rejected, there will be a remnant that will remain his people; God keeps his promise towards the twelve tribes of Israel.

We also often forget that the covenant that God made with Abraham was to make him a great nation. However, it also stated that this great nation will be a blessing to all.

#### Genesis 12

1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves."

(RSV)

By the time Paul wrote his book to the Romans, the Jewish nation had forgotten their great mandate to become a blessing to all the nations.

<sup>27</sup> And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel,

*"Even if the number of the sons of Israel is like the sand of the sea,  
the remnant will be saved,*

<sup>28</sup> *for the Lord will execute his sentence thoroughly and decisively upon the earth."*

<sup>29</sup> And just as Isaiah foretold,  
"If the Lord of hosts had not left us descendants,  
we would have become like Sodom  
and would have resembled Gomorrah."

This section is a paraphrase of Isaiah 10:22,23. Again, it shows that God is sovereign and even though there is rampant unbelief among his chosen people, God will keep his covenant and a "*remnant*" (KATALEIMA means: a few, a remainder, a remnant) will remain faithful and be saved because of this. This is not because of their works, but because of their faith in the Lord God. We can say that in the New Testament we find people who also kept the faith, people such as: Mary and Joseph, Elizabeth and Zacharias, and also old folks like Simeon and Anna. Isaiah declares that the grace of God was upon them and that, as evil as they had been, "*descendants*" (SPERMA means: a seed, something sown) would remain. If not, they would have become as dead as Sodom and Gomorrah (Isaiah 1:9).

<sup>30</sup>What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness—even the righteousness *that is* by faith.

This is a very important verse to understand this whole argument concerning Israel (and its unfaithfulness) and the Gentiles. What shall we "*say*" (EREO means: to utter, speak, say)? That the "*Gentiles*" (ETHNOS means: a race, a tribe, non-Jews, Gentiles) THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT "*who did not pursue*" (DIOKO means: pursue, press forward). The Gentiles DID NOT look towards "*righteousness*" (DIKAIOSUNE means: equity, justification, righteousness) but they "*attained*" (KATALAMBANO means: to take eagerly, seize) this very "*righteousness*" (DIKAIOSUNE means: equity, justification, righteousness). They attained righteousness "*that is by faith*" (PISTIS means: persuasion, credence, moral conviction). Yes, the Gentiles, who knew nothing about becoming righteous by the law, became righteous by faith in the promises of God.

<sup>31</sup>But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, did not attain to the law. <sup>32</sup>Why that? Because *they did not pursue it* by faith, but as *if* by works. They stumbled over the *stone that causes people to stumble*,

In this verse, Paul is contrasting the Gentiles who by faith attained righteousness with the Jewish nation who were "*pursuing*" (DIOKO means: to press forward, ensue) righteousness through the "*law*" (NOMOS means: law, regulations, principles). We see this all the time in the encounters of Jesus with the religious elite. They often accused him of not following or breaking the law of Moses. What happened to Israel, who pursued the law? Paul wrote that they had not attained righteousness.

<sup>32</sup>Why that? Because *they did not pursue it* by faith, but as *if* by works. They stumbled over the *stone that causes people to stumble*,

There was NO RIGHTEOUSNESS for them because they did not "*pursue*" (righteousness) by "*faith*" (PISTIS means: persuasion, credence, moral conviction) but by "*works*" (ERGON means: to work, toil, labor). They wanted to justify themselves before God through their good deeds and by trying to follow the law. Remember what James wrote:

James 2

10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.

11 For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," said also, "Do not kill." If you do not commit adultery but do kill, you have become a transgressor of the law.

(RSV)

Paul writes that the Jews "*stumbled over the stone*", the literal meaning of this is "*stone of stumbling*". This stone causes people to "*stumble*" (PROSKOPTO means: to beat upon, dash, stumble at). Paul will explain this further by referring to Isaiah 28:6 and 8:14.

<sup>33</sup> just as it is written,

“Behold, I am laying in Zion *a stone that causes people to stumble,*  
*and a rock that causes them to fall*  
 and the one who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

The "*I am*" is the Lord God speaking *to Isaiah. He will place in Zion (Israel) " a stone that will cause people to stumble"*, again this means "*a stone of stumbling*". This rock will cause them to "fall." But the one who "*believes*" (PISTEUO means: to have faith in, to entrust) WILL NOT be "*put to shame*" (KATAISCHUNO means: to shame down, disgrace, dishonor).

God has planted a stone in Israel. Either it will make you fall or make you become unashamed. Peter explained it this way:

1 Peter 2

6 For it stands in scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and he who believes in him will not be put to shame."

7 To you therefore who believe, he is precious, but for those who do not believe, "The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner,"  
8 and "A stone that will make men stumble, a rock that will make them fall"; for they stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

(RSV)

## 34 - Unbelief and the promises of God

Romans 10:1-13

**10** Brothers, the desire of my heart and my prayer to God on behalf of them *is for their* salvation. <sup>2</sup> For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. <sup>3</sup> For ignoring the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. <sup>4</sup> For Christ *is the* end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. <sup>5</sup> For Moses writes about the righteousness *that is* from the law: "The person who does *this* will live by it." <sup>6</sup> But the righteousness from faith speaks like this: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down), <sup>7</sup> or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). <sup>8</sup> But what does it say? "The word is near to you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim), <sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth "Jesus *is* Lord" and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses, resulting in salvation. <sup>11</sup> For the scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." <sup>12</sup> For *there* is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same *Lord is* Lord of all, who is rich to all who call upon him. <sup>13</sup> For "everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."

(LEB)

In this section we will see two great truths that the apostle Paul desires his readers (who I believe to be mostly from a Jewish background) to understand. The first is that there is an immense difference between the righteousness of the law (which no one can attain) and the righteousness through faith in the Messiah. The second great truth is that before the Lord God, there is no more difference between a Jew and a Gentile. Please note that these two themes are recurring in Romans.

<sup>1</sup> Brothers, the desire of my heart and my prayer to God on behalf of them *is for their* salvation. <sup>2</sup> For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

If we could open the heart of Paul and look at what he is longing for, this is what we would see. He speaks of the "*desire*" (EUDOKIA means: satisfaction, delight, desire) of my "*heart*" (KARDIA means: fig: the thoughts and feelings of the mind). Not only did Paul have this deep desire in his heart, he actually did something about it "*and my*

*prayer*" (DEESIS means: a petition, a prayer, a request). His desire for Israel led him to pray to God. Should this not also be what all Christians should do? He prayed on behalf of the Jews, and this is what he prayed for: their "*salvation*" (SOTERIA means: rescue, safety, deliver). They needed to be saved through the Messiah just as every Jewish person needs to know the Messiah today-nothing has changed!

May we not forget that Paul had a great zeal for the tradition of the elders, as testified by the Scriptures:

#### Acts 9

1 But Saul, still burning with desire to put to death the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest,

2 And made a request for letters from him to the Synagogues of Damascus, so that if there were any of the Way there, men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

(BBE)

#### Philippians 3

4 Even though I myself might have faith in the flesh: if any other man has reason to have faith in the flesh, I have more:

5 Being given circumcision on the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in relation to the law, a Pharisee:

6 In bitter hate I was cruel to the church; I kept all the righteousness of the law to the last detail.

7 But those things which were profit to me, I gave up for Christ.

8 Yes truly, and I am ready to give up all things for the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, which is more than all: for whom I have undergone the loss of all things, and to me they are less than nothing, so that I may have Christ as my reward,

(BBE)

He had been taught at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3) and had become a Pharisee with a burning zeal for the law. So when he writes:

<sup>2</sup> For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

He knows what he is talking about. He is able to "*testify*" (MARTUREO means: to bear witness, testify) that the Jewish people have a "*zeal*" (ZELOS means: fervent mind, zeal) for God. But there was a negative point to their zeal: it was "*not according to*

*knowledge*" (EPIGNOSIS means: recognition, full discernment). They had zeal but not the right knowledge, and this bankrupted their relationship with the Lord God. Brethren, may we know God and live according to his will rather than our own.

<sup>3</sup>For ignoring the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. <sup>4</sup>For Christ *is the* end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

In these two verses, Paul tells us exactly what went wrong with their zeal for the Lord God. Their biggest mistake was "*ignoring*" (AGNOEMA means: a thing ignored, shortcoming). They VOLUNTARILY ignored "*the righteousness*" (DIKAIOSUNE means: equity, justification, righteousness) of God. This is the foundation of all religions: voluntarily ignoring God's way to righteousness. They voluntarily ignored what God said and replaced it by "*seeking*" (EUTHEOS means: forthwith, straightaway, going about) to "*establish*" (KAUCHESES means: boasting, glorifying, rejoicing) their own (righteousness is to be understood here). They decided not to "*subject themselves*" (HUPOTASSO means: subordinate, subjection) to the "*righteousness*" (DIKAIOSUNE means: equity, justification, righteousness) of God. God said this is the way to righteousness, to be justified before me and the people (in general) said "no, we are not going to do things your way, but our way!"

<sup>4</sup>For Christ *is the* end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Paul explains the way to righteousness—it is through Christ! For Christ, the Messiah is the "*end*" (TELOS means: the conclusion of an act) of the law. Jesus said the following concerning the law:

#### Matthew 5

17 Let there be no thought that I have come to put an end to the law or the prophets. I have not come for destruction, but to make complete.

BBE

Then at the cross his last words were:

#### John 19

30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

(NKJV)

Jesus perfectly fulfilled the law and then gave up his spirit to his heavenly Father. That is why Paul could write, "Jesus is the end of the law!" He then writes, " *for righteousness to everyone who believes*". Righteousness is not in the law (as we have seen over and over again), but in "*he who believes*" (PISTEUO means: to have faith in, to entrust). This is what the Jewish people in general did not accept-they rejected their Messiah and placed their trust in the Law of Moses, which can never save since it demands perfection!

<sup>5</sup> For Moses writes about the righteousness *that is* from the law: "The person who does *this* will live by it."

Here, Paul manifests the impossibility of becoming righteous by the law. He speaks about Moses and the "*righteousness*" (DIKAIOSUNE means: equity, justification, righteousness) that is from the law. He details the demands of the law by quoting Lev. 18:5 "You shall therefore keep my statutes and my ordinances, by doing which a man shall live: I am the LORD."(RSV) If you want to live, you must obey the entire law, which no one can do because we are all sinners (Rom. 3:23). This was the only way (by living perfectly in accordance with the law) you could have real life with the Lord.

<sup>6</sup> But the righteousness from faith speaks like this: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down), <sup>7</sup> or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

Those who have true faith in Christ would tell those who place their faith in the law, "Do not say in your heart, "who will ascend into heaven?"(Deut. 30:12) This seems to be an echo of their unbelief, even though Jesus had performed so many miracles and wonders to prove he was the Messiah. They were waiting for another Messiah to descend and not the meek and kind-hearted Savior who entered Jerusalem on the back of a donkey!

<sup>7</sup> or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

Verses six and seven are difficult to understand, and there are different views concerning them. Was the apostle Paul speaking about the death (the abyss) and resurrection (ascending into heaven) of Jesus as further proof that he was the Messiah?

<sup>8</sup> But what does it say? “The word is near to you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim), <sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth “Jesus *is* Lord” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses, resulting in salvation.

In verse eight, Paul quotes from Deut. 30:14. I believe that the "word" (RHEMA means: an utterance, saying, word) that Paul is speaking of is "*the word of faith*," which is the gospel story. This "word", the precious Good News concerning the Son of God who had come to redeem a people from their sins, was in their "mouths and in your hearts". They knew the "word", spoke the "word" and kept the "word" in their "heart" (KARDIA means: fig: the thoughts and feelings of the mind). This is what Paul and others like him proclaimed:

<sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth “Jesus *is* Lord” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

This is the Good News in a nutshell. After hearing the message of salvation, "*if you confess*" (HOMOLOGOUMENOS means: confessedly, without controversy) with your mouth. Giving the idea of making an open profession of faith in Christ that "Jesus is Lord" (KURIOS means: supreme in authority). If you "*believe*" (PISTEUO means: to have faith in, to entrust) "*in your heart*" (not in your mind or simply intellectually) that "*God raised him from the dead*" which gives the idea that you believe that he died on the cross and that the father raised him from death, then, "*you will be saved*" (SOZO means: to save, to deliver, to protect).

<sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses, resulting in salvation.

Paul adds that it is with the "*heart*" (KARDIA: means: fig: the thoughts and feelings of the mind) that we become righteous (not with the law). Righteousness is given when we "*confess*" (HOMOLOGOUMENOS means: confessedly, without controversy) first in our hearts, then with our mouths that we have "*salvation*" (SOTERIA means: rescue, safety, deliver). This is how every true Christian comes to salvation. It begins in the heart after hearing the Good News and then it is spoken of to others.

<sup>11</sup> For the scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” <sup>12</sup> For *there* is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same *Lord is* Lord

of all, who is rich to all who call upon him. <sup>13</sup> For “everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Verse eleven is a quote from Isaiah 28:16 where God says that he "will lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried and precious cornerstone." It is God that gave Jesus the Messiah to be Israel's cornerstone of faith and salvation. Those who reject this cornerstone reject the Almighty.

#### John 5

22 "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,  
23 "that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.  
(NKJV)

Paul hammers in the second great truth of this section.

<sup>12</sup> For *there* is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same *Lord is* Lord of all, who is rich to all who call upon him.

There is no "*distinction*" (DIASTOLE means: a variation, a difference, a distinction) between the Jew and the Greek. Why is this so? Because the Lord (Jesus) is "*Lord*" (KURIOS means: supreme in authority) of all, both Jews and Gentiles. Why is Jesus the Lord of all? Because he is "*rich*" (PLOUTEO means: to be wealthy, rich) to all (Jews and Gentiles) who "*call upon*" (EPIKALEOMAI means: to invoke, call upon) him. So come to Jesus, whoever you are, confess your faith in him as your Messiah and he will receive you, for he is rich in mercy.

<sup>13</sup> For “everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”

To reassure his readers Paul quotes a promise from the Lord God that is found in Joel 2:32

#### Joel 2

32 And it shall come to pass that all who call upon the name of the LORD shall be delivered; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.  
(RSV)

Salvation is guaranteed by God's promise and the sacrificial work of Jesus on the cross. If the Holy Spirit is talking to you to repent, do not hesitate to do so.

## 35 - Salvation and the gospel

Romans 10:14-21

<sup>14</sup> How then will they call upon *him* in whom they have not believed? And how will they believe *in him* about whom they have not heard? And how will they hear about *him* without one who preaches *to them*? <sup>15</sup> And how will they preach, unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "How timely *are* the feet of those who bring good news of good things." <sup>16</sup> But not all have obeyed the good news, for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" <sup>17</sup> Consequently, faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing through the word about Christ.

<sup>18</sup> But I say, they have not heard, have they? On the contrary,  
 "Their voice has gone out to all the earth,  
 and their words to the ends of the inhabited world."

<sup>19</sup> But I say, Israel did not know, did they? First, Moses says,  
 "I will provoke you *to jealousy* by *those who are* not a nation;  
 by a senseless nation I will provoke you *to anger*."

<sup>20</sup> And Isaiah is very bold and says,  
 "I was found by those who did not seek me;  
 I became known to those who did not ask for me."

<sup>21</sup> But about Israel he says,  
 "The whole day *long* I held out my hands  
 to a disobedient and resistant people."

(LEB)

This section is about the gospel story, which is the story of salvation. This story should be on the lips of every true believer. A desire should be present in us to proclaim the "Good News" of salvation in Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul begins with four questions that deal with the gospel story.

<sup>14</sup> How then will they call upon *him* in whom they have not believed?

These questions are set forth to make his readers think about their part in proclaiming the gospel to unbelievers. The first question deals with "how will they call", the word "*call*" (EPIKALEOMAI means: to invoke, call on). How are the people going to be able to invoke "upon him", that is, Jesus Christ, if they have not "*believed*" (PISTEUO means: to have faith in, to entrust)? Is it not impossible to invoke Christ if they don't believe in him? So they need to come to a point where they can believe.

v.14 ... And how will they believe *in him* about whom they have not heard?

The second question is an extension of the first, and the word "*believe*" is the link between them. So how can they believe "in him," in Jesus Christ, if they haven't "heard" (AKOUO means "to hear, to comprehend"). How can people believe in someone they have never heard of? They can't, because it is impossible. To be able to call upon the Lord, people need to hear about him.

v.14 ...And how will they hear about *him* without one who preaches *to them*?

As with the first and second questions, there is a direct link between the third and second questions. This time the link is in the word "hear." So how are people going to hear about the Lord so that they can believe in him and call upon his name? Unless someone "*preaches*" (KERUSSO means: to herald, proclaim, publish) to them. People need to call upon the Lord, so they need to hear the gospel message, and to be able to hear it, there needs to be people who proclaim it to them. That is the duty of every born-again disciple of Christ (Mat. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

<sup>15</sup> And how will they preach, unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "How timely *are* the feet of those who bring good news of good things."

The fourth question is also very logical and linked to the other three with the word "*preach*" as the link. How can people "*preach*" (KERUSSO means: to herald, proclaim, publish) if they are not "*sent*" (APOSTELLO means: set apart, to send, send away)? Whether this is a personal sending from the Lord or a sending by the church as a specific ministry, people need to be sent. Again, I want to remind you that all true believers have been personally sent on a mission by the Lord Jesus Christ. That mission is to be his witness to the ends of the world. No Christ-follower can claim that he is not obliged to share the "Good News" with those around him. To prove his point, Paul quotes two prophets:

Isaiah 52:7

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace, who brings good tidings of good, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

(RSV)

## Nahum 1:15

Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace! Keep your feasts, O Judah, fulfil your vows, for never again shall the wicked come against you, he is utterly cut off.

(RSV)

The apostle continues with an unfortunate truth, and this time he quotes the prophet Isaiah:

<sup>16</sup> But not all have obeyed the good news, for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"

It is sad to see that not all "*have obeyed*" (HUPAKOUO means: to listen intensively, to heed, to obey). People hear the "Good News" but turn away from it. Paul quotes Isaiah:

## Isaiah 53:1

Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

(RSV)

Not everyone who hears will call upon the name of the Lord. The apostle John tells us that Jesus came into the world but the world did not comprehend or know him (John 1:5,10) nor did they receive him (John 1:11). Some believers cease to evangelize because they do not see or see very little fruit from their efforts. May we remember that this has been foretold centuries ago. May we persevere in what the Lord has given us to do - the rest is up to him.

<sup>17</sup> Consequently, faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing through the word about Christ.

This is Paul's summary of what he had just written. The word "*consequently*" (ARA means: to draw a conclusion) and Paul will construct a logical chain of events that is in two steps. The first is that "*faith*" (PISTIS means: persuasion, credence, moral conviction) comes by "*hearing*" (AKOE means: hearing, report, rumor). So one needs to hear it. Then the second event is that "*hearing*" is through the "*word*" (RHEMA means: an utterance, saying) concerning Jesus Christ. It's very simple. People need to hear about Jesus Christ so that they can come to faith!

<sup>18</sup> But I say, they have not heard, have they? On the contrary,

“Their voice has gone out to all the earth,  
and their words to the ends of the inhabited world.”

Some may say that "not everybody has heard this "Good News". Paul, knowing this, argues that they have. God has left an imprint on the heart of every single person through creation (Rom. 1:20) and also through their conscience (Rom. 2:15). As pertaining specifically to Israel, all have heard through the Law and the Prophets concerning the Messiah to come. Paul writes" "*on the contrary*" (MENOUNGE means: yes doubtless, verily), they did hear and he quotes from Psalm 19:4.

v.18 ... “Their voice has gone out to all the earth,  
and their words to the ends of the inhabited world.”

Their "*voice*" (PHTHOGGOS means: a musical note, a sound) has "*gone out*" (EXERCHOMAI means: to issue, to come out, spread abroad) to all the "earth" (GE means: soil, region, country, earth). Paul declares and is in accord with King David who wrote this Psalm that people have heard of God's way to salvation. Paul also writes that their "*words*", which is the same Greek word as "*voice*", went to the "*ends*" (PERAS means: an extremity) of the "*inhabited world*" (OIKOUMENE means: land, especially the Roma Empire).

<sup>19</sup> But I say, Israel did not know, did they? First, Moses says,  
“I will provoke you *to jealousy* by *those who are* not a nation;  
by a senseless nation I will provoke you *to anger*.”

Paul continues his argument that everyone has heard the plan of God for salvation either through nature, which would lead to God, one's conscience, which would speak to the person about spiritual things, and the Law and Prophets, which would be the written word of God. His question is written in the negative form.

<sup>19</sup> But I say, Israel did not know, did they?

Paul is saying, did not Israel "*know*" (GINOSKO means: to know, to be aware, to understand)? They certainly did, and Paul will quote from the words of Moses found in Deut. 32:21:

v.19 ... First, Moses says,  
“I will provoke you *to jealousy* by *those who are* not a nation;  
by a senseless nation I will provoke you *to anger*.”

Since the Israelites voluntarily did not receive the "Good News" of salvation through the coming Messiah but preferred to place their trust in the Law of Moses, the Lord God said the following: I will "*provoke you to jealousy*" (PARAZELOO means: to stimulate, excite to rivalry, jealousy). This is how the Lord will do this, he will raise up those who "*are not a nation*" (ETHNOS means: a race, a people). Here the Lord is speaking about Gentiles. These Gentiles are called "*senseless*" (ASUNETOS means: wicked, foolish) and God will provoke you with "anger" (PARORGIZO means: anger, enrage, wrath) in his people. In other words, since his people, the Israelites, in most parts, have not received the "Good News" of his Messiah, God turns to the nations with the same "Good News" to provoke his people, to wake them up spiritually.

<sup>20</sup> And Isaiah is very bold and says,  
 "I was found by those who did not seek me;  
 I became known to those who did not ask for me."

Continuing with the same thought, Paul now uses a verse given by the prophet Isaiah (65:1). It declares that God was "*found*" (HEURISKO means: to find, obtain, get) by those who DID NOT "seek" (ZETEO means: to seek, endeavor, enquire) him. He became "*known*" (EMPHANIZO means: to exhibit, to appear, to manifest) to those who DID NOT "*ask*" (EPEROTAO , means: to ask for, to question) about him. What a contrast with Israel, through whom God had overwhelmingly manifested himself. They neglected the Lord while those who did not search for him found him! This is pure grace manifested to the Gentiles.

<sup>21</sup> But about Israel he says,  
 "The whole day *long* I held out my hands  
 to a disobedient and resistant people."

Once again, Paul quotes the prophet Isaiah (65:2). To Israel, God had "*held out*" (EKPETANNUMI means: to fly out, to extend) his hands as a father holds his hands out to a child who is beginning to walk. Or as a father who welcomes his wayward son who has decided to repent and come back home (Luke 15:11-24). These stretched out hands of the Lord were towards a "*disobedient*" (APEITHEO means: to disbelieve, disobedient) and "*resistant*" (ANTILEGO means: to dispute, refuse, deny) people.

His own people rebelled against him and treated the Lord with disdain because of all of their idolatry and spiritual debauchery. This is the grace of God towards Israel. One day, the Messiah will come back, and this time they will receive him (Mat. 23:39).

## 36 - *Has God forgotten Israel?*

Romans 11:1-6

Therefore I say, God has not rejected his people, has he? May it never be! For I also am an Israelite, from the descendants of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup> God has not rejected his people, whom he foreknew! Or do you not know, in *the passage about* Elijah, what the scripture says—how he appeals to God against Israel? <sup>3</sup> “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have torn down your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life!” <sup>4</sup> But what does the divine response say to him? “I have left for myself seven thousand people who have not bent the knee to Baal.” <sup>5</sup> So in this way also at the present time, there is a remnant *selected by grace*. <sup>6</sup> But if by grace, *it is no longer by works*, for otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

(LEB)

In our last section, we have seen how God set aside Israel and brought salvation to a people, who were not a people to become a people. From the Gentiles, God raised up a people for his own. This was to make the Israelites react and come back to him. In this section, we will see that the Lord God did not turn his back on the children of Abraham.

v.1 Therefore I say, God has not rejected his people, has he? May it never be! For I also am an Israelite, from the descendants of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

As we have seen before, the apostle Paul begins with a question that he will continue to build upon to further his teaching. This phrase is in a negative structure, which should lead to a negative answer. Has God "*rejected*" (APOTHEOMAI means: to push off, to reject) his people, the Israelites? Has God turned his back on the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Has he renounced his covenant with them? The answer is very clear: "*may it never be*" (GINOMAI means: to cause to be, God forbid). God could not and would never completely reject the Jews because he made a solemn promise to Abram:

Genesis 17

7 And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. (RSV)

v.1 ... For I also am an Israelite, from the descendants of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

To prove that what he was saying was true, the apostle Paul used himself as an example. He was an "*Israelite*" (ISRAELITES means: a descendant of Jacob). He was also a descendant of Abraham, the one with whom God had made his covenant. Finally, he states that he was from the "*tribe*" (PHULE means: a race, a clan, a tribe) of "*Benjamin*" (BENIAMIN - one of the twelve sons of Jacob). For Paul is saying that he is proof that God has not rejected his people—for I am a Jew!

<sup>2</sup>God has not rejected his people, whom he foreknew! Or do you not know, in *the passage about Elijah*, what the scripture says—how he appeals to God against Israel?

Paul continues to teach and reassure his readers (many of whom were Jewish). God "*has not rejected*" (APOTHEOMAI means: to push off, to reject) his "*people*" (LAOS means: a people). This is the second time in two verses that Paul affirms this truth. God "*foreknew*" (PROGINOSKO means: to know beforehand). Albert Barnes wrote the following concerning the word "foreknew" in this passage: The word "foreknew" expresses not only foreseeing something, but also a previous purpose or plan." We see this in Romans 8:29:

#### Romans 8

29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

(RSV)

God cannot reject his people because they are part of his master plan for the redemption of mankind through the Messiah. Paul brings up an example of God not rejecting his people. He speaks of the prophet Elijah, who thought that he had become the only prophet left. Elijah "*appeals*" (ENTUGCHANO means: to entreat, to deal with, make intercession) to God.

<sup>3</sup>"Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have torn down your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life!"

Paul quotes 1 Kings 19:10,14 from the Holy Scriptures where Elijah says:

#### 1 Kings 19

10 He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

(RSV)

He complains to God concerning Israel: "First they *"have killed"* (APOKTEINO means: to kill, put to death, destroy) your *"prophets"* (PROPHETES means: a foreteller, inspired speaker). Second, they have *"torn down"* (KATASKAPTO means: to undermine, ruin, destroy) your *"altars"* (THUSIASTERION means: a place of sacrifice, an altar). In other words, the Israelites are destroying everything and everyone that relates to you. They are washing away your Holy name from Israel! Then Elijah makes a foolish declaration: "I alone am left" (HUPOLEIPO means: to leave behind, be left) not only that, he adds, *"they are seeking"* (ZETEO means: to seek, to search, desire) my life. In other words, they want to kill me also. This would have brought to an end (in his thought) the people who believed in the Lord God. He was basing his thoughts on what he was seeing!

<sup>4</sup> But what does the divine response say to him? "I have left for myself seven thousand people who have not bent the knee to Baal."

Paul reminds his readers that even if Elijah thought he was the last of the last, he was wrong. He did not see things as the Lord saw them. He did not know the hidden plan of God. God responded to Elijah by saying: *"I have left"* (HUPOLEIPO means: to leave behind, be left) for *"myself"* (EMAUTOU means: me, mine own, myself) seven thousand people (God is probably referring to men). These people were special in the sense that they had not *"bent the knee"* (KAMPTO means: to bend, to bow) to Baal, who was a Phoenician idol. Paul is manifesting that even in the terrible spiritual times of Elijah, even when everything seems contrary to what we expect from God, God is in control and will never fail to keep his covenant.

<sup>5</sup> So in this way also at the present time, there is a remnant *selected by grace*.

Paul encourages his readers to remember that the Lord God had a remnant of people then and he also does today. He writes *"at the present"* (NUN means: now, present time) *"time"* (KAIROS means: proper time), right now God has a *"remnant"* (LEIMMA means: a remainder, remnant) of people that are *"selected"* (EKLOGE means: selection, chosen, election) by *"grace"* (CHARIS means: graciousness, favor, grace). The phrase *"select by grace"* literally means: *"according to selection of grace"*.

<sup>6</sup> But if by grace, *it is* no longer by works, for otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

Is this remnant chosen because of their *"works"* (ERGON means: to work, toil, labor) that they do? The answer (as always) is NO. The remnant, is chosen by the grace of God.

No, God has not rejected or forgotten his people. He has opened the door for the Gentiles but not closed it for the Israelites.

## 37 - A spirit of slumber over Israel

Romans 11:7-10

<sup>7</sup>What then? What Israel was searching for, this it did not obtain. But the elect obtained *it*, and the rest were hardened, <sup>8</sup>just as it is written,

“God gave them a spirit of stupor,  
eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear,  
until this very day.”

<sup>9</sup>And David says,  
“Let their table become a snare and a trap,  
and a cause for stumbling and a retribution to them;  
<sup>10</sup>let their eyes be darkened so that they do not see,  
and cause their backs to bend *continually*.”

(LEB)

In our last section, we saw that the Lord God did not forget Israel nor push it aside for all time. Paul will explain in this section what happened.

<sup>7</sup>What then? What Israel was searching for, this it did not obtain. But the elect obtained *it*, and the rest were hardened,

We know that Israel was "*searching for*" (EPIZETEO means: to search, inquire, seek) God's righteousness, BUT they "*did not obtain*" (EPITUGCHANO means: to attain, to obtain) it. We also know that they did not obtain it because they placed their confidence in the Law of Moses instead of having faith as their means of justification.

Paul will continue and reinsert the notion of an election. I just would like to make a quick note: if there were no election and predestination, NO ONE would be saved because NO ONE is naturally attracted to the Lord as he would like them to be (Rom. 3:9-20,23). But the "*elect*" (EKLOGE means: chosen, election, selection) are the people whom God has chosen beforehand. I believe that Paul is mainly speaking of the elect within Israel, but it is the same thing for every true child of God. The elect "*obtained*" (EPITUGCHANO means: to attain, to obtain) it. The "it" is the righteousness of God through faith. Some obtained it, and some did not.

v.7 ... and the rest were hardened

The "rest" (LOIPOY means: remaining ones, remnant, rest) are the ones who did not accept God's righteousness but were determined to try to achieve it by themselves. These people (Jews and non-Jews) "*were hardened*" (POROO means: render stupid or callous, harden, blind). In the gospels we also see the hearts being "*hardened*".

#### Mark 6

51 And he got into the boat with them and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded,  
52 for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.  
(RSV)

#### Mark 8

17 And being aware of it, Jesus said to them, "Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened?"  
(RSV)

#### John 12

39 Therefore they could not believe. For Isaiah again said,  
40 "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they should see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and turn for me to heal them."  
(RSV)

This entire section is actually one block, one thought concerning the election of certain Jews and Gentiles. The following verses are difficult to accept unless we truly understand the depth of darkness and rebellion in man's hearts.

<sup>8</sup> just as it is written,

"God gave them a spirit of stupor,  
eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear,  
until this very day."

<sup>9</sup> And David says,

"Let their table become a snare and a trap,  
and a cause for stumbling and a retribution to them;  
<sup>10</sup> let their eyes be darkened so that they do not see,  
and cause their backs to bend *continually*."

God is the mastermind of the plan of redemption, and the apostle Paul describes what the Lord has done to a portion of humanity. Because of their constant rebellion against

his Majesty the Lord God gave them a "*spirit*" (PNEUMA means: a current of air, breath, a spirit) of "*stupor*" (KATANUXIS means: lethargy, slumber, stupor). They had willfully rejected God's plan for righteousness, so God gave them to be spiritually sleepy. They prefer to stay in bed rather than get up and follow the Lord. He also gave them "*eyes that could not see*" (BLEPO means: to look at, behold, perceive). Already their eyes were happily looking at things of this world or things that gratified the flesh. The Lord God just enabled them to go further in their walk into darkness. He also gave them "*ears that do not hear*". They were unable to hear the voice of God. Paul is quoting from the Prophet Isaiah.

#### Isaiah 29

9 Stupefy yourselves and be in a stupor, blind yourselves and be blind! Be drunk, but not with wine; stagger, but not with strong drink!

10 For the LORD has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes, the prophets, and covered your heads, the seers.

(RSV)

So we see that this is not something new. Mankind has always been rebellious to the Lord God. From Adam and Eve in the garden to the very end of time with the great rebellion at Armageddon. Unless the Lord personally intervenes, our hearts are too callous to repent and cry out for salvation.

<sup>9</sup>And David says,

“Let their table become a snare and a trap,  
and a cause for stumbling and a retribution to them;  
<sup>10</sup>let their eyes be darkened so that they do not see,  
and cause their backs to bend *continually*.”

Paul continues to share what happened to Israel in general and how they stepped away from the Lord. He speaks about gluttony, their "*table*" (TRAPEZA means: a table usually for food). Their gluttony became a "*snare*" (PAGIS means: a trap, a snare). This implies that it is sudden and unexpected and also a "*trap*" (THERA means: destruction, trap). This gives the idea of hunting to destroy. The snare and the trap of gluttony brought them spiritual "*stumbling*" (SKANDALON means: occasion to fall, offense) giving the idea that they "took the bait". It also brought them "*retribution*" (ANTAPODOMA means: a requital, recompense).

<sup>10</sup>let their eyes be darkened so that they do not see,  
and cause their backs to bend *continually*.

Paul quotes Psalm 69:22,23. This was their "retribution." As we have seen before in verse eight, their "*eyes were darkened.*" They became spiritually obscure, unable to see the grace of the Lord God. The phrase "*and their backs bend continually*" gives the idea of bearing a heavy and cruel burden. This is probably a reference to the burden of their sins that continually burden their souls.

## 38 - Warning to the Gentiles

Romans 11:11-24

<sup>11</sup> I say then, they did not stumble so that they fell, *did they?* May it never be! But by their trespass, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles, in order to provoke them *to jealousy*. <sup>12</sup> And if their trespass *means* riches for the world and their loss *means* riches for the Gentiles, how much more *will* their fullness *mean?*

Gentile Branches Grafted in<sup>13</sup> Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Therefore, inasmuch as I am apostle to the Gentiles, I promote my ministry, <sup>14</sup> if somehow I may provoke my people to jealousy and save some of them. <sup>15</sup> For if their rejection *means* the reconciliation of the world, what *will* their acceptance *mean* except life from the dead? <sup>16</sup> Now if the first fruits *are* holy, *so* also *is* the *whole* batch of dough, and if the root *is* holy, *so* also *are* the branches.<sup>17</sup> Now if some of the branches were broken off, and you, *although* you were a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them and became a sharer of the root of the olive tree's richness, <sup>18</sup> do not boast against the branches.

But if you boast against *them*, you do not support the root, but the root *supports* you. <sup>19</sup> Then you will say, "Branches were broken off in order that I could be grafted in." <sup>20</sup> Well said! They were broken off because of unbelief, but you stand firm because of faith. Do not think arrogant *thoughts*, but be afraid. <sup>21</sup> For if God did not spare the *natural* branches, neither will he spare you. <sup>22</sup> See, then, the kindness and severity of God: severity upon those who have fallen, but upon you the kindness of God—if you continue in his kindness, for otherwise you also will be cut off. <sup>23</sup> And those also, if they do not persist in unbelief, will be grafted in, because God is able to graft them in again. <sup>24</sup> For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are *natural branches* be grafted into their own olive tree?

(LEB

In our section, we will continue to see how the plan of God came to include Gentiles. At the same time, the apostle Paul will give a warning to the non-Jews not to believe that God will close his eyes to the way they live.

<sup>11</sup> I say then, they did not stumble so that they fell, *did they?* May it never be! But by their trespass, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles, in order to provoke them *to jealousy*. Once again, the apostle Paul uses a negative construction for this sentence, which normally demands a negative response. This question means something like this: "Is it the plan of God that the Jews forever be cast off from God's grace?" It's a good question since the Jewish people had already, for the most part, "*stumbled*" (PTAIO

means: to trip, fall, fail. err) by rejecting the ways of the Lord in regards to his righteousness. Paul's answer is once more very strong: "*May it never be*" (GINOMAI means: to cause to be, God forbid). So this IS NOT the permanent plan of God for Israel. So why did they stumble and were "set aside"?

v.11 ... But by their trespass, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles, in order to provoke them *to jealousy*.

Paul writes "*by their trespasses*" (PARATOMA means: side-slip, fall, offense, error) something happened and they were "set aside," not totally, for there are always Jewish people who have come to the saving knowledge of Jesus throughout the centuries. Because of this, "*salvation*" (SOTERIA means: rescue, deliver, salvation) has come to the "*Gentiles*" (ETHNOS means: a race, a tribe, no-Jewish people). In his last directives, we see that Jesus instructs his disciples to make disciples everywhere, even outside of Israel (Mat. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). During his lifetime, we also see Jesus instructing, helping, and healing people who were not of Jewish descent. God opened the door to righteousness for the Gentiles so that it would "*provoke them*" (PARAZELOO means: to excite rivalry, jealousy). The words "to jealousy" are not in the Greek text; they are placed there for clarity of understanding. The idea of "provoking" his people was also mentioned in Rom. 10:19.

<sup>12</sup> And if their trespass *means* riches for the world and their loss *means* riches for the Gentiles, how much more *will* their fullness *mean*?

The apostle Paul brings to his readers a question that needs our attention. If the "*trespasses*" (PARATOMA means: a side-slip, offence, fall, error) of the Jewish people bring "*riches*" (PLOUTOS means: wealth, money, possessions), Paul means spiritual riches, for the "world" (KOSMOS means: orderly arrangement, world) and their "*loss*" (HETTEMA means: a deterioration, diminish, fault) means "*riches for the Gentiles*," how much "*more*" (MALLON means: more in a greater sense) will their "*fullness*" (PLEROMA means: to fill up, full, fullness) mean? In other words if their fall brought spiritual riches to the Gentiles how much more will their reconciliation with God bring to them! Christians are spiritually in dept towards the Jewish nation. True believers must never forget this.

<sup>13</sup> Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Therefore, inasmuch as I am apostle to the Gentiles, I promote my ministry, <sup>14</sup> if somehow I may provoke my people to jealousy and save some of them.

We have noticed that Paul, for the most part, has been speaking to his fellow countrymen. Now he will specifically call out to the Gentiles. I am speaking to you "*Gentiles*" (ETHNOS means: a race, a tribe, a non-Jewish person). Paul declares himself to be the "*apostle*" (APOSTOLOS means: a delegate, he who is sent) to the Gentiles. When God sent Ananias to Paul so that he would recover his sight, this is what the Lord said to tell him:

#### Acts 9

15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;

16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."

(RSV)

This is where Paul received his mandate to be the apostle to the Gentiles. Through his ministry with the Gentiles, Paul hopes that "*somehow*" (POS means: somehow, anyhow, by any means) he will be able to "*provoke*" (PARAZELOO means: to stimulate alongside) his people, the Jewish nation, "*to jealousy*". Paul is following the plan of God by using the open door to the Gentiles to stir-up the Jews in order to "*save*" (SOZO means: to save, deliver, protect) some of them.

<sup>15</sup> For if their rejection *means* the reconciliation of the world, what *will* their acceptance *mean* except life from the dead?

With this other question, I believe Paul is trying to say how wonderful it will be when Israel returns to the Lord. Paul wants Gentiles to consider the following: If their "*rejection*" (APOBOLE means: rejection, casting away) has brought the "*reconciliation*" (KATALLAGE means: restoration to, reconciliation). If the setting aside of the Jewish nation has brought reconciliation of the Gentiles with the Lord God, what will their "*acceptance*" (PROSLEPSIS means: admission, receiving) back to the Lord mean? Paul states that it will be like bringing someone back to "*life*" (ZOE means: life, life-time) from the "*dead*" (NEKROS means: a corpse, dead)! This will be a grand day for both Gentiles and Jews, for both will be united with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).

<sup>16</sup> Now if the first fruits *are* holy, *so* also *is* the *whole* batch of dough, and if the root *is* holy, *so* also *are* the branches.<sup>17</sup> Now if some of the branches were broken off, and you, *although* you were a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them and became a sharer of the root of the olive tree's richness,<sup>18</sup> do not boast against the branches. But if you boast against *them*, you do not support the root, but the root *supports* you.

Paul will use the imagery of what spiritually happened to the Gentiles. He begins by speaking of the "*first-fruits*". These were the fruits that one would bring as a thanksgiving offering to the Lord for the harvest that he procured. The "*first-fruits*" (APARCHE means: a beginning of sacrifice) can easily represent the nation of Israel, for they were the first-fruits of many to come to salvation. The first-fruits are "*holy*" (GAGIOS means; sacred, pure, morally blameless) and so are the "*roots*" (speaking of the olive tree). Because the first-fruits and the roots are holy, so are the "*branches*" (KLADOS means: a twig, a branch). The entire tree (Israel) is holy because of its relationship with God.

<sup>17</sup> Now if some of the branches were broken off, and you, *although you were a wild olive tree*, were grafted in among them and became a sharer of the root of the olive tree's richness,

If a farmer had many olive trees, he would sometimes "*break off*" (EKKLAO means: to excise, break off) or cut off some branches. He would do this only if these branches DID NOT BEAR FRUIT. This symbolizes Israel, which had stopped bearing fruit for the glory of the Lord. So what did the Lord do? He took the Gentiles even though they were a "*wild olive tree*" and "*grafted*" (EGKENTRIZO means: to prick in, graft unto) them in "*among them*" (the cultivated olive tree). A farmer would do this because a wild olive tree either DID NOT BEAR fruit or its fruits were useless. By cutting off a useless branch from the cultivated olive tree and grafting in a branch from a wild olive tree, - the wild olive tree branch would begin to bear good fruit. Why did this happen? Because it became a "*sharer*" (GINOMAI means: to cause to be, to become) of the root of the olive tree's "*richness*" (PIOTES means: repletion, plumpness, fatness), which we know is holiness.

<sup>18</sup> do not boast against the branches. But if you boast against *them*, you do not support the root, but the root *supports* you.

Paul warns the Gentile believers not to "*boast*" (KATAKAUCHAOMAI means: to exult or boast against) against the "*branches*" (KLADOS means: a twig, a branch). We know that the branches are from the olive tree (the nation of Israel). When you do boast against the branches, you forget that you do not "*support*" (BATAZO means: to lift, to sustain, to carry) them but the "*root*" (RHIZA means: a root) that is the Jewish nation that supports you. In other words, you are who you are because the Gentiles have been grafted along with the Jews. There is absolutely no reason to boast, none whatsoever!

<sup>19</sup>Then you will say, "Branches were broken off in order that I could be grafted in." <sup>20</sup>Well said! They were broken off because of unbelief, but you stand firm because of faith. Do not think arrogant *thoughts*, but be afraid.

In verse nineteen, we can see what type of boasting certain Gentiles could come up with. The branches (Israel) were "*broken off*" (EKKLAO MEANS: to excise, break off) so that I could be "*grafted in*" (EGKENTRIZO means: to prick in, grafted into). Some could think that "I am better than they are because they were cut off and I took their place." Paul says that they were not cut off because you were better, but because of their "*unbelief*" (APAISTIA means: faithlessness, disbelief). The only reason you were grafted in is because you stand firm in your "*faith*" (PISTIS means: persuasion, credence, moral conviction). They were taken off because they no longer had faith, and you took their place because of your faith. So don't have any "*arrogant*" (HUPSELOPHRONEO means: arrogant, high-minded) thoughts. On the contrary, be "*afraid*" (PHOBOE means: to frighten, afraid, fear).

<sup>21</sup>For if God did not spare the *natural* branches, neither will he spare you.

Please note that Paul IS NOT speaking about the individual believer. When he speaks of the "*natural branches*" he speaks of the Jews in general. Not all, because some were saved. When he speaks of "you", he speaks of the Gentiles in general and not the true believer. The true Jewish believers were not cut off, only the unbelievers, and the true Gentile believer is not cut off, only the unbelievers. Be afraid and remember that if God "*did not spare*" (PHEIDOMAI means: to be chary of, forbearer, spare) the "*natural branches*", the Jewish nation, he certainly will not "*spare*" (PHEIDOMAI means: to be chary of, forbearer, spare) you. This is the same Greek word for both groups of people.

<sup>22</sup>See, then, the kindness and severity of God: severity upon those who have fallen, but upon you the kindness of God—if you continue in his kindness, for otherwise you also will be cut off.

Paul describes the "*kindness*" (CHRESTOTES means: gentleness, goodness, kindness) and also the "*severity*" (APOTOMAI means: decisiveness, rigor, severity) of God. Paul says that he is severe upon those who have "*fallen*" (PIPTO means: to fall down, fail). I believe the verse that manifests how far the Jewish people have fallen is when just before the crucifixion, they said the following:

Matthew 27

24 So when Pilate saw that he was able to do nothing, but that trouble was working up, he took water and, washing his hands before the people, said, The blood of this upright man is not on my hands: you are responsible.

25 And all the people made answer and said, Let his blood be on us, and on our children.

(BBE)

But the Lord God spread his kindness upon the Gentiles in general, for the door was open wide for them to come to the cross. But Gentiles must not reject, rebuff, or decline God's kindness because they will also be "*cut off*" (EKKOPTO means: to excise, cut down, cut off) and his grace will cease.

<sup>23</sup> And those also, if they do not persist in unbelief, will be grafted in, because God is able to graft them in again. <sup>24</sup> For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are *natural branches* be grafted into their own olive tree?

Paul closes by assuring his readers (Jews and Gentiles) that if they do not "*persist*" (EPIMENO means: to stay over, remain, persevere) in "*unbelief*", they (the Jews) will be "*grafted in*" (EGKENTRIZO means: to prick in, grafted into). We have seen this over and over again, Jewish people coming to the saving knowledge of Jesus as their Messiah.

<sup>24</sup> For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are *natural branches* be grafted into their own olive tree?

Paul tells the Gentiles that if they were "cut off" and "grafted" onto a "*cultivated*" (KALLIELAIOS means: a cultivated olive tree) olive tree, how "*much more*" (POSOS MALLON means: how much greater) is God able to graft "*natural branches*", the Jewish nation, into their own "*olive tree*". God can easily bring the Jewish nation into its rightful place, and he will do so in the future.

## 39 - *The Messiah will come again for Israel*

Romans 11:25-36

<sup>25</sup> For I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of this mystery, so that you will not be wise *in your own sight*, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, <sup>26</sup> and so all Israel will be saved, just as it is written,

“The deliverer will come out of Zion;

he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

<sup>27</sup> And this *is* the covenant from me with them  
when I take away their sins.”

<sup>28</sup> With respect to the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sake, but with respect to election, *they are* dearly loved for the sake of the fathers. <sup>29</sup> For the gifts and the calling of God *are* irrevocable. <sup>30</sup> For just as you formerly were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of the disobedience of these, <sup>31</sup> so also these have now been disobedient for your mercy, in order that they also may now be shown mercy. <sup>32</sup> For God confined them all in disobedience, in order that he could have mercy on them all.

<sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches  
and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!

How unsearchable *are* his judgments  
and *how* incomprehensible *are* his ways!

<sup>34</sup> “For who has known the mind of the Lord,  
or who has been his counselor?

<sup>35</sup> Or who has given in advance to him,  
and it will be paid back to him?”

<sup>36</sup> For from him and through him and to him *are* all *things*.

To him *be* glory for eternity! Amen.

(LEB)

We now arrive at the end of the first section of this book. Paul divides his epistles in two sections. The first is the theological aspect, and the second is the application of the theology that was taught, the practical aspect of what has been taught.

<sup>25</sup> For I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of this mystery, so that you will not be wise *in your own sight*,

In our last section, Paul talked to the Gentile believers and told them not to think too much of themselves because they had been grafted into the cultivated olive tree. This only happened because the Jews had ceased to bear fruit for the glory of God and not because of something in themselves. Paul continues in the same vein and brings another aspect to which he does not want them to be "*ignorant*" (AGNOEO means: not to know, to ignore, not understand) about. He will reveal a "*mystery*" (MUSTERION means: a secret, undisclosed, a mystery) to them. It's not for the sake of gossip but for their spiritual knowledge so that "*you will not be wise in your own sight*" (PHRONIMOS HEAUTOU means: intelligent in oneself). He does not want them to think too much of themselves. This makes me think of:

#### Proverbs 15

33 The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom, and humility goes before honor.  
(RSV)

#### Proverbs 18

12 Before destruction a man's heart is haughty, but humility goes before honor.  
(RSV)

Paul will begin to reveal the mystery that we all need to understand.

v.25 ...that a partial hardening has happened to Israel, until the full number of the  
Gentiles has come in,

The hardening of the mind and heart mentioned by Paul was only partially applied (MEROS means: a division, a share, a portion). Not ALL of Israel had become dull and callous towards the righteousness of God. The door to salvation was open to those who had ears to hear. Not only that, but Paul teaches that this "partial hardening" was not permanent; it was to remain until the "*full number*" (PLEROMA means: repletion, completion, to fill up). of the Gentiles "*has come in*" (EISERCHOMAI means: to enter, come in, go in). Through this, we know that there is a determined number of Gentiles who will enter the kingdom of God through the Messiah. NO ONE knows what that number is.

<sup>26</sup> and so all Israel will be saved, just as it is written,  
"The deliverer will come out of Zion;  
he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

<sup>27</sup> And this *is* the covenant from me with them  
when I take away their sins."

Once the number of the Gentiles is fulfilled, Paul writes that "*all Israel*", not just part, but "all Israel", will be "*saved*" (SOZO means: to save, deliver, protect). The plan of God will once more focus on the children of Abraham. The Messiah will return to save Israel from its enemy, and they will turn their eyes to him and call out for him.

<sup>26</sup> and so all Israel will be saved, just as it is written,

“The deliverer will come out of Zion;  
he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

<sup>27</sup> And this *is* the covenant from me with them  
when I take away their sins.”

Paul uses a quote from Isaiah 59:20,21 and Jeremiah 31:31-33 to point out that the Redeemer, or the Messiah, if you prefer, will come a second time. This time it will be specifically for Israel as a nation.

<sup>28</sup> With respect to the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sake, but with respect to election, *they are* dearly loved for the sake of the fathers.

The Jews had become "*enemies*" (ECHTHROS means: to hate, enemies, adversaries, foe) this was for "your sake", the sake of the Gentiles. On the other hand, with respect "to *election*" (EKLOGE means: divine selection, chosen), having been chosen by the Lord God to become a "great nation", they are "*dearly loved*" (AGAPETOS means: beloved, well loved) not for their own sake, for they had greatly rebelled against God, but for the sake of the "fathers" (PATER means: a father near or far). God had made promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and because of them, he loved their descendants.

<sup>29</sup> For the gifts and the calling of God *are* irrevocable.

Speaking about the "*gifts*" (CHARISMA means: a divine gratuity, a spiritual endowment) and the "*calling*" (KLESIS means: an invitation, a calling) towards Israel. Paul writes that they are "*irrevocable*" (AMETAMELETOS means irrevocable, unchangeable, immutable). Amen that the Lord God keeps his promises and covenants. This means that the promise to be saved from the judgment to come, if you repent and believe in the Messiah, will always remain.

<sup>30</sup> For just as you formerly were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of the disobedience of these, <sup>31</sup> so also these have now been disobedient for your mercy, in order that they also may now be shown mercy.

The Gentiles had received "*mercy*" (ELOS means: active compassion, mercy) because the Jews had become "*disobedient*" (APEITHEIA means: disbelief, obstinate unbelief). One day they will also receive "*mercy*" (ELEEEO means: compassion by word or deed). God will not forget the Israelites and will shower them once more with his compassion.

<sup>32</sup> For God confined them all in disobedience, in order that he could have mercy on them all.

God "*confines*" (SUGKLEIO means: to shut together) all of Israel in "*disobedience*" (APEITHEIA means: disbelief, obstinate unbelief), remember Romans 3:23. So that they all can receive his mercy. All of Israel has sinned, and all of Israel can receive righteousness through the Messiah.

<sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches  
and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!  
How unsearchable *are* his judgments  
and *how* incomprehensible *are* his ways!  
<sup>34</sup> "For who has known the mind of the Lord,  
or who has been his counselor?  
<sup>35</sup> Or who has given in advance to him,  
and it will be paid back to him?"  
<sup>36</sup> For from him and through him and to him *are* all *things*.  
To him *be* glory for eternity! Amen.

Paul ends his theological section with what I believe to be a doxology and praises the Lord God for the following reasons.

<sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches  
and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!

He glorifies God for the "*depth*" (BATHOS means: profundity, mystery, deepness) of the "*riches*" (PLOUTOS means: wealth, riches) and the "*wisdom*" (SOPHIA means: wisdom, good judgment) and the "*knowledge*" (GNOSIS means: knowing, knowledge) of God. What strikes me is that Paul glorifies the Lord for the things HE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND about him. Who he is, is beyond Paul's comprehension, and he glorifies

him for that. A god that we could know and understand everything about would not be much of a god, would he!

v.33 ... How unsearchable *are* his judgments  
and *how* incomprehensible *are* his ways!

Paul tells us how "*unsearchable*" (ANEXEREUNETOS means: construable, cannot be searched out) are his "*judgments*" (KRIMA means: a decision, a judgment). Paul has taught us regarding God's righteousness and his dealings with Israel and the Gentiles. These things are difficult to understand. He also writes how "*incomprehensible*" (ANEXEREUNETOS means: construable, cannot be searched out) are his ways. This reminds me of what is written:

#### Isaiah 55

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the LORD.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

(RSV)

To prove his point that God's judgments and ways cannot be understood he quotes from Isaiah 40:13.

<sup>34</sup> "For who has known the mind of the Lord,  
or who has been his counselor?"

For who has "*known*" (GINOSKO MEANS: to know, be aware of) the mind of the Lord? This reminds me of Job 38-41 when God asks Job a series of questions that he cannot answer. Who has been his "*counselor*" (SUMBOULOS means: a counselor, an adviser)? Who gives advice to the Almighty? No one!

<sup>35</sup> "Or who has given in advance to him,  
and it will be paid back to him?"

This is a quote from Job 41:11. Is there anyone who has FIRST given to God so that he will be "*paid back*" (ANTAPODIDOMI means: to require, repay, render)? Does God need our advice and when he receives it, does he give us a reward? Of course not!

<sup>36</sup> For from him and through him and to him *are all things*.  
To him *be* glory for eternity! Amen.

Paul ends with a three-part sentence. Some have seen this as a trinitarian statement, some have not. "*From him*" seems to speak of God being the eternal source of all things, the great designer. "*Through him*" speaks of God being the prime and efficient cause of all things. "*To him*" speaks of God being the ultimate end of all things. To this God "*be glory*" (DOXA means: glory, dignity, praise, honor) for "*eternity*" (AION means: an age, perpetuity, eternal) — Amen, so be it!

## 40 - *The disciple's dedication*

Romans 12:1,2

<sup>1</sup>Therefore I exhort you, brothers, through the mercies of God, to present your bodies *as* a living sacrifice, holy *and* pleasing to God, *which is* your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup>And do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may approve what *is* the good and well-pleasing and perfect will of God.  
(LEB)

We are beginning a new section in the book of Romans. As I have said before, this book is divided into two sections. The first is the theological section, and the second is the practical aspect. Now that Paul has taught the plan and mystery of redemption, God's righteousness, election and predestination, the universal guilt of man, the role of both the law and grace of God, and other spiritual wonders, the question is: what are we now going to do knowing all of this? This is what this section is all about: living as a true disciple of Christ.

<sup>1</sup>Therefore I exhort you, brothers, through the mercies of God, to present your bodies *as* a living sacrifice, holy *and* pleasing to God, *which is* your reasonable service.

The word "*therefore*" is a conjunction linking what has been said and what will be written. What follows is directly linked to what we have learned. I would like to make a small comment on the order of Paul's epistles to churches. First comes theology, and there is a simple reason for that. We must first get to know the mind of God before we are able to act in a way that pleases him. You simply cannot please someone if you don't know what he likes and dislikes.

Paul says, "*I exhort*" (PAKAKALEO means: to call near, to invite, beseech) you "*brothers*" (ADEPHOS means: a brother near or remote). Paul is inviting and calling out the brothers and sisters in the faith (whether they are Jews or Gentiles), to do the following. But before he tells them what he calls them out to do, he speaks of the reason why they should willingly and gladly do so. It is because of the "*mercies*" (OIKTIRMOS means: pity, mercy) of God. Remember what God has done in your favor. Remember that the Messiah has taken upon himself your debt and your judgment.

Remember that there is now peace and no more enmity, that condemnation no longer exists. These are the "*mercies*" that you have freely received because of your faith in the Messiah. This is what you must remember and stand upon to be able to "*present*" (PARISTEMI means: to exhibit, to be at hand, to stand) your "*bodies*" (SOMA means: the body as a whole) to God. Have you ever wondered why Paul asks the believers in Rome to present their "*bodies*" and not their minds or hearts? I believe it is because (as we will see) it is the mind that is renewed and not the flesh. There is no redemption for our flesh because it is the instrument that sin uses to become alive. Believers need to present their "*bodies*" because they are still untamed and desirous of sin (Rom. 7). In a way, God wants us to present our bodies because he already has our hearts and spirits.

In what way should we present our bodies? It is "*as a living*" (ZOA means: to live, a life-time) "*sacrifice*" (THUSIA means: a sacrifice, or the act of sacrificing). In other words, God wants us to live a life that is pleasing to him. An example of this would be the lives of Adam and Eve before they sinned or the life of Christ, who walked in the light in communion with his Father. While he was in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said the following to his disciples:

#### Matthew 26

41 Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing,  
but the flesh is weak."  
(RSV)

Our spirit is willing but our flesh is weak and that is why we need to present our bodies to God.

v.1 ... holy *and* pleasing to God, *which is* your reasonable service.

We simply cannot present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God as we desire to do. The offering of our bodies for a life of sacrifice needs to be "*holy*" (HAGIOS means: sacred, pure, consecrated). Presenting our bodies to God and living the way we desire is not what Paul has in mind. A sacrifice needed to be holy if it were to be offered. Our sacrifice, apart from being holy, needs to be "*pleasing*" (EUARESTOS means: fully agreeable, well-pleasing) to God. An example of this would be the story of two brothers: Cain and Abel. Both presented a sacrifice to God, but only one was pleasing to him—Abel's. What we do in life should be pleasing to the Lord. Is offering our bodies as a living sacrifice a "BIG" thing that we should be proud of and even boast about? NO, Paul says that such a life is your "*reasonable*" (LOGIKOS means: reasonable, rational) "*service*" (LATREIA means: ministrations of God, worship, service). It is only reasonable

that after receiving all the mercies of God, one should, in return, offer his life to manifest his gratitude towards his Savior.

<sup>2</sup>And do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may approve what *is* the good and well-pleasing and perfect will of God.

In this verse, the apostle Paul will teach the believers how they can become a living sacrifice. In other words, what can they do to become such a sacrifice. This is a three-step plan that Paul is giving, which is still efficient for you and me today.

The first step is NOT TO BE "*conformed*" (SUSCHEMATIZO means: to be fashioned alike, conform to, same pattern) to this "*age*" (AION means: an age, the world). Believers are no longer citizens of the world, as we read in:

#### Ephesians 2

19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,  
(NKJV)

Paul is saying that the model after which our lives are to be conformed to is no longer that of the world. The model that we now have is the Lord Jesus, and our lives should be fashioned to reflect his.

The second step is "*be transformed*" (METAMORPHOO means; be transformed, change). Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, we must allow ourselves to become the new person that God has given us to be through the new birth. This transformation is through the "*renewal*" (ANAKAINOSIS means: renovation, renewing) of your "*mind*" (NOUS means: the intellect, the mind, understanding). Our mind, which has been conformed to this world and has become its slave, needs to break away from its old master and see, think, and live differently. This time by the standards of God's ordinances. Learn to think as Jesus thinks and live as he lives.

v.2 ..."so that you may approve what *is* the good and well-pleasing and perfect will of God."

This is the third step to becoming a living sacrifice. Because we no longer have the world as a model and we let ourselves be transformed in our minds, we grow in Christ.

We are now able to "*approve*" (DIKOMAZO means: to test, discern, examine) what is the "*good*" (AGATHOS means: good in any sense, benefit, well) and the "*well-pleasing*" (EUARESTOS means: fully agreeable, well-pleasing) and "*perfect*" (TELEIOS means: complete, of full age, perfect) "*will*" (THELEMA means: a determination, a choice, desire, will) of God. The third step seems to represent the person who is mature in the Lord and is capable of discerning what the Lord approves.

This is what the disciple of Christ ought to be dedicated to: growing in the knowledge of the Lord, which changes his life so that he becomes more and more Christ-like. Jesus said this in two very simple words:

"Follow me"  
(John 1:43)

## 41 - Service in the Holy Spirit

Romans 12:3-8

<sup>3</sup>For by the grace given to me I say to everyone who is among you not to think more highly of yourself than what one ought to think, but to think *sensibly*, as God has apportioned a measure of faith to each one. <sup>4</sup>For just as in one body we have many members, but all the members do not have the same function, <sup>5</sup>in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ, and *individually* members of one another, <sup>6</sup>but having different gifts according to the grace given to us: if *it is* prophecy, according to the proportion of *his* faith; <sup>7</sup>if *it is* service, by service; if *it is* one who teaches, by teaching; <sup>8</sup>if *it is* one who exhorts, by exhortation; one who gives, with sincerity; one who leads, with diligence; one who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

(LEB)

In our present section, the apostle will encourage the Roman believers to allow God to work in them so that they can work for the benefit of their brothers and sisters in the faith.

<sup>3</sup>For by the grace given to me I say to everyone who is among you not to think more highly of yourself than what one ought to think, but to think *sensibly*, as God has apportioned a measure of faith to each one.

Paul will speak of the "*grace*" (CHARIS means: favor, gift, grace) not only that he has received but mainly of the grace that each true believer receives. This grace is "*given*" (DIDOMI means: to give, bestow, grant). It is NEVER worked for or paid for. It is freely given by the Lord God to his children. Paul, filled with this grace of God, desires to let everyone know something that will HINDER the work of the grace of God in us. We all know that we can grieve the Holy Spirit within us.

Ephesians 4

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

(RSV)

This is what every child of God must never do, and that is "*not to think*" (HUPERPHRONEO means: to esteem oneself overmuch, to be vain) more highly of yourself than what you ought "to think" (KATAPHRONEO means: to think against, despise). In other words, Paul tells the believers not to think too much of themselves

but to think "sensibly" (SOPHRONEO means: to be of sound mind, reasonable). This makes me think of a church leader who thought too much of himself.

### 3 John 1

9 I have written something to the church; but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge my authority.

(RSV)

We must always remember that humility precedes glory.

v.3 ... as God has apportioned a measure of faith to each one.

We must think sensibly of ourselves according to what God has "*apportioned*" (MERIZO means: to apportion, bestow, share) a "*measure*" (METRON means: a measure, a limited portion) of "*faith*" (PISTIS means: persuasion, credence, moral conviction) to each one. In other words, God has given each of his children a measure of faith and grace (capacities) to empower them for their spiritual duties. There is NO GLORY in this because it is not derived from your own abilities but is given by God as he sees fit. Paul taught the same thing to the Corinthian believers.

### 1 Cor. 12

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;

5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;

6 and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one.

7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

The following verse echoes what Paul had taught the Corinthians about the body of Christ and the different ministries we find in it.

<sup>4</sup>For just as in one body we have many members, but all the members do not have the same function,

Paul will begin to speak about the church as a whole and not the individual. It seems that for many believers, the concept of being "one" body has long been forgotten. Living for oneself has crept into the hearts of many who call themselves believers. Paul speaks of "*one body*" (SOMA means: the body as a whole). This body has "*many members*" (POLUS MELOS means: many different parts). The human body has ears, eyes, fingers, toes, a nose, a mouth, and so forth, but it is the sum of every part and it

makes one "unit", one body. What is wonderful concerning this body with many members is that they DO NOT have the same "*function*" (PRAXIS means: practice, an act, a function). They don't all do the same thing for the body. The body to be in good health needs its different parts to work together and so does the church.

<sup>5</sup> in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ, and *individually* members of one another

Paul teaches that in the same way, "*we*", which refers to the believers, who are "*many*" (POLUS means: much in any aspect), form just ONE BODY in "*Christ*" (CHRISTOS means; anointed, the Messiah). In Christ, there should not be any divisions. All should be like-hearted. Because we are "*individually*," each and every one of us are "*members*" (MELOS means: a limb or part of a body, a member) of one another. If a congregation has 47 people attending, then there are 47 parts that make ONE body of Christ.

<sup>6</sup> but having different gifts according to the grace given to us: if *it is* prophecy, according to the proportion of *his* faith; <sup>7</sup> if *it is* service, by service; if *it is* one who teaches, by teaching; <sup>8</sup> if *it is* one who exhorts, by exhortation; one who gives, with sincerity; one who leads, with diligence; one who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

In these verses, Paul tells the Roman believers how this should work out. Since we are individuals who make up the whole entire body, we individually have spiritual gifts given to us by the Lord God. We have "*different*" (DIAPHOROS means: differing, diverse) "*gifts*" (CHARISMA means: a divine gratuity, spiritual endowment). These are spiritual capacities that God gives his children for the betterment of the body of Christ. These gifts are "*according to the grace*" (CHARIS means: benefit, favor, gift, grace) that is "*given*" (DIDOMI means: to give, bestow, grant). Once again, we see that the spiritual capacities that people receive are given to them, they have not been earned, bought, or received because we do something. Let's look at some spiritual gifts that are given to an individual to use for the edification of others.

v.6 ...if *it is* prophecy, according to the proportion of *his* faith;

The word "*prophecy*" (PROPHETEIA means: prediction, bring forth) mainly refers to communicating the word of God to his people. If a person has such a capacity, then it must be used according to the "*proportion*" (PROPHERO means: to bear forward, bring forth) of his faith. Such a person must bear forth this gift with all the capacity that has been given to him.

<sup>7</sup> if *it is* service, by service; if *it is* one who teaches, by teaching;

Another spiritual capacity is "*service*" (DIAKONIA means: attendance, aid, service). If you have this spiritual capacity to serve people, then use it and be of service to those who need you. If you have received the gift of being one who "*teaches*" (DIDASKO means: to teach) then do so and teach at the level of theology that you are capable of.

<sup>8</sup> if *it is* one who exhorts, by exhortation; one who gives, with sincerity; one who leads, with diligence; one who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

If "*exhortation*" (PARAKALEO means: to call near, invite, invoke) is your God-given gift, then use it to come alongside people who are seeking spiritual guidance and invite them to follow the Lord. If you have the spiritual gift of liberality, and are someone who "*gives*" (METADISOMI means: to give over, share, impart) do so with "*sincerity*" (HAPLOTES means: with discrimination). Be generous not only to certain people because you like them, but to all who are in need. Remember what Jesus taught.

#### Luke 14

12 He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your kinsmen or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and you be repaid.

13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind,

14 and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

(RSV)

Paul ends this section with two more spiritual gifts that need to be exercised wisely.

v.8 ...one who leads, with diligence; one who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

If you have the gift to "*lead*" (PROISTEMI means: to stand before, to preside, to rule) in whatever capacity, then do it with "*diligence*" (SPOUDE means: speed, eagerness, diligence). Do it well, do it with energy and show people that you are glad that you are in front of them. Finally, if you have the gift of "*mercy*" (ELEEO means: to be compassionate by word or deed) do it with "*cheerfulness*" (HILAROTES means: readiness of mind, cheerfulness). Don't look as though you have been forced to be merciful. Be grateful that you can show mercy.

In the practical aspect of this new section, we see that each and every individual true believer is an official member of the Body of Christ and should use the spiritual gifts he has received for the betterment of the entire body.

## 42 - Relationships and Christians

Romans 12:9-16

<sup>9</sup> Love must be without hypocrisy. Abhor what *is* evil; be attached to what *is* good, <sup>10</sup> being devoted to one another in brotherly love, esteeming one another *more highly* in honor, <sup>11</sup> not lagging in diligence, being enthusiastic in spirit, serving the Lord, <sup>12</sup> rejoicing in hope, enduring in affliction, being devoted to prayer, <sup>13</sup> contributing to the needs of the saints, pursuing hospitality. <sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute, bless and do not curse *them*. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Think the same *thing* toward one another; *do not think arrogantly*, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise *in your own sight*.  
(LEB)

In our last section, we saw that the Lord God gives to his children spiritual gifts and capacities for the benefit of the body of Christ. In this section, the apostle Paul gives straight-forward commands concerning our relationships with other believers.

<sup>9</sup> Love must be without hypocrisy.

Our "*love*" (AGAPE means: love, affection, benevolence) "must be"; this is not a matter of choice on our part; it is an obligation "*without hypocrisy*" (ANUPOKRITOS means: honest, sincere). This should be the foundation for our relationships with other believers. It is based on love that is true. We love our brothers and sisters not because of who they are, but because they are loved and accepted by God just as we are (even with our faults).

v.9 ... Abhor what *is* evil

The word "*abhor*" (APOSTUGEO) means "to detest utterly, abhor, hate." If we are to love without hypocrisy, it automatically means that we hate what is "evil" (PONEROS means: hurtful, evil, vicious). Believers need to take a stand and revile whatever is evil in the eyes of the Lord. We are children of light and no longer of darkness (Eph. 5:8).

v.9 ... be attached to what *is* good,

This goes without saying that if we abhor what is evil, we must be "*attached*" (KOLLAO means: to glue, stick, cleave) to what is "*good*" (AGATHOS means: good, benefit, well).

As the word means, we must stick to what is good in the sight of the Lord God. This is not something new. The Bible has taught this many times in the Book of Psalms (34:14; 36:3; 37:3). Being attached means that doing good is not something that we do once in a while, but rather a way of living.

<sup>10</sup> being devoted to one another in brotherly love

We are told to be "*devoted*" (PHILOSTORGOS means: fond of a natural relative) to one another, again not just the believers we get along with or the ones we prefer but "*one another*" (ALLELON means: one another, each other). We should be fond, caring, and affectionate with all the children of God in "brotherly love" (PHILADELPHIA means: fraternal affection). This affection is spiritual and pure, and not of the flesh.

v.10 ... esteeming one another *more highly* in honor,

One way we can be devoted to each other is by "*esteeming*" (PROEGEMAI means: to lead the way for others) one another more highly in "*honor*" (TIME means: value, esteem, precious). The way we think and act toward one another should demonstrate that we value the brethren. This speaks of how we treat each other when we are with them.

<sup>11</sup> not lagging in diligence

This command speaks of being attentive in whatever we do. We should "*not be lagging*" (OKNEROS means: tardy, indolent, slothful) in "*diligence*" (SPOUDE means: to be busy, eagerness). We should be occupied and not leave for tomorrow what we know the Lord wants of us to do today. There is a saying that says, "Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today," and it is so true.

v.11 ...being enthusiastic in spirit

If we are not to be slothful, we need to be "*enthusiastic*" (ZEO means: to be hot, be fervent) in the "spirit" (PNEUMA means: current of air, breath, spirit). We need to do things, remembering that we are doing them for our Lord and not for man. Paul wrote:

1 Corinthians 10

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.  
(RSV)

So let's be enthusiastic in the Lord, knowing that all that we do in the name of the Lord will receive a reward, even giving a simple cup of water (Mark 9:41).

#### v.11 ... serving the Lord

This follows being enthusiastic (fervent) in the Spirit. When we are enthusiastic, we want to "serve" (DOULEUO means: to be a slave, in bondage) the "Lord" (KURIOS means: supreme in authority). Do you remember when God told Moses and Aaron to go and see Pharaoh so that he would let his people go? The reason for this was the following:

#### Exodus 7

16 And you shall say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, "Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness; and behold, you have not yet obeyed."

(RSV)

God wanted to liberate his people so that they could enjoy freedom and serve him. Having been freed from the condemnation of sin, we are now free to love and serve our Lord.

#### <sup>12</sup> rejoicing in hope

The Lord desires his people to "*rejoice*" (CHAIRO means: to be cheerful, to be glad, rejoice) in "hope" (ELPIS means: to anticipate, usually with pleasure). Our hope is in Jesus our Messiah (2 Cor. 1:7; 1 Thes. 2:19; 1 Tim. 1:1; 1 Peter 1:3). May we rejoice in our salvation and in the hope that we have in our beloved Savior.

#### v.12 ... enduring in affliction

This is much needed in all of our lives. We need to be "*enduring*" (HUPOMENO means: to stay behind, remain, abide, endure) in our "*affliction*" (THLIPSIS means: pressure, affliction, anguish). When tribulations come our way, we must remain strong and persevere through them. Remember what the Lord told us:

#### John 16

33 I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

(RSV)

v.12 ...being devoted to prayer,

True believers in Christ do pray, but are we "*devoted*" (PROKARTERREO means: to be earnest towards, persevere) to "*prayer*" (PROSEUCHE means: prayer, worship)? Do we make a point of willingly taking time for prayer? Do we believe that it is important and useful in our spiritual life?

<sup>13</sup>contributing to the needs of the saints

This speaks of taking part in the welfare of our brothers and sisters by "*contributing*" (KOINONEO means: to share with others) to the "*needs*" (CHREIA means: necessary, need, want, lack) of the "*saints*" (HAGIOS means: sacred, pure, holy, saint). Do we take time to look and listen to see if there are people in our churches who are in need? Is our heart open to stepping in and actually bringing relief to them?

v.13 ... pursuing hospitality.

It may be that contributing to the needs of the saints can come to a point where you will be "*pursuing*" (DIOKO means: to pursue, follow after, given to) "*hospitality*" (PHILONEXIA means: to entertain a stranger). For some reason, someone may need shelter, and since you have an extra room, God may call you to extend his stay for many days or even weeks. It is one thing to invite people for lunch after church, but another to have that person live in your house until he is settled.

<sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute, bless and do not curse *them*.

The Lord God wants us to "*bless*" (EULOGEO means: to speak well of, to bless) people even though they "*persecute*" (DIOKO means: to pursue, to make to flee, drive away) you. This makes me think of what Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount:

#### Matthew 5

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

39 But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also;

40 and if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well;

41 and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.

(RSV)

Disciples of Christ are called to "bless" and not "curse" (KATARAOMAI means: to doom, to curse). We must never wish evil on a person.

<sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.

We must act in a way that is appropriate for how the other person is feeling. We should "*rejoice*" (CHAIRO means: to be cheerful, be glad, rejoice) with those who are rejoicing. The opposite is also valid, we should "*weep*" (KLAIO means: to sob, wail aloud) with those who are weeping. How insensitive to rejoice when the person next to you is grieving and to mourn when he is rejoicing!

<sup>16</sup> Think the same *thing* toward one another;

This verse should help us get along with other believers. We are asked to "*think*" (PHRONEO means: to exercise the mind, to think) the same thing, meaning to think alike towards one another. Having the same good thoughts in the Lord for each other.

v.16 ... do not think arrogantly

We are called to have good thoughts towards other believers, but as for us, we need to be careful with how we see ourselves. We must not "*think*" (PHRONEO means: to exercise the mind, to think) "*arrogantly*" (HUPSELOS means: lofty in character, highly esteemed) about ourselves. After all, I am a sinner redeemed by the grace of God, just like the other person.

v.16 ... but associate with the lowly

Rather than thinking too much of myself, I should "associate" (DSUNAPAGO means: to yield, lower yourself) with the "*lowly*" (TAPEINOS means: depressed, cast down, humble). Just as Jesus was often with the lowly, sick, poor, and hurting, so should his disciples be.

v. 16 ...do not be wise *in your own sight*.

This command ends this section very well. Do not be "*wise*" (PHRONIMOS means: sagacious, wise, clever) in your own "*sight*" (HEAUTOU means: self, him, their own). Don't think that you know better than anyone else. Sometimes you might, but sometimes it is not the case. So remain humble before your Lord and your brothers and sisters in Christ.

## 43 - Relationships with all people

Romans 12:17-21

<sup>17</sup> Pay back no one evil for evil. Take thought for *what is* good in the sight of all people. <sup>18</sup> If *it is* possible on your *part*, be at peace with all people. <sup>19</sup> Do not take revenge yourselves, dear friends, but give place to *God's* wrath, for it is written, "Vengeance *is* mine, I will repay," says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> But "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him *something* to drink; for *by* doing this, you will heap up coals of fire upon his head." <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.  
(LEB)

If you notice in this section, the apostle Paul twice mentions "all people." That is why I chose to entitle this section "Relationships with all people". Under the lead of the Holy Spirit, Paul gives the believers in Rome directives on how to deal with people in general. As it was with our last section, these are a series of short imperatives.

<sup>17</sup> Pay back no one evil for evil.

This is one thing that most people keep in mind and wait for the perfect moment to do, and that is "*pay back*" (APODIDOMI means: to give away, to re-pay, payment). When someone does us harm, we want to respond with an equal or greater force. But that is not the Christian way. We are to pay back "no one", not a single soul, "*evil*" (KAKOS means: worthless, depraved, bad, evil, wicked) with "evil". Jesus taught this:

Luke 6

27 "But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

29 To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt.

30 Give to every one who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again.

31 And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.

(RSV)

So what are disciples to do if they are not to retaliate? Paul writes:

v.17 ... Take thought for *what is* good in the sight of all people.

Instead of thinking about how we can get back at the people who do us wrong, we should "*take thought*" (PRONOEO means: to consider in advance, provide for) of what is "*good*" (KALOS means: good, virtuous, honest, worthy) in the "*sight*" (ENOPION means: in the face of, in the presence of) of all people. We should be thinking of doing good for those who do not do good to us. Just like Jesus on the cross when he said:

### Luke 23

33 And when they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left.

34 And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.

(RSV)

Being a disciple of Christ is not an easy thing to do. We are called to do the opposite of what our old nature pushes us to do. This is an example.

<sup>18</sup> If *it is possible on your part*, be at peace with all people.

The burden seems to be on the disciples' side. He is to "*if possible*" (DUNATOS means: powerful, capable, possible) on your part, be at "*peace*" (EIRENEUO means: to be peaceful, live in peace) with all people. This gives the idea that the initiative should come from the person who believes. We can extend an "olive branch," but it may not be accepted by the recipient. What we are told to do is to do our part, and the rest is not in our hands. That is why Paul wrote "if possible".

<sup>19</sup> Do not take revenge yourselves, dear friends, but give place to *God's* wrath, for it is written, "*Vengeance is mine, I will repay,*" says the Lord.

So believers are not to "*revenge ourselves*" (EKDIKEO means: to retaliate, revenge, vindication). So what are we to do-just sit there and let people trample over us - NO! We are to do something even greater than all the vengeance we could pour out on them. We are to "*give place*" (DIDOMI TOPOS means: to bestow a place) to God's "*wrath*" (ORGE means: violent passion, anger). Paul then quotes Deut. 32:35 and writes: "*vengeance*" (EKDIKESIS means: vindication, retribution, vengeance) is mine, it belongs to the Lord. He promises, "*I will repay*" (ANTAPODIDOMI means: to requite, render, repay) says the Lord. What we are to do is to place everything in the hands of the Lord and simply wait for justice to be given by the Lord.

<sup>20</sup> But “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him *something* to drink; for *by* doing this, you will heap up coals of fire upon his head.”

What we should do is the opposite of what our flesh desires for us to do to our enemies. If your "*enemy*" (ECHTHROS means: to hate, enemy, foe) is "*hungry*" (PEINAO means: to famish, to crave, hunger) be happy-no! Paul says to "feed him." Be kind and provide sustenance for him to live and get better. If your enemy "*is thirsty*" (DIPSAO means: to thirst for) you need to give him something to "*drink*" (POTIZO means: to furnish drink, to give water). Once again, the apostle Paul refers the believers back to the word of God and freely quotes from Pr. 25:21,22.

#### Proverbs 25

21 If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink;

22 for you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the LORD will reward you.  
(RSV)

Being kind and generous to people who are your enemies will only add to their judgment to come. It may also bring them to repentance, seeing your love for them.

<sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

As with our last section, Paul ends with a phrase that "wraps up" his main thought. Do not be "*overcome*" (NIKAO means: to be victorious) by "*evil*" (KAKOS means: worthless, evil, depraved, wicked). In other words, don't let yourselves be conquered by evil. This reminds me of another warning, this time by Peter:

#### 1 Peter 5

8 Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour.

9 Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experience of suffering is required of your brotherhood throughout the world.

(RSV)

We should be the ones who are victorious, not the enemy! Paul writes: but "*overcome*" (NIKAO means: to be victorious) evil with "*good*" (AGATHOS means: good in any sense, benefit, well). Doing good is our weapon against the evil that is done to us.

## 44 - Relationships with authorities

Romans 13:1-7

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for *there* is no authority except by God, and those that exist are put in place by God. <sup>2</sup>So then, the one who resists authority resists the ordinance *which is* from God, and those who resist will receive condemnation on themselves. <sup>3</sup>For rulers are not a *cause of* terror for a good deed, but for bad *conduct*. So do you want not to be afraid of authority? Do what *is* good, and you will have praise from it, <sup>4</sup>for it is God's servant to you for what *is* good. But if you do what *is* bad, be afraid, because it does not bear the sword to no purpose. For it is God's servant, the one who avenges for punishment on the one who does *what is* bad. <sup>5</sup>Therefore *it is* necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. <sup>6</sup>For because of this you also pay taxes, for *the authorities* are servants of God, busily engaged in this very *thing*. <sup>7</sup>Pay to everyone *what is* owed: *pay* taxes to whom taxes *are due*; *pay* customs duties to whom customs duties *are due*; *pay* respect to whom respect *is due*; *pay* honor to whom honor *is due*.

(LEB)

In our present section, we will look at what is expected of true believers. For many, this will not be much appreciated, for we all have a rebellious heart and do not like to be told what to do.

<sup>1</sup>Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for *there* is no authority except by God, and those that exist are put in place by God.

The apostle Paul begins with a bold statement, and he desires everybody to understand that they are not the exception to what is written. He begins by writing "every" (PAS means: all, any, every, the whole) "person" (PSUCHE means: breath, current of air, spirit). If you are a true Christian, this includes YOU! You cannot say that these imperatives do not apply to you - Paul says "EVERY PERSON". All Christians have to be "subject" (HUPOTASSO means: to subordinate, to be under obedience, put under) to the "governing" (HUPERECHO means: to hold oneself above, superior) "authorities" (EXOUSIA means: force, mastery, authority). Every child of God is to be submissive to the local authorities - whoever they are and at what level of authority they are.

Paul tells the Roman believers why this is so.

v.1 ... for *there* is no authority except by God, and those that exist are put in place by God.

Paul writes that there are "*no authorities*" (EXOUSIA means: force, mastery, authority) and I would stress the word "NO" (so there are no exceptions) that are there "*except*" (EI means: but, except that, if not) by God. All the authorities are there because of the will of God. Remember that Paul was living in a world where the authorities hated Christians, imprisoned, tortured, and killed followers of Christ! If he is able to say "be under their authority" and refers to the Roman Empire, how much more with our governments? Paul also says that they exist because they have been "*put in place*" ( TASSO means: assign, dispose, appoint, ordain) by God. With our human eyes, we may not understand, but every government is there because God wants them to be there. The problem is that we do not know the plan of God or why he allowed them to be there.

<sup>2</sup>So then, the one who resists authority resists the ordinance *which is* from God, and those who resist will receive condemnation on themselves.

Paul warns believers who may not believe that they must submit to the authority of the governments. They may think that they are evil and stand against all that is holy and say "NO". Paul writes that the one who "*resists*" (ANTITASSOMAI means: to oppose, resist, be against) the "*authority*" (EXOUSIA means: force, mastery, authority) actually resists the "*ordinance*" (DIATAGE means: arrangement, institution) which is from God. In reality, it is not the people in authority that you resist, but the Lord God who has placed them there. So what will happen if you voluntarily resist them? Paul writes that you, the believer, will "*receive*" (LAMBANO means: to take, to seize, hold, receive) "*condemnation*" (KRIMA means: avenge, condemned, judgment) on yourself. Maybe we should think twice before disobeying our governments. We know that there are moral or spiritual limits to what a fallen government may ask us to do. There are times when we will have to disobey because what they ask is a direct order that goes against the Lord God. An example of this would be if the government tells you to kill your neighbor; you cannot do this because it is in violation of God's desire for you.

<sup>3</sup>For rulers are not a *cause of* terror for a good deed, but for bad *conduct*. So do you want not to be afraid of authority? Do what *is* good, and you will have praise from it,

Paul explains that "*rulers*" (ARCHON means: a first, chief, prince, ruler), the ones who govern us, are not a cause of "*terror*" (PHOBOS means: to be put in fear, fright) for a

"good deed" (AGATHOS ERGON means: a good work) but rather for "bad conduct" (KAKOS THELO means: a wicked determination). You should not be afraid of the authorities if you do good things, but only if what you do is evil! Paul is very logical and says that if you do not want to be "afraid" (PHOBEO means: to be alarmed, afraid, fear) just do what is "good" (AGATHOS means: good in any sense). By doing good, you will receive "praise" (EPAINOS means: a commendable thing, praise). Just live your life, follow what is asked, and do good to others.

<sup>4</sup>for it is God's servant to you for what *is* good. But if you do what *is* bad, be afraid, because it does not bear the sword to no purpose. For it is God's servant, the one who avenges for punishment on the one who does *what is* bad.

Here Paul explains that the government is God's "servant" (DIAKONOS means: an attendant, a waiter, a servant). They are there for what is "good" (AGATHOS means: good in any sense). Are they always "good"? No. Do they always do as God wishes? No. There are faithful and wise servants as well as evil servants (Mat. 24:51). Notice that Paul switches from the government to the individual, "but if you." be preoccupied with what you have to do before the Lord. If you do something "bad" (KAKOS means: worthless, depraved, evil, wicked) be "afraid" (PHOBEO means: to be alarmed, afraid, fear). You should be afraid because the authorities do not "bear" (PHOREO means: to have a burden, bear, wear) the "sword" (MACHAIRA means: a knife, judicial punishment, sword) for no purpose. You should be afraid to do evil because the authorities that God has placed on earth are there to punish those who do such things. The authorities are God's "servant" (DIAKONOS means: an attendant, a waiter, a servant). They are there to "avenge" (carrying justice out, a punisher) those who do what is "bad" (KAKOS means: worthless, depraved, evil, wicked).

<sup>5</sup>Therefore *it is* necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience.

In this verse, Paul explains that there are two reasons why it is "necessary" (ANAGKE means: constraint, needful, must) to be in "subjection" (HUPOTASSO means: be under obedience, subject to) to the authorities. The first is because of "wrath" (ORGE means: punishment, vengeance, anger) that you might receive, and the second is because of "conscience" (SUNEIDESIS means: moral consciousness). The Holy Spirit will use your conscience to speak to you and direct you one way or another. Again, we see that it is necessary (not a choice) to place ourselves under the authority of the government.

<sup>6</sup>For because of this you also pay taxes, for *the authorities* are servants of God, busily engaged in this very *thing*.

Paul now speaks of taxes and the fact that we should "*pay*" (TELEO means: to end, conclude, pay) our "*taxes*" (PHOROS means: a load, tax, tribute). Paul again reminds the believers that the authorities "are servants of God". They are there for a reason. This should not be taken lightly as we are to be "*busily engaged*" (PROSKARTEREO means: to be earnest towards) in this very thing. Should we pay our taxes? Jesus tells us that we should.

#### Matthew 17

24 When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the half-shekel tax went up to Peter and said, "Does not your teacher pay the tax?"

25 He said, "Yes." And when he came home, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their sons or from others?"

26 And when he said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free.

27 However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel; take that and give it to them for me and for yourself."

(RSV)

To end this section the apostle Paul tries to make it very clear, believers are to be honest with the authorities and pay them what is their due.

<sup>7</sup>Pay to everyone *what is owed*: *pay* taxes to whom taxes *are due*; *pay* customs duties to whom customs duties *are due*; *pay* respect to whom respect *is due*; *pay* honor to whom honor *is due*.

Believers are to "*pay*" (APODIDOMI means: to give away, deliver, render) to everyone what is "*owed*" (OPHEILE means: a sum owed, obligation, due). Paul gives a few examples of what he means:

v.7 ...*pay* taxes to whom taxes *are due*

We have just read about this aspect.

v.7 ...*pay* customs duties to whom customs duties *are due*

Custom duties would be taxes when entering or leaving a place where you have to pay to be. Like the half-shekel tax mentioned in Matthew 17:24–27.

v.7 ....*pay* respect to whom respect *is due*

The word "*respect*" (PHOBOS means: to be put in fear, be afraid) is in the context of our relationship with governmental authorities. We are polite with those who are in authority, whether it is the police officer or the greeting person at the hospital emergency.

v.7 ... *pay* honor to whom honor *is due*.

Finally, we are to pay "*honour*" (*TIME* means: esteem, honor, dignity, precious) to whom honour is due. We are to respect those who are in places of authority.

## 45 - Christian love

Romans 13:8-14

<sup>8</sup>Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another, for the one who loves someone else has fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup>For the *commandments*, "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not commit murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet," and if *there is* any other commandment, are summed up in this statement: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>10</sup>Love does not commit evil against a neighbor. Therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law. <sup>11</sup>And *do* this *because you* know the time, that *it is* already the hour for you to wake up from sleep. For our salvation *is* nearer now than when we believed. <sup>12</sup>The night is far gone, and the day has drawn near. Therefore let us throw off the deeds of darkness and put on the weapons of light. <sup>13</sup>Let us live decently, as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and licentiousness, not in strife and jealousy. <sup>14</sup>But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and do not make provision for the desires of the flesh.

(LEB)

The apostle Paul will speak about what true love is all about. There should be a difference in the minds of true believers in relationship with the definition of what love is.

<sup>8</sup>Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another, for the one who loves someone else has fulfilled the law.

The word "owe" (OPHEILO) means being under obligation, in debt. Believers in Christ should be under no obligation towards people; we should be debt free towards them "except" (EI means: if not, but, except) to 'love" (AGAPAO means: to love in a social or moral sense) one another or each other if you prefer. I do have a debt towards the people around me, and that is to morally or socially love them. This speaks of my attitude towards my fellow man. In 1 Cor. 13:4-7, Paul gives a description of what true spiritual love is.

1 Corinthians 13

4 Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful;

5 it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;

6 it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right.

7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

(RSV)

This is how love manifests itself. It has nothing to do with sex, but all to do with the heart. This is what I owe to my family members, church friends, co-workers, neighbors, and people at large. Imagine what a paradise it would be if the world had this type of love. One day this will come true, when the Lord returns and casts away all evil into the lake of fire (Rev. 19,20).

v.8 ... for the one who loves someone else has fulfilled the law.

What happens if I love others as Christ loved me? What happens if I am no longer selfish and place the health and welfare of others before mine? When we truly love others, we "*fulfill*" (PLEROO means: to make replete, to cram, level up) the "*law*" (NOMOS means: law, regulation, principle). Paul will explain what he means by this.

<sup>9</sup>For the *commandments*, "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not commit murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet," and if *there is* any other commandment, are summed up in this statement: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Paul uses four of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20) to make his point. Notice that he chose commandments that are against mankind and not against God. When my actions hurt my fellow man, then I do not love him and I am sinning.

"You shall not commit adultery." This is not loving the spouse of the person you are having intimacy with.

"You shall not commit murder," which is not loving the people in that person's life or family.

"You shall not steal" is not loving the person that you are robbing.

"You shall not covet" is illegally desiring what belongs to another, and that is not love.  
v.9 ... and if *there is* any other commandment, are summed up in this statement: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Paul wraps up all the commandments by saying "if there is any other". All of the 613 commandments that we find in the Old Testament, anyone you can think of, are "*summed up*" (ANAKEPHALAIOMAI means: to sum up, comprehend) into this

"*statement*" (LOGOS means: something said, preaching, talking), which is taken from Lev. 19:18:

In addition, Jesus also talked about loving your neighbor as yourself in regards to the law of Moses when he said:

#### Matthew 22

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"

37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

38 This is the great and first commandment.

39 And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

40 On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."

(RSV)

In other words, loving the Lord God and loving your neighbors is what is asked of all people, especially those who have the Holy Spirit in them and are following Jesus Christ.

<sup>10</sup> Love does not commit evil against a neighbor. Therefore love *is the* fulfillment of the law.

If I were to ask for a definition of what love is, a perfect answer would be: Love does not "*commit*" (ERGAZOMAI means: to toil, labour, work) any "*evil*" (KAKOS means: worthless, depraved, evil, wicked) against a neighbor. Love desires to bless others in a concrete way. Paul ends by saying that love is the "*fulfillment*" (PLEROMA means: repletion, filled up) of the law. Do you remember when Jesus said that he had come not to abolish the law but to fulfill it (Mat. 5:17)? If you want to know what a life filled with love for others looks like, just look at Jesus!

<sup>11</sup> And *do this because you* know the time, that *it is* already the hour for you to wake up from sleep. For our salvation *is* nearer now than when we believed.

There are many reasons why believers should love as Christ loved, and Paul names two of them. The first is because of "*time*" (KAIROS means: well-timed, opportune time, convenient). The time has come to love as you should because the "*hour*" (HORA means: an hour, day, instant, season) has come to "*wake up*" (EGEIRO means: to waken, rouse from sleep). Before, we were spiritually dead in our trespasses (Eph. 2:1,5) but now we have been raised from the dead in Christ (Col. 3:1). So the time has

come, since you are alive with Christ, to live a life filled with love. The second reason to love as Christ did is because our "*salvation*" (SOTERIA means: rescue, deliverance, save) is "*nearer*" (EGGUTERON means, nearer) than when we "*believed*" (PISTEUO means: to have faith in, to entrust). Our full salvation is when we will be with the Lord, and that day is closer than the one when we first believed in him! In other words, time is running out to love those who are around you.

In the following verses, Paul will teach the believers in Rome how to be able to love as they should.

<sup>12</sup>The night is far gone, and the day has drawn near. Therefore let us throw off the deeds of darkness and put on the weapons of light. <sup>13</sup>Let us live decently, as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and licentiousness, not in strife and jealousy. <sup>14</sup>But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and do not make provision for the desires of the flesh.

The first thought that he brings in is the fact that "*night*" (NUX means: nighttime) is long gone. In other words, darkness, which was in our lives, is far away because we have been cleansed by the blood of Christ. Darkness has gone and the day has "*drawn near*" (EGGIZO means: to make near, at hand). We are now in the light and should live as children of the light (Eph. 5:8).

v. 12 ...Therefore let us throw off the deeds of darkness and put on the weapons of light.

The second thought is that now that we are in the light, we are to "*throw off*" (APOLITHEMI means: to put away, to cast off) the deeds of "*darkness*" (SKOTOS means: obscure, shadiness). It is now possible because of the power that the new birth gives us through the Holy Spirit. Once the deeds of darkness are thrown away, we are to "*put on*" (ENDUO means: to sink into a garment, put on) the "*weapons*" (HOPLON means: an implement or tool of war, an armor) of light. I believe that the weapons of light are described in the following two verses.

<sup>13</sup>Let us live decently, as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and licentiousness, not in strife and jealousy. <sup>14</sup>But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and do not make provision for the desires of the flesh.

I believe that the weapons of light are a life that is filled with light, which is the opposite of the deeds of darkness that Paul spoke of. The proof of this is the fact that

Paul writes "*let us live*" (PERIPATEO means: to tread all around) "*decently*" (EUSCHEMONOS means: honestly, decently). What Paul is saying is that your life is an actual weapon against the deeds of darkness! Your life can obliterate the obscurity of evil. Paul will now describe what a life of decency looks like.

A life of decency is not "*carousing*" (KOMOS means: a carousal, reveling, rioting). This speaks of your behaviour in general. It should not be one of rebelling or being angry, irritated and annoyed. We are told not to be angry (Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8).

A life of decency is not one of "*drunkenness*" (METHE means: intoxication, drunk). We should stay away from being drunk because it is a "work of the flesh" (Eph. 5:19,20). We should stay sober minded (1 Thes. 5:8; 1 Peter 1:13; 5:8).

A life of decency is not "*sexually immoral*" (KOITE means: a couch, a bed, sexual intercourse). We are to keep the marriage bed pure (Heb. 13:4). Fornication is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19) and is not fitting among the saints (Eph. 5:3).

A life of decency has no "*licentiousness*" (ASELGEIA means: filthy, lasciviousness). This speaks of a life filled with wastefulness and reckless deeds. It is a life of decadence and self indulgence. It is a life of useless labour (Isaiah 49:4).

A life of decency is not lived in "*strife*" (ERIS means: a quarrel, conflict, contention). This speaks of a person who steps away from quarrels and conflict with others. It is a person who prefers to be at peace with people. The message of Jesus was one of peace, and it should be ours (Acts 10:36). God has called us to a life of peace (1 Cor. 7:15)

A life of decency has no part with "*jealousy*" (ZELOS means: heat, zeal, jealousy). We know that love has no jealousy (1 Cor. 13:4) so our lives should be absent of this fleshly emotion.

These are six aspects of a decent life that children of God should be living on a daily basis. These are the weapons of light that will conquer darkness and its sinful deeds.

<sup>14</sup> But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and do not make provision for the desires of the flesh.

To be able to live this life of decency, believers are to "*put on*" (ENDUO means: to sink into a garment, put on) first "the armor of light" (v.12) and now the "Lord" (KURIOS means: supreme in authority) Jesus Christ (v.14). We are to live as Jesus lived and have

the same desires and goals as he did. This is possible (not perfectly, since we are still in a body of sin) if we do not make "*provision*" (PRONOIA means: to provide care or supply) for the "*desires*" (EPITHUMIA means: a longing mostly for what is forbidden) of the flesh.

## 46 - *The principle of personal responsibility*

Romans 14:1-12

Now receive the one who is weak in faith, *but* not for quarrels about opinions. <sup>2</sup>One believes *he may* eat all *things*, but the one who is weak eats *only* vegetables. <sup>3</sup>The one who eats must not despise the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat must not judge the one who eats, because God has accepted him. <sup>4</sup>Who are you, who passes judgment on the domestic slave belonging to someone else? To his own master he stands or falls, and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. <sup>5</sup>One person prefers *one* day over *another* day, and another person regards every day *alike*. Each one must be fully convinced in his own mind. <sup>6</sup>The one who is intent on the day is intent on *it* for the Lord, and the one who eats eats for the Lord, because he is thankful to God, and the one who does not eat does not eat for the Lord, and he is thankful to God. <sup>7</sup>For none of us lives for himself and none dies for himself. <sup>8</sup>For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord. Therefore whether we live *or* whether we die, we are the Lord's. <sup>9</sup>For Christ died and became alive again for this *reason*, in order that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. <sup>10</sup>But why do you judge your brother? Or also, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. <sup>11</sup>For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to me,  
and every tongue will praise God.”

<sup>12</sup>So each one of us will give an account concerning himself.  
(LEB)

In our present section the apostle Paul writes about our personal responsibilities in regard to people we deal with. We have a tendency to interfere in other people's business and judge them. In general, this should not be so. People are allowed to think and prioritize their lives as they desire to. It is often between them and the Lord.

<sup>1</sup>Now receive the one who is weak in faith, *but* not for quarrels about opinions.

As we have seen over and over again the apostle Paul begins with an opening statement, this time it has to do with our personal responsibilities. We are to "*receive*" (PROSLAMBANO means: to take to oneself, receive, take) the one who is "*weak*" (ASTHENO means: to be feeble, impotent, be sick, weak) in the "*faith*" (PISTIS means: credence, persuasion, moral conviction). This gives the idea of a fellow believer who is

not as spiritually mature as you may be. He may be a new believer full of zeal but lacking in wisdom. What do you do with people like that in the church? Do you set them aside? Do you publicly shame them for their lack of spiritual understanding? Paul says to "receive" them for they are brothers and sisters in Christ. One thing we should not do is to "*quarrel*" (DIAKRISIS means: discern, dispute, judicial estimation) about "*opinions*" (DIALOGISMOS means: reasoning, thought, imagination). We can certainly talk, but quarrelling is out of the question. Paul gives examples of the types of opinions which might come up that we need to be wise about.

<sup>2</sup>One believes *he may* eat all *things*, but the one who is weak eats *only* vegetables. <sup>3</sup>The one who eats must not despise the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat must not judge the one who eats, because God has accepted him.

This is the first example, and it deals with the food that we enjoy or believe to be the right food that should be eaten. This could be table talk between omnivores, vegetarians, vegans and so forth, that heats up! Regarding food, Paul uses two groups of people. The first is the one who "*believes*" (PISTEUO means: discern, dispute, judicial estimation) that he may "*eat*" (PHAGO means: to eat, eat meat) "all things", this would be our omnivore. He loves everything that you can place on a table. From meat, to fish, to vegetables, to milk products and all types of bread. The second group of people only eat "vegetables" (LACHANON means: any pot herb, any vegetable). They are called "*weak*" (ASTHENEIO means: feeble, impotent, sick, weak) because the omnivores think that they are limiting themselves and missing so much! So what are we to do in a case like this?

<sup>3</sup>The one who eats must not despise the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat must not judge the one who eats, because God has accepted him.

Paul addresses the one who thinks he is better because he can eat everything. He says that they should not "*despise*" (EXOUTHENEIO means: contemptible, disdain, despise) the one who does not eat (meat is implied here). Don't look down at your brother who only eats veggies and don't think you are better than him. On the other hand, the one who "does not eat" (who is a vegetarian) must "*not judge*" (KRINO means: to decide, condemn, judge) the one who eats (the omnivore). Both sides need to realize that the Lord God has "*accepted*" (PROSLAMBANO means: to take to oneself) them. Both sides need to be very careful and stop quarrelling over non-essential matters and begin to accept each other because that is what God has done with both groups.

<sup>4</sup>Who are you, who passes judgment on the domestic slave belonging to someone else? To his own master he stands or falls, and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

In verse four, Paul reminds both groups that one group does not belong to the other group. In other words, "who are you?" or "who do you think you are?" to pass "*judgment*" (KRINO means: to decide, condemn, judge) on a domestic slave "*belonging*" (IDIOS means: pertaining to self, one's own) to someone else. Those who do not eat meat are not your slaves, and those who do eat meat are not your slaves either. So with what authority do you judge them?

v.4 ... To his own master he stands or falls, and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

To his own master (Jesus) he "*stands*" (STEKO means: to be stationary, persevere, stand) or "*falls*" (PIPTO means: to fall or fail). If you think they are falling because they don't exactly eat like you, remember, the "*Lord*" (KURIOS means: supreme in authority) is "*able*" (DUNATOS means: powerful, capable, able) to make him stand. The Lord has authority over that person, and you don't. The Lord is capable of guiding and strengthening that person, and you are not. So stop all the quarrelling concerning the different types of food people eat.

<sup>5</sup>One person prefers *one* day over *another* day, and another person regards every day *alike*. Each one must be fully convinced in his own mind. <sup>6</sup>The one who is intent on the day is intent on *it* for the Lord, and the one who eats eats for the Lord, because he is thankful to God, and the one who does not eat does not eat for the Lord, and he is thankful to God.

This is the second example that Paul gives, and this time it deals with the days we might consider more holy than others. One person "*prefers*" (KRINO means: to distinguish, to decide) one day over another day. This person believes that Sunday is the day for the Lord, while another might say I prefer Saturday as being set aside for the Lord. While a third person regards every day as being the same, for they are all for the Lord. What Paul recommends is that whatever you believe to be right, make certain that you are "*fully convinced*" (PLEROPHOREO means: to carry out fully) in your "*own*" (IDIOS means: pertaining to self, one's own) "*mind*" (NOUS means: the intellect, the mind, thoughts and feelings). We can see this in the New Testament. The first believers in Jerusalem met every day in the Temple (Acts 4:36) while the believers in Corinth met once a week on the first day (1 Cor. 16:2). Who was right?

<sup>6</sup>The one who is intent on the day is intent on *it* for the Lord, and the one who eats eats for the Lord, because he is thankful to God, and the one who does not eat does not eat for the Lord, and he is thankful to God.

The Bible does not give a clear order on which day you should gather together to worship the Lord. Because of this, true believers should be very careful and not judge by saying: "This is the right day and they are wrong." What should be done is to look at the hearts of the people. Paul writes that the one who is "*intent*" (PHRONEO means: to exercise the mind, opinion) on the day is intent on the "*Lord*" (KURIOS means: supreme in authority). If you gather as the believers in Jerusalem every day, that is fine because your intent is for the Lord. If you gather as believers, as those in Corinth on the first day of the week, then that is also fine because you do it for the Lord. Just as the person who "*eats*" (ESTHIO means: to eat, devour) and the person who does not eat (the vegetarian) are both "*thankful*" (EUCHARISTEO means: to be grateful, to give thanks) unto the Lord. Since there is no direct command on what to eat or what day to meet, you are free to do what your heart dictates as long as it is for the Lord.

<sup>7</sup> For none of us lives for himself and none dies for himself. <sup>8</sup> For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord. Therefore whether we live *or* whether we die, we are the Lord's.

Paul explains why we should do certain things and live in a certain way. "None of us," no one is excluded from this statement, "*lives*" (ZAO means: to live, lifetime) and "*dies*" (APOTHNESKO means: to die off, be dead) for himself. In other words, no one should live or die for himself. Rather, "*we live*" (ZAO means: to live, life-time) and "*die*" (APOTHNESKO means: to die off, be dead) for the Lord. Believers do not live or die for themselves, but rather for the Lord. One way or another, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's and belong him.

<sup>9</sup> For Christ died and became alive again for this *reason*, in order that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Paul reinforces the fact that being alive or dead we belong to the Lord by saying that Christ "*died*" (APOTHNESKO means: to die off, be dead) and became "*alive again*" (ANAZAO means: to recover life, live again) for this reason. Paul does not say that this is the **ONLY** reason why Christ died and rose again, but a reason that he might be Lord of both the "*dead*" (NEKROS means: a corpse, dead) and the "*living*" (ZAO means: to live, life-time).

<sup>10</sup> But why do you judge your brother? Or also, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

Since Jesus Christ is the Lord of the living and the dead, why do you "*judge*" (KRINO means: to distinguish, decide, condemn, punish) your brother (in the faith)? Even worse, why do you "*despise*" (EXOUTHENEIO means: contemptible, despise) your brother (in the faith)? Paul comes back to his theme about your personal responsibility- don't judge and don't despise your brother on non-essential matters. He reminds the Roman believers (and we also) that one day all, (no one is excluded), "will stand" (PARISTEMI means: to stand beside, stand firm) before the "*judgment seat*" (BEMA means: a tribunal, a throne) of God (2 Cor. 5:10).

<sup>11</sup> For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to me,  
and every tongue will praise God.”

<sup>12</sup> So each one of us will give an account concerning himself.

To confirm this Paul refers to a verse that is found in Isaiah 45:23. God has spoken and it will happen.

#### Isaiah 45

23 By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.'

(RSV)

Again, Paul refers to "each one". Each and every person will not escape the tribunal of Christ. He even includes himself when he writes "of us"! Each of us "*will give*" (DIDOMI means: to give, bestow, deliver up) an "*account*" (LOGOS means: something said, utterance) concerning himself. Not an account concerning other people, BUT of yourself and yourself only.

So, let God be God and let him judge what his servants do.

## 47 - *The principle of the good of others*

Romans 14:13-23

Therefore, let us no longer pass judgment on one another, but rather decide this: not to place a cause for stumbling or a temptation before a brother. <sup>14</sup> I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing *is* unclean of itself, except to the one who considers something to be unclean; to that person *it is* unclean. <sup>15</sup> For if because of food, your brother is grieved, you are no longer living according to love. Do not destroy by your food that person for whom Christ died. <sup>16</sup> Therefore do not let your good be slandered. <sup>17</sup> For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup> For the one who serves Christ in this *way is* well-pleasing to God and approved by people. <sup>19</sup> So then, let us pursue *what promotes peace* and *what edifies one another*. <sup>20</sup> Do not destroy the work of God on account of food. All *things are* clean, but *it is* wrong for the person *who eats and stumbles in the process*. <sup>21</sup> *It is* good not to eat meat or to drink wine or *to do anything* by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is weakened. <sup>22</sup> The faith that you have, have with respect to yourself before God. Blessed *is* the one who does not pass judgment on himself by what he approves. <sup>23</sup> But the one who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not *do so* from faith, and everything that *is* not from faith is sin.

(LEB)

In our last section, Paul spoke of personal responsibilities including not unjustly judging others and the fact that we will have to appear before the Tribunal of Christ where our own actions (not those of others) will be judged for rewards. Paul continues in the same vein and talks about the principle of wanting good for others.

Therefore, let us no longer pass judgment on one another, but rather decide this: not to place a cause for stumbling or a temptation before a brother.

Paul gives a spiritual alternative to our sinful desires to judge what others do. First of all, believers should STOP and no longer "*pass judgment*" (KRINO means: to distinguish, to decide, to condemn) on one another. In other words, STOP looking at what you believe are failures in the lives of others, just like Jesus said:

Matthew 7

3 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye?

5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

(RSV)

We should rather "*decide*" (KRINO means: to distinguish, to decide, to condemn) not to "*place*" (TITHEMI means: to place, make, set forth) a cause for "*stumbling*" (PROSKOMMA means: a stub, an occasion of apostasy) or "*temptation*" (SKANDALON means: to entrap, entice to sin) before a brother. In other words, do not do anything that might become a stumbling block for your brother in the faith and make him sin. Paul is saying to stop looking at what they are doing and start looking at what you are doing that might cause them to fall spiritually.

<sup>14</sup> I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing *is* unclean of itself, except to the one who considers something to be unclean; to that person *it is* unclean.

I "*know*" (EIDO means: to see, to know, to be aware of) and am "*convinced*" (PEITHO means: to convince by argument, agree, assure). Here we see that Paul is fully assured of what he is about to say. Please note "*in the Lord Jesus*". We will come back to this. Here is what Paul knows: that nothing is "*unclean*" (KOINOS means: profane, defiled, unholy) of itself. So how do certain things get "unclean"? Paul says that it is the one who "*considers*" (LOGIZOMAI means: to make an inventory, esteem) something to be "*unclean*" (KOINOS means: profane, defiled, unholy). In other words, something can be perfectly fine before the Lord (we have seen eating or not eating meat, and following certain days instead of others), but a person can decide to make that thing "unclean". It is the decision of that person, not of the Lord.

<sup>15</sup> For if because of food, your brother is grieved, you are no longer living according to love. Do not destroy by your food that person for whom Christ died.

This is where the principle of the good of others begins. You might think that something is perfectly acceptable before the Lord and others do not-what are you going to do? Paul gives an example and once more uses food. If because of "*food*" (BROMA means: food, meat, victuals) your brother is "*grieved*" (LUPEO means: to distress, cause to grieve, sorrow), you are no longer "*living*" (PERIPATEO means; to tread all around, to walk at large) according to "*love*" (AGAPE means: affection or benevolence). The moment I do something that I believe is acceptable to God but my brother does not (omnivore -vs- vegetarian), I no longer am a loving person towards

that brother. In other words, I no longer reflect the vital principle of the God-head, and that is a sin. Paul warns "do not destroy" (APOLLUMI means: to destroy fully, die, perish) by your food (it could be something else) the person for whom Christ "died" (APOTHNESKO means: to die off, be dead). I have seen this more than once, uncaring or unwise Christians do or say something that will devastate another believer, and because of that, the person leaves the faith and abandons the Lord. Never be that person!

<sup>16</sup>Therefore do not let your good be slandered.

As disciples of Christ, we have a responsibility to be certain that our "*good*" (AGATHOS means: good, benefit, well) does not turn out to be "*slandered*" (BLASPHEMEO means: to vilify, blaspheme, or defame). When the "*good*" that we do turns out to be a stumbling block for a brother, then it is no longer "*good*".

<sup>17</sup>For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes we can forget what the kingdom of God is. Paul says that it is not "*eating*" (BROSIS means: eating, food, meat) nor "*drinking*" (POSIS means: drinking, a drink), the very two things he has been writing about. The kingdom of God is not a series of don't eat this or don't drink this, like a series of laws that will make us so spiritual! The kingdom of God is "*righteousness*" (DIKAIOSUNE means: equity, justification, righteousness) that we receive from Jesus and "*peace*" (EIRENE means: to join, peace, rest) between the Father and ourselves.

<sup>18</sup>For the one who serves Christ in this *way* is well-pleasing to God and approved by people.

Serving the Lord God with a self-righteous attitude or an attitude of doing what we want even though it might hurt a fellow believer is not right and it is not accepted by the Lord God. If you desire to "*serve*" (DOULEUO means: to be a slave to, in bondage) Christ, it has to be done right. It has to be "*well pleasing*" (EUARESTEO means: to please well, gratify entirely) to God and also "*approved*" (DOKIMOS means: approved, tried, acceptable) by the people.

<sup>19</sup>So then, let us pursue *what promotes peace* and *what edifies one another*

So what are believers to "*pursue*" (DIOKO means: ensue, follow after, press forward)? Rivalries, arguments, and being a stumbling block—are these the things we should strive for? Paul says "NO!" We are to pursue what "promotes peace." This phrase in Greek means: "the things of peace". This is what children of God should promote, because peace has been established between God and us (Rom. 5:1). We should also promote things that "edify one another". In Greek, this phrase means: "the things of edification toward one another". A life that promotes these two things will please the Lord God.

<sup>20</sup> Do not destroy the work of God on account of food. All *things are* clean, but *it is wrong* for the person *who eats and stumbles in the process*.

Paul gives a severe warning to the believers in Rome, a warning that all true believers should give an attentive ear to. Do not "*destroy*" (KATALUO means: to loosen down, demolish, destroy) the "*work*" (ERGON means: to work, toil, labor) of God on account of food. God works in everyone of his children. His goal is to make them more and more closer to the image of his beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Our work is not to step in God's way and interfere with our preferences concerning food. If we do this, we are working against the Lord! Paul reminds his readers, as he did in verse fourteen, that everything is "clean" (KATHAROS means "cleanliness, purity"). He also says that it is WRONG for the person who eats (meat) and "*stumbles*" (PROSKOMMA means: a stub, occasion of apostasy, offense) in the process. In other words, it is wrong for you to eat meat and, in the process, you make someone with a weaker conscience fall into sin.

<sup>21</sup> *It is good* not to eat meat or to drink wine or *to do anything* by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is weakened.

This is a general statement about our rights and the principle of the good of others. As Paul writes, we can eat meat, drink wine, or do anything else that God permits, AS LONG AS a brother does not "*stumble*" (PROSKOPTO means: to strike at, beat upon, make stumble) or is not "*weakened*" (SKANDALIZO means: to entrap, trip up). Jesus summed this up by saying:

#### Matthew 7

12 All those things, then, which you would have men do to you, even so do you to them: because this is the law and the prophets.

(BBE)

Paul ends with two more comments.

<sup>22</sup>The faith that you have, have with respect to yourself before God. Blessed *is* the one who does not pass judgment on himself by what he approves.

The "*faith*" (PISTIS means: persuasion, credence, moral conviction) that you have, allows you to eat certain meats and drink wine. Be certain that your faith is holy and true before the Lord without any hypocrisy. Do not use your freedom to live in the flesh.

The word "*blessed*" (MAKARIOS) means: supremely blessed, fortunate, well off. So happy are you if you are able to not pass "*judgment*" (KRINO means: to distinguish, condemn, punish) on yourself. In other words, if your conscience does not condemn you for what you are doing before God.

<sup>23</sup>But the one who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not *do so* from faith, and everything that *is* not from faith is sin.

Because if you "*doubt*" (DIKRINO means: to hesitate, doubt, waver) about what you are "*eating*" (PHAGO means: to eat, eat meat), be careful because it is a sign that it is not from "*faith*" (PISTIS means: persuasion, credence, moral conviction). Never forget that what is not from faith is a "*sin*" (HAMARTIA means: a sin, offence, sinful).

## 48 - *The disciple and edification*

Romans 15:1-3

**15** But we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of the weak, and not to please ourselves. <sup>2</sup> Let each one of us please his neighbor for his good, for the purpose of edification. <sup>3</sup> For even Christ did not please himself, but just as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."

(LEB)

The deeper we dig into the word of God, the more we see the importance to our heavenly Father of edification among his children. We are not given righteousness as a license to belittle, demean and humiliate our fellow believer. To edify each other is crucial to maintain a healthy group of believers.

<sup>1</sup> But we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Paul lays out the basic principle of Christian edification. It seems that there can be two different groups or types of people in a congregation. The first are the ones "*who are strong*" (DUNATOS means: to be efficient, be mighty). I do not believe that Paul is referring to physical strength, but rather to the spiritual maturity of a person. There are people who have more experience in the Lord and have built up spiritual strength and endurance. The writer of Hebrews wrote about this:

Hebrews 5

13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

(NKJV)

The second group of believers is called "*the weak*" (ADUNATOS means: weak, could not do, impossible). There are believers who seem incapable of moving forward with the Lord like others can. They are just as loved and precious to their heavenly Father as those who are "strong," but for some reason, they are feeble in faith.

So how should the "strong" act in relation to the "weak"? Do they discard, reject, or subtly set them aside? Do they treat them as "little children" who need not be with the "grown-ups"? The apostle Paul writes that the "strong" ought to "*bear*" (BASTAZO means: to lift, endure, sustain, carry) the "*weaknesses*" (ASTHENEMA means: a scruple of conscience, error arising from weakness of mind) of the "weak". It seems that believers have a sacred duty to be watchful over those who have weaker consciences or minds. We are to protect them from harm that can come to them, like a mother cat protects her kittens from other animals.

v.1 ... and not to please ourselves.

What would naturally "*please*" (ARESKO means: to be agreeable, to please) ourselves in such a case? Our natural "old man" would tell us to not bother with such people, that they are a burden and that we have better things to do with our time. The Holy Scriptures tell us the opposite. We need to support those who are weak not only in faith but also in mind.

<sup>2</sup> Let each one of us please his neighbor for his good, for the purpose of edification.

Let "*each one*" (HEKASTOS means: each or every, any one), once more we see that these teachings are for every true believer. No one can say that this is not for me! I have noted that Paul refers to "one another" in different forms on fourteen occasions. If you are part of the Body of Christ, then you are part of "one another". There is no escaping this.

Each and every believer is to "*please*" (ARESKO means: to be agreeable, to please) his "*neighbor*" (PLESION means: close by, a neighbor, a fellow man). In this case, Paul is speaking about the fellow believers in Christ. Why should we be pleasant and nice to ALL believers rather than just the ones we like? Because when we act this way, it is for their "*good*" (AGATHOS means: good, benefit, well). The word of God tells us that a righteous person desires to do good.

Prov. 11

23 The desire of the righteous is only good, But the expectation of the wicked is wrath.  
(NKJV)

It also tells us that our relationship with God depends on our attitude towards others. If you want God's favor and yet you close your heart to others, then you are in for a big surprise.

## Prov. 12

2 A good man obtains favor from the LORD, But a man of wicked intentions He will condemn.  
(NKJV)

Paul continues and writes, "for the purpose of edification." The goal of "pleasing our neighbor" which means being good and doing good to them, is their "edification" (OIKODONE means: a structure, edification). In Ephesians 4:9 we see that edification is given to impart grace to others. Paul told the Corinthian believers the following concerning edifying each other.

## 1 Cor. 14

26 How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.  
(NKJV)

All that we do, in speech or in action, ought to be done so that people around us will be edified. This gives the idea of being strengthened, of being built up. Our aim is to encourage believers and make them stronger in their faith.

To add weight to what he is saying, the apostle Paul gives Jesus as a model of someone who desired to edify, and we all know that there is no greater model for disciples to follow.

<sup>3</sup> For even Christ did not please himself, but just as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."

Paul writes that even "*Christ*" (CHRISTO means: Messiah, anointed) DID NOT "*please*" (ARESKO means: to be agreeable, to please) himself. The aim of Christ was not to do things that would please him. If it were so, he would never have left heaven! If the life of Christ was not one of pleasing himself but rather looking to edify others, should this not also be one of the purposes of the believer's life? To prove his point, Paul refers to a verse in the Psalms.

## Psalms 69

9 For zeal for thy house has consumed me, and the insults of those who insult thee have fallen on me.  
(RSV)

Paul points out a specific portion of this psalm. The "insults" (ONEIDISMOS means: insulting language, reproach, criticism, accusations) of those who insult you have "fallen" (EPIPITO means: to fall into) on me. So Christ took upon himself all the reproaches brought against us, and we know that it was for our good, for it brought salvation to the lost soul! Through his own sufferings, Jesus edified us, and we are also called to sometime suffer for the edification of others.

## 49 - *Jews and Gentiles united in Christ*

Romans 15:4-13

<sup>4</sup>For whatever was written beforehand was written for our instruction, in order that through patient endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures we may have hope. <sup>5</sup>Now may the God of patient endurance and of encouragement grant you *to be in agreement* with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>so that with one mind you may glorify with one mouth the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup>Therefore accept one another, just as Christ also has accepted you, to the glory of God. <sup>8</sup>For I say, Christ has become a servant of the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God, in order to confirm the promises to the fathers, <sup>9</sup>and that the Gentiles may glorify God for *his* mercy, just as it is written,

“Because of this, I will praise you among the Gentiles,  
and I will sing praise to your name.”

<sup>10</sup>And again it says,

“Rejoice, Gentiles, with his people.”

<sup>11</sup>And again,

“Praise the Lord, all the Gentiles,  
and let all the peoples praise him.”

<sup>12</sup>And again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse will come,  
even the one who rises to rule over the Gentiles;  
in him the Gentiles will put their hope.”

<sup>13</sup>Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(LEB)

We have seen that one of the important things that should preoccupy the believer in Christ is the edification and welfare of his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. In this section, Paul will once more write about the unity between Jews and Gentiles that is found in the Messiah.

<sup>4</sup>For whatever was written beforehand was written for our instruction, in order that through patient endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures we may have hope.

In his opening statement, Paul reminds the Roman believers of the role of the holy Scriptures. As we will see, it was important for Paul, and it should be important for us also. For "*whatever*" (HOSOS means: as much as, all that) was "*written beforehand*" (PROGRAPHO means: to write previously, to announce before) was written for our "*instruction*" (DIDASKALIA means: instruction, doctrine, learning). I would like to point out that Paul says that "*whatever was written*" is important, and this reminds me that ALL of the written word of God is important. It seems that some people set aside the biblical teachings they do not like. By doing so, they do not believe that all that is written is worthwhile! By doing so, they place themselves above God and make themselves judges over the Bible. Some "Christians" even believe that the Old Testament has very little worth because we are under grace and not the Law. It is obvious that they have very little understanding of the role of the Law and how it should be applied in its proper context in our lives. Remember what Jesus said:

#### Revelation 22

18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;

19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

(NKJV)

God takes his word very seriously, and so should his children. It is written that all these things were "*written*" (GRAPHO means: to grave, to write). Here we will see why the Lord God has left us his word, for our "*instruction*" (DIDASKALIA means: instruction, doctrine, learning). He wants to reveal himself to his child and not leave him clueless concerning who his Father is and what fills his heart.

v.4 ... in order that through patient endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures we may have hope.

There is an immense benefit in receiving the instructions and getting to know deeply who God is, and Paul says that it brings "*hope*" (ELPIS means: expectations, confidence, faith, hope) in our lives. Hope is essential for our mental stability and our walk in faith. But this "*hope*" is not there for the picking, as with an apple tree and its fruits! It is written that it takes "*patient endurance*" (HUPOMONE means: hopeful endurance, enduring). It is a living process. We need to receive the instructions of God, live by

them, become more and more encouraged in them, and hope will come forth in our hearts.

<sup>5</sup> Now may the God of patient endurance and of encouragement grant you *to be in agreement* with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> so that with one mind you may glorify with one mouth the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This knowledge of the Living God is to be absorbed and stored in our minds, but it is also to seep into our hearts and be lived out. Verses five and six can be seen as a blessing from Paul to the Roman believers. Paul calls God the God of "*patience endurance*" (HUPOMONE means: hopeful endurance, persevering, steadfast) and "*encouragement*" (PARAKLESIS means: exhortation, solace, comfort). Paul calls on God to "*grant*" (DIDOMI means: to give, bestow, grant, offer) the believers one special and important thing, and that is to be in "*agreement*" (PHRONEO means: to exercise the mind, to interest oneself in) with one another. When we are like God (patient and encouraging) with people of the faith, this will bring "agreement with one another". All of this is in "accordance with Christ Jesus". How is this so? Remember what Jesus said:

#### John 13

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

(RSV)

This unity by being in agreement with one another has a goal in itself and Paul reveals this to his readers.

<sup>6</sup> so that with one mind you may glorify with one mouth the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When believers are of "*one mind*" (HOMOTHUMADON means: unanimously, with one accord), something spiritual happens. Believers begin to "*glorify*" (DOXAZO means: to render glory, honor, to magnify) God as though they were of one "mouth" (STOMA means: the mouth, the front, the face). We become one voice which glorifies God, who is the Father (PATER means: father near or remote) of Jesus Christ. Here we see the double relationship of Jesus with God the Father. The first is Jesus being part of the Trinity (John 1:1 and 14) and the second as one who took on flesh and became man, therefore having God as his God (1 Tim. 3:16).

<sup>8</sup> For I say, Christ has become a servant of the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God, in order to confirm the promises to the fathers,

Paul continues to speak about peace and harmony that should exist between ALL true believers no matter what their ethnicity. To do so, he speaks of Christ who has become a "*servant*" (DIAKONOS means: to run errands, an attendant, a servant) of the "*circumcision*" (PERITOME means: circumcision). Paul is speaking of the descendants of Abraham to whom circumcision was given (Gen. 17:10-14). Actually, Christ became a servant to the Jewish nation; he was their Messiah, on behalf of the "*truth*" (ALETHEIA means: truth, verily, true) of God. God the Son became man so that the "*promises*" (EPAGGELIA means: an announcement, pledge, promise) of God the Father were "*confirmed*" (BABAIOO means: to make stable, establish, confirm) to the "*fathers*". Paul is naturally referring to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

<sup>9</sup> and that the Gentiles may glorify God for *his* mercy, just as it is written,

Here we see the "oneness" or unity of ALL of those who are in Christ. Paul first speaks concerning the Jews and the promises given to their "fathers." Now he will speak about the believers who are not of Jewish descent. Christ has come to confirm the promises of God to the Jews AND the "Gentiles" (ETHNOS means: a race, a tribe, or a non-Jewish person). Because of the promises of God, the Gentiles may also "*glorify*" (DOXAZO means: to render glory, honor, magnify) God. Why should they glorify the Lord God? It is because of his "*mercy*" (ELEOS means: compassion, tender mercies). They also have received God's mercy because of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, of all who approaches him - Jew or Gentile.

“Because of this, I will praise you among the Gentiles,  
and I will sing praise to your name.”

<sup>10</sup> And again it says,

“Rejoice, Gentiles, with his people.”

<sup>11</sup> And again,

“Praise the Lord, all the Gentiles,  
and let all the peoples praise him.”

<sup>12</sup> And again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse will come,  
even the one who rises to rule over the Gentiles;  
in him the Gentiles will put their hope.”

Paul uses a series of different verses to make his point that the Gentiles are also entitled to rejoice and praise the Lord because of their salvation in the Messiah.

v.9 ... "Because of this, I will praise you among the Gentiles,  
and I will sing praise to your name."

This is taken from Ps. 18:49 and is a Psalm written by David who rejoices in the Lord and desires to praise God even unto the Gentiles. Here we see that he desires the Gentiles to hear of the God of Israel.

<sup>10</sup> And again it says,  
"Rejoice, Gentiles, with his people."

This is taken from Deut. 32:43 and we see that there is an invitation for the Gentiles (who were not God's people) to rejoice with the Jewish nation.

<sup>11</sup> And again,  
"Praise the Lord, all the Gentiles,  
and let all the peoples praise him."

This is a quote from Psalm 117:1. We do not know who wrote this Psalm, but again we see that the Gentiles are invited to praise the Lord.

<sup>12</sup> And again Isaiah says,  
"The root of Jesse will come,  
even the one who rises to rule over the Gentiles;  
in him the Gentiles will put their hope."

This is a quote from Isaiah 11:10. We know that the "root of Jesse" is first of all David (1 Sam. 17:12) but we also know that the "root of Jesse" is also a title given to the Messiah (Rev. 5:5) because he is a descendant of King David. Here we see that the Messiah will "*rule*" (ARCHO means: to be first, reign over) over the Gentiles, who are the non-Jews. It also says that the Gentiles will also place their "*hope*" (ELPIZO means: to trust, to expect) in the Messiah.

<sup>13</sup> Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In verse five, Paul brought a blessing to his readers, and he also ends with another blessing. May the God of "*hope*" (ELPIS means: to anticipate, usually with pleasure) "*fill*

*you*" (PLEROO means: to make replete, to cram, to level up) with ALL "*joy*" (CHARA means: calm delight, joyful) and "*peace*" (EIRENE means: to join, peace, quietness, rest) in "*believing*" (PISTEUO means: to have faith in). I would like to stress that spiritual joy and peace come only through believing in the Good News. We cannot artificially create true spiritual peace and joy. Many movements try to create by human means what only true faith in Christ can bring. But why is Paul calling for faith to receive joy and peace? So that you may "*abound*" (PERISSEUO means: to super abound, be in excess) in "*hope*" (ELPIS means: to expect, to confide, to trust). Here, Paul links the believer who "*hopes*" with the God of "*hope*". This linkage through the faith of the believer to the Father is done through the "*power*" (DUNAMIS means: force, miraculous power, strength) of the Holy Spirit. May this blessing be true for each of us.

## 50 - Paul, servant of Christ

Romans 15:14-21

<sup>14</sup> Now I myself also am convinced about you, my brothers, that *you* yourselves also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to instruct one another. <sup>15</sup> But I have written to you more boldly on *some* points, so as to remind you *again* because of the grace that has been given to me by God, <sup>16</sup> with the result that I am a servant of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, serving the gospel of God as a priest, in order that the offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. <sup>17</sup> Therefore I have a reason for boasting in Christ Jesus regarding the things concerning God. <sup>18</sup> For I will not dare to speak about anything except *that* which Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, <sup>19</sup> by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit, so that from Jerusalem and *traveling* around as far as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. <sup>20</sup> And so, having as my ambition to proclaim the gospel where Christ has not been named, in order that I will not build on the foundation belonging to someone else, <sup>21</sup> but just as it is written,

*“Those to whom it was not announced concerning him will see,  
and those who have not heard will understand.”*  
(LEB)

We are now entering the conclusion of this letter to the Romans, where Paul will speak of his calling and ministry among the Gentiles.

<sup>14</sup> Now I myself also am convinced about you, my brothers, that *you* yourselves also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to instruct one another.

In this verse, we see that there are three things that Paul is "*convinced about*" (PEITHO means: to convince by argument). I see these three things as the path towards Christian maturity. The first is that they were "*full*" (MESTOS means: to replenish, to intoxicate) of "*goodness*" (AGATHOSUNE means: goodness, virtue, beneficence). It appears that the love of God that they had received individually overflowed to their brothers and sisters in the faith. Since loving each other is a sign that we are Jesus' disciples (John 13:35), we can consider this a wonderful thing. Not every church was loving like the one in Rome. The Corinthian church had internal fighting. The church John mentions in his third letter had a leader who mistreated people, and we also see that the churches in Galatia also had friction within their membership, as Paul wrote:

## Galatians 5

15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!  
(NKJV)

The second is that they were "*filled*" (PLEROO means: to make replete, to cram, to level-up) with all "*knowledge*" (GNOSIS means: general intelligence and understanding, science). I believe that the apostle Paul is speaking about the knowledge of the things pertaining to God. They did not stay as babes and only drink spiritual milk, as we see with the people in the Book of Hebrews:

## Hebrews 5

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need some one to teach you again the first principles of God's word. You need milk, not solid food;  
13 for every one who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a child.

14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil.  
(RSV)

The third is that they were "*able*" (DUNAMAI means: to be able, possible, be of power) to "*instruct*" (NOUTHETEO means: to put in mind, warn, caution) one another. They were mature enough to be able to encourage, exhort, and edify each other in the Lord. The Roman believers manifested the characteristics of a mature congregation.

<sup>15</sup> But I have written to you more boldly on *some* points, so as to remind you *again* because of the grace that has been given to me by God,

I believe it is specifically because they were mature in the Lord that the apostle Paul had "*written*" (GRAPHO means: to grave, to write) more "*boldly*" (TOLMEROTERON means: more daringly, more boldly) on some points. This is proof that when you are considered wiser in the Lord, others will speak to you concerning deeper spiritual issues. Then Paul "*reminds*" (EPANAMIMNESKO means: to remind of, to put in mind) the believers of the things he had written before. We see that he perseveres as a teacher and instructs God's people. He is not ashamed and does not shy away from what he has written. We also see that he is able to do this because of the "*grace*" (CHARIS means: graciousness, benefit, favor, liberality) that has been "*given*" (DIDOMI means: to give, to bestow, to commit) to him by God (THEOS means: supreme in

authority, creator, and sustainer). The grace of God has been given to some so that they will educate, encourage, and exhort those who are in Christ. The believers' role is to receive these instructions, verify them, and put them into action.

<sup>16</sup> with the result that I am a servant of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, serving the gospel of God as a priest, in order that the offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Because Paul does what he was equipped and given to do, he can say that the result is that he is a "*servant*" (LEITOURGOS means: a public servant, a minister) of Christ Jesus. It is ONLY when we do what we are called to do that we become a true servant of the Lord Jesus! Paul writes that he is "*servicing*" (HIEROURGEO means: to be a temple worker, a minister) the "*gospel*" (EUAGGELION means: a good message, the gospel) of God. It is not every minister who serves the gospel of God. There are some who serve themselves before serving God. They use the gospel as a means to attain their own goals, not the Lord's. But why was Paul ministering to others the Good News of Jesus Christ? It was in order that the "*offering*" (PROSPHORA means: a presentation, a sacrifice) of the "*Gentiles*" (ETHNOS means: a race, a tribe, non-Jewish people) may become "*acceptable*" (EUPROSDEKTOS means: well received, approved). We have learned that the Gentiles needed to hear and receive the gospel of Christ so that they could receive God's righteousness through the Messiah. It was the only way for them to be received and accepted by God the Father. We also see that the Holy Spirit "*sanctified*" (HAGIAZO means: to make holy, consecrate) the Gentile believers. That is why the apostle Paul was a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>17</sup> Therefore I have a reason for boasting in Christ Jesus regarding the things concerning God.

Paul is adamant, he has a reason for "*boasting*" (KAUCHESIS means: to boast, to glory) in Christ Jesus regarding the things he has just spoken about. But isn't boasting a sin?

<sup>18</sup> For I will not dare to speak about anything except *that* which Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed,

Not when it is done with this in mind. Paul writes that he would "*not dare*" (TOLMAO means: to venture, to be courageous). He would never dare to "*speak about*" (LALEO means: to talk, preach, or speak) anything EXCEPT what Christ has "*accomplished*" (KATERGAZOMAI means: to work fully, to finish, to perform) through me. His boasting was not a sin because he did not boast about himself but about what the Lord had

done through him. All the glory went to the Lord, and none was for him. The result of all this work in Christ was the "*obedience*" (HUPAKOE means: obedience, submission, compliance) that the Gentiles came to.

The apostle Paul was able to bring the Gentiles to salvation first by the "*word*" (LOGOS means: something said, utterance). He preached the gospel, and this reminds me that the power of God resides in the gospel (Rom. 1:16). Second, it was by "*deed*" (ERGON means: to work, an effort, labor, deed). Paul worked tirelessly to bring this life-changing gospel to the people. May the model of Paul preaching and working diligently in the service of the Lord also be our way of living.

<sup>19</sup> by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit, so that from Jerusalem and *traveling* around as far as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.

Paul continues to explain how he served the Living God. First by the word (the Good News), then by perseverance in his efforts. We now see that Paul speaks of the "*power*" (DUNAMIS means: force, miraculous power, ability) and that it was manifested in "*signs*" (SEMEION means: miracle, sign, token) and "*wonders*" (TERAS means: a prodigy, omen, wonder). This speaks of all the miracles that the apostle Paul did, not through his own abilities, but through the power of the Holy Spirit. We must remember that Paul was personally chosen by God and equipped by God to become his witness to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). This miraculous power was only given to a small number of people.

Paul then writes that his ministering for the Lord went from Jerusalem, the holy city of God, as far as Illyricum, which is a country to the north west of Macedonia. This is the furthest point where Paul brought the Gospel message. Please note that he "*fully proclaimed*" (PLEROO means: to make replete, to cram) the gospel of Christ. Paul was not afraid to explain the entire gospel and not just certain parts to please his audience, as we too often see today.

<sup>20</sup> And so, having as my ambition to proclaim the gospel where Christ has not been named, in order that I will not build on the foundation belonging to someone else,

This is very admirable of the apostle Paul. His "*ambition*" (PHILOMEOMAI means: to strive earnestly, to make it one's aim) was to "*proclaim*" (EUAGGELIZO means: to announce, to proclaim) the gospel. But there was a special aspect to Paul's evangelism, and that was to preach it where Christ "*had not been named*" (ONOMAZO means: to

name, to utter, to mention). This is what is so admirable about Paul. He did not want to "build" (OIKODOMEO means: to be a house builder, edify) on the "foundation" (THEMELIOS means: something put down, foundation) belonging to someone else. In other words, he went where the gospel had not been spoken of. Paul did not take members of this church and members of two other churches and start a new church, as we see done too many times today. He "started from scratch" and brought the gospel to places it had never been before.

<sup>21</sup>but just as it is written,  
*"Those to whom it was not announced concerning him will see,  
 and those who have not heard will understand."*

This is not the first time that we see the apostle using the Word of God to confirm what he is doing or writing. We should all rely on the holy Scriptures to guide us in our service to the Lord. Here we see that Paul quotes from Isaiah 52:15.

#### Isaiah 52

15 so shall he startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they shall see, and that which they have not heard they shall understand. (RSV)

This is why Paul did not build upon the foundation of someone else. He wanted people to see and hear the wonderful message of redemption that is found in Jesus Christ. Paul always kept in his heart his own personal calling.

May I encourage you to place this in prayer? Have you forgotten why you have been redeemed? Have your lips been closed to the message of Christ? Are you out there with ordinary people who desperately need to hear the gospel? Or do you prefer to remain closed in with your Christian friends? Let us all strive to be like Paul!

## 51 - Paul plans to visit Rome

Romans 15:22-33

<sup>22</sup> For this reason also I was hindered many *times* from coming to you, <sup>23</sup> and now, no longer having a place in these regions, but having a desire for many years to come to you <sup>24</sup> whenever I travel to Spain. For I hope *while I* am passing through to see you and to be sent on my way by you, whenever I have first enjoyed your *company* for a while. <sup>25</sup> But now I am traveling to Jerusalem, serving the saints. <sup>26</sup> For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. <sup>27</sup> For they were pleased *to do so*, and they are obligated to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual *things*, they ought also to serve them in material *things*. <sup>28</sup> Therefore, *after I* have accomplished this and sealed this fruit *for delivery* to them, I will depart by way of you for Spain, <sup>29</sup> and I know that *when I* come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

<sup>30</sup> Now I exhort you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, to contend along with me in your prayers on my behalf to God, <sup>31</sup> that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and my ministry in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, <sup>32</sup> so that, coming to you with joy by the will of God, I may rest with you. <sup>33</sup> Now *may* the God of peace *be* with all of you. Amen.

(LEB)

We will see through this section that life is not necessarily easy even though we are an apostle! Paul did not get what he wanted and he had to learn that it is always in God's time that things are done.

<sup>22</sup> For this reason also I was hindered many *times* from coming to you,

Paul writes that there was a "*reason*" (DIO means: on account of, therefore) he was "*hindered*" (EGKOPTO means: to cut into, to hinder, detain) "*many times*" (POLUS means: much, many, abundant) from coming to you. What would stop Paul? I believe the answer lies in our last section where Paul said that he evangelized the regions no one had yet reached. He did not want to build on someone else's foundation. Since Rome had already been evangelized he stayed away from it because of his ministry to the Gentiles. Paul stayed true to his calling, to the ministry the Lord had given him and so should we.

<sup>23</sup> and now, no longer having a place in these regions, but having a desire for many years to come to you <sup>24</sup> whenever I travel to Spain. For I hope *while I* am passing

through to see you and to be sent on my way by you, whenever I have first enjoyed your *company* for a while.

Paul writes "*and now*" (NUNI means: just now, now) no longer having a "*place*" (TOPOS means: a spot, location, a place) in these "*regions*" (KLIMA means: a slope, a region, a part). It seems that the time was favorable for him to go to Rome since he had traveled throughout the region he was in. He had finished the task that the Lord had given him in far away Illyricum and now he was going to head eastward.

Paul writes that he still has a "*desire*" (EPIPOTHIA means: an intense longing, a great desire). His heart was really set on visiting the Roman believers and this had been so for "*many years*" (POLUS ETOS means: a great number of years). This desire to have fellowship with the brothers and sisters in the faith did not fade away with time. May our longing to be with the brethren never disappear.

We see that the plan of Paul (which he never accomplished) was to head back eastward and go to Spain. By doing so he would stop in Rome for a while and afterwards continue on his voyage. He writes that he will be "*passing through*" (POREUOMAI means: to travel, depart, journey). This was his "*hope*" (ELPIZO means: to hope in advance, first trust). There may be a hint that Paul also hoped that the Roman believers would come to his monetary aid since he wrote "*sent on my way by you*" but this is not certain.

v.24 ... whenever I have first enjoyed your *company* for a while.

Paul also expects to "*enjoy*" (EMPIPLEMI means: to fill up, to be satisfied) their company. We see that he is more than happy at the prospect to see the Romans and enjoy having fellowship with them. May we also enjoy being together with God's people.

<sup>25</sup> But now I am traveling to Jerusalem, serving the saints.

Paul tells the Romans that he will not go directly to see them for he has to carry out an assignment first. What I see by this is that Paul kept his priorities straight. His first priority is the Lord's work and then his personal pleasure. Too often I see the opposite in the lives of Christians today. I am first and if there is time for the Lord's work then I will do it. Paul is first "*traveling*" (POREUOMAI means: depart, go, travel) to Jerusalem, the holy city of God. He also gives the reason why he is going to Jerusalem, it is for the

"*servicing*" (DIAKONEO means: to be an attendant, wait upon) of the "*saints*" (HAGIOS means: holy, pure, consecrate).

<sup>26</sup> For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

Here we see that the apostle Paul had worked towards helping the believers in Jerusalem. We also see that the believers in Macedonia and Achaia helped out. More than that they were "*pleased*" (EUDOKEO means: to think well of, asset) to make some "*contribution*" (KOINOANIA means: joint participation, distribution) for the "*poor*" (PTOCHOS means: a pauper, beggar, poor). This verse really contradicts the modern theology of being automatically called to be rich if you are a child of God! Paul had written to the Corinthians concerning gathering money to help the believers in Jerusalem sometime before he wrote his epistle to the Romans. This is what he wrote:

#### 1 Corinthians 16

1 Now concerning the contribution for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do.

2 On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that contributions need not be made when I come.

3 And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem.

(RSV)

I wonder if we are also pleased to help out when people of the faith are in true need? Or do we turn our face away because we are indifferent?

<sup>27</sup> For they were pleased *to do so*, and they are obligated to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual *things*, they ought also to serve them in material *things*.

Paul writes that the Christians he had just talked about were "*pleased*" (EUDOKEO means: to think well of, approve, pleasure) to do so. They were very glad to come to the aid of those in Jerusalem. Paul reminds the Romans that there is a spiritual reason for helping these believers. He writes that the Roman believers were "*obligated*" (OPHEILETES means: a person in debt) to them. Why were the Roman believers in debt towards the Jerusalem believers? Paul answers, if the "*Gentiles*" (ETHNOS means: a race, a tribe, non-Jewish) "*have shared*" (KOINONEO means: co-participant, partaker of) in their spiritual things, remember the cultivated olive tree and the wild olive branch which was grafted on the cultivated tree (Rom.11:717)? If the Gentiles have

received from their spiritual heritage then the Gentiles should "*serve*" (LEITOURGEO means: a public servant, a minister) them with their material blessings.

<sup>28</sup>Therefore, *after I* have accomplished this and sealed this fruit *for delivery* to them, I will depart by way of you for Spain,

Paul explains to the Romans that before he can go and see them he first of all has to accomplish this good work towards those in Jerusalem. He says that the collection of moneys to help them out first has to be "*accomplished*" (EPITELEO means: to bring to an end, accomplish) and also "*sealed*" (SPHRAGIZO means: to stamp, to seal up), this gives the idea of securing the delivery. Once that is done he will "*depart*" (APERCHOMAI means: to go off, to come, to depart) for Spain and stop to see them. Here we see that Paul is not secretive in his doings. I believe that this sense of openness should inhabit all true believers.

<sup>29</sup>and I know that *when I* come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

Paul writes "*I know*" (EDIO means: to see, to know, be aware of). In our life as a disciple of Christ there are things that we also must be certain of BEFORE acting on our impulses. Paul knew that when he will be with the Romans that it will be in the "*fullness*" (PLEROMA means: repletion, to fill up, be full) of the "*blessing*" (EULOGIA means: fine speech, benediction) of Christ. In other words he is certain that the hand of the Lord will be upon him as he visits and ministers to the Romans. Are we certain of what we are doing for the Lord?

<sup>30</sup>Now I exhort you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, to contend along with me in your prayers on my behalf to God,

Before he leaves for Jerusalem Paul asks the following. I "*exhort*" (PARAKALEO means: to call near, invite, invoke) you. Paul is calling out to them through (or because) of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is because of Jesus that Paul asks this and not because of some personal merit. And also through the "*love*" (AGAPE means: affection or benevolence) of the Holy Spirit. So because of what Christ has done for you and the love you have received through the Holy Spirit, please "*contend*" (SUNAGONIZOMAI means: to struggle in company of) with me in your "*prayers*" (PROSEUCHE means: a prayer addressed to God) on my behalf to God. We see that the apostle Paul understood that he needed prayer in his life and invited others to pray for him. If Paul needed prayers how much more are we in need of them!

<sup>31</sup> that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and my ministry in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,

He needed prayers because he knew that when he would be in Jerusalem it would be dangerous for him. That I may be "*rescued*" (RHOUMAI means: rescue, deliver) from those who are "*disobedient*" (APEITHEO means: to disbelieve), Paul speaks of the non believers probably those who are religious leaders who in the past had tried to kill him. He also asks prayer so that his "*ministry*" (DIAKO means: attendance, aid, service) may be "*acceptable*" (EUPROSDEKTOS means: well received, favorable) to the saints. Paul hoped that the goodwill offering to help the believers in Jerusalem would be well received. We know that it took some time for the Jewish believers to fully accept the Gentile believers as their true brothers in the faith. Unfortunately it is still the same today in some Christian settings.

<sup>32</sup> so that, coming to you with joy by the will of God, I may rest with you.

Paul is looking for peace of mind while serving the Lord in Jerusalem. He asks for prayers so that he will be "*coming*" (ERCHOMAI means: to come or go) to you with "*joy*" (CHARA means: cheerfulness, calm delight, joyous). He hopes all will go well and that the love gift will be well accepted. After he leaves Rome, Paul wants to continue to Rome joyful by the "*will*" (THELEMA means: a determination, a choice, a desire) of God. We see that even though this is a desire that Paul has, he places all of his journey in the hands of the Lord God. Paul desires to arrive at Rome not filled with the stress of his voyage to Jerusalem because things did not go well but rather to "*rest*" (SUNANAPAUOMAI means: refresh with) with you.

<sup>33</sup> Now *may* the God of peace *be* with all of you. Amen.

Paul ends this section with a blessing. May the God of "*peace*" (EIRENE means: peace, quietness, rest) be with all of you. A short, simple but so important blessing. For nothing surpasses the peace that the Lord gives to his children.

## 52 - Commendation of Phoebe

Romans 16:1,2

Now I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is also a servant of the church in Cenchrea, <sup>2</sup>in order that you may welcome her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever task she may have need from you, for she herself also has been a helper of many, even me myself.

(LEB)

The apostle Paul "*commends*" (SUNISTAO means: to introduce, to approve) Phoebe (this name means: shining, pure), who is our "*sister*" (ADELPHE means: sister natural or ecclesiastical). Who is this believer that Paul recommends to the Roman church? She was first and foremost a sister in the faith. We also see that she was a "*servant*" (DIAKONOS means: to run errands, an attendant, a servant). Diakonos and its derivatives are commonly used in the New Testament as a title for someone having a specific office in the church. Our English translation for DIAKONOS would be deaconess in the following Bible versions:(AMP)(GW)(ISV)(Phillips)(NIV)(NLT)(NRSV)(RSV). It is believed that she is the bearer of the letter from Paul to the Romans that he would have written from Corinth. She was part of the church of Cenchrea, which was a seaport about 13 kilometers from Corinth, from where Paul had sailed to Ephesus (Acts 18:18). The Bible leaves no information concerning this church. Very little is known about this devout believer since only one verse speaks of her.

<sup>2</sup>in order that you may welcome her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever task she may have need from you, for she herself also has been a helper of many, even me myself.

Paul desires that the Roman believers "*welcome*" (PROSDECHOMAI means: to admit, accept, await) her. It was a normal procedure in the New Testament times to give a letter of recommendation to a Christian who was travelling or visiting out of town. This assured the brethren of the legitimacy of that person as a follower of Christ. Their welcome was to be "in the Lord". They were to greet her as a sister in the faith, but also with all the love and care that Jesus himself would give to a travelling disciple. Paul not only says that she ought to be received as Christ would receive her but also in a "*manner*" (AXIOS means: appropriately, worthily) of the "saints" (HAGIOS means: sacred, pure, holy). They had a religious duty towards her and needed to receive her well.

Paul asks them to "*help*" (PARISTEMI means: to stand beside, aid, provide) her in whatever "*task*" (PRAGMA means: a deed, matter, work) she may "have need" (GINOMAI means: to cause to be, to become) from you. In other words, assist her with whatever she needs from you, and there was a good reason for this.

v.2 ... , for she herself also has been a helper of many, even me myself.

She had been a "*helper*" (PROSTATIS means: a patroness, assistant) of "*many*" (POLUS means: much, abundant, great deal). Paul points out that she has come to the aid of many and should be treated as she has treated others. This reminds me of what Jesus said:

#### Matthew 7

12 So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.

(RSV)

To emphasize how great her service was to the saints, Paul writes, "even to myself." The Bible does not offer any information on how she brought help to Paul.

## 53 - Various Greetings

Romans 16:3-16

<sup>3</sup>Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, <sup>4</sup>who risked their own necks for my life, for which not only I am thankful, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; <sup>5</sup>also *greet* the church in their house. Greet Epenetus my dear *friend*, who is *the first convert* of Asia for Christ. <sup>6</sup>Greet Mary, who *has worked hard* for you. <sup>7</sup>Greet Andronicus and Junia, my compatriots and my fellow prisoners, who are well known to the apostles, who were also in Christ before me. <sup>8</sup>Greet Ampliatus, my dear *friend* in the Lord. <sup>9</sup>Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my dear *friend* Stachys. <sup>10</sup>Greet Apelles, who *is* approved in Christ. Greet those of the *household* of Aristobulus. <sup>11</sup>Greet Herodion my compatriot. Greet those of the *household* of Narcissus who are in the Lord. <sup>12</sup>Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, the laborers in the Lord. Greet Persis, the dear *friend* who *has worked hard* in the Lord. <sup>13</sup>Greet Rufus, the chosen one in the Lord, and his mother and mine. <sup>14</sup>Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers with them. <sup>15</sup>Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints *who are* with them. <sup>16</sup>Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

(LEB)

In this section, the apostle Paul will name over twenty believers in Christ. We know nothing or very little about the majority of them. But we see that they were very precious to Paul and to his work in the Lord. We may not all be like Paul, but we certainly can be like the ones he named—workers in the kingdom of God.

<sup>3</sup>Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, <sup>4</sup>who risked their own necks for my life, for which not only I am thankful, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;

Paul begins his series of greetings with Prisca and Aquila. They are the only couple mentioned in the New Testament who had a joint ministry in the Lord. They are always named together. It seems that Prisca (Priscilla) is sometimes named before her husband Aquila (Rom. 16:3; 2 Tim. 4:19). We see in Acts 18:18 that they were part of a missionary trip alongside Paul. We also see that they further introduced Apollos to a deeper knowledge of the Lord (Acts 18:26). Finally, we see that this couple opened their home to have church meetings (1 Cor. 16:19). Paul calls them my "*fellow workers*" (SUNERGEIO means: to be a fellow worker) in Christ Jesus. From this, we can see that he highly esteemed them.

<sup>4</sup> who risked their own necks for my life, for which not only I am thankful, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;

Here we see that not only were they fellow workers in the Lord, but they went to the limit to help Paul. They "*risked their necks*" (HUPOTITHEMI TRACHELOS means: to lay down their necks). Figuratively, this means that they laid down their very lives (were ready to die) to help Paul. We do not know what Paul is inferring, but we can see the character and deep spirituality of both of them. Not only is Paul "*thankful*" (EUCCHARISTEO means: to be grateful, thankful) for them, but so are ALL (big statement) the "*churches*" (EKKLESIA means: a calling out, a popular meeting) of the Gentiles. It seems that this couple had an important impact on the lives of many in different churches.

<sup>5</sup> also *greet* the church in their house.

To conclude his greetings concerning Prisca and Aquila, Paul states that their ministry went as far as hosting believers in their home. These two are the types of believers who should fill all of our churches: - loving, caring, daring, and persevering.

v.5 ... Greet Epenetus my dear *friend*, who is *the first convert* of Asia for Christ.

We have no other information concerning this Christian except for what is before us. We do know that he must have been well-loved by Paul since he calls him "dear friend" (AGAPETOS means: beloved, dear). What we know is that he was among the "first converts". The translation means "first fruits," giving the idea that he was among the first to convert to Jesus Christ in "Asia". Actually, this region is also known as Achaia, which is a narrow strip of land in Greece. We do not know if Epenetus came to the Lord under the ministry of Apollos (Acts 18:27) or of Paul (Acts 19:21). He could have been saved under other circumstances also.

<sup>6</sup> Greet Mary, who *has worked hard* for you.

Another person is Mary, who Paul "*greet*s" (ASPAZOMAI means: to salute, to welcome, to greet). We do not know who Mary was, but what we do know is that she "*worked*" (KOPIAO means: to feel fatigue, to work hard) "*hard*" (POLUS means: much, many, great). She may have been a member of the Roman Church since Paul writes that she worked hard for them.

<sup>7</sup>Greet Andronicus and Junia, my compatriots and my fellow prisoners, who are well known to the apostles, who were also in Christ before me.

Here we have two other men, whom Paul greets. The first is Andronicus, who we know nothing about, and also Junia, who is another unknown since the Bible never speaks of them elsewhere. What we do know is that Paul calls them "*my compatriots*" (SUGGENES means: a relative, a fellow countryman). Could it be that these two men were of Jewish descent? They were also his "*fellow prisoners*" (SUNAICHMALOTOS means: a co-captive). We know that Paul had been in prison on certain occasions. It may be that he met them while they were imprisoned also. Was it also for their faith in Christ? We do not know. An interesting fact is that they were "*well known*" (EPISEMOS means: remarkable, notable, eminent) to the apostles. It seems that they were outstanding in the eyes of the apostles. This would reinforce the idea that they were Jewish. Finally, they were both older saints since Paul writes that they "were also in Christ before me".

<sup>8</sup>Greet Ampliatus, my dear *friend* in the Lord.

A part from being a "*dear friend*" (AGAPETOS means: dearly beloved, well loved) and also a believer, nothing else is known about him.

<sup>9</sup>Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ,

Again, we do not know who this person was. What we do know is that Paul calls him our "*fellow worker*" (SUNERGOS means: a co-laborer, a fellow worker). Since Paul writes "our," it seems that Urbanus worked not only with Paul but with other Christians in the Lord's work.

v.9 ... and my dear *friend* Stachys

This man had a Greek name and lived in Rome. He is another of Paul's "dear friends" (AGAPETOS means: dearly beloved, well loved). Nothing else is known about him.

<sup>10</sup>Greet Apelles, who *is* approved in Christ.

Some believe that Apelles was also known as Apollos, but no one is certain. What we do know is that this man is "*approved*" (DOKIMOS means: acceptable, approved, tried). It seems that Apelles was a man who had proven, without a doubt, his faith in Christ Jesus. We do not know in what circumstances this would have been done.

v.10 ... Greet those of the *household* of Aristobulus.

Please note that it is NOT Aristobulus (whose identity is unknown) but his "household" that Paul greets. Since Paul does not greet Aristobulus, we understand that he was not a believer in Christ or that he had died. It was people in his household who were believers. Were they his slaves? We do not know. If they were part of his family, Paul would have written "Greet the wife, or children of Aristobulus".

<sup>11</sup>Greet Herodion my compatriot.

Another unknown believer. His name is of Hebrew descent. It may be the reason why Paul calls him my "patriot" (SUGGENES means: a relative, a fellow countryman).

v.11 ...Greet those of the *household* of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

Narcissus was probably dead, and that is why Paul speaks of his "household". Please note that Paul writes to "those... who are in the Lord". This tells us that not everyone in the household of Narcissus was "in the Lord", not all were saved.

<sup>12</sup>Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, the laborers in the Lord.

These are the names of two women who seemed to be well known for their ministries among the believers. They are called "*laborers*" (KOPIAO means: to feel fatigue, to work hard). They were not lazy, but rather active in the Lord. This reminds me of Dorcas (Acts 9:36), who was full of good works and charitable deeds. Nothing else is known about these two believers.

v.12 ...Greet Persis, the dear *friend* who *has worked hard* in the Lord.

Persis is another unknown Christian. She is called "*dear friend*" (AGAPETOS means: dearly beloved), giving the idea that she was close to Paul's heart. She was also a believer who "*worked*" (KOPIAO means: to feel fatigue, to work hard) "*hard*" (POLUS means: much, many, great) in the Lord. She was one of those people who did not count her time or efforts for the things of the Lord.

<sup>13</sup>Greet Rufus, the chosen one in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

Something unusual is said about Rufus, and this is that he was the "*chosen one*" (EKLEKTOS means: select, chosen, elect, picked out). This is the only place where the name of a specific person is cited as having been chosen (EKLEKTOS). He may have been an important person. Paul also names his mother as someone to be greeted. He calls her "his mother and mine." This does not mean that she was the mother of Paul, but rather that she acted as a mother to him. We do not know in what circumstances.

<sup>14</sup>Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers with them.

In this verse, we have a series of five names to be greeted by Paul. The first is Asyncritus. Nothing is known about this man. The second is Phlegon. Nothing is known about this man. The third is Hermes, an unknown believer. The fourth is Patrobas. The Bible says nothing else about this man. The fifth is Hermas, and again, nothing is known about this man. Even the "*brothers*" (ADEPHOS means: a brother near or remote) are anonymous. All these believers are unknown to us, but well known to Paul and the good Lord.

<sup>15</sup>Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints *who are with them*.

We do not know who Philologus was. Since he is linked with Julia (another unknown), it may be that she was his wife or sister. Both seem to be believers in the Lord. Nereus and his sister are also unknown, as is Olympas. It is believed that when Paul wrote "all the saints who are with them" it is to be understood that they formed a small Christian community. As in other places, they may have gathered in someone's house to praise the Lord.

<sup>16</sup>Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

This is a general statement that ends this section. We see that Paul cares for every true believer in Christ. He tells them to "*greet*" (ASPAZOMAI means: to salute, welcome, greet) one another with a "*holy*" (HAGIOS means: sacred, pure, holy) kiss. Nothing sensual, but as with so many different nations, a kiss on the cheek to manifest that we are happy to see the person.

In his theology of being one family in Christ, Paul included ALL the "*churches*" (EKKLESIA means: a calling out, a popular meeting) of Christ in his final greeting. May we also learn that ALL true believers are members of Christ's church (his body).

## 54 - *The final exhortations*

Romans 16:17-20

<sup>17</sup> Now I exhort you, brothers, to look out for those who cause dissensions and temptations contrary to the teaching which you learned, and stay away from them. <sup>18</sup> For such people do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own stomach, and by smooth speech and flattery they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. <sup>19</sup> For *the report of your obedience* has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, and I want you to be wise toward what *is* good, but innocent toward what *is* evil. <sup>20</sup> And in a short time the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.

(LEB)

This is the final section, with a series of exhortations where Paul warns the Roman believers of certain people who are wolves in sheep's clothing.

<sup>17</sup> Now I exhort you, brothers, to look out for those who cause dissensions and temptations contrary to the teaching which you learned, and stay away from them.

We see that what Paul is about to say is urgent and that he insists on the importance of what is to be written. I "*exhort*" (PARAKALEO means: to call near, to invite, comfort) you "*brothers*" (ADEPHOS means: brother, literally or figuratively). This section is for everyone, not just for the leadership of the church. All the brothers and sisters have a responsibility towards each other, and that is to watch out for certain troublemakers. He asks them to "*look out*" (SKOPEO means: to take aim at, regard, consider) for those who cause "*dissensions*" (DICHOSTSIS means: disunity, division, sedition). This reminds me of the words of our Lord when he said:

Matthew 7

15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

16 "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?

(NKJV)

Because Jesus knew what lay ahead for his disciples he also said the following on how to act.

## Matthew 10

16 "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

(NKJV)

There will be people (and I have seen this all the time) who, instead of striving for unity, are ready to cause divisions just to get their way in the congregation. As Jesus said, you can tell who they are simply by looking at the fruits they bear in life.

Some may not cause divisions, but they bring "temptations" (SKANDALON means: a snare, occasion to fall, offense). They specialize in bringing believers to the edge of what is permissible, and by doing so become a stumbling block. They are like the wide road's doorkeepers, opening the gate so you can enter and follow the crowd.

v. 17 ... contrary to the teaching which you learned, and stay away from them.

How can you tell them apart from the brethren? Paul says that it is quite easy for them to do and say things which are contrary to the "*teachings*" (DIDACHE means: instruction, doctrine, teaching) which you have "*learned*" (MANTHANO means: to learn in any way, understand). Like the serpent in the garden who said to Eve that what she had learned from God was not true, so do these wolves dismiss the truth of the Lord and bring their own doctrines. Paul also warned Timothy about these people:

## 1 Timothy 4

1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith,  
giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

(NKJV)

What we are told to do is very simple and very clear. It is the implementation of this that appears to be the most difficult in most churches. Paul says to "*stay away*" (EKKLINO means: to deviate, to shun, avoid) from them. This is called discipline, and it is gravely lacking, yet we are told by Jesus to discipline people who say they are in the faith.

## Matthew 18

15 "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

(RSV)

Why is it so easy to follow Jesus in some ways and yet so difficult in others? Why do disciples give so many excuses when directives from the Lord do not please us? Have we forgotten who the Lord is and his authority over us?

<sup>18</sup> For such people do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own stomach, and by smooth speech and flattery they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

Paul reveals the true motive that drives these people "*who cause dissensions and temptations*". It is because such people DO NOT "*serve*" (DOULEUO means: to be a slave, serve) our Lord Jesus Christ. They may give the appearance of loving Jesus, and may even use this as an excuse to do their own will! If they do not serve the Lord, who are they serving? Paul writes that it is their own "*stomach*" (KOILIA means: the abdomen, belly). They serve their own appetite, their own desires, they serve themselves before anyone else! How do they get people to follow them in their dissensions and temptations? Through "*smooth speech*" (CHRESTOLOGIA means: fair speech, good words), they are eloquent and persuasive with their words. They also use "*flattery*" (EULOGIA means: elegance of language, to invoke a blessing) using religious or spiritual sounding language to trap people into believing them. We see this in cults all the time! Their aim is to "*deceive*" (EXPATATAO means: to seduce wholly, deceive) the "*hearts*" (KARDIA means: the heart, fig: the thoughts and feelings of a person) of the "*unsuspecting*" (AKAKOS means: innocent, harmless, simple). There is no place for the glory of the Lord nor the general health of his disciples. What they desire is to fulfill their own aspirations.

<sup>19</sup> For *the report of* your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, and I want you to be wise toward what *is* good, but innocent toward what *is* evil.

Contrary to a church such as Corinth, the general report that Paul had heard concerning the Roman believers was of their "*obedience*" (HUPAKOE means: submission, obedient). Their good reputation has "*reached*" (APHIKNEOMAI means: to go forth, come abroad) all. Paul is "*rejoicing*" (CHAIRO means: to be cheerful, calmly

happy) that they walked in the light. This can also be heard by the words of another apostle:

### 3 John 1

3 For I greatly rejoiced when some of the brethren arrived and testified to the truth of your life, as indeed you do follow the truth.

4 No greater joy can I have than this, to hear that my children follow the truth.

(RSV)

The desire of Paul was that he wanted the Roman believers to be "*wise*" (SOPHOS means: wise). It gives the idea of using the best plans and the best means for their execution. Paul wants the believers to be wise toward what is "*good*" (AGATHOS means: good, benefit, well) but "*innocent*" (AKERAIOS means: unmixed, innocent, harmless, simple) toward what is "*evil*" (KAKOS means: worthless, depraved, evil, wicked). Paul said the same thing to the Colossians:

### Colossians 3

1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

3 For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

(RSV)

This is what we all ought to do. We need to become wise concerning the things of this world and set our eyes on what is good in the sight of our Lord. When we see evil, we should turn away and have no participation in it.

<sup>20</sup> And in a short time the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.

Paul encourages the believers with this last phrase. He speaks of the triumph of the Lord God over our spiritual enemy. Paul writes that it will be in a "*short time*" (TACHOS means: a brief space of time). It may seem long to us today, but we need to remember what the apostle Peter wrote concerning God's time in relationship with ours.

### 2 Peter 3

7 But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist have been stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

8 But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.  
(RSV)

On that day, God will "*crush*" (SUNTRIBO means: to crush completely, shatter) Satan under your feet. He will no longer be a threat to all who truly believe in Christ as their exclusive Savior.

v.20 ... The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.

A blessing is given. The "*grace*" (CHARIS means: favor, gift, grace), that wonderful saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you - amen (AMEN means: surely, firm, verily).

## 55 - *Final greetings from Paul's companions*

Romans 16:21-24

<sup>21</sup> Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you, and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my compatriots. <sup>22</sup> I, Tertius, the one who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.

<sup>23</sup> Gaius, my host and *the host* of the whole church, greets you. Erastus the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus the brother. <sup>24</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with all of you. Amen.

(LEB)

Contrary to our last section where Paul greets people who are in the Church of Rome, this time he brings greetings from people in his immediate surroundings who work in the Lord with him.

<sup>21</sup> Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you, and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my compatriots.

Paul begins with Timothy, who is his closest fellow worker. We know nothing of his father except that he was Greek (Acts 16:1). Paul first noticed him in Lystra (Acts 16:2). Paul took him along as a missionary companion because of his great faith (Acts 16:3). He is called an evangelist (1 Tim. 4:14). He followed Paul on many missionary trips and might have suffered imprisonment (Heb. 13:23). Two of Paul's letters were written to him to encourage him in his ministry. We do not know how Timothy died. Paul calls him my "*fellow worker*" (SUNERGOS means: a co-labourer, a fellow worker). Here we see that Timothy "*greet*s" (ASPAZOMAI means: to salute, welcome, greet) the Roman believers.

Paul names Lucius, who seemed to be a Christian teacher or leader at the church of Antioch (Acts 13:1). He is from Cyrene, located in North Africa.

Paul also names Jason, who seems to be the Christian who hosted Paul and Silas when they arrived in Thessalonica. An uprising occurred, and Jason was seized and was brought before the ruler of the city (Acts 17:5-9).

Sosipater is named. He was a Christian from the city of Berea who came with Paul into Asia (Acts 20:4-6). Sosipater came from Berea, which is a city in Macedonia (Acts 20:4)

Paul calls all of them my "compatriots" (SUGGENES means: a relative, a fellow-countryman). They were all probably of Jewish descent. Timothy had a Jewish mother (Acts 16:1)

<sup>22</sup> I, Tertius, the one who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.

Unfortunately, nothing is known about Tertius. What this verse tells us is that he was Paul's secretary and wrote down on a manuscript what Paul dictated to him. We see from this that the apostle trusted him. We know that he was a true believer because his greeting is "*in the Lord*".

<sup>23</sup> Gaius, my host and *the host* of the whole church, greets you. Erastus the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus the brother.

We believe that Paul wrote this epistle when he was in Corinth. It seems that Gaius, who was a believer, was the "*host*" (XENOS means: a guest, entertainer) of Paul. Not only that, Gaius also hosted the "*whole church*". There is a possibility that the believers in Corinth met in his house. We can tell what type of Christian this man was by the fruits he produced. He also greeted the brethren in Rome.

Erastus is also named. He was the treasurer of the city of Corinth, which would have made him a public officer of great dignity. He also seems to be a companion of Paul in the ministry (Acts 19:22). Finally, we see Quartus, whom we know nothing about except that he is a "*brother*" in the Lord.

<sup>24</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with all of you. Amen.

As with our last section, the apostle Paul ends with a blessing. He calls upon the "*grace*" (CHARIS means: gift, benefit, favor) of the "*Lord*" (KURIOS means: supreme in authority) to be with "*all of you*". Once again, we see no distinction within the body of Christ. Paul calls upon the grace of the Lord as a conclusion in his letters to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Thessalonians, and Philemon.

## 56 - Doxology

Romans 16:25-27

25 Now to the one who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that had been kept secret for eternal ages, 26 but now has been revealed, and through the prophetic scriptures has been made known according to the command of the eternal God, resulting in obedience of faith to all the Gentiles, 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* the glory for eternity. Amen.  
(LEB)

We have come to the final section of the book of Romans. With such a monumental epistle, it is fitting that it concludes with a doxology.

25 Now to the one who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that had been kept secret for eternal ages,

The entire doxology is aimed at God the Father. He is the one who is "*able*" (DUNAMIS means: to make possible, able, might) to "*strengthen*" (STERIGMOS means: stability, steadfastness) you. Throughout the entire Bible, it is the Lord God who strengthens his people. He will strengthen your heart (Ps. 27:14). He will strengthen you in illness (Ps. 41:3). He will strengthen your soul (Ps. 119:28). He will strengthen your weak hands (Isaiah 35:5). Paul continues, as with the prophets of old, to encourage God's people, reminding them of God's presence in their lives. This is part of Paul's "*gospel*" (EUAGGELION means: a good message, the gospel) message.

v.25 ... according to the revelation of the mystery that had been kept secret for eternal ages,

He says that his gospel is according to the "*revelation*" (APOKALUPSIS means: disclosure, coming, revelation) of the "*mystery*" (MUSTERION means: to shut the mouth, a secret). We do not know when Paul received this revelation, but we do know that the apostle spoke 20 times concerning a "*mystery*" (MUSTERION) belonging to the Lord God. This mystery had been "*kept secret*" (SIGAO means: keep close, silence,

secret). It had been hidden, unknown to mankind since the very beginning of the ages. This belonged to God and to no one else.

26 but now has been revealed, and through the prophetic scriptures has been made known according to the command of the eternal God, resulting in obedience of faith to all the Gentiles,

But a time came when it had to be "*revealed*" (PLANEROO means: to render apparent, appear). It began to be revealed through the "*prophetic*" (PROPËTIKOS means: a foreteller, a prophet) "*scriptures*" (GRAPHE means: a document, holy writ). Through the prophets, who wrote the Holy Scriptures, God began to reveal the mystery which Paul is speaking about. He did not reveal it all at once, but it was given to us piece by piece until the final segment came.

This mystery was "*made known*" (GNORIZO means: to make known, declare) according to the "*command*" (EPITAGE means: a decree, commandment) of the eternal God. What is this mystery? Paul referred to it in the following verses:

Rom. 11

<sup>25</sup> For I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of this mystery, so that you will not be wise *in your own sight*, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in,  
(LEB)

The hearts of the Jewish people were hardened so that the door of righteousness could be open to the Gentiles. Once their full number has been accounted for once more, the door will be fully opened for the Israelites. This is the ONLY mystery that Paul speaks about in his letter to the Romans. The result of this mystery is the "*obedience*" (HUPAKOE means: attentiveness, compliance, submission) of "*faith*" (PISTIS means: persuasion, credence, moral conviction) to all the Gentiles. In other words, Gentiles obeyed the call to repent unto Jesus and became righteous before the Lord God.

27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* the glory for eternity. Amen.

All of mankind has been proven to be foolish and sinful. We have all fallen short of the glory of God. Only God is "*wise*" (SPOPHOS means: clear, wise). I believe that Paul is

referring to the great mystery he has just mentioned. Here we see the agent or means through which we relate to God the Father, for it is through Jesus Christ, our Messiah. Through Christ and because of his perfect sacrifice in our place, we can give "*glory*" (DOXA means: glory, dignity, praise) for all eternity.

Amen