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4 Pastoral Questions to Consider Throughout as a Devotional Exercise:

How does this apply to my life? What actions steps can I take to live this truth?

What can I share with an unbeliever? What can I share to encourage a believer?

AT-A-GLANCE in the side bar summarizes each section.

***Read all Scripture references, Paul's and mine!**

MEMORY VERSES

Romans 10:5-8

"For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down from above)" "or, " 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 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):"

KLU Introduction:

This is the most powerful book in the Bible on doctrines of the church. St. Augustine was converted through reading Romans. Martin Luther launched the Reformation on Romans 1:17 "The Just shall live by Faith". John Wesley, founder of Methodism was converted while listening to someone read from Luther's commentary on Romans. This book has influenced the church possibly more than any book of the Bible. As you read and listen to these lessons, you will gain a foundational knowledge of New Testament truth.

Author: The Apostle Paul (Shaul)

Date and Place of Writing: written from the Greek city of Corinth in 57-58 a.d.

History and Background: Paul was the first to formally formulate in writing, the key doctrines that define Christianity today. He spent years pressing into Yahweh through the Spirit and working out what had transpired in him through the Spirit and how that related to him (and thereby all of us) as an expert in the Law.

Recipients & Key People: This letter was addressed to both Jews and gentiles. It was not written to a specific church, but rather to groups of people whom he was preparing for his visit. And it would seem that he felt they were ready to receive the intensity of this letter as he testifies of the fame of the faith of those in Rome: "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." (v.1:8) Letter was carried by Phoebe, Tertius penned it for Paul, Gaius hosted Tertius while it was written.

Purpose: "THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF YAHWEH" Most important New Testament book on doctrine and theology. Written to prepare Christians for his visit; instruct them in basic doctrine (correct false teachers); explain relationship of Israel and the church; teach duties toward government and each other; and answer slander about himself. **The three crosses of Calvary depict three eternal destinies. Romans elaborates on them; the rebels (ch. 1), rulers (ch. 2-8), and citizens (ch. 9-16).** Romans is the first of Paul's letters and the first of three letters he wrote about Habakkuk 2:4; "The Just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:1; Hebrews 10:38) All Scripture is inspired by Yahweh (2 Timothy 3:16) and useful for: Doctrine—Romans; Reproof—1-2 Corinthians; Correction—Galatians; Instruction—Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians

Key Words: Righteousness, Faith, Son's of God, Sin, Flesh, Carnal Nature, Obedience, Transformation, Grace, Law, Salvation, Justification

Summary: This is the book of righteousness and faith based obedience! It is the hope of Yahweh. The word righteousness appear 40 times.
Righteousness Needed, Chapters 1-2 (sin)
Righteousness Imputed, Chapters 3-5 (salvation)
Righteousness Imparted, Chapters 6-8 (sanctification)
Righteousness Rejected, Chapters 9-11 (sovereignty)
Righteousness Practiced, Chapters 12-15 (service toward God, Government & man)

LIVING COMMENTARY

Book: **Romans 1-16**

Course # **BSC1001**

"ROMANS: Journey Through the Bible in Sixteen Chapters"

CHAPTER & VERSE
AT-A-GLANCE

**Salutation
Romans 1:1-7**

At a glance:

#1 Romans is an Old Testament quote fest.

#2 You must follow the trail or you can never fully grasp the depth of what Paul is saying.

#3 Romans will teach you what it means to live a life Grace-Empowered-Faith-Based-Obedience.

**Explanation
Romans 1:8-15**

At a glance:

#1 The believers in Rome have famous faith.

#2 Paul was both a Torah genius AND a citizen of Rome.

CHAPTER AND VERSE COMMENTARY (Scripture Excerpts from NKJV)

CHAPTER 1 "GENTILE APOSTASY"

SALUTATION: ROMANS 1:1-7

"Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

What does it mean to be separated? Paul had a radical encounter with Yahshua on the Road to Damascus (Acts 9). That is what it took to open his eyes, considering his previous intense training in the Law (Torah) and his unwavering commitment to Judaism, as it was practiced in the first century. So, he needed to be "separated". He had to be called out to an isolated place, alone for years, before he could be released as an Apostle. He immediately uses his salutation to establish Holy Spirit and doctrinal authority. He was hand-picked by Yahweh; it was all promised before through the prophets, and the Messiah is exactly who He was supposed to be! It is by the power (grace) of Yahweh that he is called as an apostle, not by his own doing.

Two immediate doctrinal ideas are of striking significance and really do give us a clue about where Paul is taking us. First he tells us that what he has to say was promised through the prophets and Holy Scriptures. Oh yes, Romans is an Old Testament quote fest, and I will warn you now, if you don't follow the trail you can never fully grasp the depth of what he is saying. And secondly, he tells us why we receive grace (the supernatural empowerment from God) and apostleship (to lead the leaders). It is so we are obedient to the faith. Romans will teach you what it means to live a life of **Grace-Empowered-Faith-Based-Obedience**. So, strap in, what he has to say is directly from the throne of heaven.

EXPLANATION-THE DESIRE TO VISIT ROME: ROMANS 1:8-15

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that

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#3 Paul has been hindered in visiting Rome until now, but he is on his way.

#4 He feels an obligation to both Jew and Gentile.

The Just Shall Live by Faith
Romans 1:16-17

At a glance:

#1 The first reference to the Old Testament: "The Just shall live by faith."

you may be established— that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles. I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also."

What is famous faith? Well, if the Apostle Paul is saying that your faith is a topic of conversation all over the known world, then you have some famous faith. And following his introduction to obedience, this should give you a clue to where we are going.

Rome is a mixed bag of all sorts of converted gentiles, and then of course there are Jews as well (see Romans 7). Rome is also the model for world government in the first century. Put aside, for the moment, what we know of Rome's horrific history of human rights atrocities, brutal "dictatorships", and debauchery. That was not because of their governmental system; it was because of evil Caesars. It's an important piece in the puzzle; Paul was both a Torah genius AND a citizen of Rome. He understood the Government of Heaven and the government of man.

He is intentional about his prayers for his audience and authentic about his desires to visit them. Paul wants to see them thrive as a center for Christian expansion (Rome is the perfect place for that to happen), and he also knows that he would be encouraged in them, as the fruit of his labor. He has certainly engaged in some intense spiritual warfare regarding his desire to be with them. We will explore this in vivid detail in this commentary. And knowing what he came from and what he endured to become what Yahweh called him to be, he feels a legitimate indebtedness to everyone!

He mentions here how he has been hindered until now to visit Rome and later on in chapter 15 he tells us exactly why. *"And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, but as it is written: "To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand." For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you.'"* (Romans 15:20-22)

He's been everywhere; now it's time to come to Rome.

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH: ROMANS 1:16-17

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith.'"

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#2 But it takes faith empowered by grace to get saved, and then the application of that salvation (obedience) to mature into an adult in the faith.

**Condemnation
Romans 1:18-32**

At a glance:

#1 Nature testifies to the identity and glory of the only true Mighty One. We can safely call this the "Creation Gospel".

#2 Paul is indicating that creation holds clues and that should bring you back to Genesis, back to the garden.

#3 There is one sin that is most indicative of the violation of the Creation Gospel.

#4 There is no respect for God's creative strategy more basic than the recognition of the natural functions and relationship of a male and a female.

#5 It's not only those who participate in sin that Yahweh sees as rebellious and deserving of eternal death, but those who approve of sin.

#6 There can be no worse fate than for Yahweh to give you over to your own sin.

What is the Gospel of Christ? It is the power of salvation by faith. For who? For anyone who believes. "*Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.*" (Habakkuk 2:4) Understanding that faith needs to be applied to the Law, resulting in faith based obedience, is a key revelation in the book of Romans. Throughout the book we will see the full Gospel explained, the Gospel of Salvation (the born-again Gospel) and the Gospel of the Kingdom (the mature adult Gospel). But it takes faith empowered by grace to get saved, and then the application of that salvation (obedience) to mature into an adult in the faith.

CONDEMNATION-GOD'S WRATH ON UNRIGHTEOUSNESS: ROMANS 1:18-32

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them."

What does it mean for Yahweh to give you over to your own desires? And what excuses do you make for choosing to do things your own way? If you reject Yahweh's ways long enough, He will release you into your sin and the dire consequences of such (the natural and eternal penalties of your errors). When you

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follow the lusts of your heart, vile passions, and a debased mind, it all leads to death.

Nature testifies to the identity and glory of the only true Mighty One. All else is futile. I think we can safely call this the "Creation Gospel". Natural creation itself testifies to the good news of who the Creator is and how He operates. And it is important to consider what is stirred in your mind when you think of creation. Here in chapter 1, Paul is indicating that creation holds clues and that should bring you back to Genesis, back to the garden. And what Paul is eluding to here is the corruption of that garden and the decay that has ensued ever since. It's been a steady decline since the first Adam, and in a prophetic stroke of genius, in chapter 8, Paul will tell us what to look for next. Hint: it has to do with creation!

But the end of chapter 1 also introduces another key prophetic idea. Throughout Romans, Paul will unveil three eternal classes of people, three eternal destinies. In the end, every knee shall bow to Yahshua our king (Philippians 2:10). Chapter 1 introduces the rebel class (those under the earth). Chapters 2-8 teaches us about the rulers of the Kingdom (those in heaven). And in chapters 9-16 we learn about eternal citizens (those on earth). As a prophetic symbol, picture the three crosses of Calvary. There is, of course, the perfect man in the middle (the ruler). And then there are two thieves, one who repents (the citizen) and one who is obstinate (the rebel). Which cross is your eternal destiny? Your thinking on this matter will reveal so much about you.

Which class is described here in Romans 1? *"Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened."* (v. 21) We can observe the sinful decline of mankind in detail here, but if there is one sin that is most indicative of the violation of the Creation Gospel, it is found in verses 26 and 27. Both women and men exchange the NATURAL USE of the opposite gender (creation's design) for what is AGAINST NATURE, the desire for the same gender (creation's decline). There is no respect for God's creative strategy more basic than the recognition of the natural functions and relationship of a male and a female. Together, they are created in Yahweh's image and commanded to be fruitful, fill the earth, and be rulers over creation itself (Genesis 1:27-28). Violation of this fundamental truth is a denial of the very existence of Yahweh.

And it's not only those who participate in such sin that Yahweh sees as rebellious and deserving of eternal death, but those who approve of such things (even if they are not practicing such themselves). If we jump ahead into the modern day, is this not precisely what we are experiencing? The few percent who practice such sin are being championed by a majority who want to "protect their rights", and more so, label all those who oppose this twist of nature as evil bigots. *"Woe to those*

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**Judgment by Truth,
Not Man's Opinion
Romans 2:1-5**

At a glance:

#1 The worst type of hypocrisy is when you condemn someone else for the very same acts you are committing.

#2 We are called to hold each other accountable in the Church, but to do so in a godly way.

#3 Judgment needs to be according to Yahweh's truth instead of man's opinions (self-righteousness).

#4 Should we judge unrighteously, we will be judged righteously!

who call evil good, and good evil.” (You must read Isaiah 5:18-21.) They’ve become futile in their thoughts and their hearts have become darkened. There can be no worse fate than for Yahweh to give you over to your own sin. For those who still have some sense of conviction, read all of Psalm 19. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.” “Keep back your servant from presumptuous sin; let them not have dominion over me!” (vv. 1, 13)

CHAPTER 2 "GENTILE CONDEMNATION"

RIGHTEOUS JUDGEMENT BY TRUTH, NOT MAN'S OPINION: ROMANS 2:1-5

“Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,”

What is the worst type of hypocrisy? It is when you condemn someone else for the very same acts you are committing. Here in Romans 2, we see what Yahweh thinks of judging others while participating in the same wrong behaviors. It is not, however, a mandate that teaches we should NOT judge one another at all. To the contrary, we are called to hold each other accountable in the Church, but to do so in a godly way. “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching.” (II Timothy 4:2) Judgment needs to be according to Yahweh's truth instead of man's opinions (self-righteousness).

When James, Jesus' brother penned these words, we have to consider that as the leader of the Church in Jerusalem, he was called to make many judgements. And as evidence does point to this James being the actual half brother of Jesus, he must have witnessed Jesus operate in every type of circumstance. His conclusion about how to “judge” righteously: *“Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?” (James 4:11-12)* And no doubt, should we judge unrighteously, we will be judged righteously!

Keep in mind the phrase from James above, *“But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.”* It will all come into focus in the next section.

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**Judgment by Deeds,
Not Status
Romans 2:6-15**

At a glance:

#1 Everyone is ultimately accountable to Yahweh's commands (statutes and judgments), without partiality.

#2 "Doers of the law" and "deeds of the law" DO NOT mean the same thing.

#3 Doers of the Law refers to faith based obedience in keeping the Torah; deeds of the Law refers to keeping a list of commandments by legalism.

#4 Our faith must translate into action. It needs to be applied to something!

JUDGMENT BY DEEDS, NOT STATUS: ROMANS 2:6-15

"who "will render to each one according to his deeds": eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness— indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God. For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)"

There is a lot going on here. First of all, judgment begins in the house of Yahweh (1 Peter 4:17), and it is according to your personal deeds not your position or heritage. Everyone is ultimately accountable to His commands (statutes and judgments), without partiality. Yahweh is no respecter of man. All will be laid bare. The gentile who was raised without Torah is still accountable to Yahweh's ways. Sorry! And of course, those raised with Torah will be judged first by it.

Here we have one of the first great misunderstandings of Paul's deep writing style in Romans. *"as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures."* (II Peter 3:16). Verse 2:13 teaches *"for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified."* The doers of the Torah will be justified. Yet, just one chapter later, Paul will declare, *"Therefore by the deeds [works] of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin."* (Romans 3:20)

So, Paul is either schizophrenic, "the doers of the law will be justified; by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified." Or, doers of the law and deeds of the law DO NOT mean the same thing. Here is the reality. Doers of the Law refers to faith based obedience in keeping the Torah; deeds of the Law refers to keeping a list of commandments by legalism (a checklist kept by self-will or self-determination in order to fulfill requirements without the heart behind it, in other words self-righteousness). This is like you telling Yahweh that your opinion of what it means to obey Him takes precedence over His! Or as James says, *"you are not a doer of the law but a judge of the law."* The Torah must be written on our hearts, through faith, in order to be pleasing to Yahweh. Nevertheless, it can't just remain

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**Judgment by Gospel,
Not Religion
Romans 2:16-29**

At a glance:

#1 The Jew approves of what is excellent (superior) and knows the will of Yahweh because they have been instructed out of the Law (Torah).

#2 Those who will rule and reign with Christ must be well-versed in grace empowered administration of God's commands.

#3 Those coming from Israel into faith in Yahshua have the initial calling and opportunity to be teachers and mentors to those who come in from the pagan world, simply because they have the upbringing to do so.

in our hearts as some intellectual ascent. It must translate into action. Our faith needs to be applied to something! Again, James addresses this directly:

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does." (James 1:22-25)

"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?... Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works... But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:14, 17-18, 20)

The works here are NOT "works of law" empowered by self-righteousness, but instead reflect faith based obedience empowered by grace.

JUDGMENT BY GOSPEL, NOT RELIGION: ROMANS 2:16-29

"in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel. Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written. For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law? For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God."

The Jew (Israel) who becomes a Christian (believes Yahshua is Messiah) does start off with a clear advantage according to Paul. They approve of what is

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#4 To claim you represent Yahweh and then disobey Him was already not good. It's even worse when believers who come into the faith with Torah training misrepresent the intention and application of Yahweh's commands and cause those weaker in the faith to stumble.

#5 Keeping the Law is a matter of the heart. Your motivation, intention, inspiration, and what empowers your obedience is what really counts. That does not discount what you must be obedient to, just how you accomplish or fulfill it.

#6 Paul is teaching what is consistent with the writings of Moses as first introduced to us.

#7 Your discipleship training is really rulership training. You are supposed to learn how apply the power that comes from God's grace to His Laws. And then you should practice implementing that grace-empowered obedience on earth. That is how the Government of Heaven comes to earth.

excellent (superior) and know the will of Yahweh because they have been instructed out of the Law (Torah). However, don't instruct others and not follow your own teachings. Those who understand the Law are meant to be guides to the blind, a light to those in a dark world, teachers of those who know so little, and mentors to those who are young. Please take note of this potential in those who are discipled with the Law of Yahweh. Ultimately it matters not if you started out as a Jew or Gentile. Any ruler must become adept at the proper administration of the laws of his kingdom. And it is no different for those who intend to be part of the ruling class in Yahweh's eternal Kingdom. Those who will rule and reign with Christ must be well-versed in grace empowered administration of God's commands. Even the ancient Kings of Israel were commanded to inscribe a complete Torah in their own hand and to study it daily as training to rule well.

“Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.”
(Deuteronomy 17:18-20)

Later on, when we get to chapter 14 and Paul distinguishes those who are weak in the faith from those who are strong, try to recall the immense value that understanding the Law had for the Kings, as described here in Deuteronomy. Those coming from Israel into faith in Yahshua have the initial calling and opportunity to be teachers and mentors to those who come in from the pagan world, simply because they have the upbringing to do so. But, please don't boast in the Law and violate it at the same time; it is a horrible witness. To claim you represent Yahweh and then disobey Him was already bad enough when Israel was doing it before the Messiah came, just as Paul refers to in Isaiah 52:5; *“the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”* It's even worse when believers who come into the faith with Torah training misrepresent the intention and application of Yahweh's commands and cause those weaker in the faith to stumble.

This is where what Paul is saying gets a bit tricky. He's a brilliant man who writes and teaches with complex thought patterns (2 Peter 3:16), and it's imperative we keep what he says in context. Let's just establish this early on in this Romans commentary. Here in chapter 2, is Paul teaching us that we should NOT bother trying to keep Yahweh's commandments because if you break just one, you've broken them all anyway, so don't waste your efforts?

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This has certainly been the prevailing belief propagated in Christian theology throughout history. If you believe obeying God's commandments is a necessary part of your faith as a Christian, then you will be judged on that basis, and if you break one command you're culpable to all of them. In modern vernacular, you can't have your cake and eat it too, meaning you can't eat your cake and still retain possession of it. Incorrect biblical application: "You can't fall short on one command and not be blamed for all of them. So, don't go down that legalistic path." This is the overwhelming sentiment in Christianity. It's the exact bias commonly used to interpret Moses' words in Leviticus 18:5 that Paul quotes later on in Romans 10:5, "*The man who does those things will live by them.*" If you believe you are responsible to keep Yahweh's Law, you will have to live by that standard and be judged as such, so don't go there!

But what is Paul really saying? It's all a matter of the heart. In other words, your motivation, intention, inspiration, and what empowers your obedience is what really counts. That does not discount what you must be obedient to, just how you accomplish or fulfill it. What would Jesus do (WWJD)? "*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to FULFILL. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*" (Matthew 5:17-18) Fulfill means fully preach, fully demonstrate, or fill to the fullest. With a circumcised heart, you too can do what Jesus did. The result is obedience to God's commands, yet the credit for your capability of now doing so goes to Yahshua's work on the cross and not your own abilities.

Then Paul says, "Let's use circumcision as an example." If you are physically circumcised, which is a commandment, and yet openly neglect other laws, it's as if in Yahweh's eyes you are not circumcised at all. On the contrary, if you are not circumcised, yet still keep His commandments with faith based strength, it is as if you are circumcised in Yahweh's eyes. The circumcised heart is what Yahweh is looking for. That is not a new idea; it has always been the case and that is the point Paul is making. He is teaching what is consistent with the writings of Moses as first introduced to us. "*Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.*" (Deuteronomy 10:16)

Moses originally taught this truth; the only way Yahweh's commands would not be too difficult to obey was after He changed our hearts. "*And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live... For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off.*" (Deuteronomy 30:6, 11) We will go into much more detail on this in our Romans 10 commentary; stay tuned.

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**The Bad News -
Condemnation Under
Sin
Romans 3:1-20**

At a glance:

#1 Romans, arguably the most theologically dense book in the Bible, written to establish and expound on the truths of the Christian faith, to explain what happens and what is available when one comes to Christ, used by scholars throughout history to identify and develop Christian doctrine, was written by a Jew.

#2 Paul concludes that the advantage of being a Jew is only an advantage in as far as Yahweh can use you for a specific task, but makes you no better than anyone else.

And even Jeremiah the Prophet expounded on the same truth when he told us about the soil of our hearts. *“Break up your fallow ground, and do not sow among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your hearts” (Jeremiah 4:3-4)* No doubt Yahshua was referring to this very prophecy as he taught the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 13:1-23 (thorns vv. 7, 22).

What is the outcome of a circumcised heart? *“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you TO WALK IN MY STATUTES, AND YOU WILL KEEP MY JUDGMENTS AND DO THEM.” (Ezekiel 36:26-27)* This should be abundantly clear by now!

Hold this high concept in mind. Your discipleship training is really rulership training. You are supposed to learn how to apply the power that comes from God’s grace to His Laws. And then you should practice implementing that grace-empowered obedience on earth. That is how the Government of Heaven comes to earth. *“Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10)*

CHAPTER 3 "THE WHOLE WORLD IS GUILTY"

THE BAD NEWS—CONDEMNATION UNDER SIN: ROMANS 3:1-20

“What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: “That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged.” But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? And why not say, “Let us do evil that good may come”—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just. What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.” “Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit”; “The poison of asps is under their lips”; “Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.” “Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known.” “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may

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#3 No one is better than anyone else. We all need God's help and it is the Law that tells us so.

#4 Knowing the Law is only profitable when mixed with humility to follow the Holy Spirit's leading in obeying it.

#5 "Doers" of the Law means faith-based obedience; "Deeds" of the Law means legalism.

be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

What advantage has the Jew, those of the circumcision? Romans, arguably the most theologically dense book in the Bible, written to establish and expound on the truths of the Christian faith, to explain what happens and what is available when one comes to Christ, used by scholars throughout history to identify and develop Christian doctrine, was written by a Jew. Yahweh picked a Jewish Torah scholar to write it! Why? Psalm 51:4; Psalm 14:1-3; Psalm 53:1-3; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Psalm 5:9; Psalm 140:3; Psalm 10:7; Isaiah 59:7-8; and Psalm 36:1, all of these scriptures flowed from Paul's pen (mouth) as he composed just this part of his letter. Could have a pagan, raised outside of the faith of Israel done that? Of course not. [Preview Matthew 13:52, much more on this later.]

Paul, the Jew, was brought up on the oracles of God, the word, the Scriptures. And no doubt they were misunderstood and misapplied over the centuries. Even Paul used them to become self-righteous, living for the law without love and grace. Knowledge can make someone feel superior; love doesn't do that (I Corinthians 8:1). Even the very scriptures he is referring to here have a common theme, the evil that dwells in a man! Ironic, isn't it? And in the end Paul concludes that the advantage is only an advantage in as far as Yahweh can use you for a specific task, but makes you no better than anyone else. All people are bound under sin and are deserving of punishment.

Man's propensity to sin only accentuates the righteousness of Yahweh so maybe that's good. "My sin serves to prove God's truth; so why not sin, it would be wrong for God to punish me for something that ultimately made Him look good." Paul has been accused of advocating such heresy. He makes his defense by quoting a litany of scriptures eluding to the evil propensity of man and how they will be held accountable. That's right, no one is better than anyone else. We all need God's help and it is the Law that tells us so.

Then what advantage does the Jew have who has studied the oracles of God? Just ask Paul's spiritual son, Timothy. *"But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have KNOWN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."* (II Timothy 3:14-17)

But this edge is only profitable when mixed with humility to follow the Holy Spirit's leading in obeying it. Paul understood the difference, certainly having lived on both sides—the law without grace and now the law with grace. Both Jews and

CHAPTER & VERSE
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**The Good News -
Justification by Faith
Romans 3:21-31**

At a glance:

#1 The Law and the Prophets were really witnessing the righteousness of Messiah all along to anyone who has faith.

#2 It matters not if you are a Jew or a Gentile, all fall short of Yahweh's standards and need His power (grace) that comes through the redemption.

#3 Yahweh cannot let sin slide without a punishment (payment). Faith in the work of the cross pays that price.

#4 Faith does not make the Law obsolete, faith reveals the truth of how the Law is to be implemented by grace.

Gentiles rejected Yahweh, all will be judged by His perfect standards, and all need His grace.

Then we see this phrase “deeds of law” and that by them no flesh will be justified. Here is that interesting twist on Paul's words in chapter 2:13 that we covered earlier; *“for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified.”* Obviously, there is a necessary contrast between “doers of the Law” and “deeds (works) of the Law.” We will see this again in the book of Romans (and in Galatians chapters 2 and 3) and it is important to keep in mind in order to properly understand Christian doctrine (theology). “Doers” means faith-based obedience; “Deeds” means legalism. Both, ironically, might look the same on paper. Yet, one produces obedience empowered by grace and inspired by the love, reverence, and appreciation for Yahweh; the other produces obedience to fulfill a heartless checklist of do's and don'ts. But rest assured, what Paul is NOT saying is that faith is the OPPOSITE of keeping the Law. He puts the exclamation on that truth in the last verse of this very chapter, *“Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.”*

THE GOOD NEWS—JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH: ROMANS 3:21-31

“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.”

Righteousness “apart from the law” does not mean you get to do an end-around and not make the Law part of your Christian walk. The Law and the Prophets were really witnessing the righteousness of Messiah all along to anyone who has faith. Again, it matters not if you are a Jew or a Gentile, all fall short of Yahweh's standards and need His power (grace) that comes through the redemption, the price Yahshua paid to ransom us. He (His shed blood) was the substitute for the death we had coming to us because of our sin.

CHAPTER & VERSE
AT-A-GLANCE

**Justification by Faith,
Not Works
Romans 4:1-8**

At a glance:

#1 To cause the law to stand firm it must be wrapped in faith.

#2 Sin, iniquity, and transgression, are all words that speak of violations against God's laws.

#3 With repentance Yahweh does not impute iniquity; with repentance Yahweh does impute righteousness.

#4 Imputed righteousness is free and puts you in right standing with Yahweh; earned righteousness has a cost and comes from what you do with that right standing.

Here is the deal, in order for Yahweh to set the righteous standard and then judge if we meet that standard, He must be just. That means He cannot let sin slide without a punishment. (It would not be just to let a demanded penalty go unenforced.) But, He is also the justifier/redeemer, meaning He made a way for it to be paid, and that is by faith in the work of the cross. Because this is true, there can be no boasting in "works" of the law. We (both Jew and Gentile) are justified by faith apart from the deeds of the Law (which again means legalism).

And then the exclamation point! Does all this talk of faith nullify the Law? Is it no longer part of your responsibility as a Christian? Can you relegate the Law to the annals of the Old Testament and just be a New Testament believer? CERTAINLY NOT! Faith does not make the Law obsolete, faith reveals the truth of how the Law is to be implemented by grace, and it always has. The Law was always and will always be meant to be kept with faith. Faith without works is dead (James 2:26).

CHAPTER 4 "JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH"

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, NOT WORKS: ROMANS 4:1-8

"What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin."

There is no better way to understand the context of Romans 4 than to emphatically restate the last verse of Chapter 3. This will help to keep our theology consistent and protect us from becoming Christians who use isolated soundbites to develop doctrinal beliefs. You simply can't develop sound doctrine from small, out-of-context bits of Scripture. It is also helpful to remember what Paul and other writers of the New Testament said elsewhere on the topic. *"Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law."* Establish here means "cause to stand firm." To cause the law to stand firm it must be wrapped in faith. Obedience by faith is Paul's message throughout his writings and is the delicate balance he displays throughout the Romans rollercoaster of law and grace. So, he emphatically states that the law is NOT made void by faith, but then again reintroduces the idea that works without faith are of no value. Abraham did put Isaac on the altar, a work for sure (see James

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#5 James distinguishes “earned righteousness” that comes from works, from “imputed righteousness” that comes from faith.

#6 There’s no love in a faith that watches someone go hungry.

#7 The only way a sinner can approach Yahweh is through repentance and faith. However, once we are saved by His grace, it is mandated that we walk in good works.

below), but he did it in faith that Yahweh would still make him the father of many nations. It was that action mixed with faith that made him righteous. Even Moses knew that, as he is the one who Paul is quoting on the subject, *“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”* (Genesis 15:6) Paul gives more details on this concept in Galatians 3.

Then Paul draws from King David’s experience as recorded in Psalm 32:1-2. This Psalm is likely inspired by David’s history with Bathsheba. He’s contemplating his sin, iniquity, transgression, all words that speak of violations against God’s laws. For David, the offenses were serious: lust, abuse of power, adultery, causing another to sin, and premeditated murder. And yet, the penalty for sin is not imputed when there is genuine repentance. Oh, but David’s repentance was not immediately forthcoming; Yahweh hounded him and his bones ached with conviction before he turned. Paul, as is his custom, brings us clarity from the words he draws from the Old Testament. The Psalm tells us that with repentance Yahweh does not impute iniquity; Paul tells us that with repentance Yahweh does impute righteousness. Throughout the Scriptures we can recognize two types of righteousness, imputed and earned. Imputed righteousness is free and puts you in right standing with Yahweh; earned righteousness has a cost and comes from what you do with that right standing. Do you obey or not?

I will paraphrase what Yahweh also says in the same Psalm, “I will instruct you in My ways; follow them, don’t be like a stubborn mule!” (vv. 8, 9) This means you just can’t repent and then go back to doing your own thing. Your faith must be mixed with obedience. Let’s revisit what James says on the topic, as it brings the perfect understanding to what it means to establish the law by faith, to make it stand firm. Notice how James distinguishes “earned righteousness” that comes from works, from “imputed righteousness” that comes from faith, using the very same scripture about Abraham. *““What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? WAS NOT ABRAHAM OUR FATHER JUSTIFIED BY WORKS WHEN HE OFFERED ISAAC HIS SON ON THE ALTAR? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for*

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righteousness.” [Genesis 15:6] And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.” (James 2:14-24)

The “works” that Paul is against is the legalism we’ve defined and been discussing in Romans 1 and 2. But Paul, no doubt, tells us elsewhere that we are saved for “good works” (faith-based obedience). *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus FOR GOOD WORKS, which God prepared beforehand that we should WALK IN THEM.” (Ephesians 2:8-10)* James speaks of good works above, like clothing the naked and feeding the hungry, both inspired by faith. Yahshua said, “Love your neighbor.” There’s no love in a faith that watches someone go hungry.

Yet, those good deeds are merely filthy rags without faith (Isaiah 64:6). We, like King David so poignantly declared in Psalm 32, and as Paul so eloquently states in Ephesians 2, must understand that the only way a sinner can approach Yahweh is through repentance and faith. However, once we are saved by His grace, it is mandated that we walk in the good works that He has prepared for us. What good works are those? Obeying Yahweh's commands! Otherwise your declaration of faith is just a mental ascent and has no real substance. Yahshua said it like this, *“You will be known as a disciple by your fruit.” (Matthew 7:16-20)* The question then remains: is your fruit sweet and juicy or spoiled and rotten?

JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE, NOT LAW: ROMANS 4:9-17

“Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised. For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;”

**Justification by Grace,
Not Law
Romans 4:9-17**

At a glance:

#1 The heart (mind) change takes place first and then the physical action.

#2 If we think we can go directly to “obeying the law” without first having faith, then we have a bleak and dark future ahead of us.

#3 The grace of Yahweh is what empowers us to obey Him; the Law was given to show us that we would always fall short without it.

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#4 Your background need not keep you from Yahweh, whether you were a pagan or a Hebrew.

#5 Abraham was neither a Jew nor an Israelite.

#6 All people become righteous by faith whether a Jew, Greek, Hebrew, or pagan.

What a masterful follow-up! Abraham was made righteous by faith and then took an action (faith-based obedience) by becoming circumcised. He was not circumcised first, and so it is with everyone. The heart (mind) change takes place first and then the physical action. Obeying the Law first does not establish the heir. Faith does! We are the seeds of Abraham through faith. And if we think we can go directly to “obeying the law” without first having faith, then we have a bleak and dark future ahead of us. Doing so would be telling Yahweh that we don’t need His promises; we can do it on our own. That would be a bad thing to do because the Law without faith brings destruction. The grace of Yahweh is what empowers us to obey Him; the Law was given to show us that we would always fall short without it.

And let’s just use some genealogical logic here:

- Abram (exalted father, covenant Genesis 15)
- Renamed Abraham (the father of many nations, Genesis 17:4-5. Circumcision as a sign, vv. 10-11. Promise of Isaac, v. 16)
- Isaac, son of Abraham (seed of promise fulfilled Genesis 21, then faith tested Genesis 22)
- Jacob, son of Isaac (Genesis 25:26, Jacob I loved; Esau I hated, Rom. 9:13)
- Jacob, renamed Israel (Genesis 32:28; 35:10, one who overcomes with the Almighty)
- Israel (had 12 sons, become tribes of Israel, Genesis 29:31-30:24; 35:16-18, 22-26)
- Joseph (11th son/tribe, Genesis 35:24, who saved the lives of all brothers/tribes in Egypt, Genesis 37-50)
- Egypt gone bad (430 years [*including Exodus and years in Canaan], Exodus 12:40, as prophesied in Genesis 15:13, see also Galatians 3:17)
- Levi (3rd son/tribe, Genesis 35:23, given priestly duties. Note: Judah was the 4th son)
- Moses (came from Levi, Exodus 2:1-10)
- Then Passover-Exodus-Freedom-Mount Sinai—The Law (Book of Exodus)

**by studying the timeline, you notice that the 430 years must have include all the years from the exodus forward.*

The covenant of faith came centuries before the Law.

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“What I mean is this: The law, introduced []430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.” (Galatians 3:17 NIV)*

Being the seed of Abraham through faith also levels the playing field, meaning your background need not keep you from Yahweh, whether you were a pagan or a Hebrew. Note: Abraham was not a Jew, nor was he an Israelite, Jews and the nation of Israel came much later. Abraham-Isaac-Jacob; Jacob renamed Israel; Israel had 12 sons; Judah was the forth son, Judah and Levi (third son) became the southern Kingdom of Judah after King Solomon died. They were called by the slang term “Jew” later on. So you can see, Abraham was neither a Jew nor an Israelite.

Bottom line: all people become righteous by faith whether a Jew, Greek, Hebrew, or pagan because it is Yahweh *“who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did.” (Romans 4:17)* And *“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)*. When you believe, you can see things that do not yet exist as if they already do, whether it is the birth of a nation, the healing of your body, the restoration of your marriage, or your vision to impact the world for Yahweh.

Justification by Resurrection power - Not Human Effort Romans 4:18-25

At a glance:

#1 Abram and Sarai were well was beyond child bearing years, so it could not be in the things of this world, the natural, that Abram could have believed such promises.

#2 The account of Abraham was to teach us that the promises of Yahweh are fulfilled in all those who have faith.

JUSTIFICATION BY RESURRECTION POWER, NOT HUMAN EFFORT: ROMANS 4:18-25

“who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.” And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.”

Look to the Heavens Abram, and count the stars; this is how expansive your ancestors will be (Genesis 15:5). Abram and Sarai were well was beyond child bearing years, so it could not be in the things of this world, the natural, that Abram could have believed such a promise. It was only by faith in the one true Mighty One that he could believe such a promise. And that faith is what accounted as righteousness.

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**The Blessings of
Justification
Romans 5:1-11**

At a glance:

#1 We have peace with Yahweh because justification is a done deal because of the work of the cross.

#2 Faith gives us access to His power, the same power Yahweh used to raise Yahshua from the grave.

#3 Even when our journey includes struggles, we have His power to endure, and not only endure but thrive.

#4 Paul introduces a prophetic idea; he says that MUCH MORE than justification, there is something else!

#5 As a new creature and as a child in the faith, you get to go on the journey toward maturity, adulthood in the faith. And what does that look like? It looks like the life of Yahshua.

#6 Think one more time about the three crosses on Calvary. Which one is your ultimate destiny?

Is this just a history lesson? Let it not be! The account of Abraham was to teach us that the promises of Yahweh are fulfilled in all those who have faith. Righteousness is imputed to all those who believe the testimony of Yahshua. He was dead, buried, and then raised from the grave by Yahweh (Ephesians 1:20). That could not happen in the natural. Imputed righteousness is that which is ascribed to you because of Yahshua's virtue (actions), not to your own. And thus you are justified (put in right standing with Yahweh) by faith alone.

CHAPTER 5 "PEACE WITH GOD"

THE BLESSINGS OF JUSTIFICATION: ROMANS 5:1-11

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."

There is so much here: justification, faith, grace, hope, saved, and reconciled. Ultimately we are justified/reconciled by His death and saved by His life. Let's start with the beginning. We have peace with Yahweh because justification, and reconciliation as referred to elsewhere in the chapter, is a done deal because of the work of the cross. It does not get better than that; it's all Him and none of you. It's faith (which of itself is a gift, Romans 12:3) that brings your permanent change in destiny. Think again about the three crosses on Calvary. Which do you aspire to?

Faith then gives us access to His power, the same power Yahweh used to raise Yahshua from the grave (read Ephesians 1:17-23). Okay, track with me here; once we have this assurance, this power, all else is a journey. And even when that journey includes struggles, you have His power to endure, and not only endure but thrive, because of the hope that comes from this new revelation. If you focus for moment about your calling, your destiny, your permanent "class distinction", all the various trials of life will feel like a flea on an elephant (read 1 Peter 1:6-9;

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James 1:2-4), knowing in the end all is perfect and you will lack nothing. And this was all made freely available to us while we were in the worst, dreadful, sinful state, meaning we didn't need to cleanse ourselves first, before we could access this gift.

Okay, that is one side, we are justified (made right) and reconciled (made whole, debt free) all by His blood/death and all for free, while we were still in darkness. But then Paul introduces a prophetic idea; he says that MUCH MORE than this, there is something else! And this something else has to do with His life, not His death. And it has to do with your life, after your death and born-again moment. Born-again as a new creature and as a child in the faith, you get to go on the journey toward maturity, adulthood in the faith. And what does that look like? It looks like the life of Yahshua.

Paul says, "we are saved by His life." Yes, He rose to life, but rewind a bit and think about His life. He lived a life of radical faith-based obedience to His Father. *"Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner." (John 5:19)* He did not come with His own doctrine and teaching, but to speak His Father's words (John 7:16-18). And that is what you are called to do, to live a life like His. And that is what it means to be "saved" by His life. Saved: temporal well-being that constitutes the best life you could possibly experience on this side of eternity because your entire focus, while you yet live, is to be conformed into His image. The safety net—we are eternally secure. The work to be done—walk like He walked.

Stop for a moment NOW and read Ephesians 4:1-16. Take a few extra minutes to meditate on verses 11-13. Do you get it? Can you sense the magnitude of your calling now? Can you shift your thinking from the pastoral (life now) to the prophetic (ultimate truth)? Think one more time about the three crosses on Calvary. Which one is your ultimate destiny?

**The Basis of
Justification
Romans 5:12-21**

At a glance:

#1 There are two Adams. One named Adam, the first man in Genesis. And second, a type and shadow of the first, who inscribed the backside of the coin. Death reigned on one side, life is the inscription on the other, Adam and Yahshua.

THE BASIS OF JUSTIFICATION: ROMANS 5:12-21

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's

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#2 Adam, a man, a human man, lost the title deed to the earth, and humans must redeem it.

#3 Yahshua must remain in heaven until the RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS.

#3 Adam had a mortal body which had eternal potential. He needed to eat from the tree of life to live forever.

#4 Yahshua resurrected with a glorified body. It was immortal (incorruptible) and eternal.

#5 We, who rule and reign with Messiah, the Church, will receive the same resurrected body that Yahshua has.

#6 Citizens of the earth, those who in the end have faith but miss the window to be covered by the blood of Yahshua, will be mortal and potentially eternal (like Adam). They need to eat from the tree of life to live forever.

#7 Rebels will experience the first death (physical death) and inherit the second death (eternal death).

offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Paul's writing style, especially in the book of Romans is somewhat of a rollercoaster. He paints such a stark contrast between two sides of the coin; it feels like the steep peaks and deep valleys of a very fast and extremely intense ride. He does this throughout the book with grace and law; imputed righteousness and the personal sanctification process (earned righteousness); eternal security and temporal life; doers of the law and works for law; faith-based obedience and flesh-based obedience.

Then, here in Chapter 5 he introduces the two Adams. One named Adam, the first man in Genesis. And the second, a type and shadow of the first, who inscribed the backside of the coin. Death reigned on one side, life is the inscription on the other, Adam and Yahshua.

Let's break it down in some detail, but first let me proffer a prophetic idea that, once considered, will guide you to a better understanding of the rest of Paul's Romans theological masterpiece. Adam, a man, a human man, lost the title deed to the earth. He forfeited it to Satan (Matthew 4:8-10; proof that Satan owns it). This assumes something important, Adam owned it and had the rights to keep it or lose it. That's important to know. So, Adam, a human, owned it and lost it, and Yahshua, divine who became human, paved the way for redemption, the restoration of the garden.

Yahshua paved the way, but He does not restore it for us. He does, however, give us the right to take it back ourselves? If you catch the nuance here, you will start to recognize the importance of human initiative, in other words, what our responsibility is on this side of eternity, as we partner with Yahweh (empowered by Him) to bring restoration of the Kingdom on Earth. This will help you begin to understand the prophetic model God has for the future of mankind. Yahshua must remain in heaven until we do our part.

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, WHOM HEAVEN MUST RECEIVE UNTIL THE TIMES OF RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS, which God has

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spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:19-21) A “man” lost the title deed and a “man” must redeem it!

So the technical part, or the legalese: Adam committed one sin, call it “my will, not Your will be done,” and he did this before the Torah was ratified on Mt. Sinai. All it took was one transgression to lose the title and go from life to death. Tune in with your prophetic brain for a moment. Adam was created as a mortal, but potentially eternal being. He could die, but he did not have to. *“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”” (Genesis 2:16-17)*

But he chose his own will, to eat from the forbidden tree, and because of that He lost the right to eat from the tree of life, which he needed to live forever. *“And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.”” (Genesis 3:22 NIV)*

Conversely, Yahshua was an immortal and eternal being who, in the single greatest act of love in history, surrendered that position and became like Adam (read Philippians 2:5-7). Yet, in one final heroic act of obedience, *“And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8)*, let’s call it “not My will, but Your will be done” (Luke 22:42), He blotted out an infinite number of our transgressions, past, present, and future. It redeemed all of us “Adams” and put us back into right standing with Yahweh. *“But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”” (John 4:14)* And at the same time, He resurrected as a new type of immortal and eternal being, a type that we too could inherit (read 1 Corinthians 15:35-58). NOW we have the ability to regain the title deed to the earth. And that is coming in the future “RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS”, which Yahshua waits for in heaven. Sin had its reign in us, but now it’s righteousness’s turn.

[Prophetic Notes:]

- Adam had a mortal body which had eternal potential (Genesis 2:16-17). He had to meet certain conditions to live forever. He was required to eat from the tree of life (Genesis 3:22).
- Yahshua resurrected with a glorified body (1 Corinthians 15:35-58). It was immortal (incorruptible) and eternal. It needs to meet no further conditions to live forever.

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- Faithful body of believers (Rulers: inherit heaven, the Church, faith-filled people who are covered by the blood of Yahshua). We receive the same resurrected body that Yahshua has (Philippians 3:21). We are immortal and eternal. We rule and reign with Messiah forever (Revelation 20:4-6; 2 Timothy 2:12).
- Faithful body of “unbelievers” (Citizens: inherit the earth, those who in the end have faith but miss the window to be covered by the blood of Yahshua). Mortal and potentially eternal (like Adam). Must eat from the tree of life to live forever (Revelation 22:1-2).
- Unfaithful unbelievers. (Rebels: those who experience the first death (physical death, Hebrews 9:27) and inherit the second death, eternal death, Revelation 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8; Jude 1:12-13).

Can you recognize that there are three permanent classes of people, just like there were three crosses? Three eternal destinies (Ruler-Citizen-Rebel). I ask yet again, which one is your ultimate inheritance?

**Know-I Died With Him
Romans 6:1-10**

At a glance:

#1 The offer in chapter 6 is best understood as the transaction or exchange.

#2 Imagine for a moment that humans no longer need to sin.

#3 You have to figure out a way to totally identify with what Yahshua did on the cross and beyond.

#4 We are bound to grow up at some point in time. Born-again infants all grown up, what might that look like?

#5 The life we now live and where we are going, personally, corporately and prophetically, needs to be worked out inside of a Torah-centric model.

CHAPTER 6 "POWER OF RESURRECTION"

KNOW - I DIED WITH HIM: ROMANS 6:1-10

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.”

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 really fit together like a puzzle. I like to think of chapter 6 as “the offer”, chapter 7 as “the dilemma”, and chapter 8 as “the solution.”

The offer in chapter 6 is best understood as the transaction or exchange. Contemplating and meditating on the magnitude of this transaction might be the most important and powerful thing a believer can do on a daily basis. I can imagine Paul, especially early on after his conversion, spending days, even weeks,

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#6 Yahweh's grace does increase to meet the demands of my sin, yet grace is no excuse to sin.

#7 We are no longer slaves to sin, but are instead freed from it.

considering what happened to him. Here is a man with superior knowledge of the Torah, advanced in his faith beyond most of his contemporaries, now the greatest advocate for the One he formally persecuted. "What actually happened to me?" he must have mused, over and over. "I was certain I had it all right." It had to feel like a death to him. "Yes, that's it; I died when I got knocked off my donkey, and born again into a new reality. I was blind, but now I see. Come on Paul, think man; what's really going on here?" And then... "That's it; it was a death. My old man died, that man who lived for sin, and I am now a new man who is no longer a slave to sin. Now, I have to live it out in a way that is very different than I used to think, because that clearly didn't work; how do I do that?"

Okay, so I'm making this up, but can't you imagine he had a talk with himself like that? Didn't you? If not, shouldn't you? Imagine with me for a moment that humans no longer need to sin; YOU no longer need to sin, all because of what Yahshua did. And all you have to do is figure out a way to totally identify with what He did on the cross and beyond, His death, burial, and resurrection. I'm convinced that if you believed this, your faith would take the front seat of your life IN EVERY WAY from here on.

I think even more importantly, Paul is setting the stage for man's prophetic destination. We are bound to grow up at some point in time. Born-again infants all grown up, what might that look like? And if Yahweh saw fit that Paul, the Torah scholar, was the perfect man to sort through this understanding and then write it down, we should not, we MUST NOT, discount his background. He is formulating his understanding of obedience unto perfection from a foundation of the Torah and the Prophets. Yahshua did also, and so should we. "Not one word, not even one letter of the Torah and the Prophets will pass away until all is fulfilled... Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:17-18, 48)." In other words, the life we now live and where we are going, personally, corporately and prophetically, needs to be worked out inside of a Torah-centric model.

So, Paul just made the point at the end of Chapter 5 that Yahweh's grace, His power toward us, increases to meet the demands of our sins, no matter how great those sins are. But, he also is very well aware of human nature (flesh nature), by virtue of coming face-to face with his own, as you will see elaborated in these next few chapters. Paul knows sin as transgression of the Law (lawlessness); Yahshua taught precisely that (1 John 3:4). Therefore, Paul recognizes sinlessness as total obedience to the Law. But he also is acutely aware that even with all his expertise, knowledge, and extreme self-determination, the best he could accomplish on his own was woefully short of that.

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**Recon-Faith in Action
Romans 6:11**

At a glance:

#1 We are joint heirs, not lesser heirs. We are destined to be conformed into Yahshua's image.

**Yield-Victory of
Crucifixion
Romans 6:12-23**

At a glance:

#1 We are clearly instructed to no longer let our bodies be instruments of sin.

#2 Sin is defined by the law, so we can't even have a conversation about sin without there being law.

But now he's a new man, empowered by grace, and he is setting the record straight. Yahweh's grace does increase to meet the demands of my sin, yet grace is no excuse to sin; it is not a hall pass or get-out-of-jail-free card. In fact, the opposite is more accurate. His grace empowers us to NOT SIN. *"How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (v. 2)* Okay, this is the stuff of deep mediation. You cannot, MUST NOT, gloss over this with some Christian-Lite attitude like, "I'm only human; no one is perfect. He's got me covered anyway; all my sins are washed away already."

The oft-adopted Christian philosophy is that trying to stay sharp and believing you can be sinless is a legalistic and an impossible-to-fulfill suggestion that is not supported by New Testament doctrine. Yet, here Paul denounces the need to sin, emphatically, "How can we live in it any longer?" I agree with Paul here; we must embrace this FACT, "He died; I died; He was buried; I was buried; He resurrected; I resurrected." Our old man (sin nature) was crucified with Him and sin is now DEAD. We are no longer slaves to sin, but are instead freed from it. This perfectly mirrors the idea of redemption, which is the price paid to free a hostage. Death no longer rules over the Messiah, and through the Messiah, death and sin no longer rule over us. It's our prophetic destination. Meditate on this daily!

RECON - FAITH IN ACTION: ROMANS 6:11

"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Likewise? Paul powerfully and authoritatively demands, "Likewise!" Like Yahshua died to sin, you too must die. And be alive in Yahweh, a new creature. Likewise! We are joint heirs (Romans 8:16-17), not lesser heirs. We are destined to be conformed into His image (Romans 8:29, Ephesians 4:13). Meditate on the three crosses once again. Which one is your true prophetic identity? *"For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection."* (Romans 6:5)

**YIELD - VICTORY OF CRUCIFIXION: ROMANS 6:12-23
NEW POSITION, NEW MASTER, NEW NATURE**

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey,

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#3 Paul tries his best to simplify the contrast between the two types of slavery—slavery to sin or to righteousness.

#4 The problem is not with the law; it's with people.

#5 With the power of the Holy Spirit you NOW have the choice, lawlessness or righteousness?

whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

As I have said already in this commentary, Romans is like taking a rollercoaster ride and if you are not sharp you will get stuck on certain peaks or valleys. We are clearly instructed to no longer let our bodies be instruments of sin. It would be a good time to repeat Yahshua's emphatic statement about sin before we continue, *“Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”* (1 John 3:4). It's been the general teaching in Christianity over the last 2000 years that “Jesus did away with the law, or replaced the law.” And Romans' verses as well as select others from Galatians, taken out of context, have been what's fueling this false doctrine.

Paul says we are not under law but instead grace; then he asks if that gives us the option to sin. Sin is defined by the law, so we can't even have a conversation about sin without there being law. If we have no law, we have no sin. Therefore, it is essential here that we track with Paul's multiple uses of the word “law” in Romans. One such distinction is the “law of sin”. He furthers his discussion by talking about obedience. What exactly are you a slave to obeying, the law of sin unto death, or the law of righteousness unto life? Through the transaction that took place, you are no longer a slave to the law of sin.

Paul knows that his writings are complex and that the doctrines he is introducing to humanity for the first time are very complicated. It is easy to twist what he says as he tries his best to simplify the contrast between the two types of slavery—slavery to sin or to righteousness. He is in no way saying the contrast is between slavery to the Torah of Moses (the Law) and slavery to righteousness. But, unfortunately, this is what has been taught in the Church. Instead, take a look at what Paul says about the Law in the next chapter of this very book. *(What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law; Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good; For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. Romans 7:7, 12, 14).* The problem is not with the law; it's with people. Is it any

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**Two Husbands:
Romans 7:1-6**

At a glance:

#1 If those teaching doctrine and theology about Romans 7 don't know the Law, then it is possible they have been twisting Paul's words.

#2 The law is like the operating system on your computer, mobile, or tablet. It's the framework that allows your device to function. You CANNOT remove the operating system and expect anything to function.

#3 Legally, we are permitted to marry Christ ONLY if there is a death! That is what the Law allows.

#4 If you abolish the law, you abolish the provision, and you have no legal right to be the Bride of Christ.

#5 Remarriage after the death of a husband requires that the next husband is in Christ!

wonder I call it the Romans rollercoaster? Peter warned that people would twist Paul's words., "as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures." (II Peter 3:16)

Then, Paul encapsulates this doctrine by saying, "For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness [sin is lawlessness] leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. With the power of the Holy Spirit you NOW have the choice!

CHAPTER 7 "THE EFFECTS OF SIN"

TWO HUSBANDS: ROMANS 7:1-6

"Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter."

"I speak to those who know the law." Why would Paul begin this section of his letter specifying a segment of readers? The stage is set for possibly one of the deepest revelations in your faith walk, so I will take my time to unpack the content of this precious gift.

First let's just agree that he has, in fact, singled out a particular segment of his audience. And then ask yourself this key question, "Do I know the law?" And if not, and if those who have been teaching you their doctrine and theology about Romans 7 also don't, then isn't it possible they have been twisting Paul's words for centuries (II Peter 3:16)? And here lies the great paradox. We want to be the bride of Christ; we believe what He promised is true; and we desire all the privileges that come with it; yet want no part of the legalities of it all. I'm sorry, it can't work that way.

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And here at the start of chapter 7 we have additional clarification about the “law.” Think of it like this. The law is like the operating system on your computer, mobile, or tablet. It’s the framework that allows your device to function. You can load all sorts of programs and apps ONTO THAT FRAMEWORK. But once you do, you CANNOT remove the operating system and expect anything to function. The death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah, as elaborated on in chapter 6, are the apps. But they only function if there is a law (operating system) in place.

A woman is bound, BY THE LAW, to her husband as long as he lives. We are talking about the command of Yahweh governing marriage (Genesis 2:22-24) and remarriage. Why is this even relevant? Because we want to marry Yahshua. But, we can’t if we are married to another. You see, the law ALLOWS us to remarry if there is a death, v. 4, (and hence the apps of death, burial, and resurrection in ch. 6). It is clear in the Old Testament that Yahweh supports remarriage after the death of a spouse. Abraham remarried after Sarah died (Genesis 25:1). It was the obligation of a brother to marry his widowed sister-in-law (Deuteronomy 25:5). And the entire book of Ruth is about the Kinsman Redeemer who rescues a widow by marrying her. We are bound/married to sin/Satan prior to our identification with Christ. And legally, we are permitted to marry Christ ONLY if there is a death! That is what the Law allows. *“but if her husband dies, she is free from that law.”*

You see, it’s the Law that has within it the provision to be freed from THAT law if there is a death, and Paul is now able to apply spiritual revelation to his previous knowledge of the Scriptures. That is the legal side of Romans 6 (He died; I died...). If you abolish the law, you abolish the provision, and you have no legal right to be the Bride of Christ. By law, sin died so you are permitted to become the bride of Christ without being an adulteress. But if you don’t have the law (operating system) that says so, then you can’t run the program. That is why Paul is addressing those who know the law; they are the ones who can understand what he is saying. Look also at what he says elsewhere when he is giving specific advice about marriage. Notice the stipulation! *“A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.” (I Corinthians 7:39)* Remarriage after the death of a husband requires that the next husband is in Christ!

Consider Yahshua’s words and actions. In Matthew 5:17-19, He says He did not come to destroy (make null) the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill (institute/practice to their fullest). And whoever does and teaches them will be great. And in one such “legal case” in which a woman is being accused of adultery (John 8:1-11), He applies the Law (the legal operating system) to release her. *“Woman, where are your accusers; is there no one to condemn you?”* The witnesses have gone, so the correct ruling according to the Torah is that she is freed to “go and sin no more.” Yahshua did not nullify or change the Law, He applied it!

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Two Discoveries
Romans 7:7-14

At a glance:

#1 The reason why Romans seems like such a rollercoaster ride is because there is such a wide chasm between attempted obedience by the flesh (empowered by self-determination) and obedience by faith (empowered by grace).

#2 The Law without faith is death. Yet, faith without the Law is unnecessary. If you have no Law, you have no sin; if you have no sin, you have no death; if you have no death, you need no Savior.

Now ask yourself why the blood of Christ has the power to redeem you! The answer may shock you; it's because the Law says so! *"In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and WITHOUT THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD THERE IS NO FORGIVENESS."* (Hebrews 9:22 NIV) *"For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; IT IS THE BLOOD THAT MAKES ATONEMENT FOR ONE'S LIFE."* (Leviticus 17:11 NIV)

Ah yes, *"Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good."* (Romans 7:12)

TWO DISCOVERIES: ROMANS 7:7-14

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet." But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin."

Let's start from the bottom here and work our way up. This is what we know, *"The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin."* The reason why Romans seems like such a rollercoaster ride is because there is such a wide chasm between attempted obedience by the flesh (empowered by self-determination) and obedience by faith (empowered by grace). Remember who the writer is; Paul is an expert in the Law, a Hebrew of Hebrews, a Pharisee. But, those things which gave him the greatest self-worth became rubbish in comparison to faith in the Messiah (read Philippians 3:4-9). The Law without faith is death. Yet, faith without the Law is unnecessary. If you have no Law, you have no sin; if you have no sin, you have no death; if you have no death, you need no Savior. Remember, Yahshua taught us that sin is lawlessness (I John 3:4). *"Therefore the Law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good."*

One last thought here: was Paul alive once without the Law? I have a number of ideas for you to consider:

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1. There was never a time that he lived in which the Law did not exist. So, he might be referring to an age of accountability (early teen years when a young man becomes a son of (accountable to) the covenant/commandments, what we call in the modern day his 'bar-mitzvah'). When he became "officially" accountable, the blessed life that obedience to Yahweh's laws offers, instead produced death. But that death was really a good thing; it showed him that the Law is actually a spiritual thing that exposes his carnal nature and therefore his need for a Savior. And that is a very good thing!

2. He could also be referring to his "I got knocked off my donkey when I encountered Yahshua experience" (Acts 10:1-7). Prior to then, he fancied himself a perfect Jew, "*concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*" (Philippians 3:6) But, when you bump headlong into the living Mighty One, you suddenly realize you've been falling woefully short all along.

3. A final thought to consider is that Paul is also referring to mankind prior to the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. Yes, as we see in the Garden with Adam and Eve, sin was in the world prior to Sinai, but the events at Sinai increased mankind's ability to recognize their sinful natures.

**Two Principles:
Romans 7:15-25**

At a glance:

#1 Paul is the first man alive to be sorting through and committing to words what took place in him when that great transaction occurred, ideas and words that have become part of the common vernacular for you and me.

#2 We can overview life in snapshots, key moments and highlights, shards of history, but the minute details of reality can never be chronicled sufficiently, for any historical event or even in your own personal life.

TWO PRINCIPLES: ROMANS 7:15-25

"For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

This is the diary of a man who is discovering what it means to be born-again and empowered by the Holy Spirit. To us, 21st Century Christians, these struggles appear almost commonplace. We had the reformation 500 years ago; we can recall countless Holy Spirit revivals throughout history; we experienced all sorts of movements: Prayer, Charismatic, Prophetic, Pentecostal, and Messianic, to name a few; and we have study bibles, bible programs and apps; a myriad of Christian

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#3 Paul is opening his diary and allowing us to see, and possibly feel, the highlights of his journey of discovery.

#4 Do we join Paul in his struggle, or do we join him in his victory, his discovery?

#5 One thing is for sure, you are no longer a victim of sin; and when you do sin, it is simply a choice.

books, curriculum, and study guides; Christian television, radio, and the internet; and we have churches on every corner, over 300,000 of them in the the U. S. alone. You get the picture? However, Paul is the first man alive to be sorting through and committing to words what took place in him when that great transaction occurred, ideas and words that have become part of the common vernacular for you and me. So, let's sort through Paul's struggle to find out just what happened to him (and all of us) when we got knocked off "our donkeys."

I like to think about the last part of Romans 7 as taking a peek into the diary of a man on a long journey. Think carefully about your own life and history. Maybe even contemplate any historical event, then consider the words written about it, and compare them to the actual event. The words can never do justice to the seconds, minutes, and hours of reality. Sure we can overview life in snapshots, key moments and highlights, shards of history, but the minute details of reality can never be chronicled sufficiently, for any historical event or even in your own personal life. Let's consider a soldier at war, for instance. There are named battles, key strategic moments, memorial dates, and history-deciding losses and victories. And in that specific soldier's life, in his mind, he endured the expanded nano-seconds of time: the fear, the suffering, the cold, the pain, the doubt, the hope, the confusion, and the terrible longing for his loved ones; he personally experienced every moment, moments that history never recorded. Can you feel it?

Now, take a look back at Paul's struggle, his dilemma. You are reading an encapsulation. He is opening his diary and allowing us to see, and possibly feel, the highlights of his journey of discovery; "*Who will deliver me from this body of death?*" Yes, it all comes down to this journal entry; "Thank you Father, your Son has ALREADY delivered me from this struggle. I get it now, my flesh serves the law of sin; but, the new man, born-again in Messiah, serves the laws of my Creator."

And then there is the great take-away for all of us. Do we join Paul in his struggle, or do we join him in his victory, his discovery? You have his diary entries to draw from; why repeat his mistakes? Choose NOW to agree with the law of sin that has you doing all sorts of things you know you shouldn't do and neglecting all the things that you should be doing, or live as the new creature you are and serve the laws of your Creator who sent His Son to die for you that you might be born-again and filled with the power of His Holy Spirit. One thing is for sure, you are no longer a victim of sin; and when you do sin, it is simply a choice.

[Note For Theological Purposes]

Notice the two laws in verses 22 and 23, the Law of God and the law of sin. *For I delight in the LAW OF GOD according to the inward man. But I see ANOTHER LAW in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into*

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**No Condemnation:
Spirit and Law
Romans 8:1-4**

At a glance:

#1 "No condemnation" is reserved for those who walk according to the Spirit.

#2 The power Yahweh used to raise Yahshua from the grave is available to us as an inheritance.

#3 What will you do with the resurrection power that has been granted to you?

#4 Yahweh's grace does not extend to willful sin.

#5 Yahshua specifically "condemns sin in the flesh" because the righteous requirement of the law requires condemnation for sin.

captivity to the LAW OF SIN which is in my members. Yahshua never came to abolish His Father's Laws, but instead, the law of sin. "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law." (Romans 3:31)

CHAPTER 8 "LIBERATION FROM SIN"

NO CONDEMNATION: SPIRIT AND LAW: ROMANS 8:1-4

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

It is no surprise that Paul would balance the rollercoaster ride, from what some people might consider pretty harsh self-condemnation in the last chapter, with a bold doctrinal statement. "No condemnation!" Yet, there is a serious caveat here, one not often preached in services that are more like G-rated entertainment than they are concerned with solid doctrine. "No condemnation" is reserved for those who walk according to the Spirit. You see, you have been freed from the law of sin and the death that comes with it. Yet, you also have a choice to go back and live by the flesh.

In Ephesians 1:19-20, we learn from Paul that the power Yahweh used to raise Yahshua from the grave is available to us as an inheritance. We learned in chapter 6 of Romans that our "old man" was crucified and died. So, here is the question: what will you do with the resurrection power that has been granted to you? If you "choose" to raise the old man (sinful flesh) from the grave, instead of living by the "Spirit of life in Christ Jesus [that] has made me free from the law of sin and death," the "no condemnation" thing does not apply.

Yahweh's grace does not extend to willful sin. "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries." (Hebrews 10:26-27). Yahshua specifically "condemns sin in the flesh" because the righteous requirement of the law requires condemnation for sin; living according to the Spirit fulfills that requirement. But, if you choose to live in the flesh you are not covered. The operative word here is "choose."

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**No Obligation: Spirit
and Flesh**
Romans 8:5-17

At a glance:

#1 Life begins in the mind. And consequently death starts there also. It is your choice to make.

#2 We are going to follow the rabbit hole to the prophetic end of human initiative.

#3 This is the perfect time to bring clarity to what is the most important gospel message in the New Testament, The Gospel of the Kingdom.

#4 The entirety of the Church mission, the prophetic end-game, is aimed at building people until they become like Messiah.

#5 John the Baptist was the prophet who fulfilled the ministry of Elijah before the first coming of Messiah. But there must also be second Elijah who comes before the second coming.

#6 Elijah comes and restores all things and then Jesus can leave His spot in heaven and come again.

NO OBLIGATION: SPIRIT AND FLESH: ROMANS 8:5-17

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”

Again, Paul flexes his Hebrew muscle by emphasizing that life begins in the mind. And consequently death starts there also. And notice the absolute assurance that it is your choice to make. You can set your mind on carnality, or you can live according to the Spirit. Yes, the work of the cross is what gives you the choice, no doubt; without it we are all involuntary slaves to sin. But, if you have the Spirit you have become one of Yahweh’s chess pieces in His prophetic plan for humanity. I am getting back to something I introduced earlier in my commentary on Romans 5:12-21, human initiative. And before we move on in Romans we are going to follow the rabbit hole to the prophetic end of this human initiative.

The Gospel of the Kingdom

This is the perfect time to bring clarity to what is the most important gospel message in the New Testament, The Gospel of the Kingdom. The book of Romans is emphatic about what reconciles us to Yahweh, the free gift of redemption or justification by faith. We have, thus far, identified this as “imputed righteousness.” We also spoke about “earned righteousness” which, includes with it, a BIG question. What will you do with the grace that has been freely given to you? Will you resurrect the “old man” or walk in the newness of life, the fullness of the Spirit? The transformation process begins and is empowered by God, but also involves human initiative (free will), which begins in the mind. Be transformed by

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#7 John's (the Baptist) ministry was to pave the way for Yahshua and to point to what the Kingdom looks like. Yahshua is exactly what it looks like when the Sprit of God is fully manifested (revealed) in a human (son), "the revealing of the son(s) of God."

#8 What will the end-of-the-age look like? It begins with the revealing of the sons of God (us) and continues into eternity as we, joint heirs, rule and reign with Christ in the increase of His Government, which has no end.

#9 If Yahweh had no interest in our participation in His plan, then why give us the choice to live by the flesh or live by the Spirit?

#10 The spiritual mind loves Yahweh and is happily subjected to His laws, resulting in life and peace.

#11 Redemption is free, being a disciple will cost you everything.

#12 We are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, IF INDEED WE SUFFER WITH HIM.

#13 "If" indeed we suffer? It sounds like "losing your life, or forsaking all you have."

the renewing of your mind, Paul exhorts in Romans 12:2. And it concludes with obtaining the mind of Messiah (I Corinthians 2:17). This is the entirety of the Church mission. The prophetic end-game is aimed at building people until they become like Messiah. *"Until we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."* (Ephesians 4:13)

Now, let me put this all in human terms. We will, as humans, on earth, eventually (at some point in human history before Christ's second coming) become like Him (perfect). The "prophetic moment" in time, the final initiation of this process, is the main topic in our next section, and is identified as the "revealing of the sons of God." (Romans 8:19) Let's travel back to the first century to explore the pattern of how all this might happen.

John the Baptist was the prophet who fulfilled the ministry of Elijah before the first coming of Messiah. Prophetically, he was the first Elijah before the first coming. But there must also be a second Elijah who comes before the second coming (the great and dreadful day of the Lord). Jesus taught us about both dispensations of Elijah when asked a provocative question by his close friends.

"The disciples asked him, "Why then do the teachers of the law [scribes] say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus replied, "To be sure, ELIJAH COMES AND WILL RESTORE ALL THINGS [surely Jesus is not referring to John, but instead to Malachi's prophesy—see below] . But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist [who DID NOT restore all things]." (Matthew 17:10-13 NIV)

Elijah has come already (his spirit in John the Baptist) and is coming again, this time to restore all things. And the Elijah "who is coming to restore all things" is prophesied about in Malachi. *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet BEFORE THE COMING OF THE GREAT AND DREADFUL DAY OF THE LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."* (Malachi 4:5-6) His is the final restoration ministry before the "day of the LORD".

And we know from Peter, in the book of Acts, that Yahshua must remain in heaven until this restoration takes place.

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, WHOM HEAVEN MUST RECEIVE UNTIL THE TIMES OF RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS, which God has

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spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:19-21)

Let’s keep things in perspective. Jesus has already come and gone (crucified—buried—resurrected—ascended). Peter is referring to the second coming here, to which he adds some prophetic notes about Elijah. “Repent...!” That is the heart’s cry of Elijah, “the how” of Elijah’s ministry, as we will see more clearly in a moment. Then Peter says “until”, clearly reflecting on “the when” this ministry will be fulfilled, which Jesus taught him in Matthew 17 when revealing “the what” of Elijah’s ministry, the restoration of all things. Elijah comes and restores all things and then Jesus can leave His spot in heaven and come again. [Note: there is even more to add to this revelation regarding Peter’s next words in Acts 3:22-23, but I will save it for the next section of Romans 8.] For now, let’s rewind a bit more and explore the Elijah ministry.

John’s (the Baptist) ministry was to pave the way for Yahshua and to point to what the Kingdom looks like. “Repent, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 3:1-3) There is that word again—repent! In other words, turn back to Yahweh, this Yahshua is exactly what it looks like when the Spirit of God is fully manifested (revealed) in a human (son), “the revealing of the son(s) of God.” That is what the Kingdom looks like, God in flesh, Yahshua. We too will eventually be “revealed as sons of God, and all of creation is eagerly waiting (see Romans 8:19).

We, who at the end-of-the-age, carry the spirit of Elijah (and perhaps with the original Elijah, there is no record that he ever died, see 2 Kings 2:1-14), then participate in the restoration of all things (read Acts 3:19-23 and Matthew 17:10-13 again if needed). And we, as forerunners to Christ’s second coming, usher in the return of Yahshua by fulfilling the ministry of those who make straight a path in the wilderness (Isaiah 40:3 and Matthew 3:3).

John the Baptist came out from the wilderness preaching “Repent...”, and then he paved the way into the wilderness for Yahshua. When Yahshua emerged from the wilderness His first recorded words were a prophetic masterpiece. *“From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”” (Matthew 4:17)* Yes, as prophesied by Isaiah, the way to the Kingdom comes by way of the wilderness. However, when John declared the Kingdom was at hand, he was directing his words outward toward Yahshua. When Yahshua spoke the same words, He was pointing inward. *“The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.” (Luke 17:20-21)*

What a prophetic masterpiece!

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The way in the wilderness—Elijah (John)—repentance—the Kingdom (over there)—the way in the wilderness—Messiah (Yahshua)—repentance—the Kingdom (in here)! And what's next? What will the end-of-the-age look like? You better believe it. A wilderness—an Elijah—total repentance (restoration of all things)—the Kingdom established (on earth as it is in Heaven)—Yahshua's second coming (we rule and reign with Him.)

And this final process begins with the revealing of the sons of God and continues into eternity as we, joint heirs, rule and reign with Christ in the increase of His Government, which has no end.

“Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” (Isaiah 9:7) The Angel revealed to Mary, yes this is He of whom the prophet spoke; *“He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And HE WILL REIGN OVER THE HOUSE OF JACOB FOREVER, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” (Luke 1:32-33)*

And to be clear; our King Yahshua was not meant to rule this Kingdom alone, as the writer of Hebrews so masterfully refers to the Psalm of David.

“For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. But one testified in a certain place, saying: “What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet.” [From Psalm 8:4-6] For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. BUT NOW WE DO NOT YET SEE ALL THINGS PUT UNDER HIM.” (Hebrews 2:5-8) This is the Gospel of the Kingdom. It has not been fulfilled yet, but it is coming! And it all starts with the transformed mind. *“For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.” (Luke 17:21)*

[End The Gospel of the Kingdom outtake]

Now back to Romans 8. If Yahweh had no interest in our participation in His plan, then why give us the choice to live by the flesh or live by the Spirit? Certainly you had no choice prior to being born-again (and in reality no choice to be born-again, it was all Him!). But, after that Paul emphasizes, “if you live according to the flesh...or, if by the Spirit you put to death the flesh...” So we need the Spirit first to even have a choice. Yet, the word “if” does emphasize our participation. Here is the reasoning again. *If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you* (and the power that comes with it, Ephesians 1:19-20), then what will you do

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with it? And it's doctrinally clear here that if you are of Messiah you have the Spirit (that's the part you had nothing to do with). And if you allow the Spirit to animate your mind; the physical manifestation will be life to your mortal body.

And we can't overlook Paul's precise balancing act regarding the Law, yet again. His clarification on the topic is repeated so often in Romans that he must be concerned the Church will muck up this doctrine! It is clear that a Spirit-filled mind results in something. He explains it this time by emphasizing the backside of of the faith-based-obedience coin, enmity toward Yahweh. The carnal mind hates Him and refuses to be subjected to His laws. So, obviously the spiritual mind loves Him and is happily subjected to them, resulting in life and peace. And if you won't obey His laws, it is impossible to please Him (and impossible to govern with Him!).

I hear so much in the Church about the free gift of redemption through the blood of Messiah (note: redemption is often erroneously referred to as salvation, which is actually the end result of living life as a redeemed person; in other words, temporal well-being; life to your mortal body). Of course, redemption as a free gift is true; yet every doctrine has two sides of the coin. Sure it cost you nothing to be born-again and it cost Him everything. But that is just the beginning. The free gift then makes you a debtor. Again, not a popular message if you are only seeking to be entertained. You now must put to death the deeds of the flesh; you owe it to Yahweh. I like to say it like this; your redemption is free, being a disciple will cost you everything. Instead of my commentary on the matter, let's just read the words of Yahshua on the subject:

"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, AND HIS OWN LIFE ALSO, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'? Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not FORSAKE ALL THAT HE HAS cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:26-33)

Does that sound free to you? If we are led by the Spirit we are now considered "sons of God," joint heirs with Yahshua (although not fully manifested yet). Ah, but again, it's not free! There is another "if" involved here. *"We are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, IF INDEED WE*

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**No Separation: Spirit
and Suffering
Romans 8:18-30**

At a glance:

#1 Yahweh's prophetic is the ultimate truth (in revelation) ministry; and thus so, this is Paul's 'piece de resistance' on truth, his 'tour de force' on the coming reality.

#2 Having rights to an inheritance is not the same as becoming a fully mature (adult) steward of that inheritance. Soon the world will know which of His sons (children) have finally grown up.

#3 The glory revealed in His children is the future of Yahweh's "human initiative partners".

#4 So much of Christian doctrine, and certainly eschatology, is zoomed in on the return of Jesus. But that is not the next great destination on the prophetic roadmap.

#5 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

SUFFER WITH HIM, that we may also be glorified together." Did you catch the "if" indeed we suffer? It sounds a lot like "losing your life, or forsaking all that you have."

And coming up next in the last part of chapter 8 is Paul's prophetic Magnum Opus. Yahshua's blood gives us the right to be called Yahweh's children (sons of God). But having rights to an inheritance is not the same as becoming a fully mature (adult) steward of that inheritance. Soon the world will know which of His sons (children) have finally grown up.

NO SEPARATION: SPIRIT AND SUFFERING: ROMANS 8:18-39

(18-30) "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

In the previous section of commentary I made a bold assessment about this portion of chapter 8. I called it Paul's prophetic Magnum Opus. Yahweh's prophetic is the ultimate truth (in revelation) ministry; and thus so, this is Paul's 'piece de resistance' on truth, his 'tour de force' on the coming reality. Okay, enough of the cool foreign phrases. It is his most spectacular achievement in prophetic doctrine and, unfortunately, one that has passed under the radar of Christianity for 2000 years.

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#6 Restoration comes BEFORE His return, not BECAUSE OF His return. That begs the question; how do the times of refreshing and restoration come? Answer: through the revealing of the sons of God.

#7 The revealing of the sons is a Passover.

#8 Before Messiah comes, first must come the restoration prophet like Moses.

#9 Passover revealed who were Yahweh's firstborn sons and who were not?

#10 If you were not a firstborn, you were neither the beneficiary of applying the blood on the doorpost, nor at risk if you didn't.

#11 All those who did not require the blood, all the non-firstborns, prophetically represent the "missing people group" we introduced earlier.

#12 All those covered by the blood of Yahshua are AUTOMATICALLY considered firstborns and are destined as RULERS. We are the church of the firstborns!

Let me continue by first repeating my own final words of commentary from the previous section, so we can then do a full exposition of verses 18-30, in all there profound revelation. *"But having rights to an inheritance is not the same as becoming a fully mature (adult) steward of that inheritance. Soon the world will know which of His sons (children) have finally grown up."*

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:" (John 1:12) We have the right (inheritance) to become sons (children) of God when we are born-again. But that is not the same as being "revealed" as sons, in other words, maturing into adults who can manage that inheritance. Paul speaks of his (or our) present day suffering being nothing when compared to the glory that shall (future, not his/our present born-again condition) be revealed. What glory is Paul speaking of, and why don't we have it now? One thing is for sure, Paul knew his prophetic destination. "Not that I have already attained, or am ALREADY PERFECTED; BUT I PRESS ON, THAT I MAY LAY HOLD OF THAT FOR WHICH CHRIST JESUS HAS ALSO LAID HOLD OF ME. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of THE UPWARD CALL of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:12-14)

It would be best to explain this "perfection, this "upward call", using Paul's own words from other epistles. In the following excerpts I placed key phrases in ALL CAPS so you can easily recognize the prophetic future. And let me reiterate by again emphasizing Paul's words from here in chapter 8 of Romans; **"the glory which shall be revealed in us."** This glory revealed in His children is the future of Yahweh's "human initiative partners."

"To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man PERFECT IN CHRIST JESUS. TO THIS END I ALSO LABOR, striving according to His working which works in me mightily." (Colossians 1:27-29)

"However, we speak wisdom among those WHO ARE MATURE, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages FOR OUR GLORY". (I Corinthians 2:6-7)

"For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" BUT WE HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST." (I Corinthians 2:16)

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“Until we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, TO A PERFECT MAN, TO THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST.” (Ephesians 4:13)

Here is the future glory ordained for Yahweh’s human initiative partners:

- Messiah in you
- Presented in perfection
- Mature adults
- Understanding Yahweh's hidden mysteries
- Possessing the mind of Messiah
- Measuring up to the perfection, stature, and fullness of Messiah

And that is all drawn from Romans 8:18. But, verse 19 is the true prophetic key: *“For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.”*

There is so much packed into this one verse, but I’ll begin with two hints. ‘Creation’ refers to what? And ‘revealing’ implies what? Creation refers to... Yes, creation! All of creation was corrupted with Adam’s sin in the garden and it has been waiting for a restoration. And it will take a revealing or manifestation of sons for that garden restoration to happen. So much of Christian doctrine, and certainly eschatology, is zoomed in on the return of Jesus. But that is not the next great destination on the prophetic roadmap. The Scriptures teach something very different. And ‘revealing’ implies that something else is coming first. We spent a lot of time explaining the following scripture in our previous section, but the space will not be wasted if I repeat it again here.

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that TIMES OF REFRESHING MAY COME from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, WHOM HEAVEN MUST RECEIVE UNTIL THE TIMES OF RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:19-21)

You realize now that the restoration comes BEFORE His return, not BECAUSE OF His return. That begs the question; how do the times of refreshing and restoration come? Answer: through the revealing of the sons of God. *And “creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” (Romans 8:21)*

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So, before we can go a step further, I am going to ask you to put on your best prophetic hat. These Romans' passages (vv. 18-30) are pregnant with prophetic insight. Think for a moment; what event is Paul talking about?

1. Groaning in labor
2. Unwilling subjects of futility
3. Called according to His purpose
4. Delivered from bondage
5. Eagerly waiting for redemption
6. Sons being revealed
7. Deliverance into freedom
8. Firstborn like Messiah

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, and yes. He is talking about the Exodus and the PASSOVER! Let's go ahead and draw the parallels from the Exodus story. Use the [numbers] inserted in the Exodus passages to reference the above list.

"And I have also heard the GROANING [1] of the children of Israel whom the EGYPTIANS KEEP IN BONDAGE [2], and I HAVE REMEMBERED MY COVENANT [3]. Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I WILL RESCUE YOU FROM THEIR BONDAGE [4], and I will REDEEM YOU WITH AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM [5] and with great judgments. I WILL TAKE YOU AS MY PEOPLE [6], and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will BRING YOU INTO THE LAND [7] which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD.' " (Exodus 6:5-8)

And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all males that open the womb, BUT ALL THE FIRSTBORN OF MY SONS I REDEEM [8]." (Exodus 13:15)

The revealing of the sons is a Passover. That should be a profound revelation, but now we must also bring deep insight about Moses (I promised earlier to go deeper into Peter's revelation in Acts 3, now's the time!). It will take a Moses (Prophet) to initiate the restoration, and this also supports the idea that Yahweh is looking for human initiative in the RESTORATION. In Acts 3:19-21 above, it is clear that

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Yahshua remains in heaven UNTIL the times of refreshing and restoration. And the next verses give a hint about how that will occur.

“For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’” (Acts 3:22-23)

Before Messiah comes, first must come the restoration prophet like Moses. Where is Peter, the one giving the speech in Acts, getting this stuff from?

“‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a PROPHET LIKE ME [Moses is speaking] from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’” (Deuteronomy 18:15-16)

CHANGE ADDED THREE VERSES

“The LORD your God will raise up a prophet like me from your community, from your fellow Israelites. He’s the one you must listen to. That’s exactly what you requested from the LORD your God at Horeb, on the day of the assembly, when you said, “I can’t listen to the LORD my God’s voice anymore or look at this great fire any longer. I don’t want to die!” The LORD said to me: What they’ve said is right. I’ll raise up a prophet for them from among their fellow Israelites—one just like you. I’ll put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. I myself will hold accountable anyone who doesn’t listen to my words, which that prophet will speak in my name.”

Deuteronomy 18:15-19 CEB

And what precedent is there for a Moses to have such God-like authority?

“So the LORD said to Moses: “See, I HAVE MADE YOU AS GOD TO PHARAOH, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land.” (Exodus 7:1-2)

Who is the Prophet like Moses who is coming, and why must he come before the Messiah? The reason I am taking the time to bring further clarity on the topic, even though we spent so much time on it in our previous section, is because it is pervasive doctrine throughout all of Christendom that Moses is prophesying about Jesus here. And if you stick with that belief, the prophetic framework crumbles.

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In the interrogation of John the Baptist we learn:

“And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “ARE YOU THE PROPHET?” And he answered, “No.” Then they said to him, “Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?” He said: “I am ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Make straight the way of the LORD,” ’ as the prophet Isaiah said [in Is. 40:3].”” (John 1:21-23)

Is John the the prophet [like Moses]? He is not willing to say, but he is sure of one thing; he had to come first to prepare the way for the Messiah. However, Yahshua clears up the uncertainty in a passage we’ve already explored. Elijah is coming and has come [as John the Baptist].

“And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Indeed, ELIJAH IS COMING FIRST and will RESTORE ALL THINGS. But I say to you that ELIJAH HAS COME ALREADY, and they did not know him [John the Baptist] but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.”” (Matthew 17:10-12)

Yes, they mocked and killed John the Baptist; they could not recognize that he was the prophet who must come first to prepare the way in the wilderness for the Messiah’s first coming, and that Elijah must come again to restore all things before the Messiah’s final return. Let me repeat this to stress the importance; the times of refreshing must come and Yahshua will remain in heaven until the restoration of all things (Acts 3:19-21). And from Yahshua's own mouth, “Elijah is coming first and will restore all things.” Elijah is THE PROPHET like Moses prophesied in [Deuteronomy 18:15-19](#) and Acts 3:22-23. And here is absolute confirmation in the last book of the Old Testament that it is, in fact, Elijah. Again, repeating a passage we’ve just studied.

““Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you ELIJAH THE PROPHET before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”” (Malachi 4:4-6)

One other interesting connection between Moses and Elijah is on the Mount of Transfiguration (read Matthew 17:1-5). Moses and Elijah appear together. And when Peter is speaking, Yahweh’s voice proclaimed from the clouds, *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”* These exact words were echoed from heaven immediately after John (Elijah) baptized Yahshua (read Matthew 3:16-17). I will expound more on this in chapter 12.

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**No Separation: Spirit
and Suffering
Romans 8:31-39**

At a glance:

#1 Who shall bring a charge against Yahweh's people? Whose condemnation shall stand?

#2 The firstborn is representative of the continuation of a culture, the survival of a nation.

So, Elijah, the prophet like Moses must come first to restore all things. This begins at Passover and the revealing of the sons of God. Is it any wonder why, for centuries, millions of Jews around the world reserve an empty chair at their table for, and open the door in search of Elijah? Think about it; in the Exodus, what did Passover reveal? It revealed who were Yahweh's firstborn sons and who were not? All firstborns who were not His sons died in Egypt. Reread Romans 8:29: *"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN."* The redemption of the firstborn is Passover language.

"For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the FIRSTBORN in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt." (Exodus 12:12-13)

I want to make an important distinction here. It brings further insight into the prophetic model that teaches there are three, not two, eternal people groups. And it has everything to do with understanding firstborns. The firstborns, and the firstborns ONLY, were the ones redeemed in the Passover. If you were not a firstborn, you were neither the beneficiary of applying the blood on the doorpost, nor at risk if you didn't. All those who did not require the blood, all the non-firstborns, prophetically represent the "missing people group" we introduced earlier, the mortal, but potentially eternal, human CITIZENS of the new earth. We've previously described them as those with faith who DON'T HAVE THE BLOOD covering them. Is it starting to become clear? Fear not, all those covered by the blood of Yahshua are AUTOMATICALLY considered firstborns and are destined as RULERS. We are the church of the firstborns!

"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN WHO ARE REGISTERED IN HEAVEN, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of JUST MEN MADE PERFECT." (Hebrews 12:22-23)

Paul rounds out this section by reiterating that we are predestined to be conformed into the image of His Son, which is the picture of the revealed sons of God being perfected, the prophetic destination of the firstborn. And that it is a work of the Spirit in us. Yes, we must be justified first (made right by His work), which then leads us to glory, the revealing of the sons of God.

(31-39) What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge

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#3 Possibly the most important scripture about the end-of-the-age. "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then THE END WILL COME."

#4 The end prophesied by Yahshua's here is not His second coming. It is the end of the world system as we know it; it's the coming of Elijah; it's the revealing of the sons of God; it is an exodus; it is the final Passover.

**Israel's Election Described:
Blessings of Election
Romans 9:1-5**

**Basis of Election
Abraham, Isaac, Jacob
Romans 9:6-13**

against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The final verses of Romans 8 (31-39) also speak of the Passover. And this time the main focus is on the Lamb which brings redemption.

"Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. (Exodus 12:5-7) For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you." (Exodus 12:23)

Look at the final imagery as you recall the Passover story. Paul draws again upon the words of King David (most likely author), this time from the musings of Psalm 44:22. Yes, a stark reminder that it is Yahweh alone who pushes back our enemies and it is Yahweh alone who makes us a reproach. And Paul chooses the words in the sober psalm that recall the Passover. *"We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."*

But in the end, who shall bring a charge against Yahweh's people? Whose condemnation shall stand? Egypt's couldn't. Could tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword separate us from His plan? No, even the angel of death could not conquer His love and plan for His people. Yahweh will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your house. It is the Passover.

I would like to offer one last morsel for you to chew on. You've now learned that it takes the Prophet Elijah and the revealing of the sons of God to begin the restoration of all things. And it begins with a Passover, the quintessential picture of the revealing of sons (the identification of Yahweh's adult children), and at the same time the end of Egyptian dominance (the world system). Why? The firstborn is representative of the continuation of a culture, the survival of a nation. And in the Passover Egypt died. Now read possibly the most important scripture about

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At a glance:

#1 There is a clear distinction between Israelites who believe Yahshua is the Messiah and those who don't.

#2 When Paul compares his past life as an excellent "without Messiah" Hebrew to his new life in Messiah, he calls it rubbish.

#3 Israel means "one who prevails with God".

#4 The New Testament equivalent of Genesis 32:26, "I will not let You go unless you bless me!" is Matthew 11:12, "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."

#5 There is an undeniable separation between those who believe and are also cleansed by the blood of Yahshua, and those who believe and are not cleansed.

#6 You should be able to identify three, NOT TWO, distinct destinies, by looking at the three crosses of Calvary. One is the rebel who never repents. One is that of the repentant sinner. And the third is the perfect man, the fullness, and stature, and image of Messiah. Which one is you?

the end-of-the-age. *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then THE END WILL COME. (Matthew 24:14)* We've already explained in detail this "Gospel of the Kingdom." But, the end prophesied by Yahshua here is not His second coming. It is the end of the world system as we know it; it's the coming of Elijah; it's the revealing of the sons of God; it is an exodus; it is the final Passover.

CHAPTER 9 "ISRAEL'S ELECTION"

ISRAEL'S ELECTION DESCRIBED: BLESSINGS OF ELECTION: ROMANS 9:1-5 BASIS OF ELECTION: ROMANS 9:6-13

(1-5) "I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.

(6-13) But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son." And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."

Who else could do it? Twelve times in the next 33 verses Paul taps into his deep understand of the Hebrew Scriptures. Twelve times! (v.7 Gen. 21:12; v.9 Gen.18:10,14; v.12 Gen. 25:23; v.13 Mal. 1:2-3; v.14 Ex. 33:19; v.17 Ex. 9:16; v.20 Is. 29:16, 45:9; v.25 Hosea 2:23; v.26 Hosea 1:10; v.28 Is. 10:22-23; v.29 Is. 1:9; v.33 Is. 8:14, 28:16). Yes, Israel was the guardian of the oracles of God. Yet they still missed it. How could they?

As we move into the next doctrinal highlight of Romans, this is a good time to expand on the idea of the three eternal people groups. It's obvious here that Paul has something important to say about Israel. And there is a clear distinction between Israelites who believe Yahshua is the Messiah (like he does) and those who don't. And Paul is burdened for the "unbeliever." In the conclusion of chapter

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#7 The various ministry offices in the Church have one over-arching purpose—to grow up born-again children into mature adults who are conformed into the image of Christ.

#8 Believers who have been conformed into Yahshua's image after that final Passover, the generation who DO become like Him, will rule and reign with Him in that new earth.

#9 The final citizens of earth, flesh and blood bodies, must eat from the tree of life bearing twelve fruits for the healing of the nations to live forever.

#10 Natural Israel are those who believe in Yahweh but who are not covered by the blood of Yahshua. They will become the new earth's permanent citizens.

8, Paul tells us that nothing can separate us from the love of Yahweh that is in the Messiah Yahshua. But what about those of Israel who don't accept Yahshua? Remember, at one time Paul was one of them, and a good one at that. But when he compares his past life as an excellent "without Messiah" Hebrew to his new life in Messiah, he calls it rubbish.

"Though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as RUBBISH, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith." (Philippians 3:4-9)

Israel—where did the name come from? And what does it mean? Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jacob renamed Israel (Genesis 32:24-28), Israel had twelve sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel. Israel means "one who prevails with God". Jacob wrestled with an angel (possibly the pre-incarnate Messiah) and overcame. He would not let go until he received a blessing. Israel identifies those who overcome with the Mighty One. To me this is the spiritual tenacity of a pit bull, and does not sound like a heritage of unbelief. I see the New Testament equivalent of Genesis 32:26, "I will not let You go unless you bless me!" as being Matthew 11:12, "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." Spiritual violence: grab onto the promises of God and DON'T LET GO!

So, I would hardly say we could throw Israelites in the same camp as rebellious unbelievers. Their heritage is that of belief. They are Yahweh's chosen, and yet there is an undeniable separation between those who believe and are also cleansed by the blood of Yahshua, and those who believe and are not cleansed. [Refer back to the commentary on the firstborn and Passover in chapter 8, pg. 43, 44; acknowledge the pattern that there is an entire people group who LIVED and WERE NOT required to be covered by the blood.]

Who are the true sons of Abraham? *"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:26-29)* Clearly, the ultimate (best) promise is to those who have faith in Messiah Yahshua. *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to*

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those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12-13) But what of the destiny of those who have the blood of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob, but not the blood of Yahshua?

In the Church, there is a prevailing storyline. Those who have Jesus die and go to heaven; those who don't have Jesus die and go to hell. It's a simple black and white equation, with two possible eternal destinies. But, I'd like you, again, to reconsider a few things, now that you have had some practice wearing your prophetic hat. There were three men on the crosses of Calvary, two thieves and one Savior. Which do you identify with? If you answer like almost every other Christian I have ever asked this question, you identify with the repentant sinner. *“Then he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” (Luke 23:42).* That was all of us at one point. We go from the cross of the unrepentant thief to the cross of the repentant thief. But is that your ultimate destiny? Don't forget, it was just in the last chapter that we learned, *“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Romans 8:29)* So, your ultimate destiny is not that of the repentant sinner; but instead, that of the Messiah. *“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” (Romans 8:16-17)* We are not called as lesser heirs, “second sons”, but as firstborn joint (equal) heirs. This might be a supremely profound revelation, but it is true nevertheless.

So, you should now be able to identify three, NOT TWO, distinct destinies. One, of course, is the rebel who never repents. One is that of the repentant sinner who has no time to be conformed into the image of the Son. Yet, the third is the perfect man, the fullness, and stature, and image of Messiah (Ephesians 4:13). That is your destiny. Go ahead and read, yet again, why the “ministry of the Church” even exists. *“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a PERFECT man, TO THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST; that we should NO LONGER BE CHILDREN, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may GROW UP in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—” (Ephesians 4:11-15)* Look at Paul's language carefully; the various ministry offices in the Church have one over-arching purpose—to grow up born-again children into mature adults who are conformed into the image of Christ. You

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**Israel's Election
Defended
Romans 9:14-33**

At a glance:

#1 Yahweh has a divine purpose for everything He does, and He makes an Esau and a Pharaoh to help create the clear dividing line within these three groups.

#2 There is no unrighteousness in Yahweh because He created some for heaven, some for earth, and some for destruction.

#3 The parable about the different soils shows three distinct destinies.

#4 A remnant of Israel will escape (be separated from) the house of Jacob and return to the Holy One of Israel (be saved).

#5 The righteousness of faith (belief plus the blood of Messiah) is clearly distinguished from works of law (belief plus the bloodline of Jacob).

are not called to remain as the repentant thief, a sinner saved by grace, but rather to become like Messiah.

Three crosses, three eternal destinies: the rebel, the citizen, and the ruler. *"If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us."* (II Timothy 2:12) We are destined to rule and reign with Messiah. *"What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, AND YOU HAVE CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR. YOU HAVE MADE HIM TO HAVE DOMINION OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS; You have put all things under his feet,"* (Psalms 8:4-6)

There will some day be a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1). And believers who have been conformed into His image after that final Passover, the generation who DO become like Him, will rule and reign with Him in that new earth. Our permanent (joint-heir) bodies will be glorified just like His. We will be unconditionally immortal and eternal. But who will we reign over? Consider again Adam, the original flesh and blood man; he needed to eat from the tree of life to live forever. Once he was cut off, it was only a matter of time until he died. Yes, the final citizens of earth, also flesh and blood bodies, must eat from the tree of life bearing twelve (tribes) fruits for the healing of the nations to live forever. They are mortal, but conditionally eternal. They are the new subjects of the Kingdom, and permanent citizens of earth (Revelation 22:2). They are considered natural Israel (12 tribes) who believed in Yahweh but who were never covered by the blood.

Yes, it might be accurate to call citizenship rubbish in comparison to rulership, but its a whole lot better than the fate of the rebels!

ISRAEL'S ELECTION DEFENDED: ROMANS 9:14-33

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy,

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which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved." "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God." Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved. For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth." And as Isaiah said before: "Unless the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah." What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.""

Let's talk about Yahweh's sovereignty. I'll first repeat the final words of Paul from Romans 9:11-13. *"For the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls, it was said to her, 'The older shall serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.'"* Yahweh's purpose by His election, "It's not fair." How can He judge us before we had any chance to choose either good or evil for ourselves; we are only walking on the path He created for us? If you look carefully in this last section of Romans 9, you will see again, the three distinct people groups. Yahweh has a divine purpose for everything He does, and He makes an Esau and a Pharaoh to help create the clear dividing line within these three groups.

But, before I elaborate the details, let me just ask this. Is there any unrighteousness in Yahweh because He created some for heaven, some for earth, and some for destruction? Actually, we all deserve destruction! Meditate rather on gratefulness for not being cast out, even though that is what you deserved. He is the Grand Designer whose plan is beyond us, unless as mature adult believers, we search out His mysteries. They are available for us to know. *"For 'WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD that he may instruct Him?' But WE HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST." (I Corinthians 2:16) "And the disciples came and said to Him, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?' He answered and said to them, 'Because it has been given to you TO KNOW THE MYSTERIES of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.' (Matthew 13:10-11, the soil parable)* One of these mysteries is to recognize the three distinct destinies, and *"Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the*

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prophets.” (Amos 3:7) And if you are called to be a Ruler, with His royal blood coursing in your veins, then it is your responsibility to search them out. “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter.” (Proverbs 25:2) Let’s search out the mystery in the Matthew 13:1-23 parable about the different soils. Yes, there are four soils, but only three distinct destinies. “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those IN HEAVEN, and of those ON EARTH, and of those UNDER THE EARTH...” (Philippians 2:10)

1. Seed sowed on the wayside: seed devoured before it takes root, recipient does not understand at all and the wicked one snatches it away—the Rebel (under the earth).
2. Seed sowed on the stony places or among thorns: seed takes shallow roots, recipient does hear and receives it with joy, but physical priorities take precedent—the Citizen (on earth)
3. Seed sowed on good ground: seed takes deep roots, recipient hears and understands, yields abundant fruit—the Ruler (in heaven)

So, let’s identify the three distinct people groups in this Romans passage. We have vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor; Paul also calls them vessels of mercy prepared for glory, and vessels of wrath prepared for destruction. Those are two distinct groups, the Ruler Class and the Rebel Class. And as the Prophet Hosea assures us, those of the Ruling Class will come from both Jew and Gentile. Where is the third class? Notice the transition in verse 27 *“Isaiah ALSO cries out concerning Israel.”* There is that name again, Israel. And he’s about to divide them into two destinies, Rulers and Citizens. Paul noted the Ruler Class from Israel already (even us whom He called, not of the Jews only... verse 24) But, there ALSO remains a natural Israel that is neither a vessel prepared for glory nor destruction. Let’s read Paul’s Isaiah reference directly from Isaiah chapter 10 and it should become clear. Remember, some of Israel and some Gentiles shall be called “sons of the living God,” (Rulers) according to Hosea. So where do we see a permanent “natural Israel”; where are the Citizens?

“And it shall come to pass in that day that the remnant of Israel, and such as have escaped of the house of Jacob, will never again depend on him who defeated them, but will depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God. For though your people, O Israel, BE AS THE SAND OF THE SEA [EARTH], a remnant of them will return; The destruction decreed shall overflow with righteousness. For the Lord GOD of hosts will make a determined end In the midst of all the land.” (Isaiah 10:20-23)

A remnant of Israel will escape (be separated from) the house of Jacob and return to the Holy One of Israel (be saved). They are the ones who become “sons.” There

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**Reason for Rejection:
Romans 10:1-13**

At a glance:

#1 The offer of redemption is the same for all, Jew and Greek. But, the path to justification can look very different for each.

#2 The Greeks have so many Gods that hearing of “another God” is just another day at the office.

#3 The Israelites already KNOW the one true God and are not really open to hearing about how they might have gotten some things wrong.

#4 Jews are often compelled to GO BACK to their erroneous beliefs, even after they come to faith in Yahshua.

#5 Christ is the “goal” of the law, the the “end” of the law.

#6 Paul is writing about Moses, who was writing about Jesus.

are some deep intricacies here, so again, put on your prophetic hat. Though Israel will be as the sand of the sea, a “remnant will be saved” (Romans says saved), a “remnant will return” (Isaiah says will return). This is the remnant of Israel who leave the Citizen Class and enter the Ruler Class. The distinction is saved vs. sand. Where is Isaiah getting this from? It comes from Yahweh's promise to Abraham to multiply his descendants into TWO classes, because he did not withhold Isaac.

“Blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the STARS OF THE HEAVEN and as the SAND WHICH IS ON THE SEASHORE; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” (Genesis 22:17-18).

- Stars of the heaven: saved eternally, possess the gates, remnant, heaven, Ruler Class—belief and the blood of Messiah (ultimately inherit a glorified body).
- Sands of the seashore: saved from destruction, physical seed, nations of the earth, Citizen Class—belief and the bloodline of Jacob (ultimately inherit flesh and blood body).

Three classes: Rulers (Stars), Citizens (Sand) and Rebels (Wrath)

The righteousness of faith (belief plus the blood of Messiah) is clearly distinguished from works of law (belief plus the bloodline of Jacob). We had discussed this at length previously. We can only attain to the law of righteousness by faith (in the blood of course). Yahshua is the stumbling stone to natural Israel. As long as it remains, the best they will do is Citizenship.

CHAPTER 10 "ISRAEL'S REJECTION"

REASON FOR REJECTION: ROMANS 10:1-13

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who does those things shall live by them.” But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, “ ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 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): that if you

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#7 Paul chooses Moses' words to reference IMMEDIATELY before what has come to be known in Christianity as "The Sinner's Prayer."

#8 Paul is NOT contrasting the righteousness of the law with the righteousness of faith; he is EQUATING them!

#9 Without Christ it is impossible to obey Yahweh's commandments and live; but with Him it is not too mysterious or too difficult.

#10 If you believe Moses you will believe Jesus, because that is who Moses was writing about.

#11 What does the practical application of faith to obedience look like?

confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

We just spent quite a bit of time talking about the two fates of Israel (other than those who outright rebel.) One is in rulership as sons of God, the other, permanent citizens of earth. Paul is desperate to see as many as possible become "sons." I have written extensively on this one section of Romans in *The Heart of David* © 2006. And here I will attempt to be concise, hopeful that I can impart Paul's intentions in a powerful and memorable way.

What is Paul desperate for? He's so passionate about "sonship" that he would choose to be accursed from Christ himself in place of his brethren, his countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites (Romans 9:3-4). He wants his brothers to "get knocked off their donkeys!" It's not easy for the "chosen race" to get out of their own way, and he knows it. The offer of redemption is the same for all, Jew and Greek. But, the path to justification can look very different for each. The Greeks have so many Gods, even an Unknown God (see Acts 17:22-31). Hearing of "another God" is just another day at the office. The Israelites, on the other hand, are certain they have it all dialed in. They already KNOW the one true God and are not really open to hearing about how they might have gotten some things wrong. That is why Paul literally had to get knocked off his ride. And in many ways, it is why he had to write the letter to the Galatians; the Jews are often compelled to GO BACK to their erroneous beliefs, even after they come to faith in Yahshua.

Yes, Paul knows the tendencies of both cultures. He was also the one addressing the Greeks at the Areopagus in Athens. Furthermore, what he knows about his past self can be easily extrapolated to "all of Israel." They are:

- Zealous (on-fire for God, ardent, fervent, followers of Yahweh)
- Misinformed (their knowledge base is corrupted)
- Ignorant (don't submit to God's righteousness because they are self-righteous)

And now to correct some historically faulty theology; you should easily recognize it by now, seeing that you have come so far in Romans. Again, I will keep this on the light side; for a more detailed explanation refer to *The Heart of David*. If I was preaching this as a sermon I would title it, "What Did You Confess?" It should be apparent by now (after so many previous explanations in this commentary) that

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Christ did not “end the Law” (v.4) using the most common vernacular for the word “end” in English, which means “finish or terminate.” Instead, verse 4 uses the word in Greek that actually means “outcome or goal.” Christ is the “goal” of the law. It’s the same Greek word used in 1 Peter 1:9 “*receiving the END of your faith — the salvation of your souls.*” You can’t terminate your faith and be saved; it’s the goal of your faith.

Ok, now that we have that settled, let’s talk about Moses. I’ll start by using Jesus’ words. “*For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?*” (John 5:46-47) In verses 5-8, Paul is writing about Moses, who was writing about Jesus. Over the years I have come to believe this to be one of the most important sections of scripture in the entire Word of God, especially in regard to Christians understanding what they confessed when they got born-again. I say this because these verses are Moses’ words that Paul chose to reference IMMEDIATELY before what has come to be known in Christianity as “The Sinner’s Prayer.” It is the most often referenced model prayer used by every pastor and evangelist world-wide to lead people to Christ. So, don’t you think it’s important that we know in what context Paul was speaking?

Okay, here we go! Moses writes about the righteousness of the Law, which we now know is Christ. And here is what he is saying. He immediately refers to Leviticus 18:5, “*The man who does those things shall live by them.*” And what is the context? (Simply read Leviticus 18:1-5.)

When you go in and possess the land (promise) Yahweh is giving:

1. Don’t practice the paganism from where you came (Egypt).
2. Don’t practice the paganism from where you are going (Canaan).
3. Instead, obey Yahweh’s Laws and they will give you life (Moses writing about Christ).

Why can I be sure this is what Paul means? Because as you have already learned in Romans, the only way to “do the Law” is with faith-based-obedience (faith in Christ [blood], so you are empowered by grace). All else is “works of Law” which is legalism (no Christ [no blood], so you are empowered by self-righteousness).

Then, in what appears to be in contrast to the righteousness of the law, Paul brings up the righteousness of faith. Is it a contrast? Verse 6 begins with the word “But”, certainly a contrast. Not so fast. In Greek the word “but” is the same word as “and, moreover, furthermore, and therefore.” And the only thing that determines which to translate is the context. So, is Paul comparing or contrasting law and faith? We already know Paul referred to Moses from Leviticus, but what about the

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next verses when he teaches about the righteousness of faith? Yes, also Moses. When Paul wants to educate us about the righteousness of faith, he AGAIN refers to Moses who was, in fact, writing about Jesus. In verses 6-8, Paul refers to Deuteronomy 30:11-14. But as Paul quotes Moses' words, he instead inserts Christ in the places that Moses writes about the Law (go ahead, do a side by side comparison, or see *The Heart of David*). "Christ is the goal of the Law." And what is the outcome of obedience in Deuteronomy 30:15-16? It is the SAME OUTCOME as Moses' words in Leviticus 18:5; obey Yahweh and live! Paul is NOT contrasting the righteousness of the law with the righteousness of faith; he is EQUATING them!

Without Christ, obedience to the Law is impossible. And with Him it is... unnecessary? No, it is necessary, but now it's "not too mysterious [difficult] or too far off." (Deuteronomy 30:11). And here is the crescendo! Romans 10:8: "THAT IS THE WORD OF FAITH WE PREACH!" When you accept Christ, obedience to God's laws is not too difficult! And then after Paul tells us that is what he is preaching about, he delivers the "Sinners Prayer" in Romans 10:9-13, that if you confess...and believe...you will be saved. Whoever calls on Yahweh through Yahshua (means Yahweh saves) will be saved.

What did you confess and believe when you got born-again? Without Christ it is impossible to obey Yahweh's commandments and live; but with Him it is not too mysterious or too difficult. Yes, if you believe Moses you will believe Jesus, because that is who Moses was writing about.

[Additional Note]

I will elaborate further in chapter 14, but it is good to make mention here. It's about the practical application of faith to obedience. What does it look like? Well, for the Jews, Yahshua addressed this when the scribe asked Him about the greatest commandment (Mark 12:28-34). He tells us the answer is to love Yahweh and to love your fellow man. As for the Gentiles, there was so much controversy over what obedience looked like for them that the Apostles convened a Council in Acts 15 to rule on the matter. In both cases, the answers encompass an encapsulation of commandments (see details on the Jerusalem Council in chapter 14). In other words, to the scribe, Yahshua gives two categories of commands to obey (not just two commandments), all those that demonstrate our love for the Father, and all those that demonstrate love for mankind. The Council in Jerusalem is prompted by the Holy Spirit to lay out a specific "legal guideline" for the Gentiles with three categories of commands to obey. One command speaks to idolatry, one to sexual purity, and the other to eating according to the Scriptures. In addition to the final instructions for the Gentiles, as James is handing down the ruling, he reminds everyone that Moses is preached in the synagogues every

**Remedy for Rejection:
Romans 10:14-17**

At a glance:

#1 You can't appreciate the fullness of what Paul is saying unless you read from where he is quoting.

#2 The common titles "God and LORD" for the Father, and "Lord" for the Son, need to be understood for what they are.

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#3 The actual Hebrew name of the Father is replaced over 6800 times in most Bible translations.

#4 When we come in a name, it is really representative of coming in the “authority of.”

#5 Preaching the gospel of peace, and bringing good news has something to do with knowing and not blaspheming the name of Yahweh.

#6 In the modern-day Christianity, the third commandment about His name, and the fourth about the Sabbath, are all but completely changed from their original context.

#7 We are redeemed (justified) when we get born-again, but salvation comes at the END, when Yahweh’s people mature into one of three permanent destinies (Ruler, Citizen, or Rebel).

#8 Whose report do you believe? God’s commandments are up in the heavens, beyond the sea, too mysterious—they are too difficult? Or, in Messiah, the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith become one in God’s grace?

Sabbath. Apparently, the Gentiles are now expected to attend, so they can learn more about how to live out this born-again life. Yes, if you explore the Word of God, you will find that in both cases the answers entail obedience to a long list of Yahweh’s instructions for practical living. And the promise is that by doing so you will have life!

REMEDY FOR REJECTION: ROMANS 10:14-17

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “LORD, who has believed our report?” So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

It’s a quote festival. Paul is the “Biblical Scholar Apostle.” No doubt this is why Yahweh chose him as the purveyor of Christian doctrine. We just can’t appreciate the fullness of what the scholar is saying unless we go back and read from where he is quoting. But I must digress briefly to bring something to light. I’ve made little effort, thus far in our commentary, to make the distinction between names and titles, and more accurately between proper names and false titles. But we must do so now for clarity. The common titles “God and LORD” for the Father, and “Lord” for the Son, need to be understood for what they are. “God” is used as the generic substitute for what should be “Almighty or Mighty One.” LORD or LORD (all caps or small caps depending on your translation) is used to replace the actual Hebrew name of the Father over 6800 times. And Lord (capitalized) is used as a title for the Son. Most English translations of the Bible do similar substitutions. You may have noticed that I have, thus far, often used the generic titles as I draw most of my references from the NKJV version. And at other times I use the Father’s Hebrew name Yahweh (transliterated), and the Son’s Hebrew name Yahshua (transliterated). For our purpose we will not argue spelling or pronunciation. The reason I have decided to bring it to light, at this point, is because I believe this is the most poignant moment to do so.

Paul ended our last section, in verse 13, by referring to the Old Testament Prophet Joel. Let’s start there. “Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” Notice the all caps LORD. He quotes this directly from Joel 2:32. But wait—does that mean that there is no way Joel, and therefore Paul, could be saying, “Whoever calls on the name of JESUS shall be saved”? In one sense, yes! But don’t panic; I will clarify. This verse in Joel is one of those 6800 times in which the Hebrew name of the Father is substituted with LORD. Here is the reference directly from Joel, starting in verse 31.

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“The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls.” (Joel 2:31-32)

Every time you see LORD above, Yahweh has been replaced. This is going to get significant as we follow Paul’s reasoning when reading his quotes from Isaiah that follow in Romans 10:14-17. So, what Joel really says is, “Whoever calls on the name of Yahweh shall be saved.” For Christians, the “saving grace” here (what an appropriate idiom), is that the Son’s Hebrew name is Yahshua (Joshua), and means, in Hebrew, Yahweh saves. So, when you call on Yahshua you are declaring that “Yahweh saves!” “But, what if I called on the name of Jesus?” First of all, fear not; Yahweh knows who you are talking about. And secondly, when we come in a (the) name, it is really representative of coming in the “authority of.” Yet, it is very important to, at least, realize what is happening in your Bible translation.

Paul’s use of Isaiah 52:7 next, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach...” should not be taken out of context. Study what the Prophet says in Isaiah 52:5-6, the verses immediately prior to Paul’s reference. “AND MY NAME IS BLASPHEMED CONTINUALLY EVERY DAY. THEREFORE MY PEOPLE SHALL KNOW MY NAME.” (Paul referred to Isaiah 52:5 way back in chapter 2.) Clearly preaching the gospel of peace, and bringing good news has something to do with knowing and not blaspheming the name of Yahweh. In Exodus 20:7, the third commandment says, “*You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.*” What vain means is to “have no meaning or bring to nothing.” Bringing Yahweh’s name to nothing is the height of blasphemy, and the promise is that you will not be held guiltless! Man was given the Father’s name to call upon in Genesis 4:26; and in Exodus 3:15, Moses is told by the Almighty, “*I am Yahweh, this is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.*” (Note: it is interesting that in the world of modern-day Christianity, in which the law, other than the 10 commandments and tithing, has been abolished, the third commandment about His name, and the fourth about the Sabbath, are all but completely changed from their original context.)

One last thing before we move on to Paul’s next Isaiah reference, notice how in verse 31 of Joel 2, the prophet is actually referring to a specific time, the end-of-the-age, “*The great and awesome day of the LORD [Yahweh].*” And as I mentioned previously in my commentary on Romans 8 (the END is a Passover), I drew a reference from THE ONE end times sermon Yahshua preached (the Olivet Discourse). “*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the END will come.*” (Matthew 24:14) But

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**Result of Rejection:
Only One Salvation-
Faith**
Romans 10:18-21

At a glance:

#1 The Rabbinic teaching style to offer the student a morsel, and it is the student's responsibility to find the entire meal.

#2 The creation gospel testifies to His laws. The heavens declare Yahweh's glory.

#3 Yahweh's law is perfect, is a sure testimony, and brings wisdom; His statutes are right; and His commandment is pure and enlightening.

notice the verse that comes immediately before it, (13) *"But he who endures to the END shall be saved."* We are redeemed (justified) when we get born-again, but salvation comes at the END, when Yahweh's people mature into one of three permanent destinies (Ruler, Citizen, or Rebel).

Now let's work our way through the rest of chapter 10, drawing from Paul's Old Testament references. *"Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" (Isaiah 53:1)* When I read this, I can't help but be drawn to the narrative about the 12 spies who entered Canaan about a year after the Exodus (Numbers 13:1-33). Ten of them returned with a bad report (verse 32). *"Truly the land is good, has lots of fruit and milk and honey, but there are giants in the land and they will crush us like grasshoppers."* (Remember: those spies were ultimately disposed of by Yahweh, Numbers 14:36-37.) But there was also a good report from Joshua and Caleb. *"Yes, the land is good, there are giants, and Yahweh has ALREADY given them into our hands."* Whose report will you believe? Properly connecting this to Romans 10:1-13, what report do you believe? God's commandments are up in the heavens, beyond the sea, too mysterious—they are too difficult? Or, in Messiah, the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith become one in God's grace? Whose report will you believe?

RESULT OF REJECTION: ONLY ONE SALVATION-FAITH: ROMANS 10:18-21

But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: *"Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world."* But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: *"I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation."* But Isaiah is very bold and says: *"I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me."* But to Israel he says: *"All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people."*

What excuse could Israel possibly proffer for choosing the wrong report? Again the scholar draws upon the Word. This time Paul elects the wisdom of King David in Psalm 19. It's a Rabbinic teaching style to offer the student a morsel, and it is the student's responsibility to find the entire meal (Yahshua did the same). Let's take a big bite of Psalm 19, so we can expand on the morsel that Paul is offering.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. THEIR LINE HAS GONE OUT THROUGH ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE END OF THE WORLD. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its rising is from one

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**The Personal Proof:
Romans 11:1**

At a glance:

#1 There are three possible fates for Israel.

- I. Those who outright reject Yahweh (have no faith) will meet the demise of the rebel class.
- II. Those who have faith in Yahweh (desire to obey His commands), but are not covered by the blood will occupy a permanent mortal, but potentially eternal role as citizens.
- III. The manifested sons of God who keep the commands and have the testimony (blood) of Yahshua will rule and reign forever with Messiah.

**The Historical Proof:
Romans 11:2-10**

At a glance:

#1 Yahweh has not cast Israel aside, even though the majority of them are stuck trying to know Him by works.

#2 Yahweh has preserved a remnant by His election.

#3 Yahweh wants all people, everywhere, to recognize that there is only one way to become sons, and that is by His grace.

#4 David's enemies were from his own house! Yahshua's enemies, yes, also from His own house.

end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end; and there is nothing hidden from its heat. The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;" (Psalms 19:1-8)

Just as we witnessed at the beginning of Paul's doctrinal masterpiece in Romans 1:20, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse," the heavens declare His glory and tell His story. It's the creation gospel, and the psalmist teaches us that in it there is nothing hidden. What should we extrapolate from creation's testimony? Yahweh's law is perfect, is a sure witness, and brings wisdom; His statutes are right; and His commandment is pure and enlightening. Whose report will you believe?

Finally, it becomes perfectly clear from Paul's lesson using Moses' words in Deuteronomy (read 32:18-21), and again from the Prophet Isaiah (read 65:1-2), that those who do not wish to believe His good report will be replaced by those who do. Whose report do you believe?

CHAPTER 11 "ISRAEL'S RECEPTION"

THE PERSONAL PROOF: ROMANS 11:1

"I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

It bears repeating here. There are three possible fates for Israel. Those who outright reject Yahweh (have no faith) will meet the demise of the rebel class. Then, there are those who have faith in Yahweh (desire to obey His commandments), but are not covered by the blood of Yahshua. They will occupy a permanent mortal, but potentially eternal role as citizens (like Adam, by eating from the tree of life, Rev. 22:2). Of course, there is the ruling class. They are those of us who will rule and reign forever with Messiah. They are the manifested sons of God who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony (blood) of Yahshua the Messiah (Rev. 12:17; 14:12).

THE HISTORICAL PROOF: ROMANS 11:2-10

God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, "LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life"? But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to

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**The Kingdom Proof:
Romans 11:11-24**

At a glance:

#1 Yahweh works through those who seem to be “cast away”.

#2 It was Yahweh who sold Joseph into slavery and it was Yahweh who gave Israel a “spirit of stupor.”

#3 Joseph was sold into slavery by God’s design; what seemed to be meant for evil Yahweh actually meant for good.

#4 Israel seemed to be cast away; yet, the outcome was salvation and riches to the Gentiles.

#5 Who do you think Yahshua was talking about at the end-of-the-age, in His sole prophetic sermon (the Olivet Discourse)?

Baal.” Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Just as it is written: “God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, To this very day.” And David says: “Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a recompense to them. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, And bow down their back always.”

We have already made the clear delineation between obedience empowered by GRACE and obedience empowered by SELF. Paul’s distinction here, as he draws his attention to “his people” Israel, is that there is an eternal plan for them. Yahweh has not cast them aside, even though the majority of them are stuck trying to know Him by works (works of Law). The prophet Elijah had this same concern, that none of Israel would be preserved (read 1 Kings 19:1-18). But fear not, Yahweh has preserved a remnant by His election. Some will become sons of God. Yet there is a bigger picture here. The scholar, again, draws upon his vast knowledge of scripture. It was Yahweh who made them deaf, dumb, and blind (Deuteronomy 29:4; Jeremiah 5:21; Ezekiel 12:2; Isaiah 42:19-20). It was His way of ensuring that all people, everywhere, would recognize that there is only one way to become sons, and that is by His grace.

Then Paul makes what appears to be a very curious reference to King David’s prayer about his enemies in Psalm 69:22-23. The Psalm would seem to be an exposition about God’s people against God’s anointed. As such, it is a very appropriate reference here. One verse, in particular, draws our attention to David as a prefigure of Messiah, and in my opinion ties together Paul’s argument. Again, it is likely that the scholar desires the student to search it out. It is the verse immediately before Paul’s quote. *“They also gave me [David] gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” (Psalms 69:21) “And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him [Yahshua] sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink.” (Matthew 27:33-34)* David’s enemies were from his own house! Yahshua’s enemies, yes, also from His own house.

THE KINGDOM PROOF: ROMANS 11:11-24

I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy

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those who are my flesh and save some of them. For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

Paul does a masterful job here to guard against swollen heads. Certainly, history has born out that the "gentile" world did become quite bitter towards the "natural branches." Centuries of anti-semitism crowd our past, even up to the present day. Listen, no one likes "the favorite." Remember what happened to Joseph, Jacob's favorite? That's right; his brothers first wanted to leave him for dead and eventually sold him into slavery. That was no easy ride for the eventual "preserver of life." I highly suggest you read the entire story of Joseph in Genesis 37-50, but let me highlight a few verses about Joseph to share how powerfully Yahweh works through those who seem to be "cast away". Notice the striking similarity to what Paul is teaching us in Romans 11. Remember, in the end it was Yahweh who sold Joseph into slavery and it was Yahweh who gave Israel a "spirit of stupor" (Romans 11:8).

About Joseph: *"But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you SOLD ME here; for God sent me before you to PRESERVE LIFE." (Genesis 45:5)*

About Israel: *"I say then, have they STUMBLED that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, SALVATION HAS COME TO THE GENTILES." (Romans 11:11)*

About Joseph: *"And God sent me before you to PRESERVE A POSTERITY for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a GREAT DELIVERANCE." (Genesis 45:7)*

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About Israel: *“Now if their fall is RICHES FOR THE WORLD, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, HOW MUCH MORE THEIR FULLNESS!” (Romans 11:12)*

About Joseph: *“Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you MEANT EVIL AGAINST ME; but GOD MEANT IT FOR GOOD, in order to bring it about as it is this day, TO SAVE MANY PEOPLE ALIVE.” (Genesis 50:19-20)*

About Israel: *“For if their being CAST AWAY is the RECONCILING OF THE WORLD, what will their acceptance be but LIFE FROM THE DEAD?” (Romans 11:15)*

Joseph was sold into slavery by God’s design; what seemed to be meant for evil Yahweh actually meant for good; the outcome was a great deliverance, the preservation of life of the future generations in the earth, to save many people alive. And ultimately, Joseph did not question Yahweh's modus operandi; *“Am I in the place of God?” (Gen. 50;19)* It’s like Paul taught us in Romans 9:20-14; *“Who are you to reply against God?”* The Potter can do anything He wants with His clay, no questions asked!

Israel stumbled and fell; they seemed to become a great failure; they seemed to be cast away; yet, the outcome was salvation and riches to the Gentiles; life from the dead.

In the end, how much more the fullness of Israel? Concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers (Rom. 11:28). I would say that their destiny could be like Joseph; ultimately they might be the discerning and wise rulers.

“Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, THERE IS NO ONE AS DISCERNING AND WISE AS YOU. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.” And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I HAVE SET YOU OVER ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT.” Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck.” (Genesis 41:39-42)

Hint: who do you think Yahshua was talking about at the end-of-the-age, when in His sole prophetic sermon (Olivet Discourse) He asked this: *“WHO THEN IS A FAITHFUL AND WISE SERVANT, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that HE WILL MAKE HIM RULER OVER ALL HIS GOODS.” (Matthew 24:45-47)* Sounds an awful lot like Joseph. So, don’t be so fast to cast Israel aside in perpetuity.

THE SCRIPTURE PROOF: ROMANS 11:25-36

**The Scripture Proof:
Romans 11:25-36**

At a glance:

#1 Paul, the great Hebrew scholar, the expert in the Law, is mandated by Yahweh to solve the mysteries and deliver the Doctrine of Christianity to the world.

#2 Can you really know what Paul is saying if you are not willing to “search it out” for yourself?

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#3 The pastoral is only one of the two pillars that hold up the Church. The prophetic is the second pillar.

#4 The Pastor operates with power (daily operations) and the Prophet with authority (daily oversight).

#5 Yahshua teaches His disciples that they need to apply new revelation to their existing knowledge of Scripture to understand the deep mysteries of God, to understand the Kingdom.

#6 Even scribes, the biblical lawyers of the day, the experts, need to be "instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven."

#7 we are entering a new season, one that we might call the **Prophetic Reformation.**

#8 There is an ultimate plan for Israel; His covenant will be fulfilled; they will receive His Spirit and will remember His word. The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.

#9 Who could possibly partner with Yahweh in His grand plan for the universe?

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins." Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?" "Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?" For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

Can you really know the depth of the mystery Paul is uncovering here if you are not willing to "search it out" for yourself? That's what they did in Berea in Acts 17:11. *"They received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out if what Paul was saying was true."* They searched the Scriptures. And, maybe I don't need to say this, but I will. There were NO SCRIPTURES then, other than the Old Testament. So Paul, the great Hebrew scholar, the expert in the Law, is mandated by Yahweh to solve the mysteries and deliver the Doctrine of Christianity to the world, and he is doing so by using the Old Testament. Again, ponder this question: Why would Yahweh choose a Hebrew Torah scholar to do so? And why did Yahshua tell his disciples that it was their job to know the mysteries of the Kingdom (Matthew 13:11)? And what was the reward for searching, or the risk for staying ignorant, being wise in your own opinion, as Paul so "tactfully" words it? Yahshua too, was not so tactful; *"For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."* (Matthew 13:12)

[Prophetic Mystery Outtake]

By now you are becoming a prophetic lawyer, or a biblical pattern scientist. You should be, minimally, able to recognize that there is a constant prophetic undertone throughout the Word of God, even if you can't quite pinpoint the mystery in every lesson. Now you can, at least, see that there is something more. Sure the Bible is mostly pastoral in its application, meaning that it is about the practical everyday living that results from your born-again encounter with Yahshua and the Holy Spirit. That is what the PASTORAL does. How can we shepherd the

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sheep to holy and victorious living? Yet, the pastoral is only one of the two pillars that hold up the Church.

"...having been built on the foundation of the APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a HOLY TEMPLE in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." (Ephesians 2:20-22)

The APOSTOLIC, or pastor of pastors is one pillar, but notice the second, the prophetic! The functional side of these two interdependent offices is that the Pastor operates with power (daily operations; he moves in strength) and the Prophet with authority (daily oversight, he establishes directives). It is much like a well-functioning marriage, the woman has the power, the man the authority. Femininity has all the attributes and characteristics of the Holy Spirit (helper, comforter, guide, persuader, etc.), masculinity all the attributes and characteristics of the Father ("I don't do anything on My own, only what My Father tells Me to do." John 5:19, 8:28) By the way, it is also a feature of a well-functioning government, a division of power and authority; one branch makes laws (the power of the legislative branch), one enforces them (the authority of the executive branch)!

As I read Ephesians 2:20-22, and contemplate these two essential structural elements of the church, the spiritual temple, it reminds me of the two bronze pillars that held up the entrance to Solomon's temple (I Kings 7:15-22). *"Then he set up the pillars by the vestibule of the temple; he set up the pillar on the right and called its name Jachin, and he set up the pillar on the left and called its name Boaz." (v. 21)* They are both needed; they are interdependent. And consider what these names mean: Jachin on the right, "He shall establish," the authority of the Prophet. And Boaz on the left, "In His Strength," the power of the Pastor.

It would seem that for many centuries the pastoral office has dominated the church with little or no emphasis on the prophetic pillar. This has become even more accentuated in this modern mega-church era. And so we are clear, when I say prophetic, I am not talking about the demonstration of the prophetic gifts. They have clearly been active in many denominations. Instead, I am talking about the prophetic authority co-laboring with pastoral power, both offices working for the mutual benefit of the church and the advancement of God's initiatives on the earth. I believe this pastoral influence is most demonstrable with the hyper-emphasis on the Gospel of Salvation, while there has been very little advancement of the Gospel of the Kingdom. Two thousand years later, it is still practically undefined by the church worldwide. But I believe we are entering a new season, one that we might call the **Prophetic Reformation**. Five hundred years ago we

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had a reformation of theology; this time it will be the restoration of the prophetic authority in the earth.

There is always something more! Now you can go back and reread the entire New Testament with new prophetic glasses and easily see that the over-arching message is about the Gospel of the Kingdom (which we've previously discussed in detail).

I could have introduced this next verse in any other area in this commentary in which I emphasized Paul's expertise and why he was chosen to be the formulator and disseminator of Christian theology. But I think now is the perfect time because I believe you are ready to really appreciate it. I've stated over and over that I believe Paul was chosen because he was most equipped to add new revelation to existing knowledge. **That's precisely what Yahshua was doing every time He said, "It has been written...but I tell you...!" (Sermon on the Mount, Mat. 5-7)**

"Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?" [Are you getting new revelation] They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe INSTRUCTED CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new [new revelation] and old [applied to existing knowledge]."" (Matthew 13:51-52)

Who needs to do this? EVERY SCRIBE INSTRUCTED CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. Yahshua is teaching His disciples that they need to apply their existing knowledge of Scripture to understand the deep mysteries of God, to understand the Kingdom. And notice the subtle, yet, immeasurably important fact about the scribes, the biblical lawyers of the day, the experts! They too need to be "instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven." If they, as experts, needed to be instructed, what about you? And who better to do it than Paul, an expert in the Law who now has access to the Spirit of all truth.

"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come." (John 16:13)

[End Prophetic Mystery Outtake]

Now, together we can go back to Romans 11 and search the mysteries of what Paul is saying about Israel, to bring out of our treasure things new and things old.

It is clear that Paul is a fan of Isaiah because he keeps referring to his prophecy to explain his take on things (all by memory!). This time he zooms in on Isaiah 59:20 in his Romans masterpiece, but look at the context. There is an ultimate plan for Israel; His covenant will be fulfilled; they will receive His Spirit and will remember His word. The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable (Romans 11:29).

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“So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun; when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him. (20) “The Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,” says the LORD. “As for Me,” says the LORD, “this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants’ descendants,” says the LORD, “from this time and forevermore.”” (Isaiah 59:19-21)

Oh the depths of the riches of both the wisdom and knowledge of Yahweh. *“Who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?”* Again, Paul’s go-to Prophet is Isaiah.

“Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? (13) Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor has taught Him? With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of justice? Who taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding?” (Isaiah 40:12-14)

**Sacrifice on the Altar:
Romans 12:1-2**

At a glance:

#1 Yahweh chose a Scholar in the Law to formulate Christian doctrine and theology.

#2 Completely dying to yourself as a follower of Messiah is reasonable; it is not extraordinary.

#3 The “world” does not mean the same thing in all contexts. God loved the world and tells us do not love the world.

#4 The will of Yahweh is found in the Law of Yahweh.

#5 The word picture for transformation is caterpillar-to-butterfly.

Who could possibly partner with Yahweh in His grand plan for the universe? Paul proffered this very question elsewhere in his writings, and answered it! *“For “who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?” BUT WE HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST.” (I Corinthians 2:16)* Yes, as joint heirs, revealed sons of God, we have the mind of Messiah and are charged with partnering with Him to manage creation.

And just in case the Gentiles might be at risk of that swollen head again, this privilege has ZERO to do with who they were without Him and EVERYTHING to do with who they are in Him. *Who has a claim against Me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to Me. (Job 41:11 NIV)* Oh, and as a not so subtle reminder, he is talking about Israel. *“Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! The Deliverer will come out of Zion.” (Rom. 11:12, 26)*

CHAPTER 12 "SERVICE TO SAINTS"

SACRIFICE ON THE ALTAR: ROMANS 12:1-2

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

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#5 The Feasts of the LORD can be used as a pattern to help you understand what is happening to you on your journey in the faith from childhood to adulthood.

#6 The transformation Paul is talking about in Romans 12 is the same picture we see on the Mount of Transfiguration.

#7 Does it seem luxurious and indulgent that you could even consider basking in His Word day and night?

#8 Drown yourself day and night in His presence and in His word, and be transformed by the renewing of your mind; it's the only way.

Romans 12, verses 1 and 2, are two of the more well-known verses in all of Christianity; I hear them referred to quite often. But whatever does Paul, the scholar, the Jewish scholar, mean? We cannot separate the meaning from the man, nor can we remove him from his upbringing and environment, his “expert in the Law (Torah)” upbringing and environment. And may I remind you (repetition is the greatest teacher) that Yahweh chose the Hebrew, tribe of Benjamin, legal scholar to be the disseminator of Christian Doctrine, might we even say, “the formulator” of Christian Doctrine.

There is a lot packed into these two verses. First of all, what they require of us is not easy, so let's just agree that what follows is impossible without God's grace. With that agreement we minimize the risk of this becoming an exercise in self-righteousness. And here again Paul is being very passionate. Listen, this is the same guy who was willing to trade His own eternal position in Yahweh for his brothers to receive this revelation of truth (Romans 9:1-4)! *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.” (John 15:13)*

I “beseech you!” I fervently and ardently beg you! It's urgent you get this! *“Present your bodies a living sacrifice.”* If you remove the dispensational Christian hat for one moment and attempt to see through Paul's first-century eyes, what do you see? You see an animal with it's throat slit; it's blood (the life is in the blood, Leviticus 17:11) drained and spilled on the altar; it's body eviscerated; and it's parts cut into pieces; and burned on the fire. Pretty gruesome picture, eh? Oh, and by-the-way, the animal is pretty dead, 100% dead, all-in dead; it's not a lukewarm halfway-in-type dead.

But, present yourself as a “living” chopped up dead animal? This is what he means. *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)* I fervently beg you to live your life in Christ like you are all-in, 100% dead, committed like your life is not your own anymore. You are dead to yourself and alive for Him alone. Jesus said it like this; *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.” (Matthew 16:24-25)* This is how you live a set-apart life in the faith. *“Greater love has no one than this...”*

And how does Yahweh view this type of sacrifice? First Paul calls it holy. Holy means that it is set-apart, different from what everyone else is doing. As a Christian, you better look different from the world. Then he says it is an acceptable, reasonable service to Yahweh. That is some pretty bland language. You mean that 100% all in, totally sacrifice everything for God, like a bled,

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chopped up, burned on the altar dead animal, is nothing extraordinary in God's eyes? Exactly! It's just...reasonable.

Okay that was verse one. Next: "Do not be conformed to this world, and then, how do you do that?" First realize that the, "For God so loved the world..." world, of John 3:16, is not the world he is talking about here. He's talking about this world; *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does THE WILL OF GOD abides forever."* (1 John 2:15-17) Do not be conformed to that world, (*do not love that world or the things in that world*)! But, instead, be transformed by the renewing of your mind. This is what demonstrates the good (only the Father's will is good; Mark 10:18), and acceptable (there is that word again... not extraordinary, just reasonable), and perfect WILL OF GOD. Perfect means mature and adult-like transformation. And THE WILL OF GOD? Well, that is living in obedience to God's laws. Paul taught us this earlier in Romans; *"Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, and KNOW HIS WILL, and approve the things that are excellent [superior], being instructed out of the law,"* (Romans 2:17-18)

Let's talk about the type of transformation Paul is referring to here. He uses the Greek word from which we derive "metamorphosis." The word picture for this is caterpillar-to-butterfly type transformation. It's not like a 5th grader becoming a 6th grader; it's more like an infant becoming a rocket scientist. The resultant creature has ZERO resemblance to its predecessor. That is the type of transformation Paul is describing. That is what is available to you if you are willing to "renew your mind" daily. I'll speak to how to do that in a moment, but I think it's time for another short commercial break.

[Prophetic Mystery Outtake]

I want you to think about your journey in the faith from childhood to adulthood using the Feasts of the LORD as a pattern to help you understand what is happening in you. You may not be familiar with the Feasts, so I will give you an ultra-quick lesson of just the three main (pilgrimage) Feasts. These three are symbolic of the "seasons" in the year (life), Spring, Summer, and Fall. We've already discussed Passover and that is all about your redemption as a "first-born", your born-again experience, your "baptism in water." It's the new life of Spring. Next comes Pentecost and the work of the Holy Spirit, your "baptism in fire." It's the heat of Summer. Then there is Tabernacles, the Fall Feast, your "transformation". Fall is the death of the old and preparation for new beginnings. Interesting, the eighth day of Tabernacles (the number eight) symbolizes new

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**Member of the body:
Romans 12:3-8**

At a glance:

#1 The corporate body, like the sacrificed animal, has many parts that all need to be submitted to Him.

#2 It is vital that we all do our part in order for the body to function well (be healthy).

#3 Don't despise those "lesser gifts" as they may turn out to be the most important in God's eyes.

beginnings. When I think of the transformation Paul is talking about in Romans 12, I see Tabernacles and I am reminded of the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17.

"Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was TRANSFIGURED before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three TABERNACLES: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."'" (Matthew 17:1-4)

The Greek word used here in Matthew 17:2, transfigured, is the same word used by Paul in Romans 12:2, transformed. That is the type of transformation Paul is declaring, a face shining like the sun (Son).

[End Prophetic Mystery Outtake]

And how is any of this "HATE THE WORLD AND DO GOD'S WILL" transformation even possible? Renew your mind every day. How's that? It's simple, but it's not easy. *"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night."* (Psalms 1:1-2) Does it seem luxurious and indulgent that you could even consider basking in His Word day and night? Only royalty has the luxury to live like that. Well, I have news for you. You are royalty! You are sons and daughters of the King of the Universe, a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9). And do you know what kings were expected to do?

"Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that HE SHALL WRITE FOR HIMSELF A COPY OF THIS LAW IN A BOOK, from the one before the priests, the Levites. AND IT SHALL BE WITH HIM, AND HE SHALL READ IT ALL THE DAYS OF HIS LIFE, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel." (Deuteronomy 17:18-20)

That's right—you and Yahweh and His Word, day and night, all the days of your life! And what kind of mind transformation can you look forward to? *"Who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*" (1 Corinthians 2:16) Drown yourself day and night in His presence and in His word, and be transformed by the renewing of your mind; it's the only way.

MEMBER OF THE BODY: ROMANS 12:3-8

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#4 Christianity cannot only be lived between the ears, or in the clouds.

#5 Access God's power (personally) and put it to good use (God use) for the betterment of the body of Christ (corporately).

#6 The gift does not confer an office or title.

**Member of the Family:
Romans 12:9-13**

At a glance:

#1 love is the answer

#2 Let kindness and affection rule over your friendships in such a way that it is obvious you care more about others than yourself.

“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

Let's stay with the context of what Paul is saying. He starts with the message, present “your” body a living sacrifice, which is an individual mandate about your life. And then he moves onto the corporate Body (of Christ). We are one body (individual) with lots of members (corporate), with different roles (body parts). The corporate body, like the sacrificed animal, has many parts that all need to be submitted to Him (burned on the altar).

Elsewhere in his writing (1 Corinthians 12), Paul speaks of gifts that are of a more spiritual nature. In that teaching he also draws upon the “one body with many parts” analogy. It is vital that we all do our part in order for the body to function well (be healthy). And don't try to be the part you are not called to be, or envy another part. Every part, down to what might seem the least significant, is important. And don't despise those “lesser gifts” as they may turn out to be the most important in God's eyes.

But, here in Romans, we have entered into some of Paul's best practical living instructions, and he does so whilst he practices, on us, his own gift of exhortation. Christianity cannot only be lived between the ears, or in the clouds; we are also destined to bring heaven to earth (Matthew 6:10), and that takes reflecting heaven in everything we do, every day.

Paul calls them gifts here, and I believe he does so because they are empowered by grace, which is the ultimate gift from Yahweh. Grace is the supernatural power of God that is available in your life, the same power He use to raise Christ from the grave (Ephesians 1:19-20). So, Paul says, “Access that power (personally) and put it to good use (God use) for the betterment of the body of Christ (corporately).”

It would also be good to note here that these are gifts, not offices or titles! The gift does not confer an office or title. Let me speak in King James English so it sounds more official. “The gift-eth of prophecy does-eth not a prophet make-eth!” Translation: You are not a prophet because you have the gift of prophecy. So, don't print business cards with your newfound title on it!

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#3 Even at your times of greatest need, consider what others need first; that is the best way to become a true testimony of God's love, and to be a "safe home" for others.

**Soldier in the Battle:
Romans 12:14-21**

At a glance:

#1 We must go beyond Christian soundbites and actually DO THE THINGS Yahshua spoke about.

#2 Paul's words sound an awful lot like Yahshua's words.

#3 Paul, the "father of Christian theology and doctrine", was empowered by grace to apply wisdom to his vast knowledge of God's word.

#4 If you have been sitting on the sidelines of your faith, satisfied with being bottle fed, he's saying it's time for you to get in the game.

The gifts of God are, however, irrevocable (Romans 11:29). You can't give them back, and you are required to manage them well. *"Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful."* (I Corinthians 4:2) So, if you are called to a certain "level" of gift, "according to your faith", then you must exercise it faithfully. And do so with the same commitment as a sacrificed animal, all-in!

MEMBER OF THE FAMILY: ROMANS 12:9-13

"Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality."

Read these verses again, and imagine a world in which people live this way and treat each other like this. It might seem cliché, but love is the answer. And there is no better place to get the full scope of how God views love than I Corinthians 13.

I love Paul's use of powerful directives here; "abhor evil", hate it with a passion; and "cling to what is good", grab on and don't let go. Let kindness and affection rule over your friendships in such a way that it is obvious you care more about others than yourself. Can you imagine a world like this: marriages like this; families like this; businesses like this; governments like this; nations like this?

This can only happen if we, as Christians, become so serious about our faith that we literally treat it like a life and death matter. We must become ultra-sensitive to the Holy Spirit and be in prayer as warriors, who serve Yahweh like our life is not our own. Hey listen, it won't always be easy, maybe ever. But there is good reason for the hope that is in us (read I Peter 3:13-17), so chill out when things get tough; we will win in the end. Yes, even at your times of greatest need, consider what others need first; that is the best way to become a true testimony of God's love, and to be a "safe home" for others. Can you imagine a world like this? It may seem impossible, but it is coming.

SOLDIER IN THE BATTLE: ROMANS 12:14-21

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will

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heap coals of fire on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Okay, Paul has elevated his demands of us to the level of Christlike living. We must go beyond Christian soundbites and actually DO THE THINGS Yahshua spoke about. If you quiet your mind and listen carefully, this short selection at the end of Romans 12, in some places, sounds almost like Yahshua’s Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 5-7. Paul also reiterates wisdom from Proverbs and Deuteronomy, and his words here definitely influenced (or were influenced by) some of his other writings. You almost get the sense that he was there, listening to Yahshua on that fateful day early in His public ministry. Straight out of the wilderness, Yahshua hit the ground running; He was already being thronged by large crowds throughout a multi-city region (Matthew 4:25) when He gave this famous sermon. Maybe Paul heard about Him and showed up, his curiosity getting the best of him; just maybe his fascination was more powerful, for a brief moment, than his religious spirit that eventually moved him to persecute Christians. Who knows? Is it possible that Paul even came across Yahshua at other times in His “public life”? One thing is for certain; Paul’s words sound an awful lot like Yahshua’s words. Hey, maybe they had the same speech writer!

Paul: *“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.*

Yahshua: *“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” (Matthew 5:44)*

Paul: *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*

Yahshua: *“Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted...Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven...” (Matthew 5:4, 12)*

Paul: *Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble.*

Yahshua: *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also...But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:19-21, 33) “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” (Matthew 5:5)*

Paul: *Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.*

Yahshua: *“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled*

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underfoot by men. "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:13-16)

Paul: *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*

Yahshua: *"Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God... Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison." (Matthew 5:9, 25)*

Paul: *Repay no one evil for evil... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."*

Yahshua: *"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away." (Matthew 5:38-42)*

Paul: *Be of the same mind toward one another.*

Yahshua: *"that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me." (John 17:21-23)*

Paul: *Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."*

Solomon: *"If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; For so you will heap coals of fire on his head, And the LORD will reward you." (Proverbs 25:21-22)*

Paul: *Do not be wise in your own opinion.*

Solomon: *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil." (Proverbs 3:5-7)*

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**For Wrath's Sake:
Romans 13:1-4**

At a glance:

#1 Paul says that true authorities are appointed by Yahweh for the good of His people and to champion His cause.

#2 The words of authorities acting for God are to be considered as Yahweh's words. If you don't submit, you will bring judgement on yourself.

#3 Nowhere does Yahweh command us to submit to ungodly rulers when they require ungodly obedience.

#4 When the governing authorities are ungodly, they should be ignored, and instead, God's people should submit to a HIGHER AUTHORITY.

Paul: *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*

Moses: *"Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; Their foot shall slip in due time; For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them."* (Deuteronomy 32:35)

I guess the big take away here is that Paul, the "father of Christian theology and doctrine", was not making this stuff up. He was empowered by grace to apply wisdom to his vast knowledge of God's word (New and Old). And that means, if you have been sitting on the sidelines of your faith, satisfied with being bottle fed, he's saying it's time for you to get in the game. Paul said, *"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."* (1 Corinthians 11:1) *"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it."* (1 Corinthians 9:24) Run the race to win!

CHAPTER 13 "DUTIES TO POWERS"

FOR WRATH'S SAKE: ROMANS 13:1-4

"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil."

No doubt there are many "bible-based" teachings available about obeying governing authorities. Unfortunately, and I am not sure how such an obvious piece is missed, but so many leaders in the Church totally ignore these key stipulations. *"For he is God's minister to you for good... for he is God's minister, an avenger..."* Here are the key words that should help you discriminate and differentiate to whom you ought to subject yourself. In other words, is God telling us that ALL governing authorities are of Him and demanding we submit to ALL of them? If you were to follow the vast majority of teachings on the subject, that is exactly what you would be instructed to do. But, before we agree with the majority, let's take a look at what these key words mean:

Minister: servant of God; refers to the Lord inspiring His servants to carry out His plan for His people.

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**For Conscience Sake:
Romans 13:5-7**

At a glance:

#1 Do the right thing because it is right thing to do, not because you fear the consequences of not doing the right thing.

**For Love's Sake:
Romans 13:8-10**

At a glance:

#1 Our entire walk of faith, humans being empowered by Yahweh's grace, should result in one thing: radical-faith-based-obedience to Yahweh's commandments!

#2 Love for Yahweh is demonstrated by our interactions with each other (our neighbors).

Good: inherently (intrinsically) good; as to the believer; describes what originates from God and is empowered by Him in their life, through faith.

Avenger: special advocate or champion of God.

So, it should be obvious here that Paul is saying that true authorities are appointed by Yahweh for the good of His people and to champion His cause. And when they are acting in that position (ministers, good, avengers), their words are to be considered as Yahweh's words. If you don't submit, you will bring judgement on yourself. And also, if necessary, Yahweh will use HIS APPOINTED officials to discipline His people. For God's people the choice is simple; do what is good and you will have favor among leaders; do what is evil, and you should be very afraid.

But nowhere in these verses is Yahweh commanding us to submit to ungodly rulers when they require ungodly obedience. Consider Daniel's response when the decree was signed by the king forbidding prayers to Yahweh (read Daniel 6).

"Now when Daniel KNEW THAT THE WRITING WAS SIGNED, he went home. And in his upper room, with his WINDOWS OPEN toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days." (Daniel 6:10) *"So they answered and said before the king, "That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, DOES NOT SHOW DUE REGARD for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day." (Daniel 6:13)* And what about the Disciples when they were told to stop speaking and teaching in the name of Jesus (read Acts 4:1-22)? *"So they called them and COMMANDED THEM not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, "WHETHER IT IS RIGHT IN THE SIGHT OF GOD TO LISTEN TO YOU MORE THAN TO GOD, YOU JUDGE. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:18-20)* When the governing authorities are ungodly, they should be ignored, and instead, God's people should submit to a HIGHER AUTHORITY.

FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE: ROMANS 13:5-7

"Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor."

This is just a continuation of thought from the first four verses of chapter 13. Paul is saying this: "Do the right thing because it is the right thing to do, not because you fear the consequences of not doing the right thing." The ministers attending to the work of God hold His people accountable. Pay all taxes, customs, fear, and honor they are due. And consequently, don't pay others what they are NOT DUE.

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#3 Love for God and for your fellow man is the outcome of grace empowered obedience.

#4 Every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things NEW and OLD.

#5 Some commands are vertical; obeying them demonstrates love toward God. Other commands are horizontal; obeying them demonstrates love toward man.

#6 When you are capable of expressing unconditional love for God AND for your fellow man you will look just like Yahshua.

#7 Yahshua says that if you want to be "perfect" you must take up your cross and obey both the vertical and horizontal commands. That is the only way to demonstrate the unconditional love of God. That is the only way to "fulfill the law."

FOR LOVE'S SAKE: ROMANS 13:8-10

"Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."

Love is the answer. Love is the fulfillment of the law. Yes, but how? What are the inner workings of this concept? I think the answer should be obvious, but often is not, due to a long history in the Church of deemphasizing the commandments of God (other than the 10 Commandments and tithing). Let's start by first rewinding this very letter to the Romans. *"Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law." (Romans 3:31)* Our entire walk of faith, humans being empowered by Yahweh's grace, should result in one thing: radical-faith-based-obedience to Yahweh and His commandments! Here in Romans 13 Paul describes it as "fulfilling the law"; back in chapter 3 he called it "establishing the law".

Yahshua was asked a direct question about the law during His public ministry. And let's be real; most of the time He was being questioned to trap Him or trip Him up, so they could later accuse Him of blasphemy. They weren't interested in gathering wisdom from a great teacher, but rather supporting their already cemented-in-stone beliefs. I'm convinced that the modern-day church might do the same. Mark's Gospel has the most complete version of this account, so we will defer to it.

Let me set the stage; Yahshua had just entered Jerusalem for what would become the last week before His crucifixion. As He was walking in the Temple, all the 'who's who' in the religious community (chief priests, scribes, and elders) have gathered. (He had a way of attracting both His friends and His enemies.) They came to "question" His authority. However, Yahshua didn't take the bait, but instead turns their question back on them (read Mark 11:27-33).

Then He teaches a parable about the wicked tenants of a fruitful vineyard (Mark 12:1-12). The owner (representing Yahweh) leases the land to some tenants (He's clearly fingering these chief priests, scribes, and elders). Later on the owner of the land sends his servants (representing the prophets of old) to collect some fruit. Instead, the tenants beat the servants (they stoned the prophets; Mat. 23:31-39; Acts 7:51-52) and send them away. Finally, the owner sends his beloved son (representing Yahshua); surely they will respect him. They don't; tragically, they kill him (the picture of His coming crucifixion) and toss his body out. Then Yahshua

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puts an exclamation on His lesson as He connects the tenants in His parable to these religious leaders standing in front of Him; *“The stone [that’s Me] which the builders rejected [that’s you] has become the chief cornerstone [I’m the Messiah].” (Psalms 118:22) Ouch!*

They refuse that lesson and next *“sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in His words.” (Mark 12:13, read 13-17)* These hypocrites test him with some tricky tax question. And He befuddles them with the simple truth; *“give Caesar what is Caesar’s and give God what is God’s.”* Ouch again!

“Then some Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him; and they asked Him, saying...” (Mark 12:18; read 18-27) Okay, the chief priests, scribes (biblical lawyers), and elders were trapped by their own question (11:33); and the Pharisees and Herodians ended up marveling at Him (12:17). Next up: the Sadducees. You know you are desperate when you send in reinforcements who you don’t even agree with yourself. The Pharisees believe in the resurrection, but they had nothing that could stump Yahshua. So—in step the Sadducees who don’t believe in the resurrection. How did the Sadducees fare? *“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?’” (Mark 12:24)* Ouch and ouch!

Then one more scribe gives it a whirl. A scribe is the equivalent of a modern-day lawyer, but his expertise is in the Bible. He’s been witnessing this entire debacle and is pretty convinced that this Yahshua is onto something. His question is genuine, therefore, Yahshua gives him a straight answer, directly from the Scriptures. Here is the entire account.

“Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?” Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” So the scribe said to Him, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” But after that no one dared question Him.” (Mark 12:28-34)

Yahshua pulls His answer directly from Deuteronomy 6:1-9 (specifically vv. 4-5) and from Leviticus 19:18. Mark has the most complete version of the account.

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The other Gospel account is a short summary (Matthew 22:35-40). Although Matthew does record a key phrase not mentioned in the Mark account. *“On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:40)*

Here are the key connections to Romans 13:8-10. This is so rich! Remember, we are in a section of Romans (since chapter 12) in which we are learning about love and practical living. And what better lesson than to understand how love for Yahweh is demonstrated by our interactions with each other (our neighbors). The scribe asks which is the first (greatest) commandment of all. And Yahshua answers Deuteronomy 6:4-5, which is about loving Yahweh. He then adds an interpretation of the commandment which is LIKE IT, “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.” That is NOT in Deuteronomy 6 but is pulled from Leviticus 19:18. Leviticus 19:1-18 speaks directly about commands that have to do with horizontal relationships (human to human) and how they connect to loving and honoring Yahweh, yes, laws that govern horizontal relationships like the ones Paul is talking about here in Romans 13. *“You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “You shall not covet.”* These are about relationships with your neighbors. And when you love God with all your heart (Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:30), you will prove it by how you treat your neighbors (Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:31). *“And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’” (Matthew 25:40)*

But notice what the Scribe ALREADY knew. And how he approves of Yahshua’s CORRECT BIBLICAL interpretation. *“Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for THERE IS ONE GOD, and there is no other but He. And to LOVE HIM WITH ALL THE HEART, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to LOVE ONE’S NEIGHBOR AS ONESELF, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” (Mark 12:32-33)* This might come as a bit of a shock, but not all Jewish scholars in the first century missed it. This scribe didn’t; he already knew the correct answer. And look what Yahshua says to him. *“You are not far from the kingdom of God.” (v. 34)*

This scribe understood what radical-faith-based-obedience looks like and, therefore, was close to the Kingdom. Love for God and for your fellow man is the outcome of grace empowered obedience. Again, Matthew adds this clarification; *“On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:40)* Now, permit me to insert this verse once again as it fits so well and expands our revelation. *“Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things NEW and OLD.” (Matthew 13:52)*

What did this scribe bring out of his treasure new and old?

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1. **Old:** The Lord is ONE. Only Mark includes this essential piece. (Deuteronomy 6:4)
2. **Old:** Love God with your whole heart... (Deuteronomy 6:5)
3. **New:** Loving your neighbor as oneself is proof you love God with your whole heart. (Wisdom from the Spirit connecting Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18)

In Luke's Gospel a scribe asks about eternal life. Look how Yahshua replies, and again recognize the old and new. *"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE?" He said to him, "WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THE LAW? WHAT IS YOUR READING OF IT?" So he answered and said, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.' " And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.""* (Luke 10:25-28)

You must catch the subtle nuance here.

- What is written in the law?—OLD
- What is your reading of it?—NEW

What is written and how do you interpret it? In other words, what is the full extent of what it means? Yahshua was doing this Himself each time He taught as such in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7); "You know it is written...but I tell you...! The scribe mentioned above needed to understand from the Scriptures that what it means to love Yahweh INCLUDES the love of your neighbor. Some commands are vertical; obeying them demonstrates love toward God. Other commands are horizontal; obeying them demonstrates love toward man. When you are spirit-filled and capable of expressing unconditional love for God AND for your fellow man by obeying all of God's commands, you will look just like Yahshua. *"You are not far from the Kingdom of God."*

We see the very same wisdom on display in the account of Yahshua talking to the rich young ruler.

"Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?" 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." He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, " 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' " The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept

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**For our Savior's Sake:
Romans 13:11-14**

At a glance:

#1 Christians are taught that they are saved the moment they confess Jesus as Lord and Savior. But what happens at that moment is your redemption, your justification.

#2 Salvation has so much to do with practical living.

#3 He who endures to the end shall be saved.

**Am I Fully Convinced:
Romans 14:1-5, and...**

**Am I Doing unto the Lord:
Romans 14:6-9**

At a glance:

#1 Those who are weak in the faith are the ones who don't know what is permitted (kosher) according to the Old Testament.

#2 Newbies prefer to eat no meat at all, so they do not make a mistake. "Don't look down on them."

#3 You who are weak in the faith, don't you judge the one who exercises their liberty to eat [meat] because they do know what is clean and what is unclean.

from my youth. What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "IF YOU WANT TO BE PERFECT, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." (Matthew 19:16-22)

The man wants eternal life and Yahshua curiously tells him to obey those horizontal commandments. But then He reads what's in the man's heart. Yahshua tells him that if you want to be "perfect" (be like Me, manifest the Kingdom), you must give it all up (take up your cross; read Luke 14:25-35) and follow Me (obey both the vertical and horizontal commands). Yahshua taught us this in the Sermon on the Mount; *"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12)* That is the only way to demonstrate the unconditional love of God. That is the only way to "fulfill the law."

FOR OUR SAVIOR'S SAKE: ROMANS 13:11-14

"And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."

Salvation is near. This should again peak your curiosity. Traditionally, Christians are taught that they are saved the moment they confess Jesus as Lord and Savior. But like you have learned many times in Paul's theological masterpiece, what happens at that moment is your redemption, your justification. God has paid a ransom for your life, and now He sees you like you never sinned in the first place. *"But he who endures to the end shall be saved." (Matthew 24:13)* Salvation, on the other hand, has so much to do with practical living. Make no provision for sinful behaviors; but instead, as light bearers, walk properly! *"Salvation is nearer than when we first believed."*

CHAPTER 14 "RELATION TO BRETHREN"

AM I FULLY CONVINCED: ROMANS 14:1-5

"Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand,

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#4 Gentiles who are new to the faith are required to:

A. Leave their idolatry behind!

B. End all sexual immorality!

C. Refrain from eating animals that have been killed by strangulation and/or still have blood in them!

#5 Even Gentile converts are expected to eventually learn and abide by the Laws of God in the Old Testament.

#6 If you observe day that is special to you, (providing it is not in opposition to Yahweh's commands), then go ahead and keep it. Just do all things unto the LORD.

#7 It is up to the Church to judge itself righteously and ultimately we are called to obey Yahweh's commands.

for God is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.”

AM I DOING UNTO THE LORD: ROMANS 14:6-9

“He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.”

Okay, here we go again. I combined these two sections as the content is completely related. Traditionally, the Church has used this area of Romans as an apologetic to prove that eating according to the Bible (biblically fit food or kosher), and keeping Biblical Feast holidays, according to the “Old Testament Laws”, have been done away with. You've likely learned that those who still do so, or think they should, are the ones who Paul is referring to here as “weak in the faith.”

But let's discover what Paul is really saying. The critical hint is right in the beginning of the passage. Start with this; when in doubt, “err” on the side of preferring your brother (Romans 12:10; Phil. 2:3). The early Church was filled with converts from pagan belief systems. They came into Christianity knowing ZERO about its roots in the Hebrew faith, and consequently nothing about the Scriptures. This was not the same with the Jews. They had an advantage (Romans 3:1-2). But, as you also probably experienced in your own personal conversion, when you are impacted by an encounter with the Holy Spirit, you are imparted a desire to love and please the LORD. Yet that may not, and often does not, come with any actual knowledge base of what that might look like. So, here in Rome there were many believers (once Gentiles in the flesh; Ephesians 2:11-13) who were confused about what they were permitted to eat and what days were holy. So much of that confusion was clearly around which meats were clean or unclean according to God's word (Leviticus 11). Again, they had ZERO background in this stuff. So, to be safe, they chose to eat only vegetables, which is commanded nowhere in the Torah (Law). You must get this. Paul is not saying that those “weak in the faith” are the ones who are still trying to eat clean according to the Old Testament; he is saying that those who are weak in the faith are the ones who don't know what is permitted (fit or kosher) according to the Old Testament. In order to honor God in their own way, these newbies prefer to eat no meat at all, so they do not make a mistake. And Paul is saying, “Don't look down on them.” Ultimately, they are God's servants and He is the one who knows the intentions of their hearts (Hebrews 4:12-13). Also, you who are weak in the faith, don't you

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judge the one who exercises their liberty to eat (meat) because they do know what is clean and what is unclean. Knowing the difference is a strength (maturity) in the faith, not a weakness.

This was a huge issue in the early Church, so much so that they needed to convene a council to figure out what to do with the massive influx of gentiles who were turning to Yahweh through Yahshua. I am confident that this is such an important piece for you to fully understand what Paul is teaching us in Romans 14 that I included here the entire ruling from the Jerusalem Council:

“Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: “Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.” Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, “Men and brethren, listen to me: Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: ‘After this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the LORD who does all these things.’ “Known to God from eternity are all His works. Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to ABSTAIN FROM THINGS POLLUTED BY IDOLS, FROM SEXUAL IMMORALITY, FROM THINGS STRANGLED, AND FROM BLOOD. For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”” (Acts 15:6-21)

Notice that the ruling for the Gentiles, who are new to the faith, includes regulations that require immediate adherence:

1. Leave your idolatry behind!
2. End all sexual immorality!
3. Refrain from eating animals that have been killed by strangulation and/or still have blood in them! These are two indicators for eating food that is kosher.

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(Kosher is the modern term used to describe food that is fit to eat according to the Scriptures.)

Much like we discussed in chapters 10 and 12 when we explored Yahshua's interaction with the scribe who asked Him about the greatest commandment (Mark 12:28-34), this ruling encompasses an encapsulation of commandments. In other words, to the scribe, Yahshua gives two categories of commands to obey (not just two commandments), all those that demonstrate our love for the Father, and all those that demonstrate love for mankind. In similar form, the Council in Jerusalem is prompted by the Holy Spirit to lay out a specific "legal guideline" for the Gentiles with three categories of commands to obey. One command speaks to idolatry, one to sexual purity, and the other to eating according to the Scriptures.

One more note about the Jerusalem Council ruling: the new converts were not given a permanent free ride to stay immature or "weak in the faith." Look at verse 21 of the ruling; *"For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."* (Acts 15:21). Immediately after the three starting rules (which by the way have their roots way back to the days of Noah), James reminds us that God's people attend synagogue weekly on the Sabbath to study "Moses". In other words, even Gentile converts are expected to eventually learn and abide by the Laws of God in the Old Testament. Yes, if you explore the Word of God, you will find a long list of Yahweh's instructions for practical living. This is a far cry from saying that doing so makes one "weak in the faith."

Now, back to Romans 14. If you were one of the new converts (weak in the faith), and you were not completely confident you understood what was permitted, it would be much easier to simply not eat meat and only eat vegetables. Their hearts are in the right place, so do not despise them. And conversely, you who are weak, don't despise others who exercise their liberty (also read I Corinthians 10:23-33).

We can say the same about special days. If you observe a day that is special to you, (providing it is not in opposition to Yahweh's commands), then go ahead and keep it. Just do all things unto the LORD (Colossians 3:23; I Corinthians 10:23-33). In the modern day, we might consider days like anniversaries, Mother's Day or Memorial Day. Are they in opposition to Yahweh's commands? Of course not. If you desire to keep them, go ahead and do so, just honor Yahweh as you do. What Paul is NOT saying is that if you don't feel like keeping commanded Biblical Holidays (Leviticus 23), you don't need to. He is also not giving permission to keep days that are in direct opposition to God, like Halloween or other holidays which maintain their roots in pagan worship.

**Will I stand the
Judgment: Romans
14:10-12**

At a glance:

#1 Don't judge unbelievers, do judge believers, and remove yourself from evil people.

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#2 Falsities are NOT to be equated with the Law in the Old Testament. God's laws are never considered as such: "empty deceit; man's traditions, commandments, and doctrines; nor basic principles of the world.

#3 Let no one judge you, but the body of Christ! Those outside the Body cannot judge those who are on the inside.

#4 The measure you use will be used against you. Remove the log before you discern the speck.

It is up to the Church to judge itself righteously (Colossians 2:16-17) and ultimately we are called to obey Yahweh's commands. Hey listen, that is exactly why you are empowered by grace.

WILL I STAND THE JUDGMENT: ROMANS 14:10-12

"But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us shall give account of himself to God."

To me it's simply amazing how much content there is in just a few words from Paul. But again, I think as students of the Word, true disciples, not just people with an "I-got-saved-date", we have the responsibility to go deep, to search out the mysteries of God. Remember, Jesus told us that it has been given to us to know the mysteries of the Kingdom (Matthew 13:11).

So, should we NOT judge our brothers at all? Or, is Paul saying don't judge with contempt? It would seem, contextually, that he is telling us that we need to understand people's weakness and discern accordingly. It would appear elsewhere in Paul's writing that we are to judge one another as fellow believers. "For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? DO YOU NOT JUDGE THOSE WHO ARE INSIDE? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person." (I Corinthians 5:12-13) Don't judge unbelievers, do judge believers, and remove yourself from evil people.

There is a short piece that brings clarity to this in Colossians 2 (read the entire chapter). If read with the correct intention, it reveals that God's people are not to be judged by outsiders, but we are to be judged by the Body of Christ. We should not be fooled "through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the basic principles of the world (v. 8)." Nor should we subject ourselves to the regulations of "false religions or the commandments and doctrines of men (vv. 22-23)." But let's be clear here, these falsities are NOT to be equated with the Law in the Old Testament. God's laws are never considered as such: "empty deceit; man's traditions, commandments, and doctrines; nor basic principles of the world."

So, now when you read Colossians 2 and you know Paul is not disparaging God's Laws, what does he mean by: "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, BUT THE SUBSTANCE IS OF CHRIST." (Colossians 2:16-17) The key to correct understanding is actually found just underneath the surface by exploring the original language. Let no one judge you...period; or let no one judge you, but...; but the SUBSTANCE IS of Christ? The original says "but the body of

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**Cause Others to
Stumble: Romans
14:13-21**

At a glance:

#1 When you are in the presence of someone who is weak in the faith, do not become a stumbling block to them.

Christ.” Substance (sóma in Greek) is the word for body and we are all familiar with the phrase “the Body of Christ.” And the word “is” does not appear in Greek. It was added in English for clarity and appears in italics to indicate such in the more literal translations. What clarity does it add? It only adds clarity if you want the verse to mean NO ONE should judge you at all. If you believe Paul’s intention was that no one should judge you because it’s all about Jesus, then you would prefer to use “substance” and add the “is”. Some versions go even further, replacing “body” with “reality”, the reality is of Christ, pushing that doctrinal bias even harder. Instead, if you understand that no one outside the faith should judge you, but insiders should (which is consistent with Paul’s other writings), then use “body” and take out the “is” that doesn’t exist in the first place. And you are left with: “Let no one judge you, but the body of Christ!” which is now consistent with I Corinthians 5:12, “*DO YOU NOT JUDGE THOSE WHO ARE INSIDE?*”

There is another distinction to make here and it is found in I Corinthians 6:1-6, in which Paul is talking about legal matters in the courts of earth. Ultimately, as rulers, we will in the end sit with Messiah as judges over the world and angels, and if so, we should be capable of handling legal matters on earth between fellow believers, as opposed to subjecting ourselves to the courts of man.

Yet, the bigger picture here is the moment we stand before the throne of Christ. On this subject Paul again defers to his favorite Prophet. The distinction in Isaiah 45:20-23 is that Yahweh will eternally judge both the believer and unbeliever, where we have nothing to do with the eternal judgment of those on the outside. (Again refer to I Corinthians 5:12-13). Isaiah is revealing that every knee and every tongue...will need to present their cases and be judged before God. And elsewhere, Paul teaches us that this is where God completes His ultimate separation of mankind into three permanent classes, rulers (who will judge with Him), citizens, and rebels. “*That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven [rulers], and of those on earth [citizens], and of those under the earth [rebels], and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*” (Philippians 2:10-11)

God’s people will be judged in the end and all their choices as believers will be tested by fire. Any work built on the foundation of faith-based-obedience will be rewarded. All else will be burned (read I Corinthians 3:9-15). “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.*” (II Corinthians 5:10-11)

For the outsider, presently, we have one message—Christ crucified (I Corinthians 2:2). The fear of His judgement should be enough to persuade them. But for the

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#2 If you love your brother you will be willing to sacrifice your liberty for the sake of his conscience.

#3 Do not let your mature understanding of food destroy a new believer who simply does not get it yet.

#4 Anything, even those things permitted by God, like eating certain meats and drinking wine, are worth sacrificing in the presence of someone weak in the faith, for their conscience sake.

#5 If you hurt someone weak because of your liberty, the offense is on you, not them.

**Doing It By Faith:
Romans 14:22-23**

At a glance:

#1 Your maturity must not create uncertainty in others, especially if it inspires them to violate their conscience.

insider, we must judge with wisdom and discernment, not with contempt, but with the goal of maturing the Body of Christ. *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (II Timothy 3:16-17)*

Finally on this matter, heed the words of Yahshua in Luke 6:37-42; the measure you use will be used against you. Remove the log before you discern the speck.

CAUSE OTHERS TO STUMBLE: ROMANS 14:13-21

“Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way. I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.”

Now we are back to what we started with in chapter 14. When you are in the presence of someone who is weak in the faith, do not become a stumbling block to them. Paul confirms Yahshua’s words; *“But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.” (Mark 9:42)* We must keep things in context here; Paul is not saying that nothing is unclean. The context is about those weak in the faith who are concerned that the meats (or other things) they might choose are not permitted. If they feel it is unclean; then to them it is, and you must not do anything to cause them to stumble. Just abstain in their presence for their conscience sake, not your own. Yes, if you love your brother you will be willing to sacrifice your liberty for the sake of his conscience. (For clarity on this, Paul writes brilliantly in I Corinthians 10:23-33, read it!).

Do not let your mature understanding of food destroy a new believer who simply does not get it yet. I love the way Paul words it; *“Do not let your good be spoken of as evil (v. 16).”* Do not let the fact that you have mature knowledge in the faith (good) end badly for others. Remember, the Kingdom of Heaven is about being transformed into the image of Messiah. The immature believer who lives with a

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**Christ's Ministry to the Jew & Gentile:
Romans 15:1-13**

At a glance:

#1 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

#2 The only Scriptures that existed at the time Paul penned Romans (or dictated it) is the Old Testament (Torah: 5 Books of Moses; Prophets: Major and Minor; History: of Kings, People, and Events; Poetry: Psalms, Proverbs, Songs).

#3 The fact that Paul was a scholar of the Torah is why Yahweh chose him to be the formulator and then purveyor of Christian doctrine.

#4 This Romans masterpiece encompasses the entire Bible in 16 chapters.

#5 He did not look to man to understand what this newfound Gospel was about, but instead applied new revelation to his existing knowledge.

#6 Yahweh used a man who was totally prepared for the ministry to develop Christian theology.

good conscience (and you can help) is pleasing to God. Anything, even those things permitted by God, like eating certain meats and drinking wine, are worth sacrificing in the presence of someone weak in the faith, for their conscience sake. If you hurt someone weak because of your liberty, the offense is on you, not them.

DOING IT BY FAITH: ROMANS 14:22-23

“Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.”

Bottom line: don't condemn yourself by the liberty you enjoy. Your maturity must not create uncertainty in others, especially if it inspires them to violate their conscience. That is no way to live in Christ. Everything we do must be rooted in grace empowered faith-based-obedience. All else falls short of the glory of Yahweh.

CHAPTER 15 "CHRISTIAN LABORS"

CHRIST'S MINISTRY TO JEWS & GENTILE: ROMANS 15:1-13

“We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.” For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: “For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name.” And again he says: “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!” And again: “Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!” And again, Isaiah says: “There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope.” Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

I think if we isolate this one verse in chapter 15, we can summarize Paul's entire teaching philosophy in Romans. “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures

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#7 The weak don't have the scruples (enough biblical knowledge) to know what to eat, so they eat only vegetables.

#8 Become like Paul; know the Word like the back of your hand, so you too can apply new revelation to existing knowledge.

might have hope (v. 4)." Think about it; the only Scriptures that existed at the time he penned those words (or dictated them) is the Old Testament (Torah: 5 Books of Moses; Prophets: Major and Minor; History: of Kings, People, and Events; Poetry: Psalms, Proverbs, and Songs). And the fact that he was a scholar of such is why Yahweh chose him to be the formulator and then purveyor of Christian doctrine (revisit Mat. 13:52, "things new and old"). This Romans masterpiece encompasses the entire Bible in 16 chapters, as Paul drew from his vast knowledge of these scriptures, possibly stories about or interactions with Yahshua, and, without a doubt, by revelation from the Holy Spirit. Yahweh did this all to bring us our Christian belief system, and He isolated Paul from the Church leaders of the day to do so, as it seems. Paul's long journey to and in the faith is not the subject matter here in this section, but it is important to highlight a few facts, so you can appreciate how Yahweh uses "human initiative" (in this case Paul's scholarly preparation) in His divine plan. You can read Galatians 1:11-2:2 to get a quick overview, but I will summarize it here to help.

Paul was advanced in his Judaism beyond many of his contemporaries; so when he got knocked off his donkey on his way to Damascus, and the Son was revealed to him, he got alone with the Spirit and received revelation from Yahshua. He did not look to man to understand what this newfound Gospel was about, but instead applied new revelation to his existing knowledge (again Matthew 13:52). And no one knows for sure the exact timing of it all, but it seems at first he stayed away from the disciples and got alone for three years in the wilderness (Arabia), including an abundance of ministry along the way. Then he went to Jerusalem briefly (for 15 days; Acts 9:26-30) to see Peter, but it seems he met with James alone, and then went back out to minister. It wasn't until 14 years later (uncertain if Paul means 14 years after the initial 3 years or including the 3 years) that he goes back to Jerusalem, by direction of the Holy Spirit, to share the testimonies of his ministry to the Gentiles.

The take away here is that Yahweh used a man who was totally prepared for such a ministry (old) to develop Christian theology (new). Are you prepared? He applied new revelation to his existing knowledge of Scriptures. Do you? And he encapsulated this concept with this statement: *"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."*

Just in the first 13 verses alone of Romans 15 he draws upon his knowledge of the Old Testament five times (almost certainly from memory), quoting David, Moses and Isaiah. As it is written:

"Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me." (Psalms 69:9)

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**Paul's Ministry to the
Jew & Gentile:
Romans 15:14-21**

#1 Don't just read Paul's quotes; read the passages from where he referenced them and try to get inside his mind.

#2 Paul goes deep; *"I have written more boldly to you on some points."*

#3 He's confident the Romans will understand his profound doctrinal insights and the complicated relationship between those of differing backgrounds coming into the faith.

#4 Yahweh chose a great Jewish scholar to disciple the Gentiles.

#5 The Jew and Gentile have come from very different places, but they are traveling to the same destination.

"Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the Gentiles, and sing praises to Your name." (Psalms 18:49 and II Samuel 22:50)

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land and His people." (Deuteronomy 32:43)

"Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!" (Psalms 117:1)

"And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious." (Isaiah 11:10)

So, what's Paul's point here? Look, Jesus paid the price for all of us (Gentiles included). And as we just clarified in the previous chapter, those weak in the faith come from the Gentile background, as they have no previous foundation in Scriptures to draw upon. Here in chapter 15, Paul specifically includes himself as one of the strong ones; *"We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves."* Now go review 14:1-2; the weak don't have the scruples (enough biblical knowledge) to know what to eat, so they eat only vegetables. Paul, of course knew better, but admonishes us to prefer our neighbor over our liberties; it's not about you. Christ was the example of such when He took on the reproach that was meant for us. He didn't come to please Himself; He preferred us. Be Christ-like-minded. Do for each other what He did for you; accept one another like He accepted you. Why? Because the Messiah came as a Servant to the Jew first, in order to confirm the promises He also made to the Gentiles. Lastly, become like Paul; know the Word like the back of your hand, so you too can apply new revelation to existing knowledge.

PAUL'S MINISTRY TO JEW & GENTILE: ROMANS 15:14-21

"Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient— in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, but as it is written: "To whom He

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#6 In his own life, Paul had to move from self-determination based obedience to grace empowered faith-based-obedience, so he could deliver an authentic message.

#7 God's people are called to move from childhood (weakness) in the faith to adulthood (maturity) in the faith, as the Holy Spirit partners with human initiative.

#8 From Jerusalem first, and then beyond, the entire world will say, "Yahweh reigns!"

was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand.””

At the time Romans was written, Paul had not yet visited Rome, but he certainly knew about the activities and effectiveness of the Church there. Remember, way back in chapter 1, Paul compliments them on their famous faith. *“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.” (Romans 1:8)*

I hope you are falling deeply in love with a new way of understanding the Scriptures. Don't just read Paul's quotes; read the passages from where he referenced them and try to get inside his mind. (I pray you do the same with all the references I've provided.) This short passage alone in Chapter 15, 8 verses, is a delicious taste of what is available to you if you are willing to peek below the surface.

First, consider what we know thus far. Paul can't wait to get to Rome; he's writing to "groups of groups" in Rome, clearly filled with people he believes, by the Spirit, who can handle Yahweh's deepest revelations. They are both of Jewish and Gentile (once Gentiles; Ephesians 2:11-13) persuasions, and at times he is clearly addressing one or the other of those audiences separately. And he alternates throughout. He uses references from the Old Testament, time and time again, to establish the doctrinal basis of his writings. It is almost as if he has reiterated the entirety of the Bible in 16 chapters. Here in chapter 15 he admits that he has gone deep with them; *“I have written more boldly to you on some points.”* He's confident they will understand both the profound doctrinal insights, as well as the complicated relationship between those of differing backgrounds coming into the faith.

Take a moment to appreciate the depth of Romans:

- He's identified three eternal classes of people.
- He's distinguished doing the Law from works (deeds) of Law.
- He's discussed the advantages and disadvantages of past upbringing (Jew or Gentile).
- He's introduced the simple Gospel of "Salvation" (Justification, Redemption, Reconciliation) and distinguished it from the more complex Gospel of the Kingdom.
- He helped us clarify what righteousness is and introduced the two types, imputed righteousness and earned righteousness (both necessary).

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- He's solidified our identification with Christ's death, burial and resurrection, and what that means both spiritually (in heaven) and physically (on earth).
- He introduced the legal basis for redemption from the Old Testament; without death and blood you cannot be born again. And he used marriage to explain it.
- He uncovered the sources of personal struggles and how they are overcome.
- He's distinguished the Law of Moses from the Law of sin and death.
- He's elaborated on killing the flesh and the power of walking in the Spirit.
- He's taught us about the prophetic future, the "revealing of the sons of God," and about the necessity of human initiative in Yahweh's eternal plans.
- He's helped us understand God's sovereignty.
- He reminded us exactly what we confessed when we got born again. And what it means to live with grace empowered faith-based-obedience.
- He alleviated the confusion about natural Israel and the three eternal fates of mankind.
- He helped us understand what it truly means to sacrifice everything and live a life in the faith.
- He showed us the outcome of a transformed mind and how to get one.
- Then, he helped us understand the true nature of Godly authority.
- He gave us real clarity about how Jews and Gentiles, who came into the faith, need to treat each other and how to consider others as a priority.
- He coached us on how to honor and support those who are weak in the faith.
- And throughout the entire letter, he formulated "Christian Doctrine" and proved it all from the Old Testament. That alone should encourage us to become experts in God's Word.

Paul calls himself a "minister to the Gentiles". Don't you find it fascinating that Yahweh would choose the great Jewish scholar to disciple the Gentiles? When you think about it, it makes perfect sense. Who better than an expert to elaborate on what the Old Testament means relative to their newfound faith? And who better to explain the "complicated" relationship between "former" Gentiles and those who "already" called themselves the chosen people of God. The Jew and Gentile have come from very different places, but they are traveling to the same destination.

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**Gentile's Ministry to
the Jew:
Romans 15:22-33**

At a glance:

#1 Paul has had a longstanding desire to visit Rome, but he needs to first finish preaching where no one had gone before him.

#2 Paul already knew in the spirit that he needed to go to Jerusalem before heading to Rome. And He knew he was headed for trouble.

#3 We can trace the steps of Paul's entire journey, from conversion to Rome, in the Book of Acts.

And this is no doubt why Paul had to “get away alone” for so long to sort through what his encounter with Yahshua meant relative to his faith and the faith of these new Gentile converts. *“For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—in mighty signs and wonders...”* In his own life, he had to move from self-determination based obedience to grace empowered faith-based-obedience, so he could deliver an authentic message about what that looked like to all people, Jew and Gentile.

The initial message to the Gentiles is “Christ Crucified” (I Corinthians 2:1-5) and then to stand back and watch the Holy Spirit move (signs and wonders). But, then the message changes as God's people are called to move from childhood (weakness) in the faith to adulthood (maturity) in the faith, as the Holy Spirit partners with human initiative (I Corinthians 2:6-16). Yes, the Gentiles are also called to become obedient, but Paul is careful not to lead them down the same historic journey of mistakes that Israel made—the journey of self-righteousness. He is also warning Jewish believers to recognize this tendency in themselves, to not jump back on that road, and furthermore, to not become an impediment for the Gentiles to embrace a life of grace empowered faith-based-obedience.

I think we also learned that Isaiah was Paul's favorite Prophet. Even look here in chapter 15 at the depth of what he draws from one verse in Isaiah 52:15. Please, stop here and read all of Isaiah 52; it's worth it! And this is not even Paul's first reference in Romans to this very chapter of Isaiah. In Romans 2, Paul refers to Isaiah 52:5, *“And My name is blasphemed continually every day.”* And again in Romans 10 he refers to Isaiah 52:7 after he clarified what we confessed when we got born again. *“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, “Your God reigns!””* And it would seem that he is teaching us that the testimony will first come from Jerusalem (that's Isaiah's message).

Yes, Paul says “from Jerusalem” and beyond I preached this message. I was called to lay down new tracks where “no man has gone before.” It's the revelation of his Isaiah reference. *“So shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider.” (Isaiah 52:15)* This is new revelation added to his existing knowledge; “from Jerusalem”. They must get it right first, and from there the entire world will say, “Yahweh reigns!”

GENTILE'S MINISTRY TO JEW: ROMANS 15:22-33

“For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you. But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years

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#4 Paul (Saul) was the leader who condoned the kangaroo court that judged and killed Stephen.

#5 Paul had to endure the same type of accusations and persecutions of false witnesses throughout his entire ministry that he allowed in Stephen's "trial".

#6 Paul visited Jerusalem three times throughout his ministry years. Once after three years, once after fourteen years, and once before his trip to Rome as a prisoner.

#7 Paul constantly defended his position that he was NOT teaching against the Laws of Moses.

#8 In Rome "He explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus FROM BOTH THE LAW OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS."

#9 Paul knew he was going to get to Rome, but his journey there was not what he would have chosen. Man does indeed make his own plans, but Yahweh must ordain each step.

to come to you, whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while. But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things. Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain. But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."

[Strap yourself in for a dramatic overview of Paul's journey to Rome!](#)

[Paul has had a longstanding desire to visit Rome, but he needs to first finish preaching where no one had gone before him. As we know historically, Paul winds up in Rome as a prisoner, not the way he planned it. He wanted to go there for ministry and to spend some quality time with many old friends. But as it happened, Yahweh had different plans. Remember, many years earlier, shortly after his conversion, Ananias received a word for Paul; "But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. FOR I WILL SHOW HIM HOW MANY THINGS HE MUST SUFFER FOR MY NAME'S SAKE." \(Acts 9:15-16\)](#)

[Before heading to Rome on his way to Spain, Paul was going to make his third stop in Jerusalem since his miraculous conversion, and he already knew in the Spirit that it would be very risky. "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." \(Acts 21:13\) "Nevertheless, please pray for my deliverance from those in Judea who do not believe \(Romans 15:30-31\)." After his second visit to Jerusalem \(Acts 15\), Paul had a vision that he must go to Macedonia and preach the gospel \(vision: Acts 16:9-10; arrival: 20:1-2\). After Paul ministered there, they were so grateful for the invitation to participate in the blessings of Israel that they gave a contribution for Paul to bring to the saints in Jerusalem. Paul already knew in the spirit that he needed to go to Jerusalem before heading to Rome. "When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." \(Acts 19:21\) And He knew he was headed for trouble. "They told Paul through the Spirit not to](#)

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go up to Jerusalem.” (Acts 21:4) “And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul’s belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’ ”” (Acts 21:10-11) Paul was about to punch his ticket to Rome, and he was not traveling first class!

We can trace the steps of Paul's entire journey, from conversion, all the way to Rome, in the Book of Acts. It all started with his zealotry to preserve his cemented-in-stone understanding of Judaism. And in doing so, Paul became the early Church's worst nightmare. The first recorded act of his brutality is against Stephen, who was illegally stoned to death after false testimony against him. *“Then they SECRETLY INDUCED MEN TO SAY, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council. They also set up FALSE WITNESSES who said, “This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law;” (Acts 6:11-13) Paul (Saul) was the leader who condoned the kangaroo court (Acts 6:8-15) and eventual wrongful capital punishment (Act 7:54-60), even after Stephen gave his masterful self-defense (Acts 7:1-53).*

So, it should be no coincidence that later on, after his conversion, Paul had to endure the same type of accusations and persecutions of false witnesses throughout his entire ministry. *“This fellow [Paul] persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.” (Acts 18:13) However, before that journey would begin, and immediately after Stephen's death, Paul (Saul) went on a rampage, determined to champion his Jewish religion. He must have been the darling of the faith and a favorite of the High Priest's office (which ironically, after his conversion, became Paul's worst nightmare).*

Check out some excerpts of Saul's exploits:

“Now Saul was consenting to his [Stephen's] death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles... As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.” (Acts 8:1, 3)

“Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.” (Acts 9:1-2)

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Stephen's stoning and Saul's brutal persecution of the Church were the very inspiration for Yahshua's intervention in his life (his "knocked off his ass" experience; Acts 9:3-19) *"Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"" (Acts 9:4)*

At his conversion, Paul is blinded (by the light), and is then led into Damascus. And when you combine the accounts in Acts 9:8-15 and Galatians 1:15-17, it seems Paul went into Damascus, got baptized by Ananias, was there for some time, left for Arabia, and then returns to preach in Damascus, where he eventually receives death threats and has to escape for his life (Acts 9:23-25). He ultimately makes his way to Jerusalem where Barnabas helps him get in front of the apostles to declare his conversion (first of three post-conversion visits to Jerusalem; it's now three years after conversion; Acts 9:26-30, Galatians 1:18). There is an attempt on his life in Jerusalem, as well, and he doesn't stay long. We also know from his letter to the Galatians (1:19-20) that he never had any significant interaction with Church leaders in Jerusalem until many years later (Galatians 2:1-10). That is when he returned there for his second visit, after 14 years, to take part in the Jerusalem Council (read Acts 15:1-35).

Ponder Paul's involvement in Stephen's death as he turned a blind eye to false accusations against him. *"And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I [Paul] also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him."* (Acts 22:20) Because he was complicit, Paul literally spent years defending himself against the same such accusations that led Stephen to his death. *"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."* (Galatians 6:7)

Each place he turned, Paul was accused of teaching that faith in Jesus replaced the Law of Moses. *"You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to FORSAKE MOSES, SAYING THAT THEY OUGHT NOT TO CIRCUMCISE THEIR CHILDREN NOR TO WALK ACCORDING TO THE CUSTOMS."* (Acts 21:20-21)

But was he teaching such? Acts 21 records his defining moment on the subject.

What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and THAT ALL MAY KNOW THAT THOSE THINGS OF WHICH THEY WERE INFORMED CONCERNING YOU ARE NOTHING, BUT THAT YOU YOURSELF ALSO WALK ORDERLY AND KEEP THE LAW. But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided [Jerusalem Council ruling, Acts 15] that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep

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themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.”” (Acts 21:22-25)

What does Paul do? He’s accused of teaching against the Laws of Moses and everyone is watching. If he is promoting such doctrine and also personally no longer walking orderly according to the law, then this is his opportunity, his defining moment to say so. If not, he’s asked to include himself in a vow that four other men have taken, and to take it a step further and pay their expenses, as well as his own. It’s a Nazarite Vow straight from the Law of Moses in Numbers 6. So, if Paul is teaching against the Law, this is the moment to stand up and say, “Yes, it’s true!” But he doesn’t... Instead, he takes the vow!

“Then Paul took the men, and the next day, HAVING BEEN PURIFIED WITH THEM, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them.” (Acts 21:26)

Multiple times throughout his ministry he openly declares the same testimony; “I DO NOT FORSAKE THE LAW OF MOSES, NOR DO I TEACH OTHERS TO DO SO.”

“Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me [FALSE ACCUSATIONS]. But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, BELIEVING ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAW AND IN THE PROPHETS.” (Acts 24:13-14)

“NEITHER AGAINST THE LAW OF THE JEWS, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all.” (Acts 25:8)

But the troublemakers in Jerusalem didn’t care. Even after Paul’s participation in the vow and his open declaration, they continued to falsely accuse him and stir up controversy. *“This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place. (v. 21:28).”* Paul knew this was coming! That is why, here in Romans 15, he is asking for prayers of protection from those who don’t believe when he returns to Jerusalem.

Such an uproar ensues after seven days that they seize Paul and beat him. When the commander of the local garrison (named Lysias, Acts 24:6-7) caught wind of the uproar, he shows up, stops the beating and binds Paul (Acts 21:27-33). After he is rescued from the beating, Paul gets Lysias to let him give his testimony to the entire mob (Acts 21:37-22:21). Even after his testimony, the ruckus crowd moves Lysias to “beat the truth out of him,” which surprisingly he is willing to do. It’s just about to happen when Paul tells the centurion assigned to beat him that he is a Roman citizen by birth. Before he lays a hand on Paul, the centurion

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informs Lysias of this crucial development. Of course, the commander is alarmed by this new information as, according to Roman law, you were NOT PERMITTED to bind and punish a prisoner without a trial (Acts 22:22-29).

Now more interested in the truth, Lysias orders the Sanhedrin to come before Paul and state their accusations (Acts 22:30). Paul's defense, which is undeniable, causes more conflict and he needs to be rescued from the mayhem (Acts 23:1-10).

And then Paul's moment of confirmation from the Lord that he is right where he is supposed to be: *"But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as YOU HAVE TESTIFIED FOR ME IN JERUSALEM, SO YOU MUST ALSO BEAR WITNESS AT ROME.""* (Acts 23:11) He's going to get to Rome, but it's not going to be a mission trip; it's going to look more like his chaotic experience in Jerusalem.

Next there is yet another plot to kill him and he needs to be secretly moved outside of Jerusalem to Caesarea (Act 23:12-22). This is where Paul will meet Governor Felix (Acts 23:23-35) and where he is kept locked up until trial. Five days later, the High Priest Ananias and some elders bring their "evidence" (false accusations) against Paul in front of Felix. They do so using a professional orator, Tertullus (a spin doctor). Paul masterfully defends himself yet again, but Felix procrastinates and leaves him in prison for TWO YEARS until he leaves office and Festus takes over (Acts 24). The High Priest asks Festus to move Paul back to Jerusalem (so they can kill him along the way), but Festus commands he be left in Caesarea, so he can hear Paul's story himself. Festus does so and asks Paul if he wants to go back to Jerusalem to defend himself, but Paul refuses and instead appeals to Caesar in Rome (Acts 25:1-12). Paul is GOING TO GET TO ROME one way or the other! Festus agrees, but before he ships Paul off, King Agrippa comes into town and Festus tells him the whole story. This incites Agrippa's interest and he asks for Paul to be brought before him (Acts 25:13-27). In Acts 26 Paul again recounts his entire history and testimony, this time for Agrippa. It is so compelling that Agrippa is nearly convinced to convert to Christianity (v. 28). In the end this is Agrippa's ruling.

"When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains." Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."" (Acts 26:30-32) PAUL IS GOING TO ROME!

Paul arrives in Rome (Acts 28:11) after a harrowing trip (Acts 27:1-28:10). And he begins his ministry: *"And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So when they had come together, he said to them:*

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**Some Saints to Greet:
Romans 16:1-16**

At a glance:

#1 There is no other letter Paul wrote and no other city Paul wrote to that has more people in it that he had such a deep connection with.

*"Men and brethren, **THOUGH I HAVE DONE NOTHING AGAINST OUR PEOPLE OR THE CUSTOMS OF OUR FATHERS** [THERE IS THAT TESTIMONY AGAIN], yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans," (Acts 28:17)*

In Rome, Paul put's the exclamation mark on his ministry with this one testimony!
*"He explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, **PERSUADING THEM CONCERNING JESUS FROM BOTH THE LAW OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS, from morning till evening.**" (Acts 28:23) Isn't this precisely what we have being doing throughout our study of the ENTIRE BOOK OF ROMANS?*

Paul was the up-and-coming superstar in Judaism and now he is a traitor and blasphemer in the eyes of "his people". Here in Romans 15, Paul is asking these groups of very faithful believers in Rome to pray earnestly for him, so that he is able to get in and out of Jerusalem without any complications. Yet he knows in the Spirit this is unlikely. *"And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me." (Acts 20:22-23)* History tells us that he did make it to Rome, and no doubt his ministry was abundant. *"Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him." (Acts 28:30-31)*

Man does indeed make his own plans, but Yahweh must ordain each step (Proverbs 16:9).

"For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus... The will of the Lord be done." (Acts 21:13-14)

Paul

CHAPTER 16 "GREETINGS TO BRETHERN"

SOME SAINTS TO GREET: ROMANS 16:1-16

"I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also. Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ. Greet Mary, who labored much for us. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my

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**Some Sinners to
Avoid:
Romans 16:17-20**

At a glance:

#1 Romans 1:8 and 16:19 are the bookends of Romans: famous faith and radical obedience.

#2 Paul was very concerned with doctrine and that he admonished believers to avoid those who practiced what was contrary to what he taught

#3 Paul was very concerned with doctrine and that he admonished believers to avoid those who practiced what was contrary to what he taught.

#4 Good doctrine needs to be a part of an effective adult (mature) believers tool belt.

#5 Read the entire letter to the Ephesians, the "Epistle of Oneness".

#6 People and beliefs to avoid come with a spirit of the "self".

#7 It's those who are weak in the faith who will be most vulnerable. Protect them!

countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus. Greet Herodion, my countryman. Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them. Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you."

Since we have used this commentary to focus on theology, there is not much to comment on here. But, what I will make note of is that there is no other letter Paul wrote, and no other city Paul wrote to, that has more people in it that he had such a deep connection with. It all the more emphasizes why he so longed to visit.

SOME SINNERS TO AVOID: ROMANS 16:17-20

"Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that YOUR FAITH IS SPOKEN OF THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD." (Romans 1:8)

"For YOUR OBEDIENCE HAS BECOME KNOWN TO ALL. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil." (Romans 16:19)

Romans 1:8 and 16:19 are the bookends of Romans: famous faith and radical obedience. We have identified this throughout Romans as **Grace-Empowered-Faith-Based-Obedience**. Use it to distinguish good and evil. That is what grown-ups in the faith do. *"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." (Hebrews 5:14)*

Unfortunately, it's not all that uncommon these days in the Church to hear that we should not get hung up on doctrinal issues, that it only brings division. It seems

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here that Paul was very concerned with doctrine and that he admonished believers to avoid those who practiced what was contrary to what he taught. He is saying that NOT KNOWING good doctrine is what brings division. And here he writes this at the end of his Magnum Opus on Christian theology. Yes, doctrine is important and good doctrine needs to be a part of an effective adult (mature) believer's tool belt.

What and who should you be on guard for? Well, for sure you should be on the lookout for those who are divisive. You will be able to identify them because they cause division and offense. If you want to understand the opposite of those things I would recommend you read the entire letter to the Ephesians, the letter I call the "Epistle of Oneness".

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is ONE body and ONE Spirit, just as you were called in ONE hope of your calling; ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism; ONE God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Ephesians 4:1-6)

We have spent quite a bit of time here in Romans dealing with relationships, and bearing with one another's weakness, learning to prefer our brothers. The people and beliefs to avoid come with a spirit of "self". They use their silky words to draw attention to themselves and will appear to want their own followers. *"They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them." (Galatians 4:17)* It's those who are weak in the faith who will be most vulnerable. Protect them! *"Am I my brother's keeper?"* The famous words of Cain when questioned by Yahweh in Genesis 4:9, *"Where is Abel your brother?"* Paul says, "Yes you are!"

I'll close out this portion by giving you some practical advice to fulfill the mandate of this section of Romans:

- *"Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." (I Corinthians 15:33)*
- *"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" (II Corinthians 6:14)*
- *"Go from the presence of a foolish man, when you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge." (Proverbs 14:7)*

SOME SERVANTS TO HONOR: ROMANS 16:21-27

Some Servants to Honor:
Romans 16:21-27

At a glance:

#1 The mysteries here in Romans are the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

#2 The prophetic understanding of Scriptures is here for us to understand and steward well for the nations.

CHAPTER & VERSE
AT-A-GLANCE

#3 The command of the everlasting God is obedience to the faith: Yes, RADICAL-GRACE-EMPOWERED-FAITH-BASED-OBEDIENCE!

“Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you. I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord. Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith— to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.”

And as a man who lives by his own words, “Give honor where honor is due” (Romans 13:7). Paul honors those who have run with him; he even allows his transcriber, Tertius, to pen a few words of his own, in what just might be the most important letter ever written throughout history.

“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: “I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.”” (Matthew 13:35)

The mysteries here in Romans are the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven (read Matthew 13:1-23, Parable of the Soils). Paul is giving us the keys to understand the Kingdom (Matthew 16:19). And he is doing his best to make the message of these secrets clear, *“how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:”* (Ephesians 3:3-5; read all of Ephesians 3). They were once hidden from our eyes, but now the prophetic understanding of Scriptures is here for us to understand and steward well for the nations. *“But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”* (Matthew 13:16-17) Yes, uncover the mysteries and steward them well (read Matthew 25:14-30. The Parable of the Talents).

And what has now been made know by the prophetic Scriptures; what is the commandment of the everlasting God? We are right back where we started: *“Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name,”* (Romans 1:5) Obedience to the faith: Yes, RADICAL-GRACE-EMPOWERED-FAITH-BASED-OBEDIENCE!

Amen