

# NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

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Published by:

**HAYES PRESS**

The Barn, Flaxlands

Royal Wootton Bassett

Swindon, SN4 8DY

United Kingdom

[www.hayespress.org](http://www.hayespress.org)

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# THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS: WHEN AND WHERE WRITTEN

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It is evident from the statements in Rom.1:11-15<sup>1</sup> that at the time of writing this letter, the apostle had not yet visited Rome. Yet his extensive knowledge of the saints there (36 of whom are referred to) is revealed in the closing chapter. Paul had a longing to visit them. First he intended to go to Jerusalem to convey the gift from the saints in Macedonia and Achaia to the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. After completing this mission, his purpose was to visit Rome on his way to Spain (Acts 15:22-29<sup>2</sup>). (How different was his actual journey as a prisoner following his appeal to Caesar!). While the apostle was in Ephesus his plans for the future were made known. “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<sup>3</sup>).

It is interesting to note that from Ephesus he sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia while he stayed in Asia for a while. After the uproar in Ephesus, he journeyed into Macedonia, and thence into Greece, where he spent three months (Acts 20:1-4<sup>4</sup>). At that time, Timothy, Sosipater, Gaius and Erastus were with the apostle, and are amongst those who sent greetings to the saints in Rome (Rom.16:21-23<sup>5</sup>). Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, some nine miles from Corinth, is commended to the church in Rome, and she may have been the bearer

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.11-15>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2015.22-29>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2019.21>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.1-4>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.21-23>

of the letter (Rom.16:1<sup>6</sup>,2<sup>7</sup>). It would seem that the letter was written from Corinth fairly late in the apostle's public ministry, and during his final visit to that city. The date may have been about A.D.58.

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6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.1>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.2>

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE EPISTLE

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The Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Romans has never been in doubt. The similarity of the epistle to that of the Galatians, supposed to have been written about the same time, has frequently been remarked upon. Both declare that man is justified by faith apart from works of law or any human works whatsoever. It is remarkable that the epistle was written to the saints in the church of God in Rome, and that from that very city, from papal Rome, has issued a curse upon any who teach that a man is justified from sin by faith in Christ alone. Papal Rome's teaching is the complete negation of the teaching of Paul in the Romans.

The epistle is divided into three main sections (1) chapters 1-8 (2) 9-11, (3) 12-16: Number (1) reveals the state of mankind and God's provision in the work of Christ to meet his need, consummating in that glorious chapter 8, wherein we see the believer completely justified on the ground of faith alone, and for ever united in life and love to Christ. In number (2) we have the profound subject of election dealt with, and in it we also see God's governmental dealings with the Jewish people in setting them aside nationally for the present, and His dealing in this dispensation of grace with mankind on the ground of sinner-ship. Here is a time of unique privilege for the Gentiles such as they never experienced before. Then in number (3) we have many matters of Christian behaviour touched upon, behaviour which is comely and proper for such as have become the subjects of God's grace. This begins with the apostle's pleading words, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God (both his electing and saving mercies), to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (chapter 12:1).

These main sections may be further divided:

(a) in Chapter 1:1-17 we have the introduction to the epistle.

(b) in chapter 1:18-32 we have a description of the Gentiles, not simply by the master-hand of Paul, who well knew the deep depravity of the Gentiles from experience, but this is an account of how God saw them. Then in chapter 2:17-3:8 Paul tears the mask of religion from the Jew and lets him see himself in the mirror of the word of God which Paul wrote. The Jew was naturally a hypocrite, and the Pharisees proverbially so.

(c) Chapter 2:1-16 outlines the justice of God, who will deal with the Jew as a man under law, and the Gentile who had no law will be judged on the ground of the law of his own conscience.

(d) In chapter 3:9-5:21 we have the charge laid against all men, that all are under sin, and God's provision in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus to meet the need of all, the sole and only condition being that each shall believe in Christ the Redeemer.

(e) Chapters 6 and 7 deal with the fact that Christ died unto sin, and that we also died with Christ, our old man being crucified with Him. Therefore, being freed by death from bondage to sin, we are now to present our members, which were once used as servants to sin, as instruments of righteousness unto God. Death also freed the Jew from the dominion of the law, so that he might be joined in life to the Lord, who was raised from the dead to bring forth fruit un-

to God. Then in 7:7-35 we have the complete answer to the question, “Is the law sin?” and the disclosure that the fault is not in the law but in man himself.

(f) Then follows chapter 8, the chapter on the work of the Spirit which brings to fruition the work of Christ in His death and resurrection. Here the believer is declared to be no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit; no longer in sin but in righteousness; groaners indeed, but yet children of God with a glorious hope, being joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Here we look and wonder and worship at the vast panorama – foreordained, called, justified, glorified. Who can say anything to such things? Finally, such is the security of the believer that nothing can separate him from the love of Christ or from God’s love in Christ Jesus.

(g) In Rom.9<sup>1</sup> we have the truth of election dealt with in a manner nowhere else found in the Scriptures. In chapter 10 we have the Jew’s bigoted adherence to the rags of his own legal righteousness, whilst God is handing out freely, to all who will believe, the glorious garment of salvation. To whosoever will is the world-wide message of the gospel, as far flung as “the swift-winged arrows of light.” In chapter 11 we have God’s governmental dealings in the casting off of the unbelieving Jew and the bringing in of “the fulness of the Gentiles.”

(h) Chapters 12 to 15 are hortatory; in them is much instruction as to behaviour, often given in the fewest words.

(i) Finally chapter 16 brings this magnificent epistle to a close with a letter of commendation, words of greeting, ex-

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9>

hortation to withdraw from trouble-makers, and a doxology to the only wise God through Jesus Christ.

# COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

## CHAPTER ONE

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### **R**om.1:1<sup>1</sup>

Paul puts his signature to the Romans at the beginning of the letter and not at the end, as in our day. Then he gives his qualifications. He is first of all a bondservant or slave of Jesus Christ, a purchased slave who had been bought with a price (1 Cor.6:20<sup>2</sup>), and that price was the blood of Christ (Rev.5:9<sup>3</sup>), and therefore he was not his own, he was his Lord's property. He was in the highest kind and most sacred form of bondage, in which are angels (Rev.19:10<sup>4</sup>; Rev.22:9<sup>5</sup>) as well as men. Angels say that they are fellow-bondservants with redeemed men. Paul was also "a called apostle"; that is, he was an apostle by calling. He was not one of the original number, the twelve who were chosen by the Lord from His disciples, after He had continued all night in prayer to God (literally "in the prayer of God") (Lk.6:12-16<sup>6</sup>) but an apostle born out of due time (1 Cor.15:8<sup>7</sup>). He was an apostle not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ. Paul's call to apostleship was by the Lord Himself (1 Cor.9:1<sup>8</sup>,2<sup>9</sup>, Gal.1:1<sup>10</sup>).

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.6.20>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.5.9>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.10>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.22.9>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.6.12-16>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.8>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.9.1>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%209.2>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.1.1>

We read of fifteen faithful apostles, the twelve, amongst whom Matthias had a place by lot (Acts 1:26<sup>11</sup>), Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:14<sup>12</sup>), and James, the Lord's brother (Gal.1:19<sup>13</sup>). The apostle says that he was "separated unto the gospel of God," and of necessity separated from many things and persons (Phil.3:4-7<sup>14</sup>). He was by reason of the grand purpose of his life separated from the grandest schemes of humanitarianism for the betterment of the earthly conditions of his own race or the world at large. Had he followed such a course, he might have ascended high in men's estimation, because of his great natural gifts and tireless energy, but, as he said himself, "I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24<sup>15</sup>).

In divine election this purpose was given him in Christ Jesus before times eternal (2 Tim.1:9-11<sup>16</sup>), he was separated thereto even from his mother's womb (Gal.1:15<sup>17</sup>): and the time came when the Holy Spirit said, "Separate unto Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2<sup>18</sup>). The gospel of God is described in many ways. It is "of God," as to its Source, and it is "of Christ," as to its Subject. It is the gospel of God's grace and of God's glory, and of the glory of Christ. It is also the gospel of our salvation. It is in every way worthy of its Divine Author and Subject, and of the Divine Spirit by whose

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11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.26>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2014.14>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.1.19>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.3.4-7>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.%2024>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.9-%2011>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.1.15>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2013.2>

means it is proclaimed to men (1 Pet.1:12<sup>19</sup>). It is essentially glad tidings of God's love for men (Jn 3:16<sup>20</sup>).

### **Rom.1:2<sup>21</sup>**

The coming of Christ and the appearing of divine grace (Tit.2:11<sup>22</sup>) were heralded by the prophets since the start of the human race (Lk.1:70<sup>23</sup>; Gen.3:15<sup>24</sup>). Moses was the first of the prophets to record in the Holy Scriptures such announcements of a Divine Saviour, and David, Isaiah and others added voluminously to what had gone before. It is said that at the time of Christ's birth eastern nations were agog with the expectation of a world-ruler arising from the Jews. No doubt this expectation brought the Magi from the East to Jerusalem seeking the King whom they found in Bethlehem (Matt.2:2<sup>25</sup>). Even in Palestine we have evidence of this expectation: "The people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ" (Lk.3:15<sup>26</sup>).

### **Rom.1:3<sup>27</sup>**

This brief statement of intense clarity leaves us in no doubt as to what happened in Bethlehem. God's Son was born (literally, became; see Jn 1:14<sup>28</sup>, "the Word became flesh") of David's seed. He who is the eternal Son and Word, who is God, the Maker of all, became Man of the

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19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.1.12>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.16>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.2>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.2.11>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.1.70>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.3.15>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.2.2>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.3.15>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.3>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.14>

chosen virgin of David's royal line. He took unto that divine, uncreated substance in which He is of one substance with the Father, that created substance from His human mother, thus this Divine-human Person bridges the gulf as the Mediator between God and men.

**Rom.1:4<sup>29</sup>**

The feet of the Lord's Divine and Eternal Sonship is a matter for faith and not for reason, as is also the feet of Eternal Deity. It is as Cowper truly says, "Object of faith, and not of sense." See the marginal rendering of both AV/KJV and RV where "declared" is said to mean "determined." This or the word "defined", is better than "declared," for the Greek word means "to mark out by a boundary line or limit." It has also been rendered "marked out." The Son is "marked out" "with (or in) power, according to the spirit of holiness." "According to the spirit of holiness" is here set in contrast to "according to the flesh." Weakness is a characteristic feature of the flesh, and Christ in His manhood "was crucified through weakness" (2 Cor.13:4<sup>30</sup>). But Christ in His Divine Being knew no weakness, He is marked out with power and that according to the spirit of holiness. His holiness was equal to that of the Father and the Spirit. Of this intense holiness the heavenly beings say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty" (Rev.4:8<sup>31</sup>, Isa.6:3<sup>32</sup>).

Had the Holy Spirit been here meant, it would have been as easy to say, "According to the Holy Spirit," but this is not what is said. What is here indicated is that holiness which is characteristic of Christ as a Divine Being, even as "according to the flesh" is characteristic of Him in His humanity. "By the resurrection of the dead"; this, rendered literally, is "out of resurrection of dead" (persons) (Greek: *ek anastaseos*

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29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.4>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.13.4>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4.8>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.6.3>

*nekron*). The only similar statement in the New Testament is found in Acts 26:22<sup>33</sup>,23<sup>34</sup>: “What the prophets and Moses did say should come, how that the Christ must suffer and how that He first by the resurrection of the dead (Greek: *ek anastaseos nekron*) should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.” The AV/KJV renders this as “that He should be the first that should rise from the dead”; the RV plainly expresses the meaning of the Greek here. The proclamation of light was out of the resurrection of the dead. Resurrection of dead (persons) (Greek: *anastaseos te nekron*) is one of the first principles of Christ (Heb.6:2<sup>35</sup>). In this He is different from any teacher that has arisen amongst men, no one proclaimed the resurrection of the dead and no one said that he would be the cause of resurrection, but the Lord did so in His ministry in support of His claim that He was the Son of God. The Lord is marked out as the Son of God “out of resurrection of dead (persons).”

Most commentators say that Greek: *ek anastaseos nekron* is the Lord’s own personal resurrection, but it seems to me that it is of wider application. It includes His resurrection truly, for His resurrection is proof of all resurrection (1 Cor.15:22<sup>36</sup>). Take John’s Gospel as giving proof of the Lord’s Divine Sonship (Jn 20:30<sup>37</sup>,31<sup>38</sup>). The first reference to resurrection is in regard to the Lord Himself. He said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up...He spake of the temple of His body” (Jn 2:19<sup>39</sup>,21<sup>40</sup>). When proving that He was the Son of the Father and therefore equal with God, He said, “The hour cometh, and

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33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2026.22>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2026.23>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.6.2>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.22>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2020.30>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2020.31>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%202.19>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%202.21>

now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.” And again, “Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgement” (Jn 5:25<sup>41</sup>,28<sup>42</sup>,29<sup>43</sup>) Then we have His words about Lazarus; “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby” (Jn 11:4<sup>44</sup>). Further, He said to Martha that Lazarus would rise again, for He himself was “the Resurrection, and the Life” (Jn 11:23<sup>45</sup>,25<sup>46</sup>). He is the cause of all resurrection. The Lord raised Himself; He raised Lazarus, He raised the son of the widow of Nain, and He stopped the work of death in the daughter of Jairus. Such resurrection with all that are included in Jn 6:25<sup>47</sup>,28<sup>48</sup>,29<sup>49</sup>, alluded to above, marks out Christ as the Son of God in power. He who is the Resurrection will not leave one body in the tomb; all will be raised.

### **Rom.1:5**<sup>50</sup>

Grace here is linked not with salvation, but with apostleship, for Paul says in Ephesians, “Unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (Eph.4:7<sup>51</sup>). Apostleship, the greatest of all gifts in this dispensation, required grace commensurate to the

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41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%205.25>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%205.28>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%205.29>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2011.4>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2011.23>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2011.25>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%206.25>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%206.28>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%206.29>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.5>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.7>

work involved. Great service required great grace. “Unto obedience of faith,” is not “obedience to the faith,” as in the AV/KJV. The obedience here is that obedience that faith renders to the message of the gospel. Faith alone is God’s requirement, even as the Lord said, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent” (Jn 6:29<sup>52</sup>). Faith in Christ plus human works is a Judaizing gospel, a gospel of perdition. “Among all the nations”: though it is God’s desire that all men should be saved, it is not here stated that he was sent to bring all the nations to the obedience of faith. “Among all the nations,” shows that amongst the Gentiles was to be Paul’s sphere of labour. “For His Name’s sake,” which means for, or, in behalf of, Him who bears the Name; the Name is descriptive of the Person; the worth of the Person is the worth of His Name.

**Rom. 1:6<sup>53</sup>:**

“Among whom” means among the Gentiles. “To be” is in Italics hence there are no equivalent words for these in the Greek. The passage literally means, “called of Jesus Christ.” It is a genitive of possession; they were Jesus Christ’s called ones. They had been called by Him and had responded to His call, and thus they were His.

**Rom. 1:7<sup>54</sup>:**

“To all that are in Rome” is limited and qualified by “beloved of God” and “called saints.” They were beloved of God, because they were accepted in the “Beloved” (Eph. 1:6<sup>55</sup>), and were loved with the Father’s love (Jn 17:26<sup>56</sup>). They were called saints as the apostle was a “called” apostle, which means that they were saints by calling. The calling in

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52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%206.29>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.6>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.7>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.6>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.26>

their ease had been effectual; they were as the Corinthians, who are described as “sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints.” Christ was their sanctification (1 Cor.1:2<sup>57</sup>,30<sup>58</sup>). This calling could never be reversed, and being holy ones it was incumbent on them to be saintly in behaviour, but it was not by behaviour or their own works they became saints. This is the reverse of what is the custom in man-made saints. Rarely do men make saints of persons when they are alive, but God makes saints right at the beginning of their new life as regenerated persons. What wondrous grace! “Grace...and peace”: grace, the salutation of this dispensation and the key word that unlocks the mystery of the dealings of God with men, is joined to the Hebrew salutation of peace (Heb. *Shalom*). Grace is a gem with many facets in which glows the glory of God’s unmerited favour to men; and peace, which means wholeness or soundness, a freedom from pain or fear, shows a mind resting completely, amidst life’s ebb and flow of joys and sorrows, victories and failures, upon the complete provision and protection God has provided for us in Christ.

**Rom.1:8<sup>59</sup>:**

Paul was ever thankful to God for good tidings he heard of the saints; this he expresses in several of his epistles and he grieved over the evil behaviour of others. He alone of all the New Testament writers speaks of God as “my God.” His personal thanks is not to Jesus Christ, but to God through Jesus Christ. In the movement of saints to and from Rome they carried tidings throughout the world of the faith of the Roman Christians. Alas! A different day has fallen on Rome; corrupt Christianity, idolatry, ceremonies, priestcraft, lies, and sins of all kinds, are characteristic of papal Rome; living faith in a living Christ no longer exists.

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57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.%202>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%201.30>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.8>

**Rom.1:9<sup>60</sup>,10<sup>61</sup>:**

No one but God could testify to the personal and secret prayers continually made on behalf of the Romans. This God whom he called as Witness was the God whom He served. The word serve used by Paul here means divine service (Greek: *latreuo*, a word which expresses the highest form of service as of priests to Deity). In the tempest-driven ship Paul said “Whose I am, whom also I serve” (Greek: *latreuo*) (Acts 27:23<sup>62</sup>). The Lord in the temptation quoted from the law when He said, “Him only shalt thou serve” (Greek: *latreuo*) (Matt.4:10<sup>63</sup>). Paul’s service was not in outward ceremonials, as in Israel’s day; he served in his spirit in this divine service man-ward in the gospel of His Son.

**Rom.1:11<sup>64</sup>,12<sup>65</sup>:**

Paul with intense longing desired to see the Roman saints, his object being to impart some spiritual gift to them. This was not such spiritual gifts as some saints were endowed with, as in 1 Cor.14:4<sup>66</sup>,9<sup>67</sup>, nor such a gift as was given to Tim.by (Greek: *dia*: by means of) the imposition of Paul’s hands (2 Tim.1:6<sup>68</sup>), and with (Greek: *meta*: in association with) the laying on of the hands of the presbytery (1 Tim.4<sup>69</sup>,14<sup>70</sup>), but it was spiritual gift through the ministry of the apostle as he set forth

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.9>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%201.10>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2027.23>

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.4.10>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.11>

65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%201.12>

66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.14.4>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%2014.9>

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.6>

69. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.4>

70. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim%204.14>

the truths of the gospel to them. This would give comfort both to the apostle and to the saints that heard him. Nothing is more comforting to a speaker than to have an audience that listens to him with a receptive faith.

**Rom.1:13<sup>71</sup>:**

This desire of the apostle to reach Rome is referred to in Acts 19:21<sup>72</sup>, Rom.15:24<sup>73</sup>,28<sup>74</sup>: In a life of such activity it is no wonder that many things arose to hinder the apostle in his desires. The object of the apostle's ministry was ever fruit in the lives of those he loved and served. Paul was like Joseph of old, of whom it is said, "Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a fountain; his branches run over the wall" (Gen.49:22<sup>75</sup>). There was fruit on his branches for those outside the wall.

**Rom.1:14<sup>76</sup>,15<sup>77</sup>:**

Paul was a debtor to men because of what he had received from God to give to men, not because of what he had received from men. To civilized and uncivilized, to the learned and uneducated, he was a debtor. He said, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor.9:16<sup>78</sup>). Saints as well as sinners need the gospel preached to them, the latter, in order that they may be saved, and the former, that they may know the things that are freely given to them by God.

71. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.13>

72. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2019.21>

73. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.24>

74. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.28>

75. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.49.22>

76. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.14>

77. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%201.15>

78. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.9.16>

**Rom. 1:16<sup>79</sup>:**

The grandeur, power and sin of Imperial Rome did not cause feelings of shame to rise in the heart of Paul as he thought of the lowly message he preached concerning the Man of Galilee, for therein was a power which would live when the power of Rome had perished and when the Caesars were no more. Rome lived in luxury and glory as it humbled, slew and enslaved other peoples, but the gospel that Paul preached broke the chains from the hearts of slaves and threw the prison doors open to those condemned to death through sin. Never was there such a message offering such pleasures and such peace, and opening up to once darkened minds vistas of eternal glory. Paul was hoping to come to Rome as an ambassador of the King of kings with a message from the throne of heaven, not a message of esteem and gratulation, but one calling men to repentance (as he had proclaimed to the philosophers at Athens – Acts 17:30<sup>80</sup>, 31<sup>81</sup>), and of faith in that King whom Rome had crucified on Calvary. Rome's power was used in many cases to destroy, but God's power, in the gospel, is to save all who believe. Where weak faith and God's power meet there is a saved sinner.

This gospel was to the Jew first; the course of divine testimony is clearly stated in Acts 1:8<sup>82</sup> – Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth. Paul and Barnabas emphasized this same fact to the opposing Jews of Antioch, “It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us” (Acts 13:46<sup>83</sup>, 47<sup>84</sup>). As to condition

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79. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.16>

80. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2017.30>

81. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2017.31>

82. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.8>

83. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2013.46>

84. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2013.47>

and standing there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile; all have sinned and all are under sin.

**Rom.1:17<sup>85</sup>:**

God's love, grace and mercy are revealed in the gospel, but what man needs so that he might stand before a God in infinite holiness is a righteousness equal to God's requirement. It has been the cry of men from the far past, "How can man be just with God?" (Job 9:2<sup>86</sup>; 25:4<sup>87</sup>). The gospel gives the answer to the question, for therein is revealed a righteousness of God. This is not righteousness as an attribute of God, for such a righteousness is not of faith, nor yet is it the personal righteousness of Christ, either as God or Man, but it is a righteousness of God, provided for man, as a robe to cover him, as in Isa.61:10<sup>88</sup>, "a robe of righteousness." Christ is our righteousness (1 Cor.1:30<sup>89</sup>), and we are the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor.5:21<sup>90</sup>). This is the gift of righteousness (Rom.5:17<sup>91</sup>), and it is to every one that believeth (Rom.3:21<sup>92,22<sup>93</sup></sup>). This righteousness is by or from or literally "out of" (Greek: *ek*) faith. Some have erroneously compared the AV/KJV/KJV rendering of Rom.1:17<sup>94</sup> "from (Greek: *ek*) faith to (Greek: *eis*) faith" with "from (Greek: *apo*) glory to (Greek: *eis*) glory," in 2 Cor.3:18<sup>95</sup>: In the latter scripture it is the progressive transformation into the moral

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85. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.17>

86. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%209.2>

87. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2025.4>

88. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.61.10>

89. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.30>

90. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.5.21>

91. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.17>

92. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.21>

93. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.22>

94. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.%2017>

95. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.3.18>

image of Christ, but in the former it is a once-for-all experience that is in view, in that the faith of the believing sinner is reckoned unto him for righteousness (Rom.4:5<sup>96</sup>).

Help will be found in Gal.2:16<sup>97</sup>, where we read, “We believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by (Greek: *ek* out of) faith in Christ, and not by (Greek: *ek* out of) the works of the law.” The righteousness revealed in the gospel is righteousness which springs from faith, and it is revealed to faith. The sinner to whom the gospel comes must first believe before he sees that through his believing he is declared righteous by God. Paul’s words in Rom.9:30-32<sup>98</sup> are helpful; “What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of (Greek: *ek* out of) faith: but Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by (Greek: *ek* out of) faith, but as it were by (Greek: *ek* out of) works. They stumbled at the Stone of stumbling.” See Greek: *ek pisteos* – out of faith – in Rom.3:30<sup>99</sup>; 5:1<sup>100</sup>; 10:6; Gal.2:16<sup>101</sup>; Gal.3:8<sup>102</sup>,9<sup>103</sup>.

### **Rom.1:18<sup>104</sup>:**

As the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel to the faith of the believing sinner, so contrariwise the wrath of God is revealed against the unrighteous actions of men who hold down the truth in unright-

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96. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.5>

97. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.2.16>

98. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.30-32>

99. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.30>

100. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%205.1>

101. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.2.16>

102. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.3.8>

103. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal%203.9>

104. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.18>

eousness: that is, men who refuse to allow the truth to have a voice in the correction of their conduct and that of others, because their lives are out of harmony with the God of truth. The original word rendered “hold down” in RV and “hold” AV/KJV in this verse, is rendered in a few places “hold fast” and “hold”; it is rendered “stayed” in Lk.4:42<sup>105</sup> “seize on” (AV/KJV), “take” (RV), in Matt.21:38<sup>106</sup>; and “restraineth” (RV) in 2 Thess.2:6<sup>107</sup>,7<sup>108</sup> ; the RV rendering of “hold down,” equal to hinder or repress, suits the meaning of the text, where quite evidently it describes men silencing the voice of truth.

**Rom.1:19<sup>109</sup>:**

Job says that God said to men in a past day, “And unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding” (Job 28:28<sup>110</sup>). God has given to man a knowledge of Himself in His works, for God never left Himself without witness (Acts 14:17<sup>111</sup>), and if the inner voice of conscience were heeded, it would save man from a course of wickedness. But if what God has manifested of Himself in the human conscience is silenced, then nothing can keep man from rushing to destruction, for we must remember that the mind of the flesh is death (Rom.8:6<sup>112</sup>). Humanity had long since destroyed itself, but for the fact that God is the Preserver of men (Job 7:20<sup>113</sup>; 1 Tim.4:10<sup>114</sup>).

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105. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.4.42>

106. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.21.38>

107. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.2.6>

108. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess%202.7>

**109. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.19>**

110. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2028.28>

111. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2014.17>

112. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.6>

113. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%207.20>

114. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.4.10>

**Rom.1:20<sup>115</sup>:**

How true are the words of Cowper the poet “Blind unbelief is sure to err, and scan His work in vain.” The invisible things, or attributes of God, are His everlasting power and divinity (“Divinity,” not “Godhead” as in the AV/KJV, but “Godhead” is correct in Col.2:9<sup>116</sup>). In Acts 17:29<sup>117</sup> it is “the divine,” RV margin “That which is divine.” The word “divine” is used in 2 Pet.1:3<sup>118</sup>,4<sup>119</sup> to describe God’s divine power and the divine nature), which are perceived or seen clearly in the things that He hath made. It is said that Napoleon on a voyage from Egypt to France was standing on the deck of the vessel on a clear starry night, and nearby a group of officers were discussing whether there was such a Being as God. They decided that they would ask Napoleon for his opinion. They approached him and asked the question. He turned and with a wave of his hand toward heaven said, “Gentlemen, who made all these?” Who could argue after such an answer? David said, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork” (Ps.19:1<sup>120</sup>). The Seraphim also said, “The whole earth is full of His glory” (Isa.6:8<sup>121</sup>). But the fool says in his heart, “There is no God” (Ps.14:1<sup>122</sup>). Man in the midst of God’s mighty wonders, which are patent even to an ordinary mind, is left without excuse for his unbelief and ungodliness.

**Rom.1:21<sup>123</sup>,22<sup>124</sup>,23<sup>125</sup>:**


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115. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.20>

116. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.2.9>

117. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2017.29>

118. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet.1.3>

119. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Pet%201.4>

120. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.19.1>

121. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.6.8>

122. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.14.1>

123. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.21>

Could the humiliation and degradation of the human race be more complete? Men who had a knowledge of God gave no glory to their Divine Creator, but with vain, perverted and darkened minds, they changed the glory of the incorruptible God for diverse images. Even the images of creeping things were deified and became the objects of men's worship and veneration. Satan's control and perversion of the human mind could not be more absolute than is described here by Paul, who was confronted daily with this state of things amongst the Gentiles. Even in Athens, the seat of human learning, this state of things existed; philosophy and idolatry ran as a team yoked together and well suited to each other. Even Israel in the past, who had the knowledge of God, turned aside out of the way and worshipped the gods of the heathen.

**Rom.1:24<sup>126</sup>,25<sup>127</sup>:**

“The fear of the LORD is clean enduring for ever” (Ps.19:9<sup>128</sup>). The fear of the LORD, which is pure, leads to purity of life and morals. but men, unchecked in their desires by the fear of God, threw off all restraint. Associated with idolatry has ever been moral corruption. Self-indulgence in all manner of lust claimed the votaries of idolatry, and still does, for mental degradation ever leads to bodily degradation, and men and women descended far below the level of the beast. Satan's lie took the place of God's truth, and men slipped down the slippery slope of sin, and in their religious rites they corrupted themselves in their lust.

**Rom.1:26<sup>129</sup>,27<sup>130</sup>:**

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124. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%201.22>

125. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%201.23>

126. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.24>

127. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%201.25>

128. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.19.9>

129. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.26>

“Fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb.13:4<sup>131</sup>), and in due time those indicated in these verses reaped the retribution of divine judgement which overtakes those who live immoral lives. “God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal.6:7<sup>132</sup>). Men’s shameful behaviour in connection with creature worship brought its terrible punishment in their bodies, and eternal judgement followed judgement in this life. “I know, O LORD, that Thy judgements are righteous” (Ps.119:75<sup>133</sup>).

**Rom.1:28<sup>134</sup>,29<sup>135</sup>,30<sup>136</sup>,31<sup>137</sup>,32<sup>138</sup>:**

Three times Paul says, “God gave them up”: He “gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness”; He “gave them up unto vile passions”; and He “gave them up unto a reprobate mind.” Their state was worsening each time that it is said that God gave them up. A reprobate mind was a mind that God rejected after test, and in consequence they became wholly abandoned to sin. Virtue was entirely lost, and the list of their sins brings that word of the Psalm to mind: “For the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of violence” (Ps.74:20<sup>139</sup>). Nevertheless such was the world of sinners that God loved, and for which Christ died. The triumphs of the gospel in such a scene of wickedness set the seal to the divine character of the gospel, for nothing else shall God’s love in Christ could have availed to uplift and deliver such aban-

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130. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%201.27>

131. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.13.4>

132. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.6.7>

133. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.119.75>

134. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.28>

135. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%201.29>

136. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%201.30>

137. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%201.31>

138. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%201.32>

139. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.74.20>

doned slaves of sin. “And such were some of you,” Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor.6:11<sup>140</sup>).

But these Corinthian idolaters and fornicators were justified and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God and they washed themselves with the water of the word from their filthiness. It was in such a world that the Lord Himself was betrayed and murdered, and Paul himself, the writer of this epistle, was an accomplice in the murder of Stephen the martyr. Into such a scene, such a cesspool of human corruptions, the health-giving rays of the Light of the world shone, and the changes wrought were nothing short of miraculous, for there was none too black for Christ’s blood to make white.

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140. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.6.11>

# COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

## CHAPTER TWO

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### **R**om.2:1<sup>1</sup>

Whilst in chapter 1 Paul has been reviewing the state of the Gentile world, in chapter 2 he turns to the consideration of the Jew. The Pharisees were ever ready to show how they despised those who did not know the letter of the law as they did. “The Pharisees ... answered them ... This multitude which knoweth not the law are accursed” (Jn 7:47<sup>2</sup>,49<sup>3</sup>). Man is ever ready to act the part of judge on his fellow’s conduct, and as ready to justify his own. Self-justification is an outstanding character of the human race since the fall. It came out in Adam and Eve on the day they fell. The man said that it was the woman God gave to him that was the cause of his transgression, and the woman said, “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.” The serpent was not asked for his excuse. If we condemn wrongdoing in others and yet practise the same ourselves, we judge ourselves. The Lord spoke on this very matter, when He said, “Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you” (Matt.7:1<sup>4</sup>,2<sup>5</sup>). This is in the matter of a man judging his fellow, and has nothing to do with the necessary judgement of a church of God, as mentioned in 1 Cor.5<sup>6</sup>.

### **Rom.2:2<sup>7</sup>,3<sup>8</sup>**

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%207.47>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%207.49>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.7.1>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%207.2>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.5>

Man is fallible and the best of his judgements may be but relatively just, and at times the balance is tipped because of circumstances and because of favourites; the judgement of God is factual and according to an unchallengeable standard of right. “The judgements of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether” (Ps.19:9<sup>9</sup>). His “judgements are a great deep” (Ps.36:6<sup>10</sup>), and unsearchable to us (Rom.11:33<sup>11</sup>). The justice of them cannot or ought never to be called in question. Judges will one day stand at the bar of Him who stood at Pilate’s bar, for all judgement has been given unto the Son because He is Son of Man (Jn 5:22<sup>12</sup>,27<sup>13</sup>).

### **Rom.2:4<sup>14</sup>,5<sup>15</sup>**

The Lord said that the Most High is kind toward the unthankful and evil (Lk.6:35<sup>16</sup>). The word “goodness,” in verse 4, means kindness or gentleness. Peter speaks of those to whom he wrote as having tasted that the Lord is gracious or kind (1 Pet.2:3<sup>17</sup>). And have we not all known that kindness of God our Saviour, and His love toward man, of which Paul speaks in Tit.3:4<sup>18</sup>? This attitude of kindness, forbearance and longsuffering, has ever been the attitude of God toward men, and it should have led men to repentance, but, in contrast to God’s kind-heartedness, men in their hardness of heart repelled all the evidence of

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.2>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.3>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.19.9>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.36.6>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.33>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%205.22>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%205.27>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.4>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.5>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.6.35>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.3>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.4>

divine goodness, and this was never more true than at Calvary, when God gave His best for earth's worst.

**Rom.2:6<sup>19</sup>,7<sup>20</sup>**

God's judgements are ever judgements of works, whether it be the judgement of saints or sinners. The judgement seat of Christ is one at which Christ will reward His saints (Rom.14:10-12<sup>21</sup>; 1 Cor.3:13-15<sup>22</sup>; 4:4<sup>23</sup>,5<sup>24</sup>; 2 Cor.5:10<sup>25</sup>), not one of punishments, though saints may suffer the loss of the reward that might have been theirs. The judgement of the Great White Throne, which is in view in Rom.2:5-16<sup>26</sup>, is one at which some shall receive eternal life, while others will be cast into the Lake of Fire. Prior to this judgement all that are in the tombs will be raised, as the Lord said, "They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgement" (Jn 5:28<sup>27</sup>,29<sup>28</sup>). Though some seem to think that only lost sinners will be at the Great White Throne, a close examination of Rev.20<sup>29</sup> with other related passages will show that this is not so.

There will be those there whose names will be found in the book of life. At that judgement the repentant men of Nineveh and the queen of Sheba will stand up and condemn the unrepentant Jews of the Lord's

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19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.6>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.7>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.14.10-12>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.3.13-15>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%204.4>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%204.5>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.5.10>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.5-16>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%205.28>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%205.29>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20>

time, and no doubt others also (Matt.12:38-42<sup>30</sup>). Peter's words are to the point here, "God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him" (Acts 10:34<sup>31</sup>,35<sup>32</sup>). The order is, (1) the fear of God, (2) repentance, and (3) righteous works, works meet for repentance. Men cannot do good except they first repent of their sins, and the fear of God leads men to repentance. Thus to such as "by patience in well-doing seek for glory, honour, incorruption," will be given eternal life.

### **Rom.2:8<sup>33</sup>,9<sup>34</sup>**

The previous verse shews the well-doers and their portion – eternal life: these verses deal with the evil-doers; upon them will come God's dire displeasure, upon the Jew first and also the Greek. As in the publishing of the gospel, it was to the Jew first, so the Jew will be the first in order of divine punishment. God will begin with the people that were the more highly privileged; indeed, the Lord said that it would be more tolerable, or bearable, for Sodom and for Tyre and Sidon in the judgement than for the unbelieving Jewish people of His time.

### **Rom.2:10<sup>35</sup>,11<sup>36</sup>,12<sup>37</sup>,13<sup>38</sup>**

Those contemplated here are not such as have come within the hearing of the gospel. The issue in the gospel is clearly defined by Jn the Baptist in Jn 3:36<sup>39</sup>: "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that

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30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.12.38-42>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2010.34>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2010.35>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.8>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.9>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.10>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.11>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.12>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.13>

obeyeth not the Son (refuses to be persuaded to believe in Christ) shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” Paul in these verses is dealing with the Jew under the law of Moses and the Gentile without that law. No one can possibly do good, who, having heard of Christ, refuses to believe in Him. The Jew under the law could not do good apart from repenting of sin; so also the Gentile under conscience must also repent of his sin against the light of truth that he knew, otherwise both Jew and Gentile must perish and be punished according to the measure of the truth that they each knew.

**Rom.2:14<sup>40</sup>,15<sup>41</sup>,16<sup>42</sup>**

This does not mean that the Gentiles had no law at all which regulated their conduct towards each other, but that they had no law divinely given, such as Israel had, which was given at Sinai, for “the law was given by Moses” (Jn 1:17<sup>43</sup>). Such statutes of the law as “Thou shalt do no murder,” “Thou shalt not steal,” “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour,” were never viewed otherwise by men generally than wrong. Men were guided naturally by the truth contained in these statutes, and so they became a law unto themselves; their conscience guided them, and their thoughts accused them when they broke such laws, and excused them when they sought to comply with them. This working of the conscience in the Gentiles will be revealed when God judges men. It was thus that Paul set forth in the gospel that he preached the responsibility of the Jew under the law, and the Gentile under conscience, that they each were under the obligation to repent and seek to work righteousness. To the idolaters of Lystra he said, that God “in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their

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39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.36>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.14>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.15>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.16>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.17>

own ways”; and to the philosophers of Athens he said, “The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but NOW He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent.”

**Rom.2:17<sup>44</sup>,18<sup>45</sup>**

The Jew in the past had an advantage over the Gentile, not naturally or physically, but through election and the giving of the law. Paul addresses the Jew personally, and being a Jew naturally himself he knew the things wherein the Jew had pride, yet that pride and trust in the things mentioned were misplaced. He might be a Jew and yet not one according to the standard of verse 29, a Jew inwardly; he might seek rest in the law, but through his disobedience it might be to him as a burning Sinai, where the law was given; he might boast in a God that he knew not; he might know His will in the outward things of the law, but know nothing of the weightier matters of the law, judgement and mercy and faith (Matt.23:23<sup>46</sup>); he might approve the things that differ (see Phil.1:9<sup>47</sup>,10<sup>48</sup>) without any real appreciation of the excellent phases of divine truth.

**Rom.2:19<sup>49</sup>,20<sup>50</sup>**

There is nothing more fulsome than a person assuming to engage in the things that Paul here indicates who is not fitted morally and spiritually to do so. Was the Jew a guide of the blind? Did not the Lord say, “Thou blind Pharisee”? (Matt.23:26<sup>51</sup>). Could the money-loving Pharisee be a

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44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.17>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.18>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.23.23>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.1.9>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil%201.10>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.19>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.20>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.23.26>

light to those in the darkness? (Lk.16:14<sup>52</sup>), for the Lord again said, “If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.” In the law was the form of truth, the pattern for all sculptors of human character.

**Rom.2:21<sup>53</sup>,22<sup>54</sup>,23<sup>55</sup>,24<sup>56</sup>**

Isaiah, who speaks in chapter 52:5 of the name of God being blasphemed among the Gentiles because of the sinfulness of the Jewish people, tells us also of what God’s purpose was in His people; they were a people “which I formed for Myself, that they might set forth My praise” (Isa.43:21<sup>57</sup>). But alas, we hear God again saying through His prophet, “Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah” (Isa.1:10<sup>58</sup>). He calls upon them to cease sacrificing.

**Rom.2:25<sup>59</sup>,26<sup>60</sup>,27<sup>61</sup>**

Paul says in Phil.3:2<sup>62</sup>,3<sup>63</sup>: “Beware of the evil-workers, beware of the concision: for we are the circumcision, who worship (Greek: Latreuo: serve) by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” The concision were the cutters, who lacerated the flesh, but did not carry out the law which the rite of circumcision de-

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52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.16.14>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.21>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.22>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.23>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.24>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.43.21>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.1.10>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.25>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.26>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.27>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.3.2>

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil%203.3>

manded. Paul says that every man that receives circumcision is a debtor to do the whole law (Gal.5:3<sup>64</sup>). So Paul reasons in Rom.2<sup>65</sup>, that circumcision in the flesh is meaningless if it is not accompanied by the keeping of the law. And contrariwise, the Gentiles who fulfilled the law's requirements were the circumcision, though they were uncircumcised in their flesh. Thus the obedient Gentiles condemned the disobedient Jews. What was to be expected in the conduct of the Jews when some of their Rabbis taught, "Circumcision is equivalent to all the commandments of the law"? The covenant of circumcision, as instituted in Abraham and his seed, is bound up with these words of the LORD to Abraham, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be thou perfect. And I will make My covenant between Me and thee ... This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee; every male among you shall be circumcised" (Gen.17:1<sup>66</sup>,2<sup>67</sup>,10<sup>68</sup>). So that a perfect walk is bound up with circumcision.

### **Rom.2:28<sup>69</sup>,29<sup>70</sup>**

When God dealt with Israel after the flesh, it was a day of outward ceremonies, though God's desire was that a true heart-condition should accompany these outward rites. A fundamental change has taken place in this dispensation. A true Jew now is one who is inwardly such, and circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit and not the letter. Circumcision to-day is "a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ" (Col.2:11<sup>71</sup>),

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64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.5.3>

65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2>

66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.17.1>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%2017.2>

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%2017.10>

69. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.28>

70. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.29>

and the circumcised person is one who has no confidence in the flesh (Phil.3:3<sup>72</sup>). The praise of such is not of men, but of God.

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71. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.2.11>

72. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.3.3>

# COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

## CHAPTER THREE

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### **R**om.3:1<sup>1,2</sup>

Paul has just asserted in the previous chapter that circumcision must be regarded as uncircumcision, except it be accompanied by the doing of the law, and a Jew is one whose heart condition is in agreement with what God required. Here Paul deals with the Jew's advantage and the profit of circumcision, and his questions stand related to the prime function of the Jew, in that he was intrusted with the oracles of God, one which involved the keeping of the law that was given to him. When Moses and Israel stood at the base of Sinai, trembling, listening to God thundering out the statutes of the law (Ex.20<sup>3</sup>), Israel replied, "All the words which the LORD hath spoken will we do" (Ex.24:3<sup>4</sup>). Thus the Jew was exalted above all the nations as God's peculiar treasure, a man with the living oracles of God in his hand. In this wonderful volume was his rule of life and here too were the promises of God relative to Christ, and the glory of Israel.

### **Rom.3:3<sup>5,4</sup>**

The lack of faith in many Jews could not in the last degree cancel out God's faithfulness, literally "the faith of God," that is, the word which He gave in good faith and cannot and will not break, which a man can

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.20>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.24.3>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.3>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.4>

trust implicitly and know that God will implement every word He has spoken. Many amongst the people were men of this world, whose portion is in this life (Ps.17:14<sup>7</sup>). To the believer God has become true, what He ever is, true to His word, but man is naturally a liar. “They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies” (Ps.58:3<sup>8</sup>). So the LORD’S words are, “Cursed is the man that trusteth in man” (Jer.17:5<sup>9</sup>). God will be seen to be just in the condemnation of the sinner (as in David’s case) (Ps.51<sup>10</sup>). His condemnation of the sinner cannot be impeached, and, if His judgement is called in question (by men), God will be victorious; His judgement must prevail.

### **Rom.3:5<sup>11</sup>6<sup>12</sup>**

Paul argues as if a Jewish caviller were before him. “Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly,” does not encourage the thought that man’s unrighteousness commends or shows forth the righteousness of God. This is not righteousness as an attribute of God, but that righteousness which He gives to the believing sinner. If man’s unrighteousness commended God’s righteousness, would not God be unrighteous in visiting with wrath? In this Paul speaks as a caviller might reason. The thought cannot be tolerated, for if this were His way of commending righteousness, then how could He judge the world? God ever condemns sin, in whomsoever found, though in wondrous grace He justifies every sinner simply on the ground of his faith.

### **Rom.3:7<sup>13</sup>,8<sup>14</sup>**

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7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.17.14>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.58.3>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jer.17.5>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.51>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.5>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.6>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.7>

Paul claimed time and again that he lied not, and he wrote so to Timothy, “I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I speak the truth, I lie not), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth” (1 Tim.2:7<sup>15</sup>); but if by his lie, as some described his message, the truth of God abounded unto His glory, why should Paul be condemned as a sinner? Why indeed, if lying is a means whereby God can be glorified? Then the end justifies the means – an impossible thought! Slander said that Paul’s doctrine of divine justification implied, “Let us do evil, that good may come.” Justification by faith and divine forgiveness through free grace were by the mouth of slander made to mean – You may live as sinful a life as you care, yet God will forgive you in the end, and when forgiven, you can live as you please. All who say, “Let us do evil things, that good things may come,” are justly doomed.

### **Rom.3:9**<sup>16</sup>

Are we, the preachers of God’s free grace, better than they, the cavillers? Or are the Jewish law-keepers in a position of peculiar advantage? No, in no wise: for the axe of divine condemnation is laid at the root of every tree, and this is proved by the very law in which the Jew gloried. Sin has been laid to the charge of all mankind, and Paul was a true exponent of this fact. This one-time Pharisee said of himself, “I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious” (1 Tim.1:13<sup>17</sup>). Man is brought to the bar of God. Is he guilty or not guilty? What is the charge preferred against him? It is – “All are under sin.” There are no exceptions. Paul then proceeds to read out the charge as though he were acting for the Crown.

### **Rom.3:10-18**<sup>18</sup>

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14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.8>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.2.7>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.9>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.1.13>

The charge is composed of words taken from Ps.5:9<sup>19</sup>; Ps.10:7<sup>20</sup>; Ps.14:1-3<sup>21</sup>; Ps.36:1<sup>22</sup>; Ps.53:1-3<sup>23</sup>; Ps.140:3<sup>24</sup>; Prov.1:16<sup>25</sup>; Isa.59:7<sup>26</sup>,8<sup>27</sup>: It is from the law in its widest sense as covering the entire Old Testament. See Jn 10:34<sup>28</sup>; Jn 15:25<sup>29</sup>, where the Lord quotes from the law, yet the quotations are from the Psalms. Paul too quotes from the law (1 Cor.14:21<sup>30</sup>), yet the passage he quotes from is found in Isa.28:11<sup>31</sup>,12<sup>32</sup>: There is none righteous, nor is there one that doeth good; the whole human race has turned aside out of the way and are as lost sheep. Man's case is hopeless, even his best works are sinful in God's sight. Man's throat, mouth, tongue, and lips, pour out the poison and stench of the corruption of his heart. His feet are swift to shed blood, and destruction and misery and in his ways. Look back over the page of history and every page is stained with man's wickedness and corruption; look abroad in the world and man's ways are unchanged, and man is more accountable, perhaps, through increased knowledge: then peer into the future and the tide of wickedness will be seen to rise higher and higher. Man is bankrupt of any merit that God can accept.

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18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.10-18>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.5.9>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.10.7>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.14.1-3>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.36.1>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.53.1-3>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.140.3>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.1.16>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.59.7>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2059.8>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2010.34>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.25>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.14.21>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.28.11>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2028.12>

**Rom.3:19**<sup>33</sup>

The law here is the whole Old Testament from which Paul quoted in the previous verses as he laid the charge to Jew and Greek, that they are all under sin. Those under the law here are the Jewish people. They are a sample of the whole human family, and God tested the sample under the best possible conditions, and He proved the sinfulness of the Jew. The black record of their history in disobeying God, killing the prophets and stoning them that He sent unto them, and last of all in murdering His Son, proves to the hilt their guilt. The sample has been condemned, and in consequence the entire human race is condemned. Every mouth that might be opened in self-defence and self-justification is shut, and the whole world lies under judgement.

**Rom.3:20**<sup>34</sup>

Flesh signifies the entire human race, and no one of all flesh can be justified by law-keeping, for no one can do good. The law was given not to take sin away, but to give to man a knowledge of sin.

**Rom.3:21**<sup>35</sup>,**22**<sup>36</sup>,**23**<sup>37</sup>

God's righteousness for sinful man has now come to light quite apart from the law, though testimony is borne to it both by the law and the prophets. This righteousness is the possession of every sinner that believes in Jesus Christ. Distinction is gone between Jew and Greek. God treats with all men on the basis of their sinnership, for all have sinned, and are fallen, ruined creatures. Human, Pharisaical pride is ever ready to say, "I am not as the rest of men ... or even as this publi-

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33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.19>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.20>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.21>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.22>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.23>

can.” But the publican said, “God, be merciful to me a (or the) sinner” (Lk.18:11<sup>38</sup>,13<sup>39</sup>,14<sup>40</sup>), and this man went down to his house justified.

**Rom.3:24**<sup>41</sup>

Grace, God’s peculiar and wondrous favour toward men, is the basis of divine justification and of His dealings with the human race. But this is not grace at the expense of justice. This justification is indeed gratuitously bestowed by God’s grace, but it is done through or by means of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. He it was who gave Himself as the redemptive offering and wrought a divine deliverance in which God has infinite and eternal satisfaction. God’s holiness and justice are neither impaired nor imperilled in justifying the believing sinner. God justifies the sinner (Rom.8:33<sup>42</sup>), by His grace (Rom.3:24<sup>43</sup>), by (Greek: *en* in) His (Christ’s) blood (Rom.5:9<sup>44</sup>), by (Greek: *ek* out of) faith (Rom.5:1<sup>45</sup>).

**Rom.3:25**<sup>46</sup>,**26**<sup>47</sup>

Scholars differ as to whether “propitiation” should be rendered thus or by “Mercy-seat.” Liddell and Scott say that the Greek word for “Mercy-seat” in Heb.9:5<sup>48</sup> is *Hilasterion*, but the word in Rom.3:25<sup>49</sup> is Hi-

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.18.11>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lk%2018.13>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lk%2018.14>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.24>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.33>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.24>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.9>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.1>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.25>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.26>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.9.5>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.25>

lasterios, which means propitiatory, or offered in propitiation, meaning a propitiatory sacrifice. To render the word “propitiation” as “Mercy-seat” in Rom.3<sup>50</sup> would destroy the typology of the sin offerings in Lev.4<sup>51</sup> and 16<sup>52</sup>, the sin offering for the individual and that on behalf of the people. Propitiation in Rom.3<sup>53</sup>: is for the individual sinner, but propitiation in Heb.2:17<sup>54</sup> is for the people. In the case of the individual sinner in the past, propitiation was made at the Copper Altar, but the blood of the sin offering for the people was taken into the Tent of Meeting and put on the horns of the Golden Altar, and on the day of atonement the blood of the sin offering for the people was taken into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled upon the and before the mercy-seat, and also put upon the horns of the Golden Altar. The sin offering for the people is in view in the epistle to the Hebrews, indeed it is what took place on the day of atonement (Lev.16<sup>55</sup>) that is chiefly before the apostle’s mind, but in Rom.3:25<sup>56</sup> it is the sin offering for the individual sinner.

The Copper Altar finds its answer in the Cross, and it is at the Cross that the sinner finds in Christ One who has answered in His blood to every claim of God against him. There is no thought that he reaches the Mercy-seat. At the Cross Christ is set forth propitiatory, or the propitiatory sacrifice, and there the sinner is atoned for. Propitiation in Heb.2:17<sup>57</sup> is made by the High Priest on behalf of the people, and in Heb.9:23<sup>58</sup>,24<sup>59</sup> the High Priest cleanses the things of the heav-

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50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lev.4>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lev%204.16>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.2.17>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lev.16>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.25>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.2.17>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.9.23>

only sanctuary, so that the people may draw nigh to God, as in Heb.10:19-22<sup>60</sup>: In His forbearance God passed over the sins which were committed by His people under the Old Covenant. These sins had to be redeemed by Christ, as in Heb.9:15<sup>61</sup>, before those that were called could enter into the promised eternal inheritance. God remains just though He justifies the sinner that believes in Jesus. This is literally “the faith of Jesus.” This faith springs from Jesus and does not originate in the sinner’s heart. Here many sinners make the mistake of searching their hearts to find faith to place it in Jesus. “Faith cometh by hearing,” or literally, “Faith (is) out of (Greek: *ek*) (a) report, but the report through (the) word (or saying) of God,” or of Christ (RV). Faith springs from Jesus, it reaches the sinner’s heart by the report or gospel concerning Him, and when believed the sinner is saved. Faith does not arise in the sinner’s heart as an entity, it comes into existence by the hearing of the divine message.

### **Rom.3:27<sup>62</sup>,28<sup>63</sup>**

There can be no boasting on the believing sinner’s part. He has nothing and can do nothing to commend him to God, no merit whatever. He is justified by a law of faith. The statute of heaven is – “Hear, and your soul shall live” (Isa.55:3<sup>64</sup>). The law said, “Do,” but the Lord said, “It is finished.” Therefore it follows as a corollary that a sinner can be justified by one means only, and that is by faith and not by works of the law.

### **Rom.3:29<sup>65</sup>,30<sup>66</sup>**

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59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%209.24>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.10.19-22>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.9.15>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.27>

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.28>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.55.3>

65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.29>

Here Paul is not dealing with Israel who were God's people in the past, but with Jews and Gentiles being God's creatures, and in this sense God is the God of Gentiles as well as Jews. God is one, and He has one way of justifying both Jew and Gentile. He justifies the Jew out of (Greek: ek) faith, and the Gentile by that same faith (Greek: dia tes pisteos = "through the faith," but this does not mean through the faith as a body of doctrine, but through the faith he has just mentioned as the way He justifies the Jew).

Paul established the law by showing the law's proper function, for "through the law cometh the knowledge of sin." The sinner having come to a knowledge of his sinfulness through the law, God intended that the sinner would come to Christ for justification, for He is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth (Rom.10:4<sup>67</sup>). Christ is the Law's end, object, aim or goal. The law hath been our tutor unto Christ that we might be justified by faith (Gal.3:24<sup>68</sup>).

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66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.30>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.4>

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.3.24>

# COMMENTARY ON ROMANS CHAPTER FOUR

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**R**om.4:1<sup>1,2</sup>,3<sup>3</sup>,4<sup>4</sup>,5<sup>5</sup>

Paul is still arguing out the case of justification by faith as though he were dealing with a Jewish opposer of the doctrine. Justification by faith was something that Abraham found, a great discovery. If he had been justified by his works then he could have boasted of what he had accomplished, but his glorying would have been man-ward, not Godward: man sees works, but God sees faith. James says, “Shew me thy faith apart from thy works” – a moral impossibility for man to do toward man. “I,” he said, “by my works will shew thee my faith” (Jas.2:18<sup>6</sup>). Then James cites Abraham as being justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac, and thus he says that the scripture was fulfilled, “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.” Abraham was justified by faith in Gen.15<sup>7</sup>, and justified by works in Gen.22<sup>8</sup>: Justified by faith first, then by works. Righteousness by faith is not a reward, it is a gift, called in Rom.5:17<sup>9</sup> “the gift of righteousness.” Hence it is of God’s free grace, not by the merit of man’s deeds. As it was with Abraham, so is it with every believing sinner now;

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%204.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%204.3>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%204.4>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%204.5>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.2.18>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.15>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.22>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.17>

the ungodly, the sinner in whose heart naturally there is no fear of God (Rom.3:18<sup>10</sup>), can be justified without an atom of human goodness or merit, simply on the ground of faith in Christ.

Rom.4:6<sup>11</sup>,7<sup>12</sup>,8<sup>13</sup>

Justification and forgiveness are twin truths. If God reckons righteousness to a believer He cannot also reckon sin. Thus the believer is free from sin's guilt, and is a righteous man before God. David in Ps.32<sup>14</sup>, from which Paul quotes as above, said, "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee ... And Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (verse 5). When faced with his sin, he said, "I have sinned against the LORD," and Nathan the prophet said, "The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die" (2 Sam.12:13<sup>15</sup>). David earlier in this chapter had pronounced death upon himself, and the law of God also had pronounced the death sentence upon him (Deut.22:22<sup>16</sup>). "The wages of sin is death" (Rom.6:23<sup>17</sup>). But for sinners whose lives are forfeited the proclamation of the gospel is clear and plain; "Through this Man (Jesus Christ) is proclaimed unto you remission (or forgiveness) of sins: and by Him everyone that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38<sup>18</sup>,39<sup>19</sup>).

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10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.18>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.6>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%204.7>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%204.8>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.32>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Sam.12.13>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.22.22>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.23>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2013.38>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2013.39>

Some may see in Abraham's justification and David's forgiveness a difference in time as compared with the justification of the believing sinner now: both Abraham and David had been for some years walking the path of faith before the events of Gen.15<sup>20</sup> and 2 Sam.12<sup>21</sup>, whereas in the case of the believing sinner now, he is justified and forgiven by God when he is born again, right at the beginning of his spiritual life. Paul is dealing with the principle of justification and forgiveness on the ground of God's free grace, and received by faith alone. As David was blessed in God's forgiveness, so is every man whom God forgives, and as Abraham was blessed by God, so in him would all families of the earth be blessed who share his faith. Blessed indeed is that man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin, for He reckoned it to his Saviour and Substitute, even to Christ.

**Rom.4:9**<sup>22</sup>

Here Paul touches a sore part with the circumcised Jews. Were these truths which emerged in the experiences of Abraham and David, who belonged to the chosen race, to be handed out freely to the uncircumcised Gentiles? or was this blessedness to be the exclusive possession of the Jewish people for all time? The scene in Acts 22, especially in verses 21- 23, shows how the Jewish mind reacted to the thought of the Gentiles being brought into divine blessing equal to what they themselves thought they enjoyed. When Paul related what the Lord's command to him had been – “Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles ... they gave him audience unto this word; and they lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.” The naturally minded Jew revolted at the thought of sinners of the Gentiles sharing divine blessing with himself. This nevertheless is true in this dispensation of grace, “that the Gentiles

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20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.15>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Sam.12>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.9>

are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the Body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (Eph.3:6<sup>23</sup>).

**Rom.4:10<sup>24</sup>,11<sup>25</sup>**

At least fourteen years separate Gen.17<sup>26</sup>, when Abraham was circumcised, and Gen.15<sup>27</sup> when he was justified. Therefore Paul’s argument is irrefutable, for Abraham was not circumcised when he was justified by faith, and if he, an uncircumcised man, was justified by faith, were the uncircumcised Gentiles to be excluded from sharing in the Abrahamic blessing? Some of the Rabbis taught, as we have before said, that “circumcision is equivalent to all the commandments of the law,” which was magnifying what was only an outward sign above all inward reality. Circumcision was a sign of what Abraham had already, even the righteousness of faith; this sign was a seal upon his flesh that God had justified him by faith. Apart from the reality of faith circumcision was but the laceration of the flesh. Paul says, “Neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature (or creation)” (Gal.6:15<sup>28</sup>).

**Rom.4:12<sup>29</sup>,13<sup>30</sup>**

In the divine promise of Gen.12:1<sup>31</sup>,2<sup>32</sup> there is envisaged what is later made plain, that Abraham was to be the father of a multitude of nations (Gen.17:5<sup>33</sup>), which means, as verse 11 shows, “the father of all them

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23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.6>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.10>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%204.11>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.17>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.15>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.6.15>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.12>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%204.13>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.12.1>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%2012.2>

that believe.” This fatherhood is based on faith, not on natural generation. Believing Abraham is the father of believers everywhere, of Jews and Gentiles who receive the blessing of the gospel which was preached to Abraham – “In thee shall all the nations be blessed” (Gal.3:8<sup>34</sup>). This statement of the gospel was to find fulfilment in Abraham’s Seed, which is Christ (Gal.3:16<sup>35</sup>; Gen.22:18<sup>36</sup>). Childless and uncircumcised Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees (Heb.11:8<sup>37</sup>) by faith, laden with the rich promise of becoming the blesser of mankind.

He, while yet childless, looked from an earth in darkness to heaven lit by innumerable stars (Gen.15<sup>38</sup>), believed God that his seed would be as numerous as the stars of heaven, became heir of the world in the fatherhood of faith. He was made the father of believing men of all nations, and eventually of believing nations everywhere. He possessed especially that land of all lands, Canaan, as his first possession, though during his lifetime he was a stranger in it. Adam is the head of a race of fallen and sinful men, but Abraham is the head of all races who enjoy the same blessedness that he possessed, and this blessedness shall continue when this world shall be no more (Rev.21<sup>39</sup>). The dark night of Gen.15<sup>40</sup>, luminous with revelation and faith, finds its counterpart in Calvary’s dark night, at noonday, out of which flashes evermore that divine light of Him who is the Light of the world – “It is finished”: light out of darkness, life out of death!

### **Rom.4:14<sup>41</sup>,15<sup>42</sup>**

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33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.17.5>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.3.8>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.3.16>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.22.18>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.11.8>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.15>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.21>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.15>

Paul in Heb.8:8-12<sup>43</sup>, in quoting the terms of the New Covenant which God has promised to make with Israel (Jer.31:31-34<sup>44</sup>), does so from the LXX, part of which reads, “For they continued not in My covenant, and I disregarded them, saith the Lord.” The Hebrew says, “My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD,” or, “should I have continued an husband unto them?” Alas, if the promise of the blessing of mankind had rested on obedience, either the obedience of Israel or of men in general! The law could only work wrath because of men’s transgression. What a gospel that would be if the promise of salvation were dependent on man’s obedience to a code of laws and not on faith alone, on one act of faith in the Divine Redeemer and His finished work! Promise and faith stand together, as do law and works. Paul truly says that the promise is made of none effect if the heirs are such as are of the law. The whole scheme in divine promise would have been wrecked right at the start if it had been based on “Thou shalt,” and not on God’s “I will.” “I will make of thee a great nation,” – “I will bless thee ... in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen.12:1-3<sup>45</sup>).

**Rom.4:16<sup>46</sup>,17<sup>47</sup>**

The promise was made by God in grace, that is, according to His free unmerited favour, and the reception of it by faith (Greek: ek, “out of” faith, not “out of” works of law). The object of this was to make it sure to all the seed, both to such as were Abraham’s natural seed who were of the law (Jews), and such as were of the faith of the uncircumcised Abra-

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41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.14>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%204.15>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.8.8-12>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jer.31.31-34>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.12.1-3>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.16>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%204.17>

ham (Gentiles), for, says Paul, Abraham “is the father of us all.” In proof of this he quotes the word to Abraham, “A father of many nations have I made thee.” This universal fatherhood of Abraham, Paul tells us, was “before Him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were.” Isaac was not born when God spoke of Abraham being a father of many nations. “I have made,” God said, not “I shall make.” It was as though God had already called men of many nations by the gospel call. Then there was the serious consideration that the bodies of Abraham and Sarah, so far as human generation was concerned, were as good as dead. But that was no difficulty to Him who quickens the dead. “All things are possible with God” (Mk.10:27<sup>48</sup>), and “All things are possible to him that believeth” (Mk.9:23<sup>49</sup>).

**Rom.4:18<sup>50</sup>,19<sup>51</sup>,20<sup>52</sup>**

Against all hope in nature, the possibility of natural birth being gone, Abraham nevertheless believed in hope, a hope based upon God’s promise that he would be the father of many nations, with seed as numerous as the stars of heaven. The deadness of his own body and of Sarah’s womb never caused him to waver in the least. As in the darkness, in Gen.15<sup>53</sup>, he looked away from earth to heaven, so also he looked away from himself and Sarah to God the Promiser, and to the promise of God which shone in undimmed brightness before him, and he gave glory to God. We too need to learn this lesson of faith, to look away from earth and self to God, and to rest upon, and live by, His sweet and enduring promises.

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48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark.10.27>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark.9.23>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.18>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%204.19>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%204.20>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.15>

**Rom.4:21<sup>54</sup>,22<sup>55</sup>**

Abraham's God was God Almighty, Heb. *El Shaddai*, a God who is all powerful. How God-glorifying it is where there is that full assurance that what God has said He is able to do! How dishonouring to doubt God's ability to fulfil His word! "Wherefore," because Abraham was fully assured, "his faith was reckoned unto him for righteousness." As time went on God's promise to Abraham opened out like a flower, and we see the development of God's original promise to him in Chaldea.

**Rom.4:23<sup>56</sup>,24<sup>57</sup>,25<sup>58</sup>**

Here Paul draws to a close his unanswerable argument on Abraham being justified by faith, showing that what was true of the father is true of all his seed, who stand in his faith as believers in the revelation and promise of God, whether these be Jews or Gentiles. What was written for Abraham was written for all his seed, that righteousness is reckoned to them on the ground of faith, apart from works. Peter says the same thing of those who have believed as Paul says here, "Who through Him (Christ) are believers in God, which raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Pet.1:21<sup>59</sup>). Paul's words are, "Who believe on Him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead." To believe in Christ is to believe in God. The Lord said, "He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me" (Jn 12:44<sup>60</sup>).

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54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.21>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%204.22>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.23>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%204.24>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%204.25>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.1.21>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2012.44>

God raised our Lord from (Greek: *ek* out of) the dead, that is, from among dead persons, He having been delivered up for (Greek: *dia*, the sense of which here is, on account of, because of) our trespasses, and raised for (Greek: *dia*, on account of) our justification, that we might be justified with the “justification of life” (Rom.5:18<sup>61</sup>). This is the gospel, that Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead (1 Cor.15:4<sup>62</sup>), for if Christ hath not been raised we are yet in our sins (1 Cor.15:17<sup>63</sup>) and faith in Him is vain.

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61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.18>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.4>

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.17>

# COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

## CHAPTER FIVE

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### **R** om.5:1<sup>1</sup>

To be justified is to be declared to be righteous by God (Rom.8:33<sup>2</sup>). “It is God that justifieth” This righteousness is a gift given to the believing sinner, called “the gift of righteousness” (Rom.5:17<sup>3</sup>), his faith being reckoned for righteousness (Rom.4:5<sup>4</sup>). “By faith” is literally “out of” (Greek: *ek*) faith, as we have before seen. Which did Tertius write at Paul’s dictation, Greek: *echomen*, “we have,” or Greek: *echomen*, “let us have”? Scholars tell us that documentary evidence is strong for the latter reading (the difference between the words is a short or long o). It may, after all has been said, ever remain a matter of dispute, but there can be no dispute on the doctrine of peace with God, that in no sense is this made by an act on the part of the believing sinner; peace was made by Christ through His death on the Cross – “having made peace through the blood of His Cross” (Col.1:20<sup>5</sup>). This peace is the believer’s, whether it is peace like a river flowing unruffled and majestically onward, or whether, through sin or false doctrine, the enjoyment of it is intermittent, it is nevertheless his and will be his for ever. Our peace with God is through, by means of, our Lord Jesus Christ and not through our own efforts.

### **Rom.5:2**<sup>6</sup>

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.33>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.17>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.5>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.20>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.2>

As it is through our Lord Jesus that we have peace with God, so it is through Him, by His merits alone, that we have access into this grace wherein we stand, as being fully justified and accepted by God. “We stand upon His merits, we know no other stand.” As standing in grace “we rejoice” (not “let us rejoice”), boast or glory, in the hope of the glory of God which is yet to be revealed. “In hope” (Greek: *epi*, upon) that is, resting on, as finding its basis or foundation upon hope. What a prospect for those who know God’s grace!

### **Rom.5:3<sup>7</sup>,4<sup>8</sup>,5<sup>9</sup>**

It is not “let us also rejoice,” but “we also rejoice” (RV margin or “we glory,” AV/KJV), in our tribulations. The reason for this rejoicing is, that tribulation worketh patience or endurance, even as the strenuous efforts and, at times, sufferings of the athlete result in ability to endure the contest, and without the severity of his training he would utterly fail. Endurance worketh probation, that is proof, or perhaps more correctly the result of proof, approval, as the athlete is approved who endures the test. Approving follows proving, Probation works hope, it increases and renews the believer’s hope. The believer’s hope is sure, not something that will end in disappointment and cause him to be ashamed. The reason for this is, that the love of God has been poured out in our hearts, and the One who causes this diffusion of divine love within us is the blessed Holy Spirit who has been given to us. This is the only mention of the Holy Spirit in Romans until we come to chapter 8.

### **Rom.5:6<sup>10</sup>**

Here the apostle shows the character of that love of God which the Spirit has poured out in our hearts; it is love for creatures that were so

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7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.3>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%205.4>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%205.5>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.6>

void of good as to be called “the ungodly,” those who were utterly impious and without the fear of God. And not only so, but were entirely without strength, powerless to do one good act to make themselves acceptable to God. This is what he said when he quoted from Ps.14<sup>11</sup> and 53<sup>12</sup>, in Rom.3:12<sup>13</sup>, “There is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one.” Yet it was for such ungodly sinners Christ died. Wondrous love!

**Rom.5:7<sup>14</sup>,8<sup>15</sup>**

It is rarely the case that any one would die for one who is legally righteous, even out of respect; there is nothing to draw out human affection to a man who is meticulously just and renders to others only their due, but for the good or gracious man who calls out affection, a man of humanitarian goodness (not good in God’s sight), some one would even venture to die. But in contrast to this, that love of God which is commended toward us is, that while we had neither righteousness nor goodness in God’s sight, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Well does God commend His own love toward us, as entirely suited to our desperate plight.

**Rom.5:9<sup>16</sup>**

Justified in (en) His blood, we are viewed by God as under the blood of Christ’s sacrifice; hence we are free from guilt and clear from sin’s condemnation. In consequence we shall be saved from divine wrath through our living Redeemer. This is like what was said to the Israelites in Egypt. “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” “When He seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will

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11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.14>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2014.53>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.12>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.7>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%205.8>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.9>

pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you” (Ex.12:13<sup>17</sup>,23<sup>18</sup>). The blood of the lamb and Jehovah their living Redeemer preserved them from destruction. Even so it is now, our justification and salvation depend on His blood and the living Lord Himself, as alive from the dead.

### **Rom.5:10<sup>19</sup>,11<sup>20</sup>**

We were not only ungodly sinners, we were enemies of God. This state of mind and heart, which is seen in Adam and Eve when they turned their backs on God and fled from Him, needed to be completely changed. The basis of this changed attitude is the death of Christ. Nothing less than this can effect a change in the sinner toward God. That heart is heavy, and hard as adamant rock, that can view the sufferings and death of God’s beloved Son and not be moved. Reconciliation, which is not atonement, means to change thoroughly, and describes the completely changed attitude to God in those who were His enemies in the past. Those who are reconciled are saved by, or, more correctly, in (en) the life of Him, who has been raised from the dead. We are united to Him in resurrection life. Paul in Col.3:3<sup>21</sup>,4<sup>22</sup> says that Christ is our life, and also that our life is hid with Christ in God. How safe this makes the sinner who is saved by grace!

### **Rom.5:12<sup>23</sup>,13<sup>24</sup>**

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17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.12.13>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ex%2012.23>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.10>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%205.11>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.3>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col%203.4>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.12>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%205.13>

Therefore, or “on this account,” that reconciliation necessitated by Adam’s sin has been effected for believers through One, even Jesus Christ, just as sin entered the world by or through one man, even Adam, and by sin came death. Death here is death as it affects the soul, spiritual death, of which God spake when He said, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen.2:17<sup>25</sup>). Physical death followed this when Adam was 930 years old. Though many of the statements here made regarding death are true with regard to physical death, the apostle is not dealing with that. Death here is death as it affects the soul, as in Eph.2:1<sup>26</sup>, whereas in 1 Cor.15<sup>27</sup> it is death as it affects the body. Death passed unto all men, the reason for this being, “for that all sinned.” Sin entered, penetrated into the world through Adam, and having pervaded the entire race was in the world from Adam to Moses, prior to the giving of the law; but God being just does not put sin to the account of such as have no law. This does not mean that man prior to Moses had no sort of law at all. See Rom.2:14-16<sup>28</sup> where Paul speaks of the Gentiles who, having no law, yet did by nature the things of the law, became a law to themselves, and hence became accountable under the law of conscience.

**Rom. 5:14<sup>29</sup>**

Even though sin is not imputed where there is no law, death reigned from Adam, when sin entered the world, until Moses, when the law was given to Israel. Death was a universal king over all who sinned even though they did not sin so grievously as Adam did, for Adam’s sin was not one of being deceived as Eve’s was (1 Tim.2:14<sup>30</sup>). Adam was not

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25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.2.17>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.1>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.14-16>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.14>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.2.14>

deceived; he disobeyed or rebelled against the revealed will of God. Adam is a figure of Christ, each is head of a race, the one of sinful men, the other of such as are righteous.

**Rom. 5:15**<sup>31</sup>

What is the correct translation of the first sentence of this verse? On this point translators differ. Some put it in the form of a question – “But [shall] not as the offence, so also [be] the free gift?” Others render it as a positive statement – “Not as the offence [is] the free gift,” or, “But the free gift is not as the transgression was.” I favour the view that it is not a question, but a positive statement, that the trespass and the free gift are contrasted here, despite the fact that it is stated in the previous verse that Adam is a figure of Christ. The trespass of Adam, which results in the death of the many, is contrasted with the grace of God and the gift in grace which is of the one Man, Jesus Christ, which did (and does) abound in its fulness unto the many. Great indeed is the contrast between the offence of Adam and God’s grace in Christ. The one fouled every spring of thought and action in mankind, the other purifies minds and hearts darkened by sin, and flows like a river glorious to every believer through the blessed Man, Jesus Christ.

**Rom. 5:16**<sup>32</sup>

Here again those who favour the first sentence of the previous verse as a question follow on by putting the first part of this verse as a question also – “And [shall] not as by one having sinned [be] the gift?” Again I favour the view that the words here are a positive statement – “And not through one that sinned [is] the gift.” The gift could not possibly come by one that sinned, if this is the meaning of the question above. The following part of the verse shows this. “For the judgement came of one unto condemnation,” that is, one single trespass of one man brought con-

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31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.15>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.16>

demnation, but in contrast to this, the free gift is of (Greek: *ek*, out of) many trespasses, as occasioned by them, by the many sins which resulted from the initial act of wrongdoing. The objective of this free gift, or act of divine favour, is justification.

**Rom. 5:17**<sup>33</sup>

Paul plainly shows that all Adam's posterity (except Christ) were involved in the sentence, "The day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen.2:17<sup>34</sup>), which fell on Adam on the day that he sinned. Whilst all are under the reign of death, only such as receive God's abundant grace in the gift of righteousness shall reign in life through Jesus Christ. Clear distinction should be drawn here between reigning in life through Jesus Christ, and reigning with Him (2 Tim.2:12<sup>35</sup>). In the former case, all who are justified by grace shall without personal merit reign in life through Jesus Christ, but only such as have the personal merit of enduring with Him shall reign with Him.

**Rom. 5:18**<sup>36</sup>

How plain is the apostle's statement here, that condemnation came unto all men because of one trespass! Such is the theology of Paul, which those that believe the Scriptures to be inspired of God accept as divine theology, that Adam's one sin brought the entire race of mankind under condemnation. This called for a Divine Deliverer, and a deliverance, which could not be effected by all or by any one of Adam's fallen race. Hence the coming and death of Christ opened the door of God's free grace. By one act of righteousness of Christ on the Cross men are offered ("unto all men") the free gift of the righteousness of God, called

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33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.17>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.2.17>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.12>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.18>

the justification of life. How great is the contrast – condemnation and death, justification and life!

**Rom.5:19**<sup>37</sup>

Without any effort on the part of men they are constituted sinners by Adam's disobedience, even so is it the case, that without any work or merit the believer in Christ is constituted righteous. By natural birth of Adam's ruined race all are constituted sinners, even so by the new birth of the Spirit are all believers righteous.

**Rom.5:20**<sup>38</sup>,**21**<sup>39</sup>

What a triumphant ending to this magnificent spiritual argument on the justification of the believing sinner, which is carried on from Rom.3:9<sup>40</sup> to 5:21! The sinner is condemned both by nature and by law, for the law came in beside, that the trespass might abound. The trespass of men was ever present from the fall of Adam, but when the light of the law fell on men it revealed sin in its fearsomeness, which was not clearly understood prior to the giving of the law. Both sin and grace abounded in Jerusalem more than in any other city on earth, even as the disciples said with one accord, "For of a truth in this city against Thy holy Servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel foreordained to come to pass" (Acts 4:27<sup>41</sup>, 28<sup>42</sup>).

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37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.19>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.20>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%205.21>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.9>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%204.27>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%204.28>

Great sin and greater grace stand here in this declaration side by side. Human hate, but infinitely greater divine love meet in what is the world's greatest tragedy and the world's greatest blessing. Here was abounding sin and super-abounding grace. As sin reigned in death – the felon, bound in sin's chains under the monstrous reign of sin, was through God's wondrous love to know through faith a translation from being under sin to being under the reign of grace. Grace reigns through the work of the Cross unto eternal life, of which one has aptly said, "Which here we have, and hereafter will receive us into itself, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Let this be the emblazoned banner of the evangelist, GRACE REIGNS, and the password of saints to the Glory.

# COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

## CHAPTER SIX

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### **R**om.6:1<sup>1</sup>,2<sup>2</sup>

Shall we as justified men continue to live the life of ungodly sinners? If so, how is grace to abound? The great change wrought in the believer through grace finds its base in the death of Christ. We who died with Christ to sin are under no obligation to continue in sin. Paul's words to the Galatians (2:20) shine with a heavenly glory; "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." And again, "For to me to live is Christ" (Phil.1:21<sup>3</sup>). There can be no living in sin if Christ lives in us.

### **Rom.6:3<sup>4</sup>,4<sup>5</sup>**

Here is a further reason why those who died with Christ should walk in the newness of the life they received through faith in Him, for they in their baptism had been baptized into His death, that is, they were buried with Him through baptism into death. Burial in the tomb of Joseph followed the Lord's death, and in our case the burial is through baptism in water. Baptism, that is dipping, signifies burial and resurrection, and as Christ was raised by the Father's glory, so we should walk (walk here covers the whole of Christian deportment) in newness of life. Life for the believer has a new glory and freshness; the life of the

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%206.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.1.21>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.3>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%206.4>

old man has a fading, dying, earthly glory, and the paths of that glory lead but to the grave and the darkness beyond.

**Rom.6:5<sup>6</sup>**

This being united with Him is not the vital and eternal union with Him in life as members of His Body, but being united (Note, there is no word for “Him” in the Greek) by baptism in likeness only, and that likeness is that of His death and resurrection, for baptism, or dipping, is the immersion and the raising up of an immersed person.

**Rom.6:6<sup>7,8</sup>**

Our old man is old Adam, our old sinful Adamic nature, which is utterly corrupt and through which we were held in bondage to sin. To change our nature or to break away from our bondage was a moral impossibility. Of old God asked the question, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil” (Jer.13:23<sup>9</sup>). The old wicked Adamic nature in men put Christ to death on the cross, and old Adam is condemned to a like death. Thus our old man is viewed as crucified with Him, the object being to annul or to render inactive the body of sin. The Greek word *katargeo*, rendered here “might be done away” is also used of “death” and of the “devil” and does not mean to annihilate. Rom.6:6<sup>10</sup> “That the body of sin might be done away” (Greek: *katargethe*); 2 Tim.1:10<sup>11</sup>, “Who abolished (Greek: *katargesantos*) death: Heb.2:14<sup>12</sup>,

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.5>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.6>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%206.7>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jer.13.23>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.6>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.1.10>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.2.14>

“That through death He might bring to nought (Greek: katargese) ... the devil.”

Why should it be said that we have been crucified with Christ, and in consequence died with Him, if the body of sin which is the whole and sole cause of the sinful emotions in us should still have the same place and power that it had before? The result of being crucified is to cause to cease (or to be idle, barren, unproductive, the body of sin). The old despotic power of sin which enslaved the believer prior to justification is broken by death, not by good resolutions; he is a free man, and not only so, but justified too, “for he that hath died is justified from sin.” “He that hath died” is not Christ, but the sinner himself who died with Christ. The penalty is met; sin’s claim upon him is rendered null and void, and he is justified. “The body of sin” is not the mortal body of the believer (verse 12), but is the same as “the body of the flesh” (Col.2:11<sup>13</sup>), which is said to be put off in the circumcision of Christ.

### **Rom.6:8<sup>14</sup>,9<sup>15</sup>**

Our living with Christ here is not in the same sense as when believers depart to be with Christ which is very far better, when they are absent from the body and at home with the Lord; nor yet is it when at His coming again we shall ascend to meet Him and to be for ever with the Lord. What it says is, that “if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him” Our living with Him is the result of our dying with Him. If the believer fails to appreciate that he died with Christ (which is a fact whether he realizes it or not), he will know little of what it is to live with Him. How blessed and glorious is that resurrection life that is lived even now with Him! Our blessed Lord lay in death’s domain once and once only. He was raised, “now no more to re-

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13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.2.11>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.8>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%206.9>

turn to corruption” (Acts 13:34<sup>16</sup>), and, though He lay in death’s charnel house, He Himself saw no corruption (Acts 13:35<sup>17</sup>,37<sup>18</sup>). He shall die no more; death’s claim upon Him is gone and gone for ever. He became dead (Rev.1:18<sup>19</sup>, Margin) of His own voluntary will, laying down His life of Himself once and for ever (Jn 10:18<sup>20</sup>); this authority He received from His Father.

### **Rom.6:10<sup>21</sup>,11<sup>22</sup>**

Great is the difference between “Christ died for (Greek: *huper*, for, in substitutionary sense) our sins” (1 Cor.15:3<sup>23</sup>, and “He died unto sin.” Those who have died with Him are to reckon that they too are dead unto sin, but they could never die for sins, either their own or others’. “Died unto sin,” and “liveth unto God,” are placed side by side. Whether we think of the Lord wrestling victoriously with sin in temptation or striving against the sin of others, whatever form it might take, till the moment He died on the cross, by that death He has no more to do with sin. He lives unto God where the combat with sin is unknown. This is to be our true reckoning – that we are dead unto sin, and only by death are we free from it. Though we are dead we are alive – alive in Christ Jesus. Here is a life that sin cannot touch or affect. This is our safety and our joy.

### **Rom.6:12<sup>24</sup>**

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16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2013.34>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2013.35>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2013.37>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.1.18>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2010.18>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.10>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%206.11>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.3>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.12>

Despite what is said in the previous paragraph about the believer having died with Christ and that he is to reckon himself dead unto sin, it is implied in this verse that sin still resides in his mortal body. His soul once black as night through sin has been cleansed by Christ's precious blood, and in Christ he is pure and holy and free from sin, and made fit for God's presence. Sin once reigned as king within him, but it has been dethroned. Another King is owner of his mortal body as He is of his soul and spirit, and it is His will to use that body to His glory. Though, for the present, He has not rid the believer's mortal body of sin, leaving sin to be contended against, just as He left Canaanites in the land of Canaan to prove Israel, whether they would keep the way of the LORD or not (Jdgs.2:21-23<sup>25</sup>), the Lord will eventually free the believer's body of both mortality and sin. In the meantime he is not to allow sin to reign in his body that he should obey its lusts.

**Rom.6:13<sup>26</sup>,14<sup>27</sup>**

The members of the mortal body, in which sin is, are not to be presented to sin, the king that has been dethroned, as instruments or weapons of unrighteousness, but the believer is to present himself to God in fealty as the King's loyal subject, as alive from the dead in Christ Jesus. His members are to be the weapons God deigns to use in this scheme in His battle against unrighteousness. What a privilege to put our hands, feet, tongue, etc., into the hands of God in the battle which is for His glory and for our own good! Sin, the previous lord of the believer, shall not be allowed to obtrude so as to render ineffective the command to surrender ourselves to God. Sin shall not have dominion because of the fundamental change that has taken place, which is, that we are not under law, but under grace. Sin may tempt, but cannot have dominion.

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25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Judg.2.21-23>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.13>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%206.14>

**Rom.6:15**<sup>28</sup>

Since grace has made us free men and we are no longer under the legal restraints of “Thou shalt,” and “Thou shalt not,” shall we turn our liberty into licence and live as though grace gives no instructions? Does grace not teach us “that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world”? (Tit.2:11<sup>29</sup>12<sup>30</sup>). Banish the thought that we should continue to sin! Should men so graced of God live lives of self-pleasing and licentiousness? There were, alas, such men in apostolic times who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness (Jude 1:4<sup>31</sup>).

**Rom.6:16**<sup>32</sup>

First there is the yielding, surrendering or presenting of the servant (slave) to his master, and then follows the obedience of that servant to that master. The servant is the servant of the one he obeys. Sin and obedience are contrasted as masters, and the believer may present himself to sin to serve sin and to reap sin’s punishment, which is death, or he may yield himself to obedience to do what is right, which is righteousness, and to reap the fruits of well doing.

**Rom.6:17**<sup>33</sup>,**18**<sup>34</sup>

Paul thanks God for the great change in the past in the experience of the Roman saints. Once they were the slaves of sin, but they heard the living and life-giving message of the gospel and they had by it been de-

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28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.15>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.2.11>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Tit%202.12>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%201.4>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.16>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.17>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%206.18>

livered to a new form of teaching, to which they had been truly obedient. What was this form, pattern or mould of teaching? It was that of death and resurrection. The death and resurrection of Christ are first of all vital to salvation, for He was “delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification” (Rom.4:25<sup>35</sup>). The Lord’s death and resurrection lie behind the ordinance of baptism (Rom.6:3-5<sup>36</sup>). Behind the Breaking of the Bread, which the Lord instituted unto the remembrance of Himself, lie the great facts of His death and resurrection. The daily dying of the Lord’s disciple and rising from among the dead (Lk.9:23<sup>37</sup>; 1 Cor.15:31<sup>38</sup>; 2 Cor.4:10<sup>39</sup>; Phil.3:10<sup>40</sup>,11<sup>41</sup>) is the pattern on which his life is to be shaped. Then the whole argument of the apostle in the chapter we are considering finds its base in the death and resurrection of Christ. Only by death and resurrection are we free from sin and made servants of righteousness.

### **Rom.6:19**<sup>42</sup>

Here is disclosed the root of past sin – “the infirmity of our flesh.” Coiled round the whole of man’s being is the serpent – sin, whose poison fouls all human thought and action. The result is the complete perversion of human activity. What a tale lies beneath the words, “Ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity”! Impurity, lawlessness unto lawlessness! The whole dark and dreary record of Rom.1:24-32<sup>43</sup>, of Gentile degradation, lies in these words of verse

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35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.25>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.3-5>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.9.23>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.31>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.4.10>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.3.10>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil%203.11>

**42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.19>**

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.24-32>

19: But now the members of these Roman believers were to be presented as slaves to righteousness. The object of this being sanctification, complete separation from such shameful things as were done in the past, so that God's holy will might be done by them.

**Rom.6:20<sup>44</sup>,21<sup>45</sup>**

Here Paul draws aside the curtain and lets those Roman believers look back on their past lives. There is ever a benefit to be derived from remembering what and where we were in the past, and what and where we are now by the grace of God. Paul says that when they were slaves of sin they were free in regard to righteousness, free to do their own will and seek their own pleasure in sin. What fruit accrued to them from their doings and what was the end? As to the deeds themselves they brought only shame, for sin is a shameful thing, a shame to a race that was at the beginning created in the image and likeness of God. What was the end? Death! The sentence upon sin is ever the same from the beginning of the race to the end; it is death all the way.

**Rom.6:22<sup>46</sup>**

They were no longer slaves of sin; they had been freed, not by a price paid by themselves, but by Another, even the Lord Christ. His blood was the ransom price. Now they were slaves of God, and in consequence of the character of their service the fruit of their doings is not shame, but sanctification, an ever increasing separation from all evil. This is not the once for all sanctification in Christ, but a sanctification which is progressive in holy living. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thess.4:3<sup>47</sup>), Paul wrote to the Thessalonians. The end or issue of such holy living is eternal life. Eternal life is given

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44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.20>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%206.21>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.22>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.3>

by Christ to all His sheep, all believers (Jn 10:27<sup>48</sup>,28<sup>49</sup>). Again, such as sow to the Spirit reap eternal life (Gal.6:8<sup>50</sup>), that is, they reap an increase of life which they already possess, as the Lord said, “I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly” (Jn 10:10<sup>51</sup>). This increase of life is by laying hold on the life eternal (1 Tim.6:12<sup>52</sup>), which is life indeed (1 Tim.6:19<sup>53</sup>). “Unto eternal life” and “unto life eternal” (Jn 12: 25<sup>54</sup>; 4:14<sup>55</sup>,36<sup>56</sup>) contemplate that phase of eternal life which is yet future.

### **Rom.6:23**<sup>57</sup>

“Wages” is the pay, stipend or ration of soldiers. The ends of the two paths of sin and righteousness are clearly stated. What is earned by sinners will be paid in full; the wage is death, and the most fearsome form of it is in the second death, which is the lake of fire (Rev.20:14<sup>58</sup>,15<sup>59</sup>). But life, natural and spiritual, is the gift of God, and here in this verse is clearly stated the blessed fact, that the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. John the apostle tells us that “this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life” (1 Jn 5:11<sup>60</sup>,12<sup>61</sup>).

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48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2010.27>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2010.28>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.6.8>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2010.10>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.6.12>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.6.19>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2012.%2025>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%204.14>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%204.36>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.23>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.14>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2020.15>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.11>



# COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

## CHAPTER SEVEN

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### **R**om.7:1<sup>1</sup>

Law, whether the Mosaic or any law of men, applies to man during his earthly lifetime. On such as may be guilty of the worst of felonies, if they die before the arm of the law reaches them, law cannot impose any penalty. Every transgression of the law of God, we are told, received a just recompense of reward (Heb.2:2<sup>2</sup>).

### **Rom.7:2<sup>3,3<sup>4</sup></sup>**

Here Paul uses what he calls “the law of the husband” to force home the truth that death frees those who have been under law, so that they are no longer under law but under grace (Rom.6:14<sup>5</sup>). A married woman is bound to her living husband, but his death breaks the marriage bond, so she is not an adulteress if she remarries. (It seems to me that there is no need to render the Greek word *chrematizo*, translated “called” here, as “divinely called,” and this is also so, I judge, in Acts 11:26<sup>6</sup>: “Called an adulteress” and “called Christians,” describe the habit of life of these persons respectively, and are correct definitions). The breaking of the marriage bond by divorce would destroy the whole of Paul’s argument.

### **Rom.7:4<sup>7</sup>**

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.2.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.2>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%207.3>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.14>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2011.26>

There is no need to conclude that Paul's similitude means that the law was the husband, and those under the law the wife. In Paul's simile the husband dies and the wife lives: this would mean that the law dies and those under the law continue to live. He states the opposite to this in his application, when he says, "Ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ." So it is not the law that dies but those under the law. What he is showing is, that death frees from the law, and nothing else. "The body of Christ" is the Lord's own body which was hanged on the tree. Christ was born under the law (Gal.4:4<sup>8</sup>,5<sup>9</sup>), and He died under the law, meeting the law's just demands against those for whom He died. Believers who were once under the law were made dead to the law by the body of Christ yielded up in death on the cross (Heb.10:10<sup>10</sup>). "We have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were holden" (verse 6). The object of this is, that they might be joined to Another, even the risen Christ, with a view to bringing forth fruit to God. The joining here is a permanent union with the living Christ that death cannot affect. Bearing in mind the thought of the similitude of husband and wife, the fruit expected of such a union is not only the reproduction of the life of Christ in us, with all its blessed virtues, but also the begetting of a prolific issue as at the beginning, when each created thing bore fruit after its kind.

The subject matter here in the similitude of husband and wife should not be confused with that set forth in Eph.5:22-33<sup>11</sup> where it is Christ and the Church which is His Body. There is no thought of fruit-bearing in Ephesians. Then again, the marriage of the Church, the Bride of the Lamb, is yet future (Rev.19:7<sup>12</sup>,8<sup>13</sup>), but our being joined or married to

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7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.4>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.4.4>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal%204.5>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.10.10>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.22-33>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.19.7>

Christ, in Rom.7:4<sup>14</sup>, is a present experience, not a future one. Now it is the individual experience of each believer to be joined to Christ, the future marriage of the Bride is a collective experience.

### **Rom.7:5<sup>15</sup>,6<sup>16</sup>**

“When we were in the flesh” signifies the condition of believers prior to regeneration. Paul says in Rom.8:9<sup>17</sup>, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.” At the time of regeneration Jewish believers died to the law, to that wherein they were holden. “Thou shalt” and “Thou shalt not” stirred up the sinful passions which are native to the flesh, which brought fruit unto death, the exact opposite of the life of Christ in the believer, which brings forth fruit unto God. Spirit should be printed with a capital S, for it signifies the Person of the Holy Spirit. Service now is not on the old principle of the letter of the law, to which a man without faith, enslaved to that legal system, might conform outwardly. God’s servants now serve in the new power of the Spirit, the words of the Old Testament having come to life in him through faith in Christ.

### **Rom.7:7<sup>18</sup>**

This part of the chapter (verses 7-25) is an answer to the question, “Is the law sin?” Paul shows that sin resides not in the law, but in man. It is by the law that sin is unveiled, “for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin” (Rom.3:20<sup>19</sup>). When Paul’s conscience was enlightened by the law, then sin became active.

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13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2019.8>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.4>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.5>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%207.6>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.9>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.7>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.20>

**Rom.7:8<sup>20</sup>**

Sin here is original sin which is inherited by all members of the human race. When the law said, “Thou shalt not covet,” sin at once resisted and wrought all manner of coveting. Two opposites met, sin and God’s holy law; and the law stirred up sin to activity. To be dead does not mean that a thing or person does not exist. Both death and life describe states of existence, not existence itself. The entrance of the law was like putting vinegar into a tumbler of water in which is bicarbonate of soda; immediately it effervesces. The rebellious character of sin was not felt until the law said, “Thou shalt not covet,” and immediately sin was stirred into violent action and produced all manner of lusting.

**Rom.7:9<sup>21</sup>,10<sup>22</sup>**

“I was alive apart from the law once”: “I” here is Paul in childhood, before the commandment of the law awakened him to the consciousness of sin. Here Paul describes his own experience and lays bare for examination those deep and secret workings of the conscience. In comparatively happy unconsciousness of the sinfulness of sin (verse 13) Paul lived in early life. He tersely states his after experience thus – “the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” When sin comes to life in the sinner, the sinner dies, he is dead through his trespasses and sins (Eph.2:1<sup>23</sup>), and from henceforth he is without strength to help himself (Rom.5:6<sup>24</sup>). Divine quickening with Christ (Eph.2:4-6<sup>25</sup>) is by the Spirit and word of God. The commandment of the law was unto life: for “the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.8>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.9>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%207.10>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.1>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.6>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.2.4-6>

thereby” (Rom.10:5<sup>26</sup>). Thus, instead of being unto life, Paul found it to be unto death. Paul, who was a sinner by nature (Rom.5:19<sup>27</sup>), became a sinner by practice.

### **Rom.7:11<sup>28,12<sup>29</sup></sup>**

Paul here answers his own question, “Is the law sin?”, by saying, “The law is holy.” Sin is deceitful (Heb.3:13<sup>30</sup>). Paul says that through the commandment sin beguiled him and through it slew him. Here is a repetition of the story of Eden’s garden, with this difference; the beguiler was not sin in Eve, but the serpent, the old serpent the devil. He so beguiled her that she ran right against the commandment, as upon a drawn sword, and the fatal judgement fell – “in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen.2:17<sup>31</sup>). Her answer to the LORD was, “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.” The commandment was like the law, holy, just and good. How subtle are both sin and Satan as they wait for the occasion to do their deadly work!

### **Rom.7:13<sup>32</sup>**

The law which is good cannot slay the good. But, alas, there is none good, no not so much as one (Rom.3:12<sup>33</sup>). The law discovered the sinner to himself; it showed sin in him to be sin, and the commandment which is holy revealed that sin is exceedingly sinful in God’s sight.

### **Rom.7:14<sup>34</sup>**

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26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.5>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.19>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.11>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%207.12>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.3.13>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.2.17>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.13>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.12>

We know (Greek: oida, intuitive knowledge, not acquired from what is external, in contrast to Greek: ginosko, which describes what is acquired or learned), Paul says, that the law is spiritual, but in contrast, he says, “I am carnal.” “I” here is emphatic, and refers to Paul himself. Mankind is sold to slavery in sin and under its dominion. The nature of Adam was completely changed by disobedience. Such a change, in part, takes place when sin revives in an individual, for from that moment he turns away rebelliously from God, since death has taken place. God alone can convert or turn the sinner back again by the life-giving message of the gospel, and by this means he is freed from the slavery of sin.

**Rom.7:15<sup>35</sup>,16<sup>36</sup>,17<sup>37</sup>**

Now as one whose soul is freed from sin, yet with sin still dwelling in his flesh, he says, “that which I do I know not” (Greek: ginosko, he has not learned and is ignorant); he is acting at the dictates of another, that is, of sin in him. His mind which is renewed hates sin, yet such is sin’s deceitfulness in the complexity of his present constitution, he hates what he practises and does what he would not do. In this Paul says that he consents unto the law that it is good. Then he points out the cause of his so acting, “So now it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me.” Such words could not be written describing an unregenerate man either under or not under the law. An unregenerate man does not hate sin, nor can such a difference be made between himself and sin in him. Pollok, the poet, in his “Course of Time,” page 101, puts the matter of the struggle of the man renewed by God’s Spirit and sin in the flesh thus:

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34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.14>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.15>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%207.16>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%207.17>

“Emblem of strength and weakness! loving now,  
 And now abhorring sin; indulging now,  
 And now repenting sore; rejoicing now,  
 With joy unspeakable, and full of glory;  
 Now weeping bitterly, and clothed in dust;  
 A man willing to do, and doing not;  
 Doing, and willing not;  
 Embracing what He hates,  
 What most he loves abandoning;  
 Half saint, and sinner half;  
 Half life, half death;  
 Commixture strange of heaven, and earth, and hell.”

Whilst Paul says that it was not he himself that does the wrong, but sin in him, this does not relieve him of blame, for though the cause is sin in his flesh, he cannot be treated as a lunatic who is not responsible for his actions. His course is that of Job who said, “I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:6<sup>38</sup>).

**Rom.7:18**<sup>39</sup>

The personal pronouns “I,” “me,” “my” refer undoubtedly to Paul (and he typifies believers in general), and not to a sinner, or a believer prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). He is showing that a believer

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38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2042.6>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.18>

in himself, however much he might will the doing of good, has not the ability to do good. Paul is preparing the ground in chapter 7 for his arguments in chapter 8, in which the Spirit is mentioned about 18 times. Prior to chapter 8 the spirit is mentioned but once (Rom.5:5<sup>40</sup>). No good can be done by the believer except he is empowered by the Holy Spirit. He cannot even call Jesus Lord but by the Spirit's power. "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor.12:3<sup>41</sup>).

The resistance of sin in the flesh is so powerful, that but for God's enabling power by the Spirit the believer could do nothing. This is the teaching of all Scripture: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord" (Zech.4:6<sup>42</sup>). "He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: He taketh no pleasure in the legs of a man" (Ps.147:10<sup>43</sup>). "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor.12:9<sup>44</sup>). "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me" (Phil.4:13<sup>45</sup>). One might quote scriptures in extenso to prove the hopelessness of the saints and servants of God apart from the power of God. Believers may will with their renewed minds, but the power to do good does not reside in themselves, but in the quickening power of God's Spirit. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" (Jn 6:63<sup>46</sup>), is an axiomatic truth.

**Rom.7:19<sup>47</sup>,20<sup>48</sup>**

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40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.5>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.12.3>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.4.6>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.147.10>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.12.9>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.4.13>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%206.63>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.19>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%207.20>

Here again Paul restates what he said in verse 17 as to the cause of evil, he says that it is because of “sin which dwelleth in me.” What is true of the wicked is true of sin in the flesh of a believer: “The wicked are like the troubled sea; for it cannot rest, and its waters cast up mire and dirt” (Isa.57:20<sup>49</sup>). How calm the believer’s thoughts would be, but for this ever-present, restless evil within! Sin stands up to challenge every good thought that emerges from the believer’s mind and seeks to neutralize it. As we have before said, that though wrong-doing arises from sin which dwells within, the believer cannot exonerate himself from blame; hence sorrow, repentance and confession must ever characterize him during all his earthly life.

**Rom.7:21<sup>50</sup>,22<sup>51</sup>,23<sup>52</sup>**

Here Paul says that he finds the law governing this state of things existing within him, which is – “that, to me who would do good, evil is present.” This is the law of sin which is in his members, which is ever present to war against the law of his mind, which delights in the law of God. His renewed mind is the inward man, the regenerate man, the man who is freed from sin and is no longer in the flesh, a saved man’s true self. He looks upon his members as one suffering from cancer might look upon his body afflicted with this dread disease. What can he do to rid himself of this malignant affection? Nothing! But how his mind longs to be free from the cancer which wars against him and deprives him of health and activity! There are two laws in the cancer patient, the law of his mind which agrees with perfect soundness and health, and the law of cancer which directs all its deadly working to the destruction of its host. Even so it was with Paul, in a moral sense, as he

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49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.57.20>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.21>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%207.22>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%207.23>

saw the law of sin in his members. The following verses show this longing for perfect health and eternal youth.

**Rom.7:24<sup>53</sup>,25<sup>54</sup>**

“The body of this death” is the body in which sin dwells, which brings to the believer so much of wretchedness and unhappiness. Though he as to his soul is redeemed, redemption has not yet reached his body, and in this he groans being burdened (Rom.8:23<sup>55</sup>). Will deliverance reach him? Assuredly it will through Jesus Christ our Lord. In anticipation of the glad day of relief, he thanks God. Paul long ago left the body and is wretched no more. He served the law of God with his mind, his true self, but with the flesh he could do no other than the flesh will ever do, serve the law of sin. For the glorious deliverance, at the Lord’s coming, from the body of this death we look and long and wait!

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53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.24>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%207.25>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.23>

# COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

## CHAPTER EIGHT

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### Rom.8:1<sup>1</sup>,2<sup>2</sup>

We have seen in chapter 7:7-25 the complete answer to the question, “Is the law sin?” Then we have seen too the stern and accurate analysis of what man is by nature, and also what he is after regeneration, that sin is in the evil nature he inherited from Adam, and that it still resides in his flesh after he is born again. In chapter 8 we see what the believer is in Christ Jesus. Passing from chapter 7 to chapter 8 is like a train passing out of the gloom and darkness of a tunnel into glorious sunshine. In Christ Jesus the believer stands free from condemnation, for in his Substitute, who suffered in his stead, he emerges from prison, where he lay condemned to death through sin, into glorious liberty. He is legally free, not by the law of Moses, but by a new law, the law of the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus. No power in heaven, earth or hell, can now charge him with sin. “It is God that justifieth; who is he that shall condemn?” (Rom.8:33<sup>3</sup>,34<sup>4</sup>). And as if to force home the truth of the freedom of the believing sinner from sin’s consequences still further, Paul adds, “It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead.” Here is life, the life in Christ Jesus who was raised from the dead. It is glorious to contemplate that we are free with the Spirit’s law on our side.

We are not as those who have escaped from sin’s dominion: we are not fugitives, but legally free men. We may think that in some cases the

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.33>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.34>

changes made in the Revised Version were unnecessary and uncalled for, but we cannot fail to be delighted with the elimination of the words of verse 1 – “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,” as found in the Authorised Version (KJV), words which fittingly find their place in verse 4: In Christ Jesus we are free from condemnation, not because of our walk, that is, our behaviour, but by our faith in Christ Jesus through the law of the Spirit, and through that law we are free from the law of sin and of death which is still in our members (Rom.7:23<sup>5</sup>).

### **Rom.8:3**<sup>6</sup>

“What the law could not do:” it could not conform the persons under it to what it demanded, because it had nothing to work upon in sinful flesh, and when once the commandment of the law had slain the sinner it was powerless to impart life to the dead. “For if there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law” (Gal.3:21<sup>7</sup>). But no law which made exactions on man as he is by nature could avail anything. Condemnation and death were by the law, but freedom from condemnation and life are in Christ Jesus. In view of the helplessness of the law, God sent His own Son, One who is like Himself in nature and holiness, not in sinful flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh. There is and was no sin in Him (1 Jn 3:5<sup>8</sup>), and He did no sin (1 Pet.2:22<sup>9</sup>). “For sin” (See Heb.10:6<sup>10</sup>,18<sup>11</sup>; 13:11<sup>12</sup> where the same words are used.) means “as a sacrifice for sin.”

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.23>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.3>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.3.21>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.5>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.22>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.10.6>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%2010.18>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%2013.11>

By the sending of His Son and by the Son's death for sin, God has condemned sin in the flesh. This is sin in its root, as rooted in the flesh, in which the roots of sin like a cancer have spread and corrupted man in heart and mind and all his members. The fundamental doctrine as enunciated by the Lord is, "Ye must be born again." Man is sinful in his nature, hence all his works are sinful. The Lord again said, "The corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matt.7:17<sup>13</sup>). Such is the seeming paradox, that sin in the flesh is condemned, yet the believer who is in Christ Jesus is not condemned.

### **Rom.8:4**<sup>14</sup>

Here is the reason for the condemnation of the flesh in the previous verse; it is condemned as a useless thing. The power to fulfil the righteous requirement of the law is the power of the Spirit. What is this just requirement of the law? It is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God...and...thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets" (Matt.22:37-40<sup>15</sup>). "Love therefore is the fulfilment of the law" (Rom.13:10<sup>16</sup>). The flesh knows only the love of self, and if others are loved it is largely for the gratification of self, but love, the requirement and essential meaning of God's law, can only be fulfilled by the Spirit's power.

### **Rom.8:5**<sup>17</sup>

Spirit here should be printed with a capital, as in the AV/KJV, and not with a small s, as in the RV, for it signifies the Holy Spirit. The Lord said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Jn 3:6<sup>18</sup>). The person who is not born again cannot

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13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.7.17>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.4>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.22.37-40>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.13.10>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.5>

ascend by education or culture to spiritual things, he can only engage in carnal things, and, if he would be religious, he can only engage in a carnal religion. He must be born again before he can mind the things of the Spirit.

**Rom.8:6<sup>19</sup>,7<sup>20</sup>**

It is clearly explained why the mind of the flesh is death, because it is enmity against God, who is the Source of life. This mind is utterly hostile to God, causing man to be the enemy of his Maker. The mind that hates the Giver of life is shut up to no other course than that of death, destruction and death in this life, and the misery of the second death, the lake of fire, in that which lies beyond time. Paul in his quotations from the Old Testament, in Rom.3:10-18<sup>21</sup>, shows the mind of the flesh which has turned man into ways of perversity and wickedness. He says, “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 have they not known.”

No wonder, when this is the natural state of men, that Satan easily won to his side the people of Israel, who cried to Pilate to crucify the Lord. The mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, nor can it be. “Sin is lawlessness” (1 Jn 3:4<sup>22</sup>), hence man is a lawless, rebellious creature; it is in his nature to rebel against God. But in contrast to this violent enmity in man against God is the mind of the Spirit, which is life and peace. The world knows only death and peace, the peace of the stricken battlefield and of the graveyard. Isaac Watts sang truly:

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18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.6>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.6>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.7>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.10-%2018>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.4>

“Like flowery fields the nations stand  
 Pleased with the morning light,  
 The flowers, beneath the mower’s hand,  
 Lie withering ere ’tis night.”

Into the heart of whomsoever He may come, the blessed Spirit brings by His quickening power and presence life and peace. This is His mind and the mind of God’s redeemed also.

**Rom.8:8<sup>23</sup>,9<sup>24</sup>**

Those who are in the flesh are such as have not known the regenerating power of God’s Spirit, who are yet in their sin and sins (Jn 8:21<sup>25</sup>,24<sup>26</sup>); such cannot please God. This brief statement, “cannot please God,” condemns all unregenerate professors, whether popes, prelates, bishops, rabbis, and all ministers of all religions; such mere religious professors cannot please God, with all their flocks of unregenerate people. All such are in the flesh. This is not the flesh as to the physical organism of the human body, but the flesh as to a sinful, corrupt nature. The person who is born again is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, because the Spirit of God dwells in him.

This translation from the flesh into the Spirit took place when the person was born again, at which time he was also delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His (God’s) love (Col.1:13<sup>27</sup>). “In the Spirit” here is a permanent experience, whereas, “in the Spirit” in Rev.1:10<sup>28</sup>; Rev.4:2<sup>29</sup>; Rev.17:3<sup>30</sup>; Rev.21:10<sup>31</sup> is in-

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23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.8>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.9>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%208.21>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%208.24>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.13>

termittent. Finally, we are told that those who have not the Spirit of Christ do not belong to Christ. This explains why such cannot please God; they are not believers in Christ; not redeemed by His precious blood; not forgiven; they are yet in the power of Satan and of darkness. The Spirit of Christ here is the Spirit of God, the blessed Holy Spirit.

**Rom.8:10**<sup>32</sup>

The riches of the mystery of the Body of Christ which comprises all believers of this dispensation of grace, of which Christ is the Head, is, “Christ in you, the Hope of Glory” (Col.1:27<sup>33</sup>). The premise of Paul’s argument in this verse is, “if Christ is in you,” then certain results follow from this as to the believer’s body, not his soul or self. Sin and the Spirit are contrasted here, not the believer’s own spirit. Because Christ is in the believer by the Spirit, the body is dead because of sin, but that same body is quickened, made alive by the Spirit to be used now, first of all as His habitation or temple: “Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor.6:19<sup>34</sup>). The body is dead through sin, and the believer is dead to sin (Rom.6:11<sup>35</sup>). The Spirit is life because of righteousness, that is, righteousness given or imputed to the believer. What follows in the next verse implements what is said in this verse.

**Rom.8:11**<sup>36</sup>

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28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.1.10>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.4.2>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.17.3>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.21.10>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.10>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.27>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.6.19>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.11>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.11>

There can be no resurrection apart from death. Sin has done its work (verse 10), and “the body is dead on account of sin.” Then follows the association of the raising up of the Lord by God with God quickening the mortal bodies of believers by His Spirit who indwells them. The quickening of the believer’s body is a present experience; it is by God’s Spirit who dwells in them, and not by the sound of the trumpet at the Lord’s coming (1 Cor.15:51<sup>37</sup>,52<sup>38</sup>; 1 Thess.4:16<sup>39</sup>,17<sup>40</sup>). It has in view not only the fact that at the time of quickening the believer’s body became a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.6:19<sup>41</sup>), but that Spirit-quickened body is to be presented to God as a living sacrifice (Rom.12:1<sup>42</sup>), which is holy, as quickened and sanctified by the Spirit, and is thus acceptable to God; it is our reasonable service (Greek: *latreia*, divine service), and is the beginning of all such service. In the believer’s Spirit-quickened body God is to be glorified (1 Cor.6:19<sup>43</sup>,20<sup>44</sup>).

### **Rom.8:12<sup>45</sup>-13<sup>46</sup>**

We are debtors, not to the flesh, but to God, for the sending of His Son and His Spirit, and all the blessings which have come to us in consequence. From the flesh we reap nothing but misery. Why should the believer live after the flesh? If he does, he must die, for the mind of the flesh (its desire and aim) is death. But if we mortify, not the body, but the deeds of the body, its actions and practices, which arise from the

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37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.51>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%2015.52>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.4.16>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%204.17>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.6.19>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.1>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.6.19>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%206.20>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.12>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.13>

flesh, then we shall live. But whence comes the power by which this is to be done? It is by the Spirit, the Cause of every victory the believer wins over sin and self.

**Rom.8:14<sup>47</sup>,15<sup>48</sup>**

This does not describe how persons become sons of God; that is dealt with in Gal.3:26<sup>49</sup>: “Ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus.” Such believers as may live after the flesh do not show what they really are by the new birth, but those who are led by the Spirit of God manifest their true character, that they are sons of God. “Children of God” describes those who are born again, but “sons of God” implies more than the new birth, it signifies likeness to God, the Father who begat them. The Lord said, “Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons (the AV/KJV incorrectly gives “children” here) of your Father which is in heaven” (Matt.5:44<sup>50</sup>,45<sup>51</sup>). The disciples who were born of God were to be like their Father in character, which would be shown in the things that they did. It is impossible to be like God unless there has been a change in nature by a new birth.

The spirit of bondage or slavery was that under which the Jewish people were to the law; the law could be nothing but slavery to an unregenerated man, but to the believer with a changed nature in the past the law was one of joyous freedom, as see Ps.1<sup>52</sup>: Again, “Oh how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day” (Ps.119:97<sup>53</sup>). Under the law the Jewish people were vainly serving God night and day (Acts 26:7<sup>54</sup>),

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47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.14>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.15>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.3.26>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.5.44>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%205.45>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.1>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.119.97>

seeking to attain to what is unattainable by the works of the flesh. In contrast to the spirit of bondage, the believer has received the Spirit of adoption (of son-placing), and at the coming of the Son of God those who are sons of God will enjoy in redeemed bodies the place that is truly theirs through grace. Meantime the Spirit teaches them to call God, Father. Here Paul uses two words for father, the Hebrew *Abba*, and the Greek *Pater*. In any language, the word for “father” is the name the Spirit teaches the believer to use in addressing God. Sweet name and sweet relationship!

**Rom.8:16<sup>55</sup>,17<sup>56</sup>**

Here the word children is used, not sons as previously, for solely on the ground of the new birth the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. We have this inward assurance of the Spirit that we are God’s children, and this assurance nothing else can supply. Faith grasps the facts of Scripture, but assurance is of the Spirit. If we are God’s children then we are heirs of God; this is the universal rule of heirship. But we are not only heirs of God, we are joint-heirs with Christ. The abundance of such grace to guilty undone sinners humbles us in the dust. Who are we that we should be joint-heirs with Christ? There is a wealth in such words that is beyond our minds to conceive even in a feeble way. If we fail to suffer with Christ this will not affect our being children and heirs, but suffering with Christ is joined to being glorified with Him, and this is something more than being heirs. Heirship rests solely on relationship, but being glorified with Him is the result and reward of suffering with Him. The believer in Christ has much in view, but he that suffers with Christ has more.

**Rom.8:18<sup>57</sup>**

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54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2026.7>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.16>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.17>

“The sufferings of this present time” (season): season implies limitation in time. Paul thinks of the time-limit that God has put to the suffering of His saints in this scene. It is but a little while, but the glory is for ever. The reward of suffering will be so infinitely greater than what the suffering merits, that the suffering is not worthy to be compared with the glory: we might say – all this glory for so little suffering!

**Rom.8:19**<sup>58</sup>

God is at present preparing the sons for the coming kingdom. Then will come the time of their adoption, when in redeemed bodies they will be glorified. Following this will be the revelation of the sons of God, who are God’s hidden ones at the present time, and for this revelation the creation waits. The grandeur of this revelation will surpass all human thought. The Lord will come to be glorified in His saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed (2 Thess.1:10<sup>59</sup>).

**Rom.8:20<sup>60</sup>,21<sup>61</sup>**

When Adam fell, not only did the human race fall in him, but all earthly creation which was placed under his lordship fell with him. God said, “Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over all cattle, and over all the earth” (Gen.1:26<sup>62</sup>). Creation here excludes the angels who were not within man’s dominion. Also it does not include the human race, the most part of which is not waiting for the revealing of the sons of God and will be in revolt against Jehovah and His Christ prior to the coming of the Son of Man. The creation does not

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57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.18>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.19>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.1.10>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.20>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.21>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.1.26>

include the vegetable and mineral kingdoms, but means all animal life which was placed under mankind, which was subjected to vanity, not of its own will. This animated creation is indeed born to a vain life, to fear and pain and death, the one part of creation making a prey of the other. God subjected creation to vanity in hope of the millennial day, when the second Man, the last Adam, will be in control, as Ps.8<sup>63</sup> and Heb.2<sup>64</sup> show. Then a change will take place in the nature of the beasts, as is described in Isa.11:6-9<sup>65</sup>, Isa.65:25<sup>66</sup>, when the Branch shall reign, the Branch that was to grow out of Jesse's root. Then creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. What a freedom the glory of the children of God will bring to this distraught earth!

**Rom.8:22<sup>67</sup>,23<sup>68</sup>**

The whole creation is plainly the animal creation which suffers pain and groans. May we say what we said in the former verse, that creation here does not include mankind? For instead of mankind being delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God, mankind will be brought before the Lord for judgement, and perchance the most part be cast into eternal fire, as Matt.25<sup>69</sup> and other scriptures show. In the common groan of animated creation we who have the first-fruits of the Spirit join as we wait for our adoption, which will take place when the Lord comes to the air for His saints. The first-fruits of the Spirit are the earnest of our inheritance (Eph.1:13<sup>70</sup>,14<sup>71</sup>). When we have been adopted (placed as sons),

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63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.8>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.2>

65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.11.6-9>

66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.65.25>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.22>

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.23>

69. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.25>

when our bodies have been redeemed, we shall never again say with Paul, “O wretched man that I am!” (Rom.7:24<sup>72</sup>). The groan shall be changed for a song, as was the case with Israel, when redeemed from the bondage of Egypt they sang by the Red Sea.

**Rom.8:24<sup>73</sup>,25<sup>74</sup>**

This is variously rendered by translators as, “in hope were we saved,” or, “we were saved with this hope in view.” It means that we were saved in a state of hope, with the day of adoption and redemption filling our hearts, and the fear of hell for ever gone. We were not saved by hope, but by faith. But faith which comes by hearing (that is, hearing the message of the gospel) brought its friends hope and love with it. They came to abide, not to be sojourners for a night. Hope lifts our drooping spirit and causes us to anticipate what faith assures us is a fact, that the glory of God will dawn and drive away the sorrows and tears and fears of the present night. Hope patiently awaits that day!

**Rom.8:26<sup>75</sup>**

Hope helps our weakness; from what mental infirmity does that human being suffer from whom all hope is quite gone! Hope helps us, and in like manner the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, for Paul says that we know not how to pray as we ought. He was a great praying man who wrote this. Paul has taught us more about prayer than any other New Testament writer; but as he thought of our Father, the great God of heaven, and poor ignorant mortals seeking to speak to Him, he knew that we did not know how to pray as we ought. But the blessed Holy

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70. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.13>

71. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%201.14>

72. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.24>

73. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.24>

74. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.25>

75. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.26>

Spirit is our Advocate and Helper, and He makes intercession from our hearts, not with words, but with groanings that cannot be uttered. Thus the creation groans, we groan, and the Spirit also groans in intercession for groaning saints.

**Rom.8:27<sup>76</sup>**

We make mistakes in prayer, but the Spirit ever makes intercession according to God's will. "The Spirit searcheth all things." "The things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God" (1 Cor.2:10<sup>77</sup>,11<sup>78</sup>). God who is the Searcher of hearts, as He listens to the groaning of the Spirit from the hearts of His saints, knows (oida "knows," not "learns") what is the mind or desire of the Spirit. What gracious provision this is to meet the needs of saints!

**Rom.8:28<sup>79</sup>,29<sup>80</sup>,30<sup>81</sup>**

This is a glorious and majestic passage of Scripture. It touches upon the sovereignty of the Eternal God, who does according to His own will in heaven and on earth, and none can stay His hand or dare say to Him, "What doest Thou?" His attribute of mercy in electing grace is as just as His merciful provision for men in His saving grace. There can be no unrighteousness with God. He said to Moses of His sovereign will in mercy and grace, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy" (Ex.33:19<sup>82</sup>). Were we in God's stead and as wise as He, we should have acted exactly as He has done. But men in their blindness and rebellion challenge God in

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76. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.27>

77. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.2.10>

78. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%202.11>

79. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.28>

80. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.29>

81. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.30>

82. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.33.19>

His dealings with the creatures of His own creation, and challenge His righteous acts, and presume that they could sketch a better plan than He. The whole divine movement of things, of which we know so little, set in motion by God has the good of those that love God as its objective. Those that love Him are His called ones, called with an effectual calling, and according to His purpose.

The salient features of this great movement are outlined in the following verses. Back into the depths of eternity and the counsels of Deity the mind of the apostle travels as he dictates to Tertius: “For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren.” To God the countless ages yet to be are as truly present as the things that now are. He “calleth the things that are not, as though they were” (Rom.4:17<sup>83</sup>). It was such a God of inscrutable knowledge and wisdom that foreordained those that He foreknew, not determining His course according to acts as they transpire. God works according as He has purposed, and how thankful those should be who are His called ones according to His purpose!

They are not His according to their own purpose, or Paul himself would never have been amongst His called ones, and neither would we! The object He had in those whom He foreknew and foreordained was that they should be conformed to the image of His Son. Then we have this vast panorama in the fulfilment of divine purpose stretching from eternity to eternity (verse 30) – foreordained, called, justified, glorified, all spoken of as though they were accomplished facts. Foreordination and glorification are facts pertaining to eternity, calling and justification are events in time.

**Rom.8:31<sup>84</sup>,32<sup>85</sup>**

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83. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.17>

84. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.31>

What can we say? for if God who has called and justified us, foreordained and glorified us with so great glory as that we should be conformed to the image of His Son, who can possibly be against us? Everything in this view presented here must be on our side and working for us, and above all, God is for us. We can only thank Him for such grace so abundantly bestowed, of which we are altogether unworthy. Having given His Son, only begotten and beloved, for us, He will give us all the rest. All things else are small in comparison with His unspeakable Gift.

**Rom.8:33<sup>86</sup>-34<sup>87</sup>**

He that would lay anything to the charge of God's elect has God to reckon with, not them. Their justification is not their own work, but His. Who can condemn those whom the just God of heaven has justified? His act is not one of passing over sins, but of putting them away for ever (Heb.9:26<sup>88</sup>), having laid them on His own Son (Isa.53:6<sup>89</sup>; 1 Pet.2:24<sup>90</sup>). "It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead"; this is the just basis of justification (Rom.4:25<sup>91</sup>). He is at God's right hand making intercession for us. The Holy Spirit is an Advocate (Rom.8:26<sup>92</sup>), and Christ Jesus is another Advocate at God's right hand (verse 34). See Jn 14:16-18<sup>93</sup>, etc.; 1 Jn 2:1<sup>94</sup>,2<sup>95</sup>:

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85. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.32>

86. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.33>

87. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.34>

88. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.9.26>

89. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.53.6>

90. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.24>

91. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.25>

92. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.26>

93. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.16-18>

94. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.1>

95. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%202.2>

**Rom.8:35<sup>96</sup>,36<sup>97</sup>,37<sup>98</sup>**

Who can separate us from such divine and eternal love which led Christ to die for us and rise again to intercede for us upon God's throne, such love as foreordained us to be with Christ and to be in His image for evermore? Shall all the evils of a wicked and antagonistic world (Jn 15:19-21<sup>99</sup>; 16:33<sup>100</sup>), and all the persecutions of the devil as a roaring lion? (1 Pet.5:8<sup>101</sup>). Nay, these things should but drive saints the more to the bosom of Eternal Love to find their solace and healing for all their sores. The answer of true and loving hearts is: "For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Suffering saints and martyrs endured all for Christ's sake. Let the world, the devil and demons do their worst, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. His love nerves the feeble arm, makes the heart steadfast, and the face like a flint to dare all for Him. His love conquers!

**Rom.8:38<sup>102</sup>,39<sup>103</sup>**

With these words Paul closes his majestic survey of the triumph of divine grace in the justification, security, and glorification of all the subjects of that grace. He runs the flag to the top of the mast, and we hear the rolling song of victory which shall resound throughout all eternity. His words sweep through the universe of created things, both present and future, and with a shout which echoes and re-echoes he de-

96. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.35>

97. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.36>

98. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.37>

99. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.19-21>

100. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2016.33>

101. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.5.8>

102. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.38>

103. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.39>

clares his unshakeable faith that nothing can separate saints from God's love which is in Christ Jesus. He cites both beings and things capable of causing separations; we mention but one, that which heads the list – death. Death, the enemy, is the last of the enemies of the human race to leave the field (1 Cor.15:26<sup>104</sup>; Rev.20:14<sup>105</sup>); what separations it has caused! But here it is defeated by God's love in Christ. Its cold clammy hand can never intrude here and wrest one saint from divine love. God's love, the greatest power in the universe, yields its trophies and treasures to none. The saints are the treasure and pearl for whom the Lord gave His all to obtain (Matt.13:44-46<sup>106</sup>).

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104. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.15.26>

105. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.20.14>

106. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.13.44-46>

# COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

## CHAPTER NINE

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### Rom.9:1<sup>1</sup>,2<sup>2</sup>,3<sup>3</sup>

Here the apostle turns to the sovereignty of God in His dealings with Jew and Gentile, dealing with such matters as are dealt with in part under the subject of the kingdom of heaven in the Gospel according to Matthew, which is the most dispensational of all four Gospels. Therein we see the distinct change in His dealings with men on earth, as He turns from Israel to His purpose amongst the Gentiles, both in connection with the Church which is His (Christ's) Body (Matt.16:16-18<sup>4</sup>), and in His disciples making disciples of all nations (Matt.28:18-20<sup>5</sup>). This last scripture should be contrasted with Matt.10:5-7<sup>6</sup>: Paul speaks the truth in Christ, in the new relationship (2 Cor.5:17<sup>7</sup>) of men to Him who is Himself the Truth (Jn 14:6<sup>8</sup>), and the faithful and true Witness (Rev.3:14<sup>9</sup>), his conscience bearing witness in the Holy Spirit, that is, his conscience informed and uncondemned concerning the inward facts of which he speaks.

His trouble is his brethren, the Israel people, about whom he has great grief and unceasing sorrow of heart. His words may be best rendered

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.3>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.16.16-18>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.28.18-20>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.10.5-7>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.5.17>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.6>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.3.14>

– “I was wishing that I myself were an anathema from Christ for my brethren’s sake.” This does not refer to any wish he had prior to his conversion during his days as a rabid, persecuting Pharisee, but to what he feels now in his great grief over his brethren. He, in his selfless love of his brethren, abandoned as he was to their well-being, was wishing to be accursed from Christ, if it could have been possible that that would have meant the restoration of Israel to divine favour. We need not seek to lessen the awfulness of what he speaks about when he uses the words “accursed from Christ.” Moses and Paul are the only men who spoke somewhat similarly as they thought of the fearsomeness of the sin of Israel (Ex.32:31<sup>10</sup>,32<sup>11</sup>; Rom.9:3<sup>12</sup>). Whence came such love? In the one case from Jehovah, the everlasting Lover of Israel, and in the other from Christ who died for that people. Paul has spiritual kinship with another race (1 Pet.2:9<sup>13</sup>), but according to the flesh the Jewish race were his brethren, his kinsmen.

### **Rom.9:4<sup>14</sup>,5<sup>15</sup>**

Here is a list of distinctions with which no race or nation after the flesh could vie. In His sovereignty and electing grace God had chosen the seed of Abraham His friend (Isa.41:8<sup>16</sup>); Deut.4:37<sup>17</sup>; Deut.10:15<sup>18</sup>), and exalted them in His favour above all the great nations, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon. They were Israelites, the sons of a man who received the unique title of “a prince of God.” Israel was God’s son, His firstborn

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10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.32.31>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ex%2032.32>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.3>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.9>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.4>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.5>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.41.8>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.4.37>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.10.15>

(Ex.4:22<sup>19</sup>); his was the adoption. His too was the glory, the Shechinah Glory of the divine Presence in the House of God. The covenants were theirs also, the Abrahamic covenants, the Sinaitic, the Levitical, the Davidic, especially that which pertained to the promised Messiah, and if there be any others, the covenants were theirs.

Theirs too was the giving of the law, and with this was associated the service of God. No other nation could serve God as Israel could, but there was ever the opportunity of strangers joining themselves to the LORD and being incorporated in the nation of Israel. Israel was a kingdom of priests, constituted such on the grounds of confessed obedience to the LORD. The promises were theirs also, promises of present good through obedience, and of future glory through the Messiah. “Whose are the fathers;” “The glory of children are their fathers” (Prov.17:6<sup>20</sup>). What nation could look back to men of such nobility of character as those from whom the Israel people sprang? None! “Of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh.” This is last but not least of the honours associated with Israel. By that race the Saviour entered the world, born of a woman, born under the law. But besides being of Israel according to the flesh, “He is over all, God blessed for ever.” God and Man are one Christ. The text of the AV/KJV and the RV give, I judge, the true translation and apply “who is over all, God blessed for ever” to Christ, and not to God, as an ascription of praise.

### **Rom.9:6<sup>21</sup>**

Israel means, “a prince of God,” the name first given to a man who had dealings with God, but this was not true of all who sprang from him. The true Israelites were only a part of all those who descended from Jacob. The true Israel were spiritual men and women.

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19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.4.22>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.17.6>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.6>

**Rom.9:7<sup>22</sup>,8<sup>23</sup>,9<sup>24</sup>**

Abraham had many descendants both by Ishmael, the son of the Egyptian bondwoman, and by Keturah's sons, but the children of the flesh are not children of God, for the word of promise was concerning Sarah's son – "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." So that we see that the word of God has not come to nought in Israel, despite the fact that Israel nationally has been set aside for the present, for from the very beginning God chose but a part of Abraham's descendants. Why this was so is bound up in the inscrutable wisdom of God, who works His sovereign counsels according to His own perfect will.

**Rom.9:10<sup>25</sup>,11<sup>26</sup>,12<sup>27</sup>,13<sup>28</sup>**

Here we have something further concerning the truth of election. In connection with Abraham, God chose but a part of his seed. In Isaac's twin sons we learn that works have nothing to do with election any more than they have to do with salvation. Election is not of works, but of Him that calleth. We must be careful in this matter of election that we do not fall into the error of those "who by making our faith as foreseen by God the cause of our election, affirm it to be out of works." Election is not the result of either faith or works foreknown by God. Election rests on the sovereign will of Him who calls. Thus it was that before Rebecca's sons were born and had done neither good nor bad, it was said to her, "The elder shall serve the younger," and what applied to her sons applied to the nations that sprang from them. Though

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22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.7>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.8>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.9>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.10>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.11>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.12>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.13>

the words spoken to Rebecca are in Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament, what was said to her was because of a fact not stated until Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated” (Mal.1:2<sup>29</sup>,3<sup>30</sup>).

God’s election rests on God’s love. “Because He loved thy fathers, therefore He chose their seed after them” (Deut.4:37<sup>31</sup>). God’s hatred of Esau need not be viewed as bitter animosity, but simply the rejection of Esau, and, in contrast, the election of Jacob. Esau and his descendants brought God’s displeasure upon themselves later because of their ways, and for this they will bear their own punishment. That need not have been had they bowed to the will of God in His sovereign choice of Jacob.

### **Rom.9:14<sup>32</sup>,15<sup>33</sup>**

Is there, can there be, injustice with God? It is impossible, indeed it is unthinkable. Can God who is Love act toward His creatures otherwise than in love, except they rebel against Him, bringing upon themselves just judgement? He who so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son has the good and the well-being of the world at heart. An unjust God would be a God who would corrupt and destroy Himself. Such is not the God of heaven, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In infinite pity He has mercy and compassion on whom He will. Moses bore witness to His integrity when he said, “The Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are judgement: A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, Just and right is He” (Deut.32:4<sup>34</sup>) Few men, if any, have

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29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mal.1.2>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mal%201.3>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.4.37>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.14>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.15>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.32.4>

been on such intimate terms with God, and his personal testimony is of the greatest importance. God cannot do wrong. It is impossible! Here we must rest in this matter of election.

**Rom.9:16**<sup>35</sup>

Here no doubt we have the scenes of Gen.27<sup>36</sup> envisaged. The aged and blind Isaac sent Esau to bring him venison such as his soul loved, and in turn he promised to bestow the firstborn's blessing upon him before he died. Esau in the hunt pursued the deer to bring his father the venison, but before he returned, Jacob, at his mother's instigation, had obtained the blessing of the firstborn from his father. It was not of him that willed (Isaac), nor of him that ran (Esau), but of God that showed mercy (to Jacob). He needed mercy for the lies he told, when he said, "I am Esau thy firstborn," and when Isaac questioned him, "Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am" (Gen.27:19<sup>37</sup>,24<sup>38</sup>). Many seem to begrudge Jacob God's mercy whilst they accept mercy in a full cup themselves. Often have I wondered how the transactions of Gen.27<sup>39</sup> could have been otherwise. Isaac was in the wrong, so also was Rebecca in her plan to prevent her husband from making a tragic mistake. Esau was in the wrong in seeking the firstborn's blessing after he had sold his birthright, and Jacob was in the wrong in that he followed the course of deception and lying at his mother's suggestion. But over all the wrongs shine the merciful ways of God in electing grace acting according to His own perfect will.

**Rom.9:17**<sup>40</sup>,**18**<sup>41</sup>

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35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.16>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.27>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.27.19>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%2027.24>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.27>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.17>

We have here Paul, as it were, giving personality to scripture, as he does in Gal.3:8<sup>42</sup>, in the words, “The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith.” In Pharaoh we see one of those proud, rebellious characters, who are prepared to fight even against God Himself. He said, “Who is the LORD, that I should hearken unto His voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, and moreover I will not let Israel go” (Ex.5:2<sup>43</sup>). As early as Ex.4:21<sup>44</sup>, God said, “I will harden his heart, and he will not let the people go.” This fearful hardening of heart came true (Ex.10:20<sup>45</sup>,27<sup>46</sup>; Ex.11:10<sup>47</sup>, etc.), but there seems no doubt that this king whom God raised up had a strong resisting heart. It says, “Pharaoh’s heart was hardened (strong),” and, “Pharaoh’s heart is stubborn (heavy)” (Ex.7:13<sup>48</sup>,14<sup>49</sup>), and he made his heart yet more heavy or stubborn (Ex.8:32<sup>50</sup>; Ex.9:34<sup>51</sup>, etc.). There seems to be an interlocking in these chapters in Exodus of Pharaoh hardening his heart and the LORD hardening it. The purpose of God in raising Pharaoh was that the name and power of Jehovah should be spread abroad, and what happened to Pharaoh had a voice for other proud men and nations. See 1 Sam.6:6<sup>52</sup>, where the Philistines remembered those events long years after they happened in Egypt.

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41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.18>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.3.8>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.5.2>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.4.21>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.10.20>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ex%2010.27>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.11.10>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.7.13>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ex%207.14>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.8.32>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.9.34>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam.6.6>

Job said, “He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against Him, and prospered?” (Job 9:4<sup>53</sup>). “For God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against Him? For He giveth not account of any of His matters” (Job 33:12<sup>54</sup>-13<sup>55</sup>). God has not explained to us why He has mercy on some, and why He hardens others; such matters rest in His sovereign will, which is impeccably just, and even in His severity He has good as the ultimate goal.

**Rom.9:19<sup>56</sup>,20<sup>57</sup>,21<sup>58</sup>**

Pharaoh in the Old Testament and Judas in the New were evidently men who loved the course that they pursued; God did not make them wicked, but being the men they made themselves, they were suited for the work they did. Balaam loved the hire of wrong-doing. God cannot be charged with wrong-doing, as though men were merely His tools in the doing of evil. If this were the case, then the question might properly be asked, “Why doth He still find fault?” Why indeed? Is it not ours to question supreme Wisdom, and say, “Why didst Thou make me thus?” If the Divine Potter from the common clay of humanity has made a man a vessel to dishonour, to follow a lowly course and vocation, let such a man fill it to the glory of God, and not drink the poisonous draught from ambition’s well, and seek to mount to wealth and fame on the rungs of the ladder of wickedness, deceit, self-seeking, and lose his soul in consequence.

Was not this the deception of Eve, who thought to mount higher by disobeying God? God makes men as He will. “The rich and the poor

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53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%209.4>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2033.12>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2033.13>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.19>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.20>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.21>

meet together; the LORD is the Maker of them all” (Prov.22:2<sup>59</sup>). Job said, “If I did despise the cause of my manservant ... Did not He that made me in the womb make him? And did not One fashion us in the womb?” (Job 31:13<sup>60</sup>,15<sup>61</sup>). God never made man to do wickedly that He might then destroy him. That would be a reproach against man’s Maker, who is Love. We must, I think, be careful to distinguish between a vessel made unto dishonour, and vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction. God does not make a vessel on purpose to destroy it. This would make the Creator more foolish than His creature man, who does not make vessels simply to destroy them, which would be wanton waste of time, work and material.

**Rom.9:22<sup>62</sup>,23<sup>63</sup>,24<sup>64</sup>**

God, because He says of Himself that He is slow to anger and plenteous in mercy (Ex.34:6<sup>65</sup>), has often endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath that were fitted unto destruction. This is seen in the two specimen cases already cited – Pharaoh and Judas Iscariot, but we can see other like cases in the Scriptures: Jeroboam and Ahab, Annas and Caiaphas. Not the least of those with whom God endured in long-suffering were the people of Israel, with whom both prophets and apostles and the Lord Himself pleaded, and warned them of coming judgement. At last it fell, and they were slain in their tens of thousands, the temple and Jerusalem were destroyed, and a remnant was carried captive amongst the nations. Divine rule in the Kingdom of heaven is seen in entreaty and also in the judgement which befell them, as outlined in

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59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.22.2>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2031.13>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2031.15>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.22>

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.23>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.24>

65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.34.6>

Matt.22:1-7<sup>66</sup>: God showed His wrath after much long-suffering, and He also made known the riches of His glory, glory which is to be seen in His mercy and grace (Ex.33:18<sup>67</sup>,19<sup>68</sup>), upon vessels of mercy. These were such as had believed from among the Jews and Gentiles, who had been called through the gospel of His grace, whom Paul describes as being foreordained, called, justified and glorified (Rom.8:30<sup>69</sup>).

**Rom.9:25<sup>70</sup>,26<sup>71</sup>**

Here Paul uses scriptures from Hos.2:23<sup>72</sup> and Hos.1:10<sup>73</sup> (which describe the restoration of the ten tribes which revolted against Rehoboam, and whom Jeroboam led into idolatry in the worship of the golden calves), and applies them to what was happening in his day, in the saving grace which believing Jews and Gentiles had known. He does the same in Rom.15:9-12<sup>74</sup>, making quotations from 2 Sam.22:50<sup>75</sup>, Deut.32:43<sup>76</sup> and Isa.11:10<sup>77</sup>, scriptures which apply to the Millennium, and applies them to the time then present, when Jew and Gentile praised God together in the same Fellowship. The same principle is also seen in Peter's application of the Joel prophecy (Joel 2:28-32<sup>78</sup>) to the

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66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.22.1-7>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.33.18>

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ex%2033.19>

69. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.30>

70. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.25>

71. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.26>

72. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Hos.2.23>

73. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Hos.1.10>

74. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.9-%2012>

75. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Sam.22.50>

76. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.32.43>

77. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.11.10>

78. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Joel%202.28-32>

outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). There will be a further outpouring of the Spirit before the day of the Lord.

**Rom.9:27<sup>79</sup>,28<sup>80</sup>,29<sup>81</sup>**

When a people depart from God and His word they never all return. For the greater part of Israel's history in the Old Testament only a remnant was found associated with the house of God. From the time of the Exodus until the days of Rehoboam was just over 500 years, and from Rehoboam to Christ almost 1,000 years. Then, when Judah and Benjamin were carried to Babylon, only a remnant came back to Jerusalem to build the temple and the city. There was but a remnant of the Jews saved in Paul's day – "a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom.11:5<sup>82</sup>). Our own day is a day of remnant testimony. And when Israel is restored at the coming of the Son of Man only a remnant will be saved then also (Zech.13:7-9<sup>83</sup>). The Lord will swiftly fulfil His word in righteousness. It is nevertheless a blessed fact that Israel was not to be at any time as Sodom and Gomorrah, which were left without any that escaped. Lot and his family were dragged out of Sodom, for they did not belong to that wicked city. Those who appreciate a day of remnant testimony find much comfort in such thoughts concerning a small remnant.

**Rom.9:30<sup>84</sup>,31<sup>85</sup>,32<sup>86</sup>**

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79. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.27>

80. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.28>

81. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.29>

82. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.5>

83. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.13.7-9>

84. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.30>

85. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.31>

86. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%209.32>

The Gentiles which did not pursue righteousness (they had no standard of right as the Jews had in the law), attained unto righteousness, that is the righteousness which is out of faith. But in contrast, Israel, pursuing their law of righteousness, did not attain to it, for it was impossible for the natural man to fulfil the law's requirements, "for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Rom.3:20<sup>87</sup>). They sought righteousness by works, not by faith. The result was that they stumbled at Christ, the Stone of stumbling and Rock of offence. Instead of resting on this Stone, they stumbled against or collided with Him. This collision was fatal to them. The gospel message was, "Believe and live," and this they would not accept.

**Rom.9:33**<sup>88</sup>

Here we have the words of Isa.8:14<sup>89</sup> joined to Isa.28:16<sup>90</sup>: The Stone of stumbling is substituted for the Corner Stone, elect, precious, blessed Stone of rest for all tempest-tossed souls, and also for a people in their struggles to reach Zion; but sad indeed it is for those who stumble at Christ, for if they are broken upon Him there is none to restore them, for He alone is the great Physician. His words to Jn the Baptist's disciples are apposite: "Blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in Me" (Matt.11:6<sup>91</sup>).

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87. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.20>

88. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.33>

89. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.8.14>

90. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.28.16>

91. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.11.6>

# COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

## CHAPTER TEN

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### **R**om.10:1<sup>1,2</sup>

Paul here lays bare the longing of his heart for his brethren's sake, as in chapter 9:3, where he says that he could wish that he were accursed from Christ for their sake. They were a burden on his heart as he beheld their misguided and hopeless zeal which could never bring them rest or salvation. Their zeal was misdirected because they rejected the Messiah, who alone could give to them through faith in Himself what they sought – righteousness and peace. Paul could but supplicate on their behalf that they might be saved, for the problem of the hardening of Israel was too profound even for his grasp of divine mysteries. Once he himself was in a plight similar to that in which they now are. If zeal could be accounted for righteousness (and some people vainly think so) then Paul and Israel would have attained to it; but righteousness is not to be had that way.

### **Rom.10:3<sup>3,4</sup>**

Israel's was bigoted zeal. Their own righteousness came into collision with the righteousness of God. Jehovah Tsidkenu (Heb.), the LORD is our righteousness, was unknown to them, and they would not submit to the plain words of Holy Scripture. The lament of the publican, "God, be merciful to me a (the) sinner," never escaped their lips, but at all costs they would maintain the attitude of the Pharisee; "I thank

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2010.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.3>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2010.4>

Thee, that I am not as the rest of men ... or even as this publican” (Lk.18:9-14<sup>5</sup>). They rejected the righteousness of God offered to them in Christ, and sought to establish their own righteousness, even though as law-breakers they were under the curse of the law (Gal.3:10<sup>6</sup>). The Scriptures shut up all under sin (Gal.3:22<sup>7</sup>). The law’s end, issue or goal, the one door of hope for Israel and all men, was Christ, in whom all believers are justified.

### **Rom.10:5<sup>8</sup>**

Moses said to Israel that the law “is your life” (Deut.32:47<sup>9</sup>). It was necessary as a moral code to regulate their lives and conduct towards God and men. But the law was fatal to them when it was applied as a means of their acceptance by God in things eternal. God could never accept a man, a sinner, on the ground of his own deeds. The law of the Burnt Offering should have taught Israel this; that if they were to be accepted by God then they were accepted by God on the ground of the Burnt Offering that was accepted for them (see Lev.1<sup>10</sup>). Only by death and blood-shedding can God accept man. Such is the voice of the gospel now. The gospel of God’s free grace teaches saved sinners how to live to please God after they have been forgiven and accepted in Christ (see 1 Tim.1:9-11<sup>11</sup> Tit.2:11-14<sup>12</sup>). Such was the function of the moral law, to teach forgiven and accepted men through sacrifice how to live afterwards. Mercy and truth were ever united in God’s dealings with men, mercy through sacrifice, and truth to guide men’s erring footsteps.

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5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.18.9-14>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.3.10>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.3.22>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.5>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.32.47>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lev.1>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.1.9-11>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.2.11-14>

**Rom.10:6<sup>13</sup>,7<sup>14</sup>,8<sup>15</sup>**

Of old, the people of Israel who stood beyond Jordan and heard Moses repeating the law, which had been given at Sinai to their fathers who had perished in the wilderness, were told that the law was in their mouth and heart, and that there was no need for any one to ascend to heaven or go over the sea to bring it nigh to them (Deut.30:11-14<sup>16</sup>). They had been under the instruction of the law during their wilderness journey of forty years, and no doubt many of them had heard God speaking from the top of mount Sinai. So was it with the Jewish people whom Paul had in view when he wrote of the word of faith being in their mouth and heart. They knew the scriptures which were replete with promises and prophecies concerning the Messiah, and all that was necessary was faith in these living Oracles, and these living words would quicken their souls into life. "Hear, and your soul shall live" was the message of Isaiah (Isa.55:3<sup>17</sup>).

The word of faith presents no humanly impossible tasks, such as to ascend to heaven to bring Christ down and to bring about the incarnation, or to descend into the abyss to bring up Christ in resurrection; simple faith in the word of the message of life is all that God requires and all that He allows. The sinner needs neither to feel, nor see, nor do, anything in order to be justified by faith. In the gospel the weakest, most hopeless and sinful of God's creatures can find peace and joy in believing. Greatly privileged are those who have the word of faith in their mouth and heart, but happier are those who have received it by faith. Great privilege brings great responsibility!

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13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.6>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2010.7>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2010.8>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.30.11-14>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.55.3>

**Rom.10:9<sup>18</sup>,10<sup>19</sup>**

Paul continues the thought of the word being in the mouth and heart. Confession is a matter of the mouth and belief is with the heart. There is no mention of confession in Peter's message to Cornelius (Acts 10:43<sup>20</sup>), or in Paul's words to the Philippian jailor (Acts 16:31<sup>21</sup>); the message in each case was one of believing in the Lord Jesus; both were Gentiles. But here Paul has Jews in view when he speaks of confession, for to confess the hated name of Jesus as Lord Jesus and so to acknowledge Him as God, even God the Son, none but a true Jewish believer would do. No such bitter antagonism existed in the hearts of Gentiles to Jesus of Nazareth. What they needed was to know who Jesus is and what He had done for them. Less than faith in Him who is the Lord Jesus, whose Deity as the Son of God is established in His being raised from the dead, is not saving faith.

**Rom.10:11<sup>22</sup>,12<sup>23</sup>,13<sup>24</sup>**

The words of Isa.28:16<sup>25</sup> quoted here say, "He that believeth shall not make haste". Haste means to hurry. How great was the hurry of the five foolish virgins in that parable of the kingdom of heaven in Matt.25:1-13<sup>26</sup>! Even in their hurrying they were too late and had to bear the shame of a shut door. The believer who rests on Christ the precious Stone of sure foundation, who is even now laid in the heavenly

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18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.9>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2010.10>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2010.43>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2016.31>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.11>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2010.12>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2010.13>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.28.16>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.25.1-13>

mount Zion, has no need to hurry or worry, for his name is written in heaven. Here Paul turns from the consideration of the Jew to the universal character of the gospel. God's provision is for Jew and Gentile alike, "for the same Lord ... is rich unto all that call upon Him." This is similar to Peter's words in connection with the call of the Gentile Cornelius – "Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)" (Acts 10:36<sup>27</sup>).

He is universal Lord; hence He is a universal Saviour. In His sight there is no distinction between men, for "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." These words are found in Joel 2:32<sup>28</sup>, and there they have special reference to the time of the great tribulation which precedes the great and terrible day of the LORD. Jehovah will work deliverance for His suffering and believing people when He returns to mount Zion, not only of Israel but of all nations, for it is whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be saved. Here the Spirit through Paul applies the words of Joel to that salvation of verses 9,10, of which Paul is writing. Note that Jehovah of Joel 2:32<sup>29</sup> is the Lord Jesus of Rom.10:13<sup>30</sup>; this is just one of the proofs of the Lord's Deity which lie like gems upon the sacred page.

### **Rom.10:14<sup>31</sup>,15<sup>32</sup>**

Here Paul quotes from Isaiah words which have reference to the time of the Lord's return to Zion, and to the beauty of the feet of Him that publishes peace and salvation, and who says to Zion, "Thy God reigneth" (Isa.52:7-10<sup>33</sup>). But also beautiful are the feet of those who

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27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2010.36>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Joel%202.32>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Joel%202.32>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.13>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.14>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2010.15>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.52.7-10>

are sent by the Lord to preach the gospel today. He was Himself sent from God, and how beautiful were His feet as He went about preaching and doing good! He has authority in heaven and earth, and He said, “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations.” Some put a full stop after “nations,” but there is only a comma, for the sentence carries on and says, “baptizing them ... teaching them to observe all things” that the Lord commanded (Matt.28:19<sup>34</sup>,20<sup>35</sup>). The Lord’s commission is covered by the complete sentence in these two verses. Preachers must be sent if men are to hear and believe the gospel.

**Rom.10:16<sup>36</sup>,17<sup>37</sup>**

“They did not all hearken.” This has ever been so – “some believed ... and some disbelieved” (Acts 28:24<sup>38</sup>). The Lord in the Parable of the Sower spoke of the “wayside” hearers, and of the “good ground” hearers. If there is to be the hearing of the saying or report of Christ there must first be the preaching, and faith cometh by hearing.

**Rom.10:18<sup>39</sup>**

In contrast to the law in the past, which was commanded in Horeb for all Israel (Mal.4:4<sup>40</sup>), and for such strangers as joined themselves to the Lord and His people, for there was one law for the home-born and for the stranger that sojourned amongst God’s people, the gospel is a universal message to all men without distinction. Paul here quotes from Ps.19:4<sup>41</sup> as to the universal message of the heavenly bodies which an-

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34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.28.19>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2028.20>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.16>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2010.17>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2028.24>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.18>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mal.4.4>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.19.4>

nounce to men on earth the glory and greatness of God the Creator, so that they might fear Him. See Col.1:6<sup>42</sup>,23<sup>43</sup> and Acts 1:8<sup>44</sup> as to the universal character of the gospel.

**Rom.10:19**<sup>45</sup>

This quotation from Deut.32:21<sup>46</sup> has in view the departure of Israel from God, and of God bringing into His favour Gentiles who believed, who were no nation, and previous to believing were a foolish people void of understanding. These Gentiles with believing Jews formed the people referred to in Rom.9:24-26<sup>47</sup> who were beloved of God and sons of the living God. The object of provoking the Jewish people was, as Paul says in Rom.11:14<sup>48</sup>, that some might be saved. Alas, oftentimes it wrought the other way, for in their mad jealousy they sorely persecuted Paul. See Acts 13:44-46<sup>49</sup>; Acts 14:1<sup>50</sup>,2<sup>51</sup>,19<sup>52</sup>,20<sup>53</sup>.

**Rom.10:20**<sup>54</sup>,**21**<sup>55</sup>

Here we have the striking contrast between Gentile and Jew; the Gentile finds a Saviour that he never sought after. Many of us are in this

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42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.6>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col%201.23>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.8>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.19>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.32.21>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.24-26>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.14>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2013.44-46>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2014.1>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2014.2>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2014.19>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2014.20>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.20>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2010.21>

category of finding a Saviour that we never sought. But how thankful we are now since grace has opened our eyes! We can sing: “Thy love it was that sought me (Thyself unsought by me).” But of Israel it remains true unto this day, that God spreads out His hands to a disobedient and gainsaying or contradicting people, who seek material rather than spiritual prosperity, and who seek satisfaction in a religion of mere externals. But it shall not be always so, for “The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid” (Zeph.3:13<sup>56</sup>).

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56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zeph.3.13>

# COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

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### **R**om.11:1<sup>1</sup>

Had God cast off His people, then Paul himself would have been thrust away also, for he was an Israelite, a descendant of him who was made a prince of God, and also of him who is called the friend of God. He was also of the tribe of Benjamin, the son of the right hand. Complete national rejection of Israel could not be true, for there was an elect remnant of which Paul was one.

### **Rom.11:2<sup>2</sup>,3<sup>3</sup>**

His people whom He foreknew must, I judge, be of such as are alluded to in Rom.8:29<sup>4</sup>, whom He foreknew and foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, who are illustrated by those who did not bow the knee to Baal in Elijah's time. How contrary was Paul's attitude to Israel, as expressed in Rom.9:1-3<sup>5</sup>; Rom.10:1<sup>6</sup>, to that of Elijah! Paul prayed for their salvation, but Elijah pleaded against them. What Elijah said was true indeed, but he was pleading with One who loved Israel with an everlasting love, who were also "beloved for the fathers' sake."

### **Rom.11:4<sup>7</sup>,5<sup>8</sup>,6<sup>9</sup>**

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.3>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.29>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.1-3>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.1>

Elijah's words were, "I am left alone, and they seek my life," but in God's electing mercy He had reserved to Himself seven thousand men who had not worshipped Baal. It will be a surprise to many in the coming day when the saints are revealed, "when He (the Lord) shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed" (2 Thess.1:10<sup>10</sup>). Elijah who was out of touch with the Lord's gracious purposes in backsliding Israel was quickly relieved of his office, and Elisha was called to take his place. Yet such was the high regard God had for His prophet that he was taken to heaven in a whirlwind, and he will come again to earth as described in Mal.4:5<sup>11</sup> and Rev.11:3-13<sup>12</sup>: As in Elijah's time, even so in Paul's day, there was a remnant elected according to grace.

Here again is that inscrutable mystery of divine election, that there is no human merit whatever in God's electing grace. Then, we may ask, Why election at all? Election does not mean that God in His foreknowledge knew beforehand who would believe the gospel and therefore He chose such: this would mean that faith was a meritorious act by which certain persons qualified to be of God's elect. Election rests solely on God's sovereign choice, which in no way impugns the justice of God or cancels out His love for all mankind. We on earth who know in part must not challenge One of infinite knowledge as to His acts. He does according to His own will in heaven and on earth.

**Rom. 11:7<sup>13</sup>, 8<sup>14</sup>**

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7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.4>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.5>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.6>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Thess.1.10>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mal.4.5>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.11.3-13>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.7>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.8>

What did Israel seek for but obtained not? Evidently, from Rom.9:30-33<sup>15</sup> and Rom.10:3<sup>16</sup>,4<sup>17</sup>, it was righteousness, which could never be obtained by works. This righteousness the elect remnant obtained by faith. The rest were hardened in their unbelief against Christ and the gospel; by the law of the consequences of the sin of unbelief they were hardened (Heb.3:13<sup>18</sup>). God did not harden them, save in the fact that sin reaped its own penalty. This was according to the certain law of results of long-continued backsliding from God, as will be seen in the passage in Isa.29:9-14<sup>19</sup> from which Paul quotes, that the punishment for such a course was spiritual stupor, blind eyes and deaf ears, which Paul said continued unto this day. Who of God's elect will not bow and adore God for His electing grace, as well as His saving grace? for but for grace our case would have been far otherwise than it is.

### **Rom.11:9<sup>20</sup>,10<sup>21</sup>**

This is a quotation from Ps.69<sup>22</sup>, and from such quotations as those of verses 9, and 21, we know it to be a psalm of the sufferings of the Christ, to whom they gave the vinegar and the gall, and who prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." But those against whom Messiah prayed were not ignorant in acting towards the Lord, for they knew that they were acting contrary to their own law when they judged and condemned Him in the dark. They also sought false witnesses against Him. The betrayal by Jud.as is referred to in verse 25, as is also the betrayal and murder of the Lord by Israel's leaders (Acts

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15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.30-33>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.10.3>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2010.4>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.3.13>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.29.9-14>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.9>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.10>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.69>

7:52<sup>23</sup>). Whoever should dine in fellowship with them would find their table but a snare and a trap; that table was a stumbling block, even as Christ was a stumbling block to them. In their blindness they would go on to the end under their sins, and the burden of law-keeping, as slaves at their weary, unending task, seeking peace and finding none. We can but shudder at the doom of such sinners who went on stubbornly in their self-chosen path. Man is ever morally accountable for his deeds to God. Judas and Pilate, Annas and Caiaphas, will for ever bear the responsibility of their acts in the train of events that led on to the crucifixion, and so will all men be responsible for what they have done.

### **Rom.11:11**<sup>24</sup>

Here we have the national stumbling of Israel at the Lord, the Stone of stumbling, for Peter said, “They stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed” (1 Pet.2:8<sup>25</sup>). With Israel there can be no national stumbling in such a sense that they will never be restored to divine favour. By their trespass salvation is come to the Gentiles; the object of this being to provoke Israel to jealousy so that they might be stirred up to repentance and to regain nationally the position they had lost in the favour of God.

### **Rom.11:12**<sup>26</sup>

Their fall is their trespass or offence, and by that the unsearchable riches of Christ are open to the Gentiles and to the world (Eph.3:8<sup>27</sup>). But if the Gentiles have gained much through Israel’s loss, their fault or failure, and consequent impoverishment as a scattered people, how much more shall be their fulness, their plenitude? What blessings shall then

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23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%207.52>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.11>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.8>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.12>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.8>

be for the world and the Gentile nations when Israel shall find their true place as a blessing in the midst of the earth! (Isa.19:24<sup>28</sup>). Who can measure the blessing that will flow to the world with the Lord dwelling in the midst of a restored Israel?

### **Rom.11:13<sup>29</sup>,14<sup>30</sup>**

The object of God stirring Israel to jealousy, in verse 11, was with a view to their national restoration, but here, in verse 14, it is Paul stirring them to jealousy as an apostle of Gentiles, as we see in Acts 22:21<sup>31</sup>,22<sup>32</sup>, when he said, “And He (the Lord) said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles. And they gave him audience unto this word; and they lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.” Though the jealousy of the Jews was bitter at the thought of the Gentiles being brought into God’s favour, Paul did anticipate that some of those that he called his flesh would be saved as the result of seeing the Gentiles richly blessed with the joy and peace of God’s salvation.

### **Rom.11:15<sup>33</sup>**

This is not the reconciling of individual believers through the death of God’s Son (Rom.5:10<sup>34</sup>), but the reconciling of the world by the casting away of Israel. A complete change has taken place in God’s dealings with the world; He is dealing directly with the world without Israel, the custodians of His law, in between (Rom.3:1<sup>35</sup>,2<sup>36</sup>). We have seen the

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.19.24>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.13>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.14>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2022.21>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2022.22>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.15>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.10>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.1>

casting away of Israel, but what will the receiving of them back be? It will mean a great spiritual quickening for Israel, as is set forth in the vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezek.37:1-14<sup>37</sup>), and a great resurgence of spiritual life in the world in general, the like of which has never been seen on earth. Life from the dead, indeed!

### **Rom.11:16**<sup>38</sup>

In the first statement regarding the first-fruit and the lump, we have a reference made to Num.15:17-21<sup>39</sup>, to the offering of the first of their dough, so that if that heave offering of the first of their dough was holy, then the rest was sanctified also. The parable is repeated in the holy root and the holy branches. Who are signified in the first-fruits of dough and the holy root? They are, I judge, the men of faith from Abraham onward, the fathers of the Israel people to whom the word of God came (Heb.1:1<sup>40</sup>). Those who followed after, right to Paul's time, who bore like character to those men of faith, were the lump and the branches. But, alas, as Paul said in Rom.9:6<sup>41</sup>, "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel."

### **Rom.11:17<sup>42</sup>,18<sup>43</sup>**

The branches were not cut off, they were broken off in judgement, and branches from the wild olive were grafted in among the natural branches to be fellow-partakers of the root and of the fatness of the olive tree. The branches which were broken off were the unbelievers of Israel, and

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36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.2>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ezek.37.1-14>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.16>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Num.15.17-21>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.1.1>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.6>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.17>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.18>

the branches that remained were such as were believers in Christ, the elect remnant of verses 5 and 7: The grafts from the wild olive were the believers of the Gentiles. The believing Jews and Gentiles drew by faith their oil from the promises of God, such as were given to the fathers (the root) of the Israel people. From such fathers the Gentiles claimed by faith spiritual descent (Gal.3:7<sup>44</sup>). The Gentiles had nothing to glory in for their place of privilege through the governmental dealings of God both with Israel and with them. The Gentiles had been greatly blessed through Israel's trespass, but said Paul, "It is not thou that bearest the root, but the root thee."

**Rom.11:19<sup>45</sup>,20<sup>46</sup>**

God's dealing in judgement with unbelieving Israel should have a salutary lesson for all Gentile believers. Unbelief was the cause of the Jews being broken off, and faith the reason for the Gentiles being grafted in. Those who have but a dead faith are in great peril that they may cease to occupy the privileged place of drawing upon the fatness of the olive tree. "Thou standest by thy faith." It should be clearly seen that neither in the Vine (Christ), nor in the Olive (Israel's privileged place in the past) is there permanency, whatever the believer's state may be. These trees in their parabolic teaching do not set forth the eternal relationship of believers in Christ to Christ. Branches from the vine can be removed if the person seen as a branch does not abide in Christ (Jn 15:6<sup>47</sup>). Alas, men gather many such branches these days. In view of the grave danger of not standing by faith, Paul says, "Be not high-minded, but fear."

**Rom.11:21<sup>48</sup>,22<sup>49</sup>**

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44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.3.7>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.19>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.20>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.6>

If God spared not the natural branches because of their unbelief, can the Gentiles expect better treatment if they cease to have a living faith? Surely not! God's goodness descends like dew upon men of faith, but His judgement falls upon the sin of unbelieving in whomsoever it may be (see Heb.3:12<sup>50</sup>, and note the context). The question is ever one of – "If thou continue in His goodness." As we look back over the centuries, and then over the lands where once the light of the gospel clearly shone, surely we can see the effects of men not standing by their faith. Over these lands the dark shadow of Mohammedanism is cast, and there the dark shadows of Roman and Greek churches (so called) are also cast; and we can clearly discern how terribly the words of the apostle have come true, "Thou also shalt be cut off." Unbelief brought its fearsome recompense. Lands that once basked in the sunshine of the gospel now sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. But what of Britain, so long blessed with the hearing of the word? The tide of faith is, alas!, on the ebb, and ebbing quickly.

**Rom.11:23<sup>51</sup>,24<sup>52</sup>**

Here Paul contemplated the time when a believing Israel will be grafted into their own olive tree. God and God alone is able to do this. He will pour out on the elect remnant of Israel in a coming day "the Spirit of grace and supplication"; and through their grief and tears "they shall look unto Me whom they have pierced: and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son" (Zech.12:10<sup>53</sup>). Wonderful, indeed, will be (so often called) "that day" of repentance and restoration. If God is able to graft wild olive branches in a good olive, contrary to na-

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48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.21>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.22>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.3.12>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.23>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.24>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.12.10>

ture (grafting is usually the other way about, grafting good scions upon a wild stock), how much more shall He graft believing Israel into their own olive tree to draw once more as of old upon the richness of the promises of God to which they have been alien so long! There is, no doubt, also contemplated here the grafting in of individual believers of Israel into their own olive tree during this dispensation of grace.

**Rom.11:25**<sup>54</sup>

“The fulness of the Gentiles” during this dispensation of grace, which ends with the Lord’s coming for the Church (Eph.3:2-8<sup>55</sup>; Eph.5:22-33<sup>56</sup>), should not be confused with “the times of the Gentiles,” which began with Nebuchadnezzar and will end with the coming of the Son of Man in judgement and for the deliverance of Israel (Lk.21:24-28<sup>57</sup>). The fulness of the Gentiles is in this dispensation of grace, but Israel’s fulness (Rom.11:12<sup>58</sup>) is in the Millennium, in the “Dispensation of the fulness of the times” (Eph.1:10<sup>59</sup>). It is in this present dispensation that the mystery of the hardening in part of Israel finds its place.

**Rom.11:26**<sup>60</sup>,**27**<sup>61</sup>

All Israel does not mean all the Jews, for, alas, that prophecy of the Lord will have a sad meaning for many: “I am come in My Father’s Name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive” (Jn 5:43<sup>62</sup>). Many shall, alas, fall a prey to the bland-

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54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.25>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.2-8>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.22-33>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.21.24-28>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.12>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.10>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.26>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.27>

ishments and deceptions of the antichrist. But all Israel, the repentant, believing and persecuted Israel, shall know deliverance by the Divine Redeemer of Isa.59:16-21<sup>63</sup>, from which portion Paul quotes. Deliverance both from their enemies and from sin will be theirs, and His covenant will be with them – of His Spirit upon them and His words in their mouth – which will continue from generation to generation. God’s word shall be in their mouth, in the mouth of their seed, and their seed’s seed from henceforth and for ever. What a Deliverer and what a deliverance! (Isa.59:20<sup>64</sup>,21<sup>65</sup>).

### **Rom.11:28<sup>66</sup>,29<sup>67</sup>**

Here we have set side by side the facts that Israel as a people are both enemies and beloved, but such opposites are easily grasped from Paul’s clear exposition. They are enemies, as touching the gospel; this fact is clearly seen in the book of the Acts. But, Paul says that they were enemies for the sake of the Gentiles, the believing Gentiles of this dispensation of grace. But God can never forget the pleasure He found in their fathers: “The LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them” (Deut.10:15<sup>68</sup>; Deut.4:37<sup>69</sup>). That election remains, though, alas, many, many of them are not in the election of Rom.11:5<sup>70</sup>,7<sup>71</sup>: God, who ever does the thing that is right, can never

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62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%205.43>

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.59.16-21>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.59.20>

65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2059.21>

66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.28>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.29>

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.10.15>

69. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.4.37>

70. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.5>

71. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.7>

change His mind about His gifts and calling, therefore the election referred to in verse 28 is irrevocable.

**Rom.11:30<sup>72</sup>,31<sup>73</sup>,32<sup>74</sup>**

Here Paul restates in other words what he said earlier in this chapter; “By their fall (trespass) salvation is come unto the Gentiles” (verse 11), so that the Gentiles obtained mercy by Israel’s disobedience. Thus also may the disobedient of Israel find mercy even as the Gentiles had; for all, Jew and Gentile, are shut up unto disobedience, that God might have mercy upon all. Though Israel is in part hardened, there is ever a way for them to come individually to Christ the Crucified and find peace and pardon in Him. If men are doomed they write their sentence with their own hand, for God’s desire is to have mercy upon all. Paul says in another place that it is His will that all men should be saved, and in proof of this He has made provision in the Man Christ Jesus for all. See 1 Tim.2:3-6<sup>75</sup>.

**Rom.11:33<sup>76</sup>,34<sup>77</sup>,35<sup>78</sup>,36<sup>79</sup>**

With this soul-inspiring doxology Paul brings to a close this Spirit-taught treatise on divine election, the most wonderful on this subject in the entire book of God. References to this subject lie here and there in the Scriptures, but here alone the case is stated in clarity, yet with a profundity that draws forth those words from the apostle’s spirit, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!”

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72. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.30>

73. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.31>

74. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.32>

75. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.2.3-6>

76. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.33>

77. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.34>

78. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.35>

79. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2011.36>

We shall ever feel as the apostle did, as we meditate on this mysterious truth of election. In doing so our feeble yet enlightened minds are seeking to plumb to the depths of the Divine Mind that designed such matters before the world began. It is well to have adoring hearts as we contemplate the infinite depths of divine wisdom, and to remember the words of Paul in an earlier chapter, "O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" The answer to the three questions – "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? Who hath been His counsellor? Who hath first given to Him?" is, NONE! "Of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things;" all things created by Him are moving unto Him inexorably, and we the redeemed are moving toward Him gladly. And now with bowed hearts before the God of election we say, "To Him be the glory for ever, Amen."

# COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

## CHAPTER TWELVE

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### **R**om.12:1<sup>1</sup>

Paul, having outlined to the Romans in the previous chapters the mercies or compassions of God, exhorts them by these very mercies, as providing a sound reason why they should give or present their bodies as one would a sacrifice at an altar. But in contrast to the slain unreasonable beasts which were offered on the altar, the offering here is living, holy and acceptable to God. There can be or ought to be no withdrawing of what has been given to God, what has been sacrificed to Him, for the offerer's own use thereafter. The living bodies of saints are acceptable to God, because they are quickened by the Holy Spirit (Rom.8:11<sup>2</sup>) in resurrection power (Eph.1:19<sup>3</sup>,20<sup>4</sup>; Phil.3:10<sup>5</sup>,11<sup>6</sup>). This offering of the living bodies of saints is their reasonable (Greek: *logiken*) divine service (Greek: *latreian*). This reasonable service is service rendered by saints whose reason or mind has been enlightened by God, and is in contrast to the service the priests of old rendered to God according to the law of a carnal (Greek: *sarkikes*, fleshly) commandment (Heb.7:16<sup>7</sup>). It is reasonable, intelligent service rendered to God on the highest plane. No real progress can be made in holy Christian living until the body is presented to God, for all the works of

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.11>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.19>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%201.20>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.3.10>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil%203.11>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.7.16>

saints are done through the body (2 Cor.5:10<sup>8</sup>); hence this exhortation comes first in the list of exhortations contained in this intensely practical chapter.

### **Rom.12:2<sup>9</sup>**

More correctly it means “do not fashion yourselves” in an outward guise which is related to the outward fashion of the age, and bears no relation to the inward life of the saint renewed by divine grace. “The fashion of this world passeth away” (1 Cor.7:31<sup>10</sup>). Note the difference between Greek: schema, fashion, and Greek: morphe, form. The believer is to transform himself, but this is only possible through his mind being renewed. This renewing process is by communion, by the reading of and meditation in the word of God, and by prayer. The eyes of an enlightened mind by seeing Christ take in His image, but the natural eyes take in the likeness of the world. We need to be like Jehovah’s servant: “Who is blind, but My servant? or deaf, as My messenger that I send?” (Isa.42:19<sup>11</sup>). He was blind and deaf to the sights and sounds around him. It is only thus that we may prove what is God’s good, acceptable and perfect will. Here is the secret revealed why so few, so very few, saints advance in the will of God. An unworldly life is vital to the proving what God’s will is. So many vainly seek the amalgamation of flesh and spirit, and of Christ and the world.

### **Rom.12:3<sup>12</sup>**

The grace which was given to Paul was that by which he was an apostle, a preacher and teacher; hence with the authority given to him through grace, he admonished each man with a view to sobriety of mind and

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8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.5.10>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.2>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.7.31>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.42.19>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.3>

not to think of himself more highly than he ought. The measure of faith which God had dealt to each was to be the measure of their estimation of themselves. Both faith and grace are given according to the measure of the gift given (Eph.4:7<sup>13</sup>).

### **Rom.12:4<sup>14</sup>,5<sup>15</sup>**

The same truth is more fully stated in 1 Cor.12:12-31<sup>16</sup>, as to the functions of the human body, which are used by the apostle to illustrate the diverse gifts given to the saints. All are one body in Christ, and severally are both members of Christ and of one another, complementary parts of one whole. This similitude describes the closest relationship in which human beings are viewed united together. It is closer than family relationship, or any association of mankind whatever. Alas, because of the working of the carnal mind, this is not seen in operation as it might and should be. But the time will come when all that is of the flesh will be swept away, and then the members of the Body and Bride of Christ shall function as God designed that they should. But Paul does not contemplate the future in what he writes; he visualizes the members performing their due functions now.

### **Rom.12:6<sup>17</sup>**

Gifts to members, that is, what members are divinely endowed with, differ; here it is the gift of prophecy. Which is the correct sense of the verse – “According to the proportion of our faith,” or “according to the analogy of the faith”? Both views are upheld by different authorities. I see no reason to change from the literal translation of the passage – “the analogy of the faith.” One who prophesies is one who conveys a mes-

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13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.7>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.4>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2012.5>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.12.12-31>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.6>

sage from God; that message must be in agreement with the words of the faith already given. It may be a new application of the truth or fresh light thereupon as fitting a peculiar set of circumstances, but it must not be at variance with the rule laid down in the former words of God.

**Rom.12:7<sup>18</sup>,8<sup>19</sup>**

Four kinds of gifts are envisaged, prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation. In Eph.4:11<sup>20</sup>, the gifts given by the ascended Christ were five, that is, the men in whom the gifts reposed, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. It is clear, I think, that the apostolic gift is not before the apostle in Rom.12<sup>21</sup>, nor yet that of the prophet. Prophecy here is the same, I judge, as in 1 Cor.14<sup>22</sup>, and has in view the delivering of a message from God; not some new thing outside the range of what has been already given, but in agreement with the faith understood and accepted by the saints. Then there may be a ministry which does not come under the heading of prophecy, nor yet is it actually teaching, that is, the taking of a portion of the Scriptures, opening it up and showing what it means, and, if need be, repeating it till it reaches the minds of the hearers and brings enlightenment to them.

There may be in ministry that use of the word which applies more to the heart than to the mind, ministering to the support and comfort of saints in the trials and troubles of the daily life. Then there is the man that is given to exhortation, the man who does himself what he exhorts others to do, a pattern man in action. Exhortation fails in effect when the character of the scribes and Pharisees is in evidence: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever

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18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.7>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2012.8>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.11>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.14>

they bid you, these do and observe; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not” (Matt.23:2<sup>3</sup>,3<sup>24</sup>).

Then there is the gift of the giver, one to whom God has given as a steward more than He has given to others. He is to give with liberality, that is, with simplicity and purity of mind. “Many will intreat the favour of the liberal man: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts” (Prov.19:6<sup>25</sup>). The ruler (one who takes the lead) is to rule with diligence. Some are born to rule and some to be ruled. There should be no slackness in divine rule, “Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks” (Prov.27:23<sup>26</sup>), but how much more important it is to “tend the flock of God”! (1 Pet.5:2<sup>27</sup>). Then there is the man who shows mercy. This is to be done with cheerfulness (Greek: *hilarotes*). This Greek word is that from which the English word “hilarity” is derived, but we should not suppose that there is any show of animal spirits as is implied in the use of the word in English. Cheerfulness is the opposite of that pseudo-piety, which treats a repentant offender as though he were a creature of a different kind.

### **Rom.12:9**<sup>28</sup>

Love should be real, sincere, unfeigned. “My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth (1 Jn 3:18<sup>29</sup>). The Greek word for “abhor” is derived from a word which means “to shudder.” The thought is that evil is to be viewed with the utmost abhorrence and detestation, but we are to cleave, or glue our-

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23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.23.2>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2023.3>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.19.6>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.27.23>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.5.2>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.9>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.18>

selves, to that which is good, and not to seek to be released from it, as when a man cleaves or is glued to his wife (Matt.19:5<sup>30</sup>).

**Rom.12:10**<sup>31</sup>

In love of the brethren (*Philadelphia*) we are to show that warm-heartedness that love of the brethren implies. Our attitude to each other is to be the opposite of mere formality. “In honour preferring one another”; that is what Paul wrote about to the Philippians when he said, “each counting other better than himself (Phil.2:3<sup>32</sup>).

**Rom.12:11**<sup>33</sup>

There is no word for business in the Greek, as in the AV/KJV. Many are diligent enough in their business who are slothful in the Lord’s things. The diligence is to be in the Lord’s things, and there are few things more detestable than to see one slothful in things eternal. The Christian is to be fervent, hot, boiling. The Lord said to the Laodiceans that they were neither boiling, nor cold, but in that insipid state of being lukewarm (Rev.3:15<sup>34</sup>,16<sup>35</sup>).

**Rom.12:12**<sup>36</sup>,**13**<sup>37</sup>

Closely allied to fervency of spirit is the thought of rejoicing in hope. The Christian pitches his tent toward the sunrising (Num.2:3<sup>38</sup>), and should be living in the joy and hope of the Lord’s coming. This joy-

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.19.5>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.10>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.2.3>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.11>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.3.15>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%203.16>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.12>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2012.13>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Num.2.3>

ousness is of great assistance in tribulation, for who can endure tribulation better than he in whom the hope of the coming of the Lord is burning brightly? “Our light affliction,” Paul says, “is for the moment” (2 Cor.4:17<sup>39</sup>). To continue steadfastly means to attend constantly to, unremittingly. It is said of those in the church in Jerusalem that they continued steadfastly in the prayers (Acts 2:42<sup>40</sup>), and prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit the disciples “continued steadfastly in prayer” (Acts 1:14<sup>41</sup>). Communicating to the needs of the saints was a prominent phase of the Fellowship at the beginning, for “they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need” (Acts 2:25<sup>42</sup>). Hospitality means to show love or kindness to strangers. “Forget not to shew love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Heb.13:2<sup>43</sup>).

### **Rom.12:14<sup>44</sup>,15<sup>45</sup>**

Who can bless their persecutors, but those in whom the Spirit of Christ is? Paul’s words are an echo of the Lord’s, “Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you” (Matt.5:44<sup>46</sup>). The Church of Rome curses those who reject her doctrines and her sins, but the followers of Christ are not to curse. It is easier to rejoice with the rejoicing ones than to weep with the weeping ones. The Lord did both; He attended the marriage in Cana, and wept with Martha and Mary over the death of their brother (Jn 2:1-11<sup>47</sup>; Jn 11:35<sup>48</sup>).

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39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.4.17>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.42>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.14>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.25>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.13.2>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.14>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2012.15>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.5.44>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%202.1-11>

**Rom.12:16**<sup>49</sup>

The thought here is: have the same feeling one toward another, the same kindly disposition. “Things” do not necessarily mean neuter, abstract things. Things here, I judge, to be persons. Condescend and go with the lowly persons: as the AV/KJV renders it, “condescend to men of low estate”. Our feelings are not to be set upon those that are high and be forgetful of the lowly. And certainly if we are to condescend to the lowly, it ill becomes us to be wise in our own conceits, that is, to have feelings that centre ourselves upon ourselves, and live in a palace of our own opinions and exalted notions as a self-conceited king.

**Rom.12:17**<sup>50</sup>,**18**<sup>51</sup>

Retaliation is not allowed to the Christian soldier; his wrestling is not against flesh and blood (Eph.6:12<sup>52</sup>). It is neither honouring to God nor to himself for the Christian to be embroiled in strife. “If it is possible” does not mean that the Christian may retaliate if his patience becomes exhausted. His part is one of peace, but his enemy may not leave him in peace. If there is no peace, it arises not from him but from his enemy.

**Rom.12:19**<sup>53</sup>

Dealing with adversaries and persecutors is the Lord’s work, and He can do it infinitely better than we could ever hope to do. Thus we are not to avenge ourselves, but to give place to God’s wrath. God knows when and how to recompense, and He will recompense. He says so.

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48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2011.35>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.16>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.17>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2012.18>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.6.12>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.19>

**Rom.12:20<sup>54</sup>,21<sup>55</sup>**

Here Paul quotes from Prov.25:21<sup>56</sup>,22<sup>57</sup>: Solomon adds, “And the LORD shall reward thee.” God has ever been kind to His enemies, for such were we, and if He had dealt with us other than in kindness (Tit.3:4-7<sup>58</sup>), where would we have been and how should we have fared? The grace which He has shown to us is now to be shown through us. We cannot drive enmity out of the hearts of men, but it may be burnt out by heaping coals of fire upon their heads. The Christian has one way of overcoming evil in others and that is by doing good to those that hate him, and praying for them that despitefully use him (Lk.6:27<sup>59</sup>,28<sup>60</sup>). We have an example of this in Paul and Silas in the prison in Philippi and their treatment of the jailor afterwards.

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54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.12.20>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2012.21>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.25.21>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%2025.22>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.4-7>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.6.27>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lk%206.28>

# COMMENTARY ON ROMANS CHAPTER THIRTEEN

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## **R**om.13:1<sup>1</sup>

After dealing in chapter 12 with Christian conduct before God, towards saints, and among men in general, Paul now comes to the attitude of saints and their responsibility to the civil authorities, called here the higher authorities. The Christian's attitude to the state is one of subjection. Subjection is not quite the equivalent of obedience. Subject the Christian must be, but should the state go beyond its divinely appointed sphere and make some statute or order which involves the Christian in disobedience to God, then the obedient saint must obey God, and at the same time seek a way of escape so that he may continue to serve God with a good conscience.

If such relief is not forthcoming, then he must maintain his loyalty to God and bear the consequences. We are truly thankful that in our times such cases are few. In Britain we live under a very benign form of government, for which we both pray and give thanks to God. The apostle says that there is no authority but of God, and authorities are ordained of God. The moral and spiritual condition of the men in authority, or whether it is an autocratic or democratic form of government, does not enter into the matter. The Christian is called upon to recognize and be subject to the government that is in control of civil matters as being of God.

## **Rom.13:2<sup>2</sup>**

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.13.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.13.2>

Daniel's attitude to the decision of Nebuchadnezzar, relative to the appointment of his daily portion of the king's meat and wine, is worthy of imitation by all who may be involved with the state in matters of conscience toward God. His decision was fixed as to what he would do, that he would not defile himself, and he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. He suggested an alternative course and he found favour with the prince of the eunuchs, and this enabled him to live with a good conscience toward God. How definite he was, yet how wise in the course he adopted, and how humble also! With him there was no resistance to authority nor withstanding God's ordinance. God had a different way of delivering Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. They refused to become idolaters at the command of Nebuchadnezzar, and were cast into the fiery furnace. The fire liberated them from the bonds that bound them, but did not singe a hair of their heads. This taught the king a lesson which he proclaimed to all lands. See Dan.1<sup>3</sup> and Dan.3<sup>4</sup>: The Christian should abstain from disobedience. Certain judgement will follow resistance.

### **Rom.13:3**<sup>5</sup>

This is the normal course of civil government, to deal with evil doers. The Christian should be a pattern subject whose good living is known to the authorities. It has been so of true Christians all down the centuries. Of old Daniel's enemies said of him, "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God" (Dan.6:5<sup>6</sup>); a very worthy commendation!

### **Rom.13:4**<sup>7,5</sup><sup>8</sup>

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3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.1>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.3>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.13.3>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.6.5>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.13.4>

Though God gave no law to Gentile peoples, yet the law of right and wrong written in their hearts, to which their conscience bears witness, finds its place on their statute books (Rom.2:14<sup>9</sup>,15<sup>10</sup>). Consequently, the administrator of such is called the minister of God for good to the Christian who is law-abiding, but if he should turn to evil ways then he has to be afraid, for the sword (the emblem of authority and justice) borne by the minister of God will fall in wrath upon the evil doer. The Christian is not to be in subjection simply because he is afraid of the wrath of the civil magistrate, but for conscience sake, for to be lawless is to be disloyal to God, who is a God of law and order.

**Rom.13:6<sup>11</sup>-7<sup>12</sup>**

Christians in the early centuries of the Christian era were looked upon as belonging to a secret society which might be dangerous to the state, but here is a paragraph, in an epistle written by the chief man amongst the churches of the Gentiles to Christians in the Imperial city as to their conduct to the state, which for its clarity as enjoining subjection to the state, observing its civil institutions, and honouring its officials, could not be improved upon. The perusal of this could not but gain the approval among all who were right-minded of Roman rulers (alas, they were not all such!) or those in authority in any state. State officials are spoken of as being ministers (Greek: *leitourgoi*, public officers, or persons of property called to do some public duty at their own expense) of God, who attended continually on the maintenance of civil order. The Christian is to render to all their dues, taxes on persons, property, etc., and customs on goods, also they are to fear and honour those in office.

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8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2013.5>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.2.14>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%202.15>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.13.6>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2013.7>

**Rom.13:8<sup>13</sup>,9<sup>14</sup>,10<sup>15</sup>**

The Christian is to be scrupulous in the matter of debt. Debts, these days, owing by both individuals and governments are reaching to fabulous figures. Debts are incurred without any real conception of how payment is to be made. The Christian is not to abandon the simple statute of the simple life, “Owe no man anything.” Debt can have a most damaging effect on Christian testimony. One thing is excepted – “save to love one another.” Here is a debt which should be continually being paid, but we shall never reach the day when we shall have paid all. The statutes of the law, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not steal, and so forth, were framed within that all-inclusive statute of man’s relationship to man, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Therefore the law in its essential meaning was Love, which finds its happiness in another’s good; it must do good. Love cannot work ill, therefore it is the fulfilment of law. James calls “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” “the royal law,” “the perfect law,” and the “law of liberty” (Jas.1:25<sup>16</sup>; Jas.2:8<sup>17</sup>,12<sup>18</sup>). What a change it would bring to this poor, weary world if this law were obeyed! We should have a world without armies, without police, without cheats, rogues, and criminals. The Christian is to be a pattern man in the world as it is.

**Rom.13:11<sup>19</sup>,12<sup>20</sup>**


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13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.13.8>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2013.9>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2013.10>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.1.25>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.2.8>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jas%202.12>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.13.11>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2013.12>

The Christian should be as a man who awakes and rises while it is yet dark to await the coming of his Master, who comes bringing salvation, a salvation which, as Peter says, is ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Pet.1:5<sup>21</sup>,9<sup>22</sup>). This salvation is nearer to us than when we first believed. Should the Lord find us sleeping when He comes, then, assuredly, we shall be ashamed before Him (1 Jn 2:28<sup>23</sup>). Almost twenty long centuries have rolled by since Paul dictated these words, "The night is far spent, and the day is at hand," a long time in the history of men, whose lives are but a few decades, but the rolling centuries are but a drop in the ocean of eternity. How near to the dawn of the day we may be now! Is not the sky in the realm of human affairs beginning to show signs of coming daybreak? I think so! Let us then cast off the works of darkness as a dismal cloak suited to those who live in the shadows and who move about like bats in the darkness, and, in contrast, put on the armour of light of a heaven-clad warrior.

**Rom.13:13<sup>24</sup>,14<sup>25</sup>**

The Christian is to walk honestly, as in the day. Thieves usually emerge, as wild beasts from their dens, at night to do their evil works. The Christian is a son of the light and of the day. His conduct is not to be the night life of the shameless and profane, in revelling, drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, of which the world is not less full now than in the apostle's time. Neither is he to be a man of strife and jealousy, jealousy which burns up the inward peace and holiness of a believer's life. He is to be as a man clad with the Lord Jesus Christ, living Christ over again in his life among men, and making not provi-

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21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.1.5>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet%201.9>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.28>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.13.13>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2013.14>

sion for “fleshly lusts”, lusts, which Peter says, “war against the soul” (1 Pet.2:11<sup>26</sup>).

# COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

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**R**om.14:1<sup>1</sup>,2<sup>2</sup>,3<sup>3</sup>,4<sup>4</sup>

I think that Greek: *asthenounta te pistei* should be rendered “weak in the faith,” and not that the man is a weak believer, “weak in faith.” The man in view here is one who has not entered fully into the dispensational change in regard to eating, that the Lord had made all meats clean (Mk.7:14-23<sup>5</sup>), and that the difference between meats had been removed, the difference that the Levitical law made. Peter was told, “What God hath cleansed, make not thou common” (Acts 10:9-16<sup>6</sup>). The weak brother was to be received to the enjoyment of fellowship, and the matter of eating was not to be made “a bone of contention,” “decisions of doubts” or reasonings. The “one man,” possibly a Gentile, has grasped by faith the teaching of the faith for this dispensation regarding eating, and can eat all things, but the “weak” man, possibly a Jew, is not clear as to the dispensational change, and having a weak conscience, apprehensive lest he should defile himself, limits his eating to herbs.

The weak brother is not to be despised, nor is the strong to be judged that he is daring in eating all things. Let not the non-eater judge the eater, for God has received him, the eater. Who art thou, the non-eater, with the weak conscience, that judgest the household servant of another? His responsibility is to his own lord and to no other. Whatever may

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.14.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2014.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2014.3>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2014.4>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark.7.14-23>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2010.9-16>

be thought of his actions in eating, that he should not be regarded as one that serves the Lord, seeing that he eats things that are deemed to be unclean by the other, yet his Lord is able to make him to stand.

**Rom.14:5<sup>7</sup>,6<sup>8</sup>**

One man judges one day to be holy, another judges every day to be holy. The man who keeps the seven-day festival of unleavened bread, in its spiritual significance, regards every day to be a holy day (1 Cor.5:8<sup>9</sup>). There is no command in this New Covenant dispensation which demands the observance of a day, as the Sabbath was observed in the past. On this matter of the observance of a day each man is to be assured in his own mind. But if a day is esteemed above another, then that day is to be regarded as unto the Lord. Equally so is this to be the case in the matter of eating. He that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, and gives God thanks, and he that eateth not the things which he deems to be unclean, but only herbs, also eateth unto the Lord, and gives God thanks. Thus Paul settled the vexed matter of days and eating at the beginning of this dispensation when Jewish believers were emerging from the shadows of the law into the clear light of the teaching of Christ, of Him who is the Substance of the shadows of the past.

**Rom.14:7<sup>10</sup>,8<sup>11</sup>**

The central fact in life is, “We are the Lord’s.” We are His for He made us, but this is not the sense in which we are His here; we are His by right of purchase. He has bought us with His blood (1 Cor.6:19<sup>12</sup>,20<sup>13</sup>;

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7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.14.5>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2014.6>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.5.8>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.14.7>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2014.8>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.6.19>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%206.20>

1 Cor.7:23<sup>14</sup>; Rev.5:9<sup>15</sup>). Hence it is that not one of us lives or dies to himself. If we live, we live unto Him, and if we die, we die unto Him, for to Him we truly and eternally belong. We are His purchased bond-servants, and whatever may have been the religious upbringing and training and in consequence the conscientious scruples of each, He, the Lord of us all, has designed a way whereby strong and weak may dwell together in harmony, neither infringing the liberty of the other.

**Rom.14:9**<sup>16</sup>

We know that the Lord Jesus is Lord as a Divine Being, even as the Father is Lord, and the Spirit is Lord. But here the Lordship of Christ rests upon the fact that He died and lived again. He said in the mountain in Galilee, "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth" (Matt.28:18<sup>17</sup>). Peter said, "God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (Acts 2:36<sup>18</sup>); and the Lord said to John in Patmos, "Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living One; and I was (became RV margin) dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades" (Rev.1:17<sup>19</sup>,18<sup>20</sup>). Living and dead are under His authority, but in this verse it is the redeemed living and dead that are in view.

**Rom.14:10**<sup>21</sup>,**11**<sup>22</sup>,**12**<sup>23</sup>

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14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.7.23>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.5.9>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.14.9>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.28.18>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.36>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.1.17>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%201.18>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.14.10>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2014.11>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2014.12>

Paul here repeats in the form of a question what he said in verse 1 about despising and judging one another in the matter of eating. Why should they judge each other, for they must stand before God's judgement-seat? Paul wrote to the Corinthians that it was a small matter with him that he should be judged by man's judgement or man's day (RV margin), for in the day of Christ, the day of His coming again, the Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the heart (1 Cor.4:1-5<sup>24</sup>). The judgement-seat of God is the judgement-seat (Bema, tribunal, not throne) of Christ (2 Cor.5:10<sup>25</sup>). Before that we must stand, and there bow the knee and make confession, and give account of ourselves, each of us. Here in verse 11 we have another of those witnesses to the Deity of the Lord, for "Lord" here is God and Jehovah of Isa.45:21-23<sup>26</sup>: If this over-powering fact had laid hold on the Roman saints (and on us) there would have been less despising and judging of each other.

### **Rom.14:13**<sup>27</sup>

This is a prime consideration in our way of life, that we do not stumble each other in what we do. Paul struck the correct note when he wrote to the Corinthians and said, "If meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I make not my brother to stumble" (1 Cor.8:13<sup>28</sup>). Earlier in this chapter he said, "Meat will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better" (verse 8).

### **Rom.14:14**<sup>29</sup>, **15**<sup>30</sup>

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24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.4.1-5>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.5.10>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.45.21-23>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.14.13>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.8.13>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.14.14>

Paul first states the doctrine in this dispensation, that all meats are clean, nothing is unclean of itself. Then as to the use of meats, complete freedom is given that one can eat this or that as one pleases. Meat is only unclean to him that accounts it to be unclean. Such a person eating what he deems to be unclean would defile his conscience. In the eating of meats one who had knowledge was to be careful that he did not grieve his weak brother, lest he should destroy him. The preservation of his brother, not the satisfying of his own appetite, was what mattered. If he walked in love he would be careful of his brother's conscientious scruples. "Destroy" here is a form of the same word as "perish" (Greek: *apollumi* or *apolluo*, see also 1 Cor.8:11<sup>31</sup>) in Jn 3:16<sup>32</sup>: In Rom.14:15<sup>33</sup> it is used in the same sense as in Matt.16:25<sup>34</sup> and Jn 12:25<sup>35</sup>, "He that loveth his life loseth (Greek: *apollumi*) it."

**Rom.14:16<sup>36</sup>,17<sup>37</sup>,18<sup>38</sup>**

Let not your good, your holy living and liberty in Christ, be blasphemed by scrupulous wranglings over the matter of meats, which are of little consequence. "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall bring to nought both it and them" (1 Cor.6:13<sup>39</sup>). Food they needed, but what each ate was a matter of liberty, and tolerance was to be exercised by each toward the other. The kingdom of God, that privileged sphere of divine rule, which had once a place in Israel, until

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30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2014.15>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.8.11>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.16>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.14.15>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.16.25>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2012.25>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.14.16>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2014.17>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2014.18>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.6.13>

they finally rejected God's Son, was taken from them and given to the little Flock of the Lord's disciples (Matt.21:33-43<sup>40</sup>; Lk.12:31<sup>41</sup>,32<sup>42</sup>), and is characterized by righteousness. This the Lord showed in Matt.6:31-33<sup>43</sup>, "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? ... But seek ye first His kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Righteousness is the doing of what is right according to God's revealed will, and the kingdom of God is here viewed as the doing of God's revealed will by His gathered people, His little Flock.

An isolated believer cannot do God's will in isolation. He must be gathered together with others into one (thing) (Jn 11:51<sup>44</sup>,52<sup>45</sup>; Jn 17:11<sup>46</sup>,19-22<sup>47</sup>; Acts 1:14<sup>48</sup>,15<sup>49</sup>; Acts 2:41<sup>50</sup>,42<sup>51</sup>). With the doing of God's will is allied peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Who can have greater peace and joy than those who know that they are doing what God has commended to be done? We may groan because of the fact that in our flesh dwells no good thing (Rom.7:18<sup>52</sup>; Rom.8:23<sup>53</sup>), but at the same time we may stand fully assured in all the will of God (Col.4:12<sup>54</sup>), and be in a state of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The

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40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.21.33-43>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.12.31>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lk%2012.32>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.6.31-33>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2011.51>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2011.52>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.11>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2017.19-22>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.14>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.15>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.41>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.42>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.18>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.23>

kingdom of God is the sphere of service to Christ. “He that herein serveth (as a bondservant) Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men.” A comparison of references to the kingdom of God elsewhere in the New Testament will show clearly that righteousness here is not imputed righteousness. Compare 1 Cor.5:11-13<sup>55</sup> with 1 Cor.6:9<sup>56</sup>,10<sup>57</sup>. In 1 Cor.5<sup>58</sup> we have a brother who is guilty of fornication whose act has disinherited him of his place and portion in the kingdom of God. See also Eph.5:5<sup>59</sup>.

**Rom.14:19<sup>60</sup>,20<sup>61</sup>**

Peace and mutual upbuilding of each other upon their most holy faith (Jud.20<sup>62</sup>) was to be the aim of saints together in assembly life. Paul wrote in Timothy about certain who were puffed up, “doting about questionings and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth” (1 Tim.6:4<sup>63</sup>,5<sup>64</sup>). Such men if allowed to follow this course of conduct would drive peace from any community. Edification or upbuilding is to be the keynote of assembly harmony, not overthrowing the work of God in any. Here Paul repeats what he said in verse 14, that all things are clean, but to him that eateth what is offensive to his conscience, such is evil to him that does it.

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54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.4.12>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.5.11-13>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.6.9>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%206.10>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.5>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.5>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.14.19>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2014.20>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude.20>

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.6.4>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim%206.5>

**Rom.14:21**<sup>65</sup>

The eating of meats is no great difficulty in our day, as would be the free use of wine or other alcoholic drinks. Though there is no such command as, “Thou shalt not drink alcoholic beverages,” yet care is needed that no one is stumbled by their use, and that no example is given to younger people of impressionable age, that spirituous liquors may be taken with impunity. The wise words of the mother of king Lemuel to her son are worthy of consideration, “It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes to say, Where is strong drink? Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgement of any that is afflicted” (Prov.31:4<sup>66</sup>,5<sup>67</sup>). “Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, ... At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder” (Prov.23:31<sup>68</sup>,32<sup>69</sup>). We are not in any way dealing with the matter of wine as to its proper use, as in 1 Tim.5:2<sup>70</sup>.

**Rom.14:22**<sup>71</sup>

There may be things that one can do privately, that one would not do before fellow- believers, because of their effect upon them. The test is, Can we in faith and with a good conscience do such and such things before God? If our heart condemns us, then we should desist. We must not do things in secret that are wicked and evil; if we do, then we are on the straight road to destroy ourselves. Happy is the man who acting as his own judge does not condemn himself in what he approves of. A good conscience is of the utmost importance to a believer. The end

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65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.14.21>

66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.31.4>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%2031.5>

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.23.31>

69. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%2023.32>

70. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.5.2>

71. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.14.22>

of Paul's charge to Timothy was, "Love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned" (1 Tim.1:5<sup>72</sup>).

**Rom.14:23**<sup>73</sup>

Whatever we are in doubt about, the wise and proper course is not to act until we get light and assurance. To act in doubt is to act with a condemned conscience. It is unwise to act on the faith of others. It was sin for the doubter to eat, and Paul lays it down as a general principle, I judge, that whatever is not of faith is sin.

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72. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.1.5>

73. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.14.23>

# COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

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### **R**om.15:1<sup>1</sup>,2<sup>2</sup>,3<sup>3</sup>

All the excellencies of Christian conduct spring from Christ. The bearing of the infirmities of the weak, and pleasing one's neighbour (not in everything as men-pleasers – Gal.1:10<sup>4</sup>) in that which is good, unto edifying, have origin in the fact that the Lord pleased not Himself. Indeed, had it been self-pleasing He sought, He would not have been found on earth at all. But in seeking God's glory, and man's good, in His lowly earthly life, the reproaches wherewith men reproached His Father fell upon Him and they broke His heart. Great was His sorrow, for He loved both God and man. Blessed Mediator!

### **Rom.15:4<sup>5</sup>**

Confirming the reference he had just made to Ps.69:9<sup>6</sup>, regarding the reproaches of Christ, the apostle says that what was written aforetime was written for our learning. How diligently He who is the Divine Word, and the Divine Wisdom, learned the Scriptures, in His humanity, in His days on earth! “Morning by morning,” He said, “He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as they that are taught” (disciples, RV margin). In consequence of this He said, “The Lord GOD hath given Me the tongue of them that are taught” (Isa.50:4<sup>7</sup>). Here is mystery, that “the

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.3>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.1.10>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.4>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.69.9>

Wisdom of God” (Lk.11:49<sup>8</sup>) “advanced in wisdom”(Lk.2:52<sup>9</sup>), a mystery, perchance, we shall never understand, but so it was. It is by the Scriptures that we know a little (oh, so little!) of patience (endurance) and comfort (encouragement), and it is by the Scriptures that we have any hope at all. May we be taught of God and learn more of the inestimable worth of Holy Writ!

**Rom.15:5<sup>10</sup>,6<sup>11</sup>**

Here the Divine Author of the Scriptures, the God of patience and of comfort, who has imparted to His living word patience and comfort, stands behind His word to implement every prophecy and promise He has given. Paul desires that this Blessed One would give them to be of one mind one with another, “not necessarily an identity of opinion in all details, but a community of sympathetic kindness.” This quotation seems to me to convey what the apostle means. Paul wrote somewhat similarly to the Philippians, “Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself” (Phil.2:2<sup>12</sup>3<sup>13</sup>). The same mind that Paul desires to be in the Romans is governed by the words, “according to Christ Jesus,” according to that mind which was in Christ Jesus (Phil.2:5-11<sup>14</sup>), ever lowly and ever seeking the well-being of others. The object of this unanimity of mind was to find its expression in “that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God

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7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.50.4>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.11.49>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.2.52>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.5>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.6>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.2.2>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil%202.3>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.2.5-11>

and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Glorious issue and end of being of the same mind, of one accord, and having one mouth!

**Rom.15:7<sup>15</sup>**

The receiving here is the same as in Rom.14:1<sup>16</sup>, receiving to the enjoyment of mutual fellowship, for wranglings over meats would drive fellowship from assembly life. How did Christ receive us? Certainly not to doubtful disputations. He received us as the father received the prodigal of Lk.15<sup>17</sup>, to the enjoyment of the fatted calf and all the other endowments which love bestowed upon the once-lost sinner. Christ received us in a manner that will ever redound to the glory of God.

**Rom.15:8<sup>18</sup>,9<sup>19</sup>**

Christ, who said that He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister (as a deacon), and to give His life a ransom for many (Matt.20:28<sup>20</sup>), must needs become a Minister of the circumcision (that is, of the Jewish people), to implement divine truth in the promises made to the fathers. Hence “to the Jew first” is ever the order of the Scriptures. What God had said to Israel in the Old Covenant Scriptures could not fail, for the Scripture cannot be broken. The Lord said, “Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished” (Matt.5:18<sup>21</sup>). Again, “Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil” (verse 17). Not only was the Jew to be blessed in Christ’s coming, but the Gentiles also came within the circle of blessing, as is

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15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.7>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.14.1>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.15>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.8>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.9>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.20.28>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.5.18>

clear from the song of David, when God delivered him from all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul (Ps.18:49<sup>22</sup>); Christ would through Gentile hearts and mouths glorify God for His mercy, as it is even now.

Rom.15:10<sup>23</sup>,11<sup>24</sup>,12<sup>25</sup>

As far back as Deut.32:43<sup>26</sup> God showed through Moses that the Gentiles would share a common joy with the people Israel. In a small way this took place in the churches of God in the days of the Apostles, when Jews and Gentiles found themselves in the Fellowship of God's Son and rejoicing in a Saviour and Lord who was common to both. But this scripture with the two others, from Ps.117:1<sup>27</sup>, and Isa.11:10<sup>28</sup>, will have a much greater fulfilment in the Millennium, when peoples of Gentile nations will go up to Jerusalem to worship King Messiah, who is Jehovah of Hosts (Zech.14:9<sup>29</sup>,16<sup>30</sup>,17<sup>31</sup>).

### **Rom.15:13**<sup>32</sup>

Paul desires that the God of hope, who is Himself looking forward to the realization through Christ of the prophecies and promises relative to the blessing of men the world over, and who fills His people with a like hope, would fill the Romans with all joy and peace in believing (blessed cordials to settle troubled and distracted minds). The object of

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22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.18.49>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.10>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.11>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.12>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.32.43>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.117.1>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.11.10>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.14.9>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech%2014.16>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech%2014.17>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.13>

this was, that they might abound (to be in abundance, affluence, overflowing) in hope, the mainspring of this being the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus Paul brings to a glorious ending this part of the epistle (Rom.14:1-15:13<sup>33</sup>) on the eating of meats, the bickerings over which, as between Jew and Gentile believer, could have resulted in the greatest discord, instead of being of one accord and glorifying God with one mouth.

### **Rom.15:14**<sup>34</sup>

Paul was persuaded himself, whether from information gathered from others or otherwise, that the brethren in Rome were full, replete with goodness, and filled with knowledge. These two things are of the greatest importance in admonition. How poor a shape an ignorant man makes of admonition! Also, how few will take kindly to an admonition when goodness is not the motive in the person who admonishes! Through the lack of goodness and knowledge admonition often fails in effect. Admonition literally means to place something on the mind. Paul was persuaded that the Romans were able to admonish one another, and this was no flattery on his part when he wrote this. Paul was ever ready to give credit where he thought it was due.

### **Rom.15:15**<sup>35</sup>,**16**<sup>36</sup>

Paul here refers to the same fact as stated in Rom.1:5<sup>37</sup>, “Through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all nations, for His name’s sake.” He was a minister (Greek: *leitourgos*, a public worker or servant) of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles (Rom.11:13<sup>38</sup>), “ministering in sacrifice” (RV margin) as a priest the

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33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.14.1-15.13>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.14>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.15>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.16>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.5>

gospel of God. This word “ministering” here is not used elsewhere in the New Testament of a preacher of the gospel. Indeed the word is used here only. The word gives not the slightest support to would-be priests who minister at a material altar, either the Romish priests who professedly sacrifice bread and wine as the literal body of the Lord, or those who offer the emblems of bread and wine as a eucharist or thanksgiving, as in the churches of episcopacy. Paul ministered as a priest the gospel of God, as a public worker (Greek: leitourgos), and the offering or oblation that he offered was not Christ, but Gentiles who have been saved by grace. This is something like that which will yet take place when the nations will bring the sons of Israel to Jerusalem as an offering unto the LORD (Isa.66:20<sup>39</sup>). Here Paul the apostle, a Jew by race, was bringing the Gentiles to God as an offering. Paul’s offering of the Gentiles was made holy and acceptable to God by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.

**Rom.15:17<sup>40</sup>,18<sup>41</sup>,19<sup>42</sup>**

Paul’s was no empty boasting or exulting in Christ as to what God had accomplished by his means. He would not dare to speak of God’s work through others, but only what Christ had wrought through him for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and work, in the power of signs and wonders, and in the Holy Spirit. How much is packed into these few words of unremitting toil, day and night, of sufferings and privations, and of mighty signs and wonders wrought in the power of the Spirit! With a wide sweep of mental vision he sees again the lands through which he passed, bearing the life-giving story of the Cross. Scenes and places and persons stand out before him. He thinks of Jerusalem and

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38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.11.13>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.66.20>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.17>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.18>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.19>

round about, Antioch, Caesarea, etc., the centre of early work. Then he passes on to far-off Illyricum on the Adriatic Sea, and in all these he had fully preached the gospel of Christ. The day will declare the sowing and the harvest.

**Rom.15:20<sup>43</sup>,21<sup>44</sup>**

Here was a high and glorious ambition, to take the gospel to lands and races where Christ was unknown. His object was not to build on the foundation of some other who had done the hard work of clearing and preparing the ground and laying the foundation of the work of God. Paul would do the heavy and often thankless task of the initial work by the Spirit's power. His purpose was to be a channel to carry the living water to those who had never heard of his Saviour, such as were not even like the Samaritan woman, who told the Lord, "I know that Messiah cometh ... when He is come, He will declare unto us all things" (Jn 4:25<sup>45</sup>). She had heard of Him, but many had never heard.

**Rom.15:22<sup>46</sup>,23<sup>47</sup>,24<sup>48</sup>**

Here Paul refers again to what he said in Rom.1:13<sup>49</sup>"I purposed to come unto you (and was hindered hitherto)." He had completed his work in and around Corinth, and says that he has no more place in these parts, and as he said before, "I long to see you" (Rom.1:11<sup>50</sup>). He anticipates going to Spain after he has reached Rome, and to be brought on his way thither-ward by the assembly in Rome. It is doubt-

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43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.20>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.21>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%204.25>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.22>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.23>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.24>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.13>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.11>

ful if he ever reached Spain; certainly the Scriptures cast no light on the subject. If he did it must have been between his first and second imprisonment in Rome.

**Rom. 15:25<sup>51</sup>, 26<sup>52</sup>**

This contribution or fellowship is referred to in 2 Cor. 8<sup>53</sup> and 9<sup>54</sup>, and the journey to Jerusalem we have followed time and again, in Acts 20 and Acts 21: The warning given to him by Agabus the prophet at Caesarea of what would happen to him in Jerusalem, and the touching scenes at Miletus, Tyre and Caesarea, did not deter him from completing his journey with the brethren as they brought the gift from the assemblies in Achaia and Macedonia. He said, "What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13<sup>55</sup>).

**Rom. 15:27<sup>56</sup>, 28<sup>57</sup>, 29<sup>58</sup>**

He again refers to the contribution of Achaia and Macedonia. He views it as the discharging of a debt, for it was from Jerusalem that the gospel issued forth to the Gentile world. As they were partakers of the regenerated Jews' spiritual things, it was fitting that they should minister to their carnal needs. He again alludes to his purpose to visit Spain, but little did he know how he would come to Rome, that it would be as Rome's prisoner to stand trial before Caesar. One thing he did know, that when he came he would come in the fulness of the blessing of

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51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.25>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.26>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.8>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor%208.9>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2021.13>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.27>

57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.28>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.29>

Christ, even as he said, to “impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established” (Rom.1:11<sup>59</sup>).

**Rom.15:30<sup>60</sup>,31<sup>61</sup>,32<sup>62</sup>**

The love of the Spirit is viewed by some as equivalent to the love of God shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom.5:5<sup>63</sup>). It is a unique statement, but it seems to me that the words of the hymn convey the truth: “Love of Father! Love of Son! Love of Aye-abiding One!” For as the Father is Love, so the Son is Love, and so also the Spirit is Love, for “God is Love.” The love of the Spirit is not simply God’s love diffused by Him in the hearts of saints, but, as I see it, it is the personal love of the Spirit. Paul greatly valued the prayers of the saints, and here he asks them to strive with him in prayer that he might be delivered from them that were disobedient in Judaea. He may have had the Jewish people in general in mind, but I am disposed to the thought that they were the disobedient that were in the churches of God in Judaea, for he adds “that my ministration ... may be acceptable to the saints.”

He was not certain evidently what the reaction would be by certain Jewish believers in view of their suspicions about Paul’s teaching amongst the Gentiles. Indeed we learn from Acts 21:20<sup>64</sup>,21<sup>65</sup>, that his trouble began with the Jews that believed, who, James said, “were all zealous for the law.” In order to placate these believers who had not appreciated fully the change from law to grace, and who still clung to the temple ritual, Paul, on the advice of James and the elders, submit-

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59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.11>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.30>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.31>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2015.32>

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.5>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2021.20>

65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2021.21>

ted to legal purification, and was found in the temple. Though what he did may have been simple enough in itself, as attesting that the reports about his teaching were not true, and that he walked orderly keeping the law, yet what emerged from it had dire results. See the whole of the narrative in Acts 21:17-36<sup>66</sup>: The condition of things may have worsened in Jerusalem since the time of the council of the apostles and elders, in Acts 15. At any rate Paul was apprehensive of how things were in Judaea, and he had need to be. From the Judaizers the most of his troubles arose. Paul passed through storms both spiritual and literal before he reached Rome. But like a wearied warrior, he thought of coming to Rome with joy and finding rest with the saints there.

**Rom.15:33**<sup>67</sup>

Many things arose in Paul's day, and arise also in ours, to destroy harmony, but if the God of peace is with us He can and will pour oil on troubled waters in assembly life and give that peaceful concord that leads to that which is both good and pleasant – brethren dwelling together in unity (Ps.133<sup>68</sup>). Amen.

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66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2021.17-36>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.33>

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.133>

# COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

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### Rom.16:1<sup>1</sup>,2<sup>2</sup>

Here is the only specimen letter of commendation in the New Testament for saints moving from assembly to assembly. Reference is made to the practice of saints bearing letters of commendation as they moved about, in 2 Cor.3:1<sup>3</sup>: It is generally thought that Phoebe was the bearer of Paul's letter to Rome, and this can be understood to have been the case, seeing that her commendation is part of the epistle. She was a deacon (Greek: *diakonos*) of the church in Cenchreae; Cenchreae was five to ten miles east of Corinth, on the other side of the isthmus of Corinth. Many have asked what the work of a female deacon is. The passage supplies the answer. "She ... hath been a succourer of many." As she had succoured many, now, as she is coming to Rome, a stranger in the great imperial city, she is to be assisted in whatsoever matter she may be in need. She was to be received worthily in the Lord, being herself subject to Him, by those who were also subject to Him.

### Rom.16:3<sup>4</sup>,4<sup>5</sup>,5<sup>6</sup>

This worthy pair who come into view in the Scriptures, in Acts 18:1-3<sup>7</sup>, in Corinth, in whose house Paul abode, because he and Aquila were of

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.3.1>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.3>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.4>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.5>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2018.1-3>

the same trade and wrought together as tentmakers, moved with Paul to Ephesus, and there he left them (Acts 18:18-21<sup>8</sup>). In 1 Cor.16:19<sup>9</sup> we find a church meeting at their house. Now they are back in Rome, though they had been expelled with the Jews from Rome by Claudius, and we find that also in Rome a church (part no doubt of the church of God in Rome) is meeting at their house. Where was it that they exposed their throat or neck to the executioner on behalf of Paul? The Scriptures do not reveal where this noble act was done. Like so many other acts of self-sacrifice, it awaits the day when the Lord will reward His saints for what they have done for His Name's sake. Here is the only case in the New Testament where thanks are given to saints. Paul and the churches of the Gentiles gave thanks to this worthy pair, not for them. They were to be saluted, and also the church at their house, by the saints at Rome. The saints were also to salute Epaenetus, whom Paul calls "my beloved", who was the first of the Asian (the Roman province of Asia) converts to be reached by the gospel, perhaps at the time of Acts 18:19<sup>10</sup>.

### **Rom.16:6<sup>11</sup>,7<sup>12</sup>**

Here is another of the Marys of Scripture, and she was, like the rest, a devoted woman to the Lord. She laboured much, toiled hard, for the Roman saints. Andronicus and Junias were Paul's blood-relations, and they were also his fellow-prisoners, taken prisoner with him when the battle had raged fiercely somewhere, where we know not. These kinsmen were of note among the apostles, though they were not apostles. There is something very precious in the fact that the gospel had been fruitful among Paul's relations, and that these men were in Christ, that

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8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2018.18-21>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.16.19>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2018.19>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.6>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.7>

is, they were saved before Paul. No doubt in his mad, saint-hunting days, he would have cast them into prison as well as any other, if they had come in his way. Now all this is changed.

**Rom.16:8<sup>13</sup>,9<sup>14</sup>,10<sup>15</sup>**

What was it that caused Paul to make such differences, as “my beloved in the Lord,” my “fellow-worker in Christ,” “my beloved,” “the approved (or tested) in Christ”? We shall not know until the day of reward, perchance, but no doubt as these men’s names were read out the differences were understood in the church in Rome. Who was Aristobulus, mentioned only here in the New Testament? It has been suggested that he was a grandson of Herod the great, a prince who lived and died in Rome. There is no Scriptural authority for this. Was he a subject of grace as was Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch? (Acts 13:1<sup>16</sup>). We cannot tell. His household, or certain of them, were in the church in Rome.

**Rom.16:11<sup>17</sup>,12<sup>18</sup>,13<sup>19</sup>**

Here is another of Paul’s relations, Herodion, but he remarks nothing about him. Some have thought that Narcissus was a well-known and powerful freedman of Claudius, who was put to death by Nero, but it has been pointed out that this might not be, because he was put to death three years before the writing of this epistle to Rome. Whether this was that freedman or not, there were those of the household of a Narcissus in the Lord. Then we have references to two women (pos-

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13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.8>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.9>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.10>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2013.1>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.11>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.12>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.13>

sibly) who labour in the Lord, and to a sister, Persis the (not “my”) beloved, who laboured much in the Lord. Then we have the touching remark concerning Rufus, the chosen in the Lord, about “his mother and mine”. Was this Rufus the son of Simon of Cyrene, who was compelled to bear the cross of Jesus? (Mk.14:21<sup>20</sup>). If h was, what memories he would have of his father’s deed! The mother of Rufus was also in Rome. His mother was “my mother” too, says Paul, a mother without a name who had mothered Paul as her own son, and for whom Paul had the greatest affection.

**Rom.16:14<sup>21</sup>,15<sup>22</sup>,16<sup>23</sup>**

Whilst we read in Paul’s epistles of “the church of God,” and “the churches of God,” we never read of “the church of Christ,” and only once of “the churches of Christ,” as here. We also read of “the churches of the saints” (1 Cor.14:33<sup>24</sup>), but never of “the church of the saints.” The churches of Christ and of the saints indicate the various churches which met at the houses of the saints, which comprised the church of God in such cities as Corinth, Rome, etc. We have in Rome the church which met at the house of Prisca and Aquila (verses 3,4). Then we have the brethren that were with Asyncritus and Phlegon, etc., and the saints who were with Philologus and Julia, etc., showing different groups of saints, forming churches of the saints or of Christ in different parts of the imperial city. All such churches in Corinth formed the Church of God in Corinth (1 Cor.1:2<sup>25</sup>), and similarly in Rome.

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20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark.14.21>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.14>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.15>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.16>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.14.33>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.2>

A commentator says of the names which are found in this chapter: "A place of burial on the Appian Way, devoted to the ashes of imperial freedmen and slaves, and other similar receptacles, all to be dated with practical certainty about the middle period of the first century, yield the following names, Amplias, Urbanus, Stachys, Apelles, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Rufus, Hermes, Philologus, Julius, Nereis; a name which might be denoted the sister (see verse 15) of a man Nereus. Of course, such facts must be used with due reserve in inference." Whether or no these engravings of the names of the dead denote the names in this chapter, we know that those whose names are in Rom.16<sup>26</sup> are amongst the vast congregation whose names are written in heaven, and whose works have followed with them.

**Rom.16:17<sup>27</sup>,18<sup>28</sup>**

As in Philippians, the saints were to mark those who were examples of good living (Phil.3:17<sup>29</sup>),so here they were to mark and keep a watchful eye upon such as were causing divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine that they had learned. Separations may be necessary when evil doctrine invades assemblies, as we learn from 2 Tim.2:16-26<sup>30</sup>, but here the Roman saints were to avoid or shun such evil workers. They served their own belly, but at the same time were men of smooth and fair speech and the innocent were deceived by them. Whether these were Judaizers who ever opposed Paul and his doctrine of grace and faith, or others who sowed discord with their heretical views, the passage does not reveal.

**Rom.16:19<sup>31</sup>,20<sup>32</sup>**

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.17>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.18>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.3.17>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.16-26>

Saints would be continually moving to and from Rome in those days, and would bring the good report of the obedience of the saints in Rome to many lands. In this Paul rejoiced. But he said that he would have them wise to the good and simple to the evil. It is not necessary that we should know the evil doctrines and practices of men to appreciate the good. To know the evil which men have wrought may even have a harmful effect on the lives of saints. Paul's dictum was wise and right: be "wise unto that which is good." The present struggle against evil has one issue: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." When? not while the battle lasts, which will continue during our lifetime. But the end of the battle will come, as it did in the case of the Lord, who fatally bruised the old serpent at Calvary (Gen.3:15<sup>33</sup>; Heb.2:14<sup>34</sup>). Satan will, I judge, be bruised beneath the feet of saints subsequent to the Lord's coming, and before he is cast to the earth by Michael and his angels (Rev.12:7-12<sup>35</sup>). What a sight to see at last our enemy defeated and bruised, against whom we shall never again need to wage many a hard-won and hardly won battle! Paul adds his cipher, his token in every epistle of his – "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

**Rom. 16:21<sup>36</sup>, 22<sup>37</sup>, 23<sup>38</sup>**

Timothy is well known to us all, the beloved and true child in faith of Paul, of whom Paul said, that he had no man like minded (Phil.2:20<sup>39</sup>).

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31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.19>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.20>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen.3.15>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.2.14>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.12.7-12>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.21>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.22>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.23>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.2.20>

Then follow the names of other three of Paul's kinsmen, Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, who with Andronicus, Junias and Herodion make six of Paul's relatives mentioned in this chapter, a remarkable sidelight of Scripture as to the working of grace among relations. When God brings back his people to Zion, He will bring them one of a city, and two of a family, twice as many of a family as of a city (Jer.3:14<sup>40</sup>). How wonderfully grace has wrought in some families! Tertius, who wrote the epistle, sent his salutation also. Gaius (the same Gaius as in 1 Cor.1:14<sup>41</sup>, but there were other men who had a similar name, Gaius of Macedonia, Acts 19:29<sup>42</sup>; Gaius of Derbe in Galatia, Acts 20:4<sup>43</sup>; and Gaius the beloved to whom John wrote, who might have been one of the others) with whom Paul resided in Corinth, and who was the host of the whole church, sent his salutation. Then Erastus (was he the same as the Erastus of Acts 19:22<sup>44</sup> and 2 Tim.4:20<sup>45</sup>?) also sent his salutation. He was a man of standing in Corinth, being the treasurer of the city. The last name to be appended of those who were with Paul and sent their greeting was Quartus the brother. Why "the" brother and not "our" brother?

**Rom.16:24**<sup>46</sup>

(Manuscripts omit this verse)

**Rom.16:25**<sup>47</sup>, **26**<sup>48</sup>, **27**<sup>49</sup>

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40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jer.3.14>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.14>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2019.29>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.4>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2019.22>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.4.20>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.24>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.25>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.26>

Paul closes this wonderful epistle with the words of a glorious and God-glorifying Doxology, to Him who is the only wise God who was able to stablish or strengthen them. This establishment was according to the theme of this epistle – the gospel, which he calls “my gospel.” Paul’s gospel was the same as that which is found in the Old Testament, even the gospel which was preached to Abraham (Gal.3:8<sup>50</sup>); the simple and profound statement of it then was, “In thee shall all the nations be blessed.” This gospel in the bud had opened out to full flower in Paul’s time, for there had been added “the revelation of the mystery which had been kept in silence through times eternal.” See also Eph.3:4-11<sup>51</sup>; Col.1:26<sup>52</sup>.

Paul is the sole exponent of this phase of the gospel among New Testament writers. He also claims that the mystery is manifested through the prophetic Scriptures. These Scriptures, I judge, can mean none other than the writings of the Old Testament. Can it be doubted that the mystery of the Church which is His (Christ’s) Body is hidden in the story of Adam and Eve, when we read what Paul wrote in Eph.5:22-33<sup>53</sup>? To men and angels the story of Adam and Eve was the story of the first man and woman, but under the Spirit’s light we see, standing gloriously behind that pair, Christ and the Church, His Bride. This gospel was made known to the nations “unto the obedience of faith,” not “obedience to the faith,” faith being the one thing necessary and allowed by God whereby the inestimable blessing of the forgiveness of sin and justification becomes the possession of every believing sinner. See Rom. 1:5<sup>54</sup>: “To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ ... be the glory for ever. Amen.”

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49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2016.27>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.3.8>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.3.4-11>

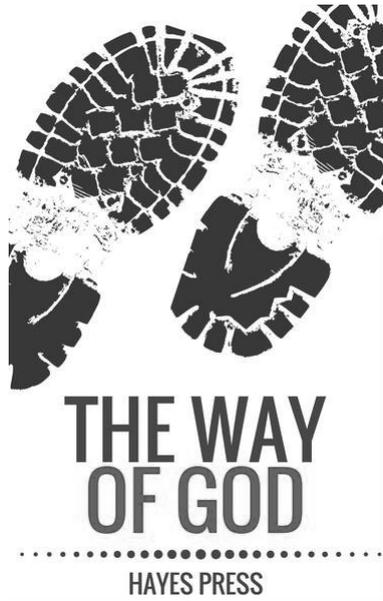
52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.26>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.22-33>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.%201.5>



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