

Romans Made Simple

by Eric Neumann

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I wrote this book as I taught through the book of Romans in 2020. It is much shorter than the Bible study on Romans that I wrote in 2017. I only consulted the Bible study book a couple of times as I wrote this book. Therefore, any differences between the two books shows that I have changed my mind on what something means.

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Quotations

The only material quoted in this book is the Word of God in the King James Version. No commentaries or scholars are quoted, because God’s Word is important, not man’s word. As such, I encourage all readers to be good Bereans by searching the scriptures to see if what I have said is true (Acts 17:11). It is okay if you do not agree with what I say, but it is not okay if your disagreement is not based upon the Word of God in its proper context, which involves “rightly dividing the Word of Truth” (II Timothy 2:15).

Goal

The goal of this book is to cast “down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and [bring] into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (II Corinthians 10:5) so that members of the body of Christ may “come unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Timothy 2:4).

Contact the author

Therefore, the author encourages any disagreements be brought to his attention so that future versions can be changed if deemed necessary.

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Romans 1 - God's Wrath Against Atheists

1:1 - The gospel of God = Jesus' death as atonement for our sin.

1:2 - "My gospel" not revealed until given to Paul, but God did promise it in the prophets (Genesis 3:15). It is just the details of the gospel were not made known to man (I Peter 1:10-12).

1:3-4 - Jesus is fully man. ("Made of a woman, made under the law" (Galatians 4:4).) Jesus was born of Mary (Matthew 1:16,21-23; Isaiah 7:14; Luke 3:23).

Jesus was fully God (John 1:1). He is "declared...with power" at His resurrection (Acts 13:33; Psalm 2:7; Matthew 3:17).

1:5 - Grace = eternal life and reward in heavenly places; Apostleship = all of us sent by God to reconcile others to God (II Corinthians 5:19-21).

1:6 - "Called" = saved body of Christ in heavenly places (Romans 8:28-29)

1:7 - "Beloved" means we are in Christ (Matthew 3:17; Ephesians 1:6).

"Peace" with God because of the crosswork of Christ (Romans 5:1-2).

1:8 - "Your faith" is the faith of Christ. The faith of Christ saves us. That is why it "is spoken of throughout the whole world."

1:9-10 - We serve God with our "spirit in the gospel of His Son." In other words, we glory only in the cross of Christ (Galatians 6:14), and we cannot serve God in our flesh (Romans 7:18). Our flesh is presented as living sacrifices to God (Romans 12:1) for God to use "as instruments of righteousness" (Romans 6:13). Walk in the good works of Christ (Ephesians 2:10), rather than trying to serve God in our flesh.

1:11 - The spiritual gift that establishes them is serving with their spirit in the gospel of God's Son. This is "my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery" (Romans 16:25). "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of

doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14).

1:12 - There is comfort in the faith of Christ, because the Holy Ghost is given unto us (Romans 5:5) to comfort us (II Corinthians 1:3-7) with the knowledge of the truth (John 14:26).

1:13 - Apparently, God kept Paul from coming to the Romans so that he would write the book of Romans. Then, when Paul does come to the Romans, it may be with the knowledge of all mystery doctrine (Romans 15:29). Romans was probably written at the beginning of Acts 20.

1:14-15 - Paul was sent by the Lord Jesus Christ to preach to all unbelievers (Acts 9:15).

1:16 - "Gospel of Christ" = "gospel of God" (1:1) = Paul's gospel. "The power of God" is in the gospel, not in speaking in tongues or feeling good in a worship song. (Hebrews 4:12).

1:17 - The gospel of Christ is the power of God because it reveals God's righteousness from Christ's faith at the right hand of God to Christ's faith in the believer's soul. (Christ's faith is given to you as God's gift to you (Ephesians 2:8-9).)

Habakkuk 2:4 says, "The just shall live by His faith," meaning Christ's faith.

1:18 - The just must live by the faith of Christ because the wrath of God has already been revealed from heaven. So, if you live by the course of this world (Ephesians 2:2), you will experience God's wrath.

Men "hold the truth in unrighteousness," meaning that they know there is a God Who should be worshipped, but they do not worship God.

1:19-20 - God has manifested Himself to all men. The invisible things of God are "His eternal power and Godhead." God's eternal power is seen in His creation of the world. The creation shows that God is the beginning and the end (Revelation 21:6). This makes Him eternal. His Godhead is seen in creation in that God the Father came up with the plan, God the Son is the Word (John 1:1), and God the Holy Ghost moved to create the world (Genesis 1:2). (Colossians 1:15-18).

This means that all people understand that God created the heaven and the earth, that His power is eternal, and that there is a Godhead over all. Since God has eternal power, man also knows that God can save him from his sin, which he also knows that he has (Romans 1:32). Therefore, when man holds the truth in unrighteousness, he is without excuse. In other words, man knows he is worthy of God's judgment and that God can save him from judgment. Therefore, when man rejects the truth of the gospel, he is without excuse and will receive God's judgment for his sin, which is death in the lake of fire (Romans 6:23).

1:21 - Man knew God, meaning that all men have the opportunity to receive God's salvation. When they glorify Him not as God and are not thankful, man begins the process of forgetting about God. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 14:1; 53:1). "Their foolish heart" refers to saying they are atheists. "Became vain in their imaginations" means they follow their religious ideas, rather than believing God. "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (II Corinthians 10:5).

1:22 - They say they are wise because they have religious wisdom. The religion of atheists is secular humanism. "The world by wisdom knew not God" (I Corinthians 1:21).

1:23 - Man's first step in getting away from the knowledge of God is to make themselves and animals God. In other words, they worship the creature, rather than the Creator (1:25). They reject the glory of God and make the glory of man the highest thing that there is.

1:24 - This results in man committing sexual sin with the opposite sex. Man knows that male and female become one flesh through sex (Genesis 2:23-24). So, you can get the power of the opposite sex by having sex with as many of them as possible. Thus, making you God (in your mind). This is how they dishonour their bodies with each other, since even joining yourself to a harlot makes you one flesh with the harlot (I Corinthians 6:16).

1:25 - The truth of God is that a man and a woman become one flesh, and they can work together to serve God. The lie is that man can have sex with as many women as possible to become God himself. In doing this, man has worshipped and served the

creature (woman) more than the Creator (God).

1:26-27 - Since man changed God's truth into a lie by pursuing multiple sexual partners of the opposite sex, God gave man up to vile affections to have sex with same-sex partners.

Sex is man's downfall because sexual sin is the only sin you can commit against your own body (I Corinthians 6:18). Therefore, you destroy the witness of God within you when you commit sexual sin.

"Natural" and "nature" used 3 times to show that sex with the same sex is against how God made you.

1:28 - Once man believes he is okay in sodomy, God gives him over to a reprobate mind, meaning that God is completely removed from his knowledge. Man thinks he is his own God, because he has conquered the opposite sex and the same sex. By the way, those following religion are reprobate to the things of God (II Timothy 3:8; Titus 1:16).

Gentiles were given over to a reprobate mind at the tower of Babel (Genesis 11). Israel was given over to a reprobate mind at the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7).

1:29-31 - Once someone is reprobate, he is "BEING filled with ALL unrighteousness." "Being" shows that it is his state, just like a believer is "BEING justified by faith" (Romans 5:1). Justification is our state; unrighteousness is the reprobate's state.

1:32 - Even reprobates know that they are subject to the judgment of God. Everyone knows they have sinned (Romans 3:23), and the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

If you are not reprobate, you feel bad about your sin. If you are reprobate, you are "past feeling" and have given yourself "over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Ephesians 4:19). Thus, you have pleasure in those who sin (Romans 1:32).

Romans 2 – Circumcision of the Heart

2:1 The one judging is using his knowledge of good to say that he is better than the people of Romans 1:18-32. He is like the

Pharisee of Luke 18:11-12. He should not judge lest he be judged (Matthew 7:1), because all have sinned (Romans 3:23).

2:2 Self-righteous people judge selectively, pointing the finger at others so that people do not see their sin, but God judges according to truth. Therefore, they are in trouble with God.

2:3 “They measuring themselves by themselves...are not wise” (II Corinthians 10:12).

2:4 God’s goodness is that He has given us the conscience to show that we are sinners (Romans 7:8-13). God’s goodness is seen in Exodus 34:6-7, when God gave Israel the law.

God forbears His wrath and longsuffers with us so that we might see His goodness and repent (II Peter 3:15).

2:5 If we choose not to believe the gospel, we increase God’s wrath against us, because the law works wrath (4:15). 11:22 calls this “the severity of God.”

“Hardness and impenitent heart” are characteristic of religious people. They have a form of godliness, but they deny the power of God’s Word (II Timothy 3:5) by creating their own way to God, when only Jesus is the way (John 14:6).

2:6 This is a reference to the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). Believers are saved based upon Christ’s merits (Romans 3:21-25).

2:7 Only Christ did this (I Peter 2:22).

2:8-10 You obey the truth by believing the gospel (10:16). Jesus is the truth (John 14:6).

All do evil (3:12).

“Of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile” probably refers to the dispensation of grace only, since the gospel of grace went out by Paul to the Jew first (Acts 13:46). Daniel 12:2, Matthew 25:31-46, and Revelation 20:5,11-15 seem to indicate that unbelieving Gentiles in Israel’s program are judged before unbelieving Jews in Israel’s program. Therefore, it makes sense that the opposite would be true in the dispensation of grace.

2:11 God not being a respecter of persons is also only true in the mystery dispensation. Deuteronomy 7:6 says that Israel, in their program, is a special people unto the Lord above all people. Ephesians 2:14 says that, in the dispensation of grace, the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile is down.

2:12 God is not a respecter of persons in any dispensation in terms of His judgment of man. All unbelievers will perish, regardless of them being under the Mosaic law or not, because even the Gentiles have the law of the conscience (2:14-15).

2:13-15 Again, you do the Word by believing the Word (10:16). James 1:21-22 says that your soul is saved by receiving the Word.

Gentiles do not have the Mosaic law. However, they do have the conscience, i.e., the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 3:22).

“Do by nature” means that they disobey the law, due to their sin nature working with the commandment to become exceeding sinful (7:13).

The work of the law is wrath (4:15). All people know that they have sinned (1:32), because the law of the conscience tells them so. But, instead of using this knowledge to believe the gospel, most people will accuse or else excuse one another. This means that they accuse others of sins that are worse than their own sin and excuse themselves in the process.

2:16 “Secrets of men” can be either good or evil (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

“My gospel” is found three times in scripture (2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8). It is Paul’s gospel to recognize your sin and trust in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for sin (I Corinthians 15:3-4).

Since all have sinned (3:23) and the wages of sin is death (6:23), all go to hell unless they are saved by the blood of Christ. Only those living in the mystery dispensation (from Paul in Acts 9:23 until the rapture of the church) actually believe Paul’s gospel in order to be saved. All others have heard a different gospel.

However, regardless of what gospel you believe in order to be saved, the blood of Christ pays for all the sins of all believers from all dispensations (Ephesians 1:7). In other words, what you believe to be saved changes depending on dispensation, but the means by which you are saved is ALWAYS the blood of Christ. Thus, the secrets of men are judged to see if the blood of Christ has been applied to the evil secrets in order to receive eternal life.

2:17-2:29 In 2:17-2:29, Paul attacks the Jewish religion. Now, God did create a religion for the Jews to follow, but they had abandoned that. Jesus said, “Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition” (Mark 7:9). And so Paul attacks the Jewish religion of the Jews’ own creation that rejects God’s commandment.

In this section, Paul shows that what counts is who you are spiritually, not who you are physically. 2:17 says, “Thou art CALLED a Jew.” In 2:28-29, Paul says that a true Jew is one inwardly, not outwardly. The Pharisees said, “Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham....Ye are of your father the devil” (John 8:39,44). Paul uses 2:17-2:29 to say the same thing about the Jewish religion. “Thou art CALLED a Jew,” but the true Jews of God are the ones who believe God and His Word.

2:17 No one should rest in the law. “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24). The law is to teach us that we are sinners (3:23), so that we might come to Christ and believe the gospel. Instead, the Jews rested in the law. Instead of saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13), the Jews said, “God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are” (Luke 18:11). They used the law, not to learn they are sinners, but to make their boast to God of their own righteousness (Isaiah 64:6).

2:18 The Jewish religious leaders were good at condemning others with the law, but they were not good at recognizing their own sin. The same holds true in Churchianity today. They condemn others and tell them they must obey the law, but they themselves do not obey the law. They recognize others’ sin, but they do not provide the answer of trusting in God for salvation.

2:19 The religious leaders believed they led others to be saved, but they actually led others into deeper despair, telling them that

the law was the answer when God is the answer. That is why Jesus called them “blind guides” (Matthew 23:16,24), “ye fools and blind” (Matthew 23:17,19), “hypocrites” (Matthew 23:13-15), and “blind leaders of the blind” (Matthew 15:14). In truth, Jesus was the light that shined in the darkness of Israel (Matthew 4:16).

2:20 Note that the Jews had “the FORM of knowledge and of the truth in the law.” The law works wrath (4:15), and everyone knows that they are worthy of death for breaking the law (1:32). Therefore, the law teaches you to fear the Lord. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7). If you learn the lesson of the law that you are a sinner, you will come to Christ and receive “the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3). Therefore, the “FORM of knowledge” is found in the law; true knowledge is found in Christ. Since the Jews used the form as the answer, they never mined the true treasures of wisdom found in Christ.

2:21-23 The teachers of the law did not teach themselves the lesson of the law, which is that they are sinners and need God to save them. By pointing the finger at others, they avoided looking at their own sin. This is what Churchianity does today. They put guilt upon their congregations in order to make themselves look good.

2:24 The Jewish religion takes on the name of God, but they say the law is the answer. Since they break the law, they dishonour God (2:23). So, they represent God falsely, blaspheming His name. Thus, they break the commandment, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain” (Exodus 20:7). Instead, they should have used the law to show they are sinners and pointed people to God for the answer. Then, God would have been glorified, because the gospel would give them eternal life. But, instead, they pointed people to themselves in God’s name; thus, blaspheming God.

Isaiah 52:5 is where it is written that the Jews blaspheme God. God’s answer is the gospel (Isaiah 52:7).

2:25 If you trust in circumcision to save you, you are a debtor to do the whole law (Galatians 5:3). Then, when you break the law, you lose your salvation. If you trust in God to save you, you never lose your salvation, because the Lord Jesus Christ never sinned.

2:26 Paul's point is that what is in the heart determines the condition of man, not physical circumcision (Mark 7:21-23). You need to keep the righteousness of the law to be saved. Christ kept the righteousness of the law. If you believe the gospel, you are righteous. The circumcised Jew, if he does not believe the gospel, is not righteous.

2:27 Nature does not matter. Are you in Adam or in Christ? In Christ, you are saved. In Adam, you are lost.

2:28-29 True circumcision is in the heart. God gave physical circumcision to the Jews as a sign of what needed to happen with them spiritually (Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6). If the Gentiles have their hearts circumcised by Christ (Colossians 2:11), they are saved and are Jews in the spiritual sense. If the Jews do not have their hearts circumcised by Christ, they are unsaved and are not Jews in the spiritual sense. "We are the circumcision" (Philippians 3:3).

Romans 3 - God's Righteousness to Cover Your Sin

3:1-2 The Mosaic law was committed unto Jews, not to us today (Psalm 147:19). This gave the Jews an advantage because the law is a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ (Galatians 3:24).

3:3-4 "The faith of God" refers to God being faithful to His Word. The latter part of Psalm 51:4 is quoted in the latter part of 3:4. The first part of Psalm 51:4 is David telling God, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned," with regard to his sin against Bathsheba. Because his sin is against God only, God can forgive him of his sin. Similarly, in 3:3-4, Israel's sins are against God only. This means that God can forgive believing Israel's sins, and not forgive unbelieving Israel's sins. In other words, since sin is against God only, God alone decides whose sins He forgives, making God true. This also makes every man a liar, because man thinks that he can decide when sins can be forgiven or not. Just look at religions. All religions have man-made conditions that must be met in order to receive forgiveness. Only the Bible stays true to the fact that only God decides the conditions of forgiveness of man's sins, because man's sins are only against God.

3:5 "I speak as a man" tells us that Paul is using man's argument. He just said that every man is a liar (3:4). Therefore,

the argument of 3:5 is a lie. Man's unrighteousness does not commend God's righteousness. God is righteous IN SPITE OF man's unrighteousness. It is harder for God to uphold His Word when every man does not uphold man's word. Granted, our unrighteousness does make God's righteousness look even better, but it does not commend God's righteousness. Rather, if God did not take vengeance against unbelievers, God would be unrighteous. In other words, God's standard of righteousness is based upon Him upholding His Word. It is not affected by the unrighteousness of man.

3:6 If God's righteousness is dependent upon man, then God is in a catch-22 when it comes to judgment. Since God's righteousness is independent of man, He can judge the world.

3:7-8 This verse continues man's lying argument and shows how twisted man's thinking is. Man says, "If God is true and I am a liar, God cannot punish me for my lie, because my lie causes God's truth to abound more. If that is true, Paul says that you also have to say that we should do evil in order to get good to come. That is like saying, "My mom loves me, but I want her to love me more. So, I am going to do every hateful thing I can think of against her. That way, her love will conquer my hate, resulting in more love from her to me." That argument is absolutely ridiculous. That is why Paul says that God's damnation of unbelieving man is just. It shows how utterly depraved man is. Also, note how it is slanderously reported that Paul's gospel is that grace is a license to sin. Paul will later respond to this argument by saying, "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (6:2).

3:9 So, did God save the body of Christ because we are better than other men? No! If we say we are better, we have lied (I John 1:8), just like the Pharisee in Luke 18:11. The Jews were proved to be under sin in Romans 2, and the Gentiles were proved to be under sin in Romans 1.

3:10-12 These verses are a quote of Psalm 14:1-3 and 53:1-3. They start with, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Romans 1:21 says, "Their foolish heart was darkened." This shows that all people are fools until they believe the gospel. In other words, all people, in their effort to get around God's judgment, believe that there is no God. This is why they do not seek after God. Therefore, they are not righteous and do not do

good.

"They are all gone out of the way." "The way" is the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Granted, some people will believe the gospel and be saved, but everyone follows their sinful desires until they are saved.

"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). Since we do not have Christ's faith until we believe the gospel, all we do is sin before we are saved. "In my flesh dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18).

3:13 This is a composite quote of Psalm 5:9 and 140:3. The Pharisees were like whited sepulchres, full of dead men's bones (Matthew 23:27). The heart is deceitful above all things (Jeremiah 17:9), and so there is deceit under the tongue. Satan is a serpent, "more subtil than any beast of the field" (Genesis 3:1). Satan's ministers are transformed into ministers of righteousness (II Corinthians 11:15). This means that unbelievers use religion to make themselves look good (II Timothy 3:5).

3:14 This is a quote of Psalm 10:7. Context of Psalm 10 is that he is prideful in his religion, such that he is confident that God will do nothing against him.

3:15-17 This is a quote of Isaiah 59:7-8. "They trust in vanity" (Isaiah 59:4). They then use their "vain...imagination" (Romans 1:21) to hatch serpent eggs (Isaiah 59:5) to create a "generation of vipers" that will go to hell (Matthew 23:33).

3:18 This is a quote of Psalm 36:1. "The fear of the Lord is the BEGINNING of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). Therefore, unbelievers have no wisdom, meaning that they do not even recognize that they are sinners. If "there is no fear of God before their eyes," it means that they think that they are god.

3:10-18 Paul used 6 quotes from the Psalms and 1 quote from Isaiah to show that we are all sinners.

3:10-12 shows that none are righteous.

3:13 shows that man is dead on the inside, uses the poison of sin to corrupt, and is deceitful about it.

3:14 shows that man curses God in his bitterness over not being God.

3:15-16 shows that man is quick to get others to believe his religion and get as many people as possible to be dead with him, because misery loves company.

3:17 shows that man does not know the gospel.

3:18 shows that man is bold about his deadly sin because he does not fear God.

3:19-20 God gave the law to stop 3:13-16 from happening. In other words, the law stops the mouths of people from promoting their religion (atheism, secular humanism, Churchianity, etc.). Without the law, 3:10-18 happens with everyone. Man knows there is a God, but he creates religion to keep from having to recognize God (1:19-28). God gives you the law so you will recognize you are a sinner. If you recognize you are a sinner and seek God for the answer to your sin, God will give you His righteousness (3:22).

The law stops religion from spreading (3:13-16), and it teaches you to seek God (Galatians 3:24). God will be found when we seek Him because: 1) "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6), and 2) "He be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27). But, without the law, the process of 3:10-18 is not stopped.

The law does not apply to believers, because we "are not under the law, but under grace" (6:14). There also is no salvation in the law (Psalm 143:2). The law shows you are a sinner. The answer to your sin is not found in the law. The law stops the bleeding of 3:15; it does not give you the pure blood of Jesus. This is why no flesh is justified in God's sight by the deeds of the law.

3:21 "But now" the fulness of time has come to reveal the righteousness of God WITHOUT the law (Galatians 4:4-5). A matter is established at the mouth of two witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15). Jesus said, "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true" (John 5:31). Therefore, the law and the prophets are the two witnesses that affirm that we can receive the righteousness of God without the law.

The law is a contract between God and man. If you obey the law perfectly, you have earned eternal life. If you disobey in one point, you have broken the contract, making you guilty of it all (James 2:10). The law says, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them" (Deuteronomy 27:26). However, if you do all of the law, God will give you blessings (Deuteronomy 28:1-6). Christ "did no sin" (I Peter 2:22). Christ "redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13), based upon Deuteronomy 21:22-23. He "bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (I Peter 2:24). Thus, the law is a witness.

The prophets are a witness because the prophets prophesied of the Messiah that would come to save believers from their sins (I Peter 1:10-11). Passages like Isaiah 53:5 witness because it says, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him: and with His stripes we are healed." Other passages like Psalm 34:20 or 22:18 show that Jesus must be the Messiah because He fulfilled prophecy that He could not control as a man. Psalm 22:18 "They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture" (fulfilled in Matthew 27:35). Psalm 34:20 "He keepeth all His bones: not one of them is broken" (fulfilled in John 19:31-36).

3:22 The law gives God's perfect holy standard (7:12), but the law does not provide the power to obey the law (7:18). The law is spiritual (7:14). Faith is the substance of spiritual things (Hebrews 11:1). Thus, the power to obey is faith. Jesus only did what His Father wanted Him to do (John 5:19, 5:30, 8:28-29). Thus, the Father and Jesus were one (John 10:30, 14:10, 14:20). This is the faith OF Jesus Christ. This is how the righteousness of God is manifest without the law. In other words, Jesus obtained the righteousness of God and gave it to us by having faith in the Father, which enabled Him to obey the law.

When we believe the gospel, God gives us the faith of Christ as a gift (Ephesians 2:8-9), and we are to live by Christ's faith (1:17; Habakkuk 2:4). The OFFER of faith is "unto all", but it is only "upon all them that believe" (3:22).

In Israel's program, "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). Jesus told a Gentile woman, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs" (Matthew 15:26). Today, in the dispensation of grace, the middle wall of partition between Jew

and Gentile has been taken down (Ephesians 2:14). "The man, Christ Jesus" is the "mediator between God and men" (I Timothy 2:5). Therefore, today, "there is no difference" (3:22) between Jew and Gentile.

3:23 The reason there is no difference between Jew and Gentile is because both has been concluded under sin (3:9). The Gentiles were concluded under sin at Genesis 11. The Jews had favored nation status with God then. Once the Jews were concluded under sin in Acts 7, there was no difference between Jew and Gentile any more.

II Chronicles 6:36 is a good cross-reference to this verse.

3:24 Hebrews 10:27-28 says that, once man dies, he is judged by God. Once you believe the gospel, you are buried into Christ's death (6:3-4). Therefore, "ye are dead" (Colossians 3:3), but yet you live because Christ lives in you (Galatians 2:20). Basically, when you believe the gospel, you are crucified with Christ, and you are declared just by God because Christ Jesus has redeemed you. "Ye are bought with a price" (I Corinthians 6:20). That price is "His own blood" (Acts 20:28). Thus, we are God's "purchased possession" (Ephesians 1:14). This is how we have been redeemed by Christ Jesus. Since God purchased us, we are justified freely, i.e., without us paying a price. Eternal life is the gift of God (6:23).

3:25 "Propitiation" means fully satisfying sacrifice. Isaiah 53:11 says that God shall see of the travail of Jesus' soul and shall be satisfied. The result is that Jesus shall justify many.

The wages of sin is death (6:23). Jesus did no sin (I Peter 2:22), which means that He could become a curse for us by hanging on a tree. So, He was "made sin" (II Corinthians 5:21). He then experienced the second death by going to hell (Revelation 20:14). Jesus said, "Who is mine adversary? Let him come near to me" (Isaiah 50:8). So, Satan came near to Jesus when Jesus died. Jesus then experienced Psalm 116:3-4. "The sorrows of death compassed Me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon Me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver My Soul." Then, the Lord delivered His soul from death (Psalm 116:8). Why? "Because it was not possible that He should be holden of" death (Acts 2:24).

In other words, when an unbeliever goes to hell, he will never get

out of hell (Revelation 14:10-11), because he does not have the capacity to pay his sin debt. Jesus, however, had the capacity to pay our sin debt, because He conquered sin and death because He never sinned. So, the justice of God demanded that He be delivered from death, as Psalm 16:10 says, "For Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." Therefore, Jesus contended with Satan over death, and Jesus swallowed up death in victory (Isaiah 25:8), such that Jesus got the keys of death and hell away from Satan (Revelation 1:18).

When we believe the gospel, we are buried with Christ in death, and we are raised to new life in the likeness of His resurrection (6:4-6). This is all because Christ is the propitiation or fully satisfying sacrifice for sin.

As we saw in Psalm 116:4, Jesus called upon the Lord to deliver His soul from hell. In other words, Jesus Christ had faith that His blood would be the sufficient payment for sin, which is why II Timothy 2:8 says that "Jesus Christ...was raised from the dead according to my gospel." This is what "through faith in His blood" means (3:25). Since only believers are given the faith of Christ, only believers have their sins paid for by the sacrifice of Christ. 3:25 mentions that God has declared "His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." This does not mean that Jesus' blood only covers past sins. It just means that all of your sins are considered to be in the past, because all of your sins--past, present, and future--are covered by the blood of Christ. 4:7-8 makes this clear, when it says that your "sins are covered" and that "the Lord will not impute sin" to your account.

3:26 God is just in declaring righteousness to us because our sins are paid for by the blood of Christ. In doing so, God justifies us. But, God is only just in justifying those who believe in Jesus, meaning that they believe the gospel God has given them.

Remember that Psalm 116:4 says that Jesus called upon the Lord to deliver His soul from hell. The parallel passage to Psalm 116 says, "In My distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to My God: and He did hear My voice out of His temple, and My cry did enter into His ears" (II Samuel 22:7). God says that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (10:13). Therefore, God saved Jesus from hell, and God will apply Jesus' death as a

sacrifice for our sins when we call upon God's name to deliver us from hell.

3:27 Since salvation is a free gift, we cannot boast about how great we are. We are to glory only in the cross (Galatians 6:14).

3:28 We are justified by the faith of Christ without the deeds of the law, because the power to obey God is in faith; it is not in the law.

3:29 In chapter 4, Paul will give the example of Abraham as a Gentile justified by faith and David as a man justified through faith. So, perhaps this verse is setting up chapter 4.

3:30 The circumcision are under the Mosaic law; the uncircumcision are not. Perhaps this is why the circumcision are justified by faith, while the uncircumcision are justified through faith.

3:31 We establish the law through faith. We are under the curse of the law, because we have broken its provisions. The law says that someone who hangs on a tree is cursed. Christ hung on a tree for us, and so Christ fulfilled the provisions of the law on our behalf. Therefore, when we believe the gospel, we receive the faith of Christ, and the law is established, as part of the justification process, by faith. "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God" (Galatians 2:19).

Romans 1-3 Summary

1:1-17 speaks of the power of the gospel and mystery doctrine to transform believers.

1:18-1:32 condemns those who use the knowledge of evil to try to get rid of God.

Chapter 2 condemns those who use their knowledge of good to try to be okay with God.

3:1-8 shows that man tells lies.

3:9-20 shows that man is pure evil, and God gave the law merely to keep man from destroying himself.

3:21-31 gives the answer that the blood of Christ was shed to give the righteousness of God to all those who believe the gospel.

Romans 4 - The Law Does Not Interfere with Justification by Faith

4:1 "Abraham our father" is explained in 4:11 that, because Abraham was justified by faith alone, as Gentiles are justified in the current dispensation, Abraham is our father.

"As pertaining to the flesh" is key to understanding this verse. Abraham must have found 3:9-18 to be true about his own flesh.

4:2-3 Abraham cannot glory because he was not justified by works. He was justified by believing God. The only glorying he can do is in the cross (Galatians 6:14). Even if he was justified by works, he still could not glory before God, because God is greater than man.

James 2:21-24 says that Abraham was justified by works. This is not a contradiction of 4:2, because James is referring to works of faith. He says that, when Abraham was justified by the work of faith of offering Isaac upon the altar, "faith wrought with his works" and fulfilled the scripture of Genesis 15:6 that is quoted here in 4:3. This was Abraham walking in the good works which God hath before ordained to do through him (Ephesians 2:10). This could not be a work of the law, because "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (3:28). "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 2:16).

All spiritual things should be answered by the question: "What saith the scripture?" (4:3). The same question is asked in Galatians 4:30. The answer to the Romans 4:3 question is to believe God in order to receive righteousness. The answer to the Galatians 4:30 question is to cast out the law and live under grace instead. So, the answers to both questions tell you how to be saved, and how to live after you are saved.

4:4-5 "The wages of sin is death" (6:23). Before you are saved, the only wage you can earn is death, because all you can do is sin, since you do not have the faith of Christ (14:23). Therefore, the only way you can get eternal life is by believing the gospel and having the righteousness of God imputed to your account (3:21-

22). Therefore, righteousness is reckoned to us of grace, "being justified freely by His grace" (3:24). This tells us that faith is not a work.

Note that God justifies the ungodly. Jesus said, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9:13). Jesus was referring to Hosea 6:6, which says, "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."

God judges you in one of two ways. Either you declare yourself to be righteous, and God judges your righteousness as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6) and casts you into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15). Or, you ask God for mercy because you recognize you are ungodly, and God justifies you and gives you the free gift of eternal life. This is summed up in Luke 18:10-14.

4:6 God imputes righteousness without works to believers, regardless of dispensation. David was under the law, and yet God gave him righteousness. David committed adultery and murder-- both of which are punishable by death under the law (Leviticus 20:10; Exodus 21:12-14). Yet, David confessed his transgression, and God forgave him (Psalm 32:5). (David's soul confessed his transgression (Romans 10:9-10).)

4:7-8 Because God "justifieth the ungodly" (4:5) and justification is a free gift of God by His grace (3:24), God forgave David of his past sins (4:7 and Psalm 32:1) and his future sins (4:8 and Psalm 32:2).

4:9 Now, Paul brings up the dispensational question. David received forgiveness of past and future sins in Israel's program. So, does forgiveness of all sins only come upon believers in Israel's program or also upon believers in today's mystery program?

4:10 To answer this question, Paul goes back to Abraham. Righteousness was reckoned to Abraham in Genesis 15:4-6 which was before circumcision was established in Genesis 17. This means that God can also reckon righteousness to believers in today's mystery program, since we are also not in circumcision. Note that Paul does not ask the question, "When was righteousness reckoned to Abraham?" Rather, he asks, "cometh this blessedness?" This blessedness is forgiveness of past sins

(4:7), and not having future sins imputed to someone (4:8). Therefore, when someone receives the righteousness of God (4:3), he receives forgiveness of ALL sins, both in the past and in the future!

4:11 Circumcision was a physical sign of Abraham's righteousness. Today, we are also circumcised once we are saved. Our circumcision is a spiritual one (Colossians 2:11). The circumcision that Abraham received was "a shadow of things to come" (Colossians 2:17).

Abraham's circumcision was also a seal of God's righteousness that he received. This means that Abraham was also eternally secure in Christ. Today, we are "sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13).

Because God planned the dispensation of grace "before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4), God preached the gospel to Abraham in Genesis 12:3, and Abraham believed God in Genesis 15:4-6 (See Galatians 3:8). Since God justified Abraham by faith and He justifies us by faith, today's believers are the children of Abraham (Galatians 3:7). This makes Abraham "the father of all them that believe" (4:11).

4:12 Circumcision was a token of the covenant between God and Abraham (Genesis 17:12). All Jews circumcised had God's covenant in their flesh (Genesis 17:13). If they did not get circumcised, they were to be cut off from God (Genesis 17:14). Ishmael was circumcised the same day that Abraham was circumcised (Genesis 17:24-26). "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (Romans 9:6). Because "the children of the promise are counted for the seed", not "the children of the flesh", which is why Isaac was saved, not Ishmael (Romans 9:7-8). Ishmael was cast out because he did not believe God (Galatians 4:30). This shows that, just because a male Jew was circumcised, it does not mean that he has God's righteousness. He must also "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham" (4:12).

Ishmael did not walk in those steps; therefore, he was not saved. Isaac did; therefore, he was saved. The Pharisees said, "Abraham is our father" (John 8:39). Jesus said, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill Me....This did not Abraham" (John 8:39-40).

The circumcision have a unique position with God, because God made a fleshly covenant with them (Genesis 17:12-13), as a sign of the spiritual covenant He wanted to make with them if they believed God. (This is also why Jesus did physical miracles as a sign of the spiritual miracle of eternal life He wanted to do for them.). So, Israel has to have the works of faith in order to be saved, meaning they have to believe the gospel. They walk in God's good works (Ephesians 2:10), when they believe the gospel given to them. This is why James says that Abraham was justified by works when he offered Isaac upon the altar. Faith wrought with his works to make his faith perfect (James 2:21-22), fulfilling his belief of God's gospel to him in James 2:23.

In other words, God looks at circumcised Jews as being in a faith position, because they have the seal of the righteousness of faith (4:11). Then, when they walk in that faith position by believing the gospel, then they are justified by faith plus works of faith (James 2:24). But, for people in the mystery dispensation, we are justified by faith alone (3:28), because we are not already in that faith position. This is probably why 3:30 says that the circumcised are justified "by faith," and the uncircumcised are justified "through faith." It is like circumcised Jews have dormant faith resident in their flesh, thanks to the circumcision covenant.

They then need to activate that faith by walking in it, i.e., believing the gospel. So, they are justified by the faith that is there. The uncircumcised do not have this covenant in the flesh, and so they are justified through the faith given unto them when they believe the gospel.

4:13 God purposely gave righteousness to Abraham before giving him the law so that people in the dispensation of grace could be saved by faith apart from the law (Galatians 3:8-9).

4:14 Faith and law do not mix (11:6). God gave the inheritance to Abraham by promise. If it is of the law, it is no more of promise (Galatians 3:16-18). In other words, if you have to keep your salvation by obeying the law, then you have to earn your salvation by obeying the law. Then, Christ's death is worthless (Galatians 2:21). But, there is no law that can give you life (Galatians 3:21); therefore, eternal life by promise is the only way we can get it.

4:15 "The law worketh wrath." 7:9 says that "when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." "For sin, taking

occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me" (7:11). In other words, because we have sin natures, the law works with the sin nature to make us "exceeding sinful" (7:13). This is how the law worketh wrath.

When there is no law, there is no breaking of the law, because there is no law to break. Still, sin was in the world before the law (5:13), and so God had to add the law because of man's sin (Galatians 3:19) so that man would see his sin and need for a Saviour.

4:16 Since righteousness cannot come by the law, it has to come by faith. Since it is of faith, then it is of grace. In other words, because we have no faith in our flesh, faith has to be given to us by God, which makes faith by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). Since faith is given to us by grace, then that makes the promise sure to all believers, because the promise cannot be earned, or else it is of the law, not of promise (4:14).

"That...which is of the law" is Israel. "That...which is of the faith of Abraham" is all believers. Because Abraham was justified by faith alone in Genesis 15, he is the father of the body of Christ.

Because Abraham was justified by faith plus works of faith in Genesis 22, he is the father of the bride of Christ. This makes Abraham the father of all believers.

4:17 "Before Him" makes me think of standing before God as the judge, as in 14:10 ("We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."). Because Abraham believed God, God, in His judgment of Abraham, quickened him, or made him alive in Christ. By doing so, God "calleth those things which be not as though they were." In other words, Abraham was declared to be alive in Christ in Genesis 15:6, even though Abraham was still in his vile flesh, and Christ had not yet died for his sins. God is outside of time, and so He sees things as they will be in eternity, not as they are on the earth. II Corinthians 4:18 says that we look at the things which are not seen, which are the eternal things, and we do not look at the things which are seen, which are the temporal. So, too, God looked at Abraham in eternity and called him a righteous man, although, in the flesh, Abraham was far from being righteous.

4:18 "Against hope" refers to the temporal or material world.

"Believed in hope" refers to the eternal or spiritual world. Abraham walked by faith, not by sight (II Corinthians 5:7). He did not look at his position as a stranger and sojourner (Hebrews 11:8-10,13). Therefore, Abraham becoming a father of many nations refers to him being a spiritual father.

4:19 The reason God waited until Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90 (Genesis 17:17) before Isaac was born was so that both Abraham and Sarah would be reproductively dead (Hebrews 11:11-12), which made Isaac a child of promise, not of the law.

4:20 Abraham's faith is also seen in being willing to kill Isaac, because he knew that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead (Hebrews 11:17-19). Abraham believed God against all earthly reasoning, which gave glory to God.

4:21 Good definition of faith. Faith means that you are fully persuaded that God will perform what He has promised. In doing so, God destroys the wisdom of the wise, and brings to nothing the understanding of the prudent (I Corinthians 1:19).

4:22 "It" is faith. 1:17 says the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. Abraham had faith in God's promise, and so Christ's faith was imputed to him, as 3:22 says we receive the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ when we believe God's Word to us, i.e., the gospel.

4:23-24 These verses tell us that Genesis 15:6 was written down both for Abraham's sake and for our sake. The book of Genesis was written down by Moses about 400 years afterward. This means that Genesis 15:6 must have some future benefit for Abraham. I believe this refers to when God judges the people with His truth (Psalm 96:13). God's Word is spirit and life (John 6:63). Revelation 20:15 says that your name must be written in the book of life in order to have eternal life with God. Therefore, I believe that the way our names are in the book of life is that we are all included in Genesis 15:6. That verse was written down to benefit both Abraham and the body of Christ so that we have proof that we are in the book of life, because we believe God and counts it unto us as righteousness.

4:25 Jesus was delivered into hell to pay for our offences, and He was raised again so that God could justify us. If God did not raise Jesus from the dead, then "your faith is vain; ye are yet in your

sins" (I Corinthians 15:17).

Romans 5 – Christ’s Overthrow of Sin

5:1 We have peace with God as a result of being justified by faith. No religion can bring about peace with God, including the Christian effort to work.

5:2 Because we have received the faith of Christ, we stand in grace. We do not stand in the law (Galatians 5:1). We are saved by grace (Ephesians 1:7; 2:8), we are kept by grace (5:15,17; II Corinthians 12:9), and we will continue to stand in grace for the ages to come (Ephesians 2:7). Therefore, God’s grace alone must also be able to sustain us in the current age. If you can lose your salvation, then God’s grace is not sufficient to cover your sin, which is not true (5:20-21). This is why we are to “rejoice evermore” (I Thessalonians 5:16).

You can “frustrate the grace of God” (Galatians 2:21) and fall from operating in grace (Galatians 5:4), but you cannot lose God’s grace.

5:3-5 We rejoice in what we have in heaven, but we also rejoice in what we have on earth for godly living, even though what we have are tribulations. The reason we rejoice in tribulations is because they create the love of God coming through us to others. God commended His love toward us in the cross (5:8), and we commend God’s love to others by suffering for godly living.

This is why our suffering works for us “an eternal weight of glory” (II Corinthians 4:17), and why we are to reckon our sufferings not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (8:18). Jesus Christ was made perfect by the things He suffered (Hebrews 2:10, 5:8-9). Why should we expect anything less for ourselves?

“Tribulation worketh patience” means that tribulation causes us to be patient in waiting for the spiritual things that we have in Christ that we will receive in the life to come.

“Patience, experience” means that patience builds experience so that we do not have the unreasonable expectation of health, wealth, and material prosperity in this life, as most of Churchianity has.

“Hope” means that we have a confident expectation of all the blessings (Ephesians 1:3) we will receive in heaven (8:24-25). Christians proclaim that we have eternal life and all the wonderful spiritual blessings in heaven for all eternity. Yet, if the current life, we are often at a disadvantage to the world, because Satan is the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4), and has the world operating by his course (Ephesians 2:2). Therefore, Bible believing Christians are troubled, perplexed, persecuted, cast down, and constantly bear Jesus’ death in our bodies (II Corinthians 4:8-10). You would think that such a position would make us ashamed.

However, “hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts” (5:5). All of our suffering results in God’s love being exhibited through us to others. Therefore, “the life also of Jesus [is] made manifest in our body” (II Corinthians 4:10), which makes all of the suffering worthwhile.

The Holy Ghost is given unto us (I Thessalonians 4:8).

5:6 “Were yet without strength” shows that we cannot save ourselves (Jeremiah 31:11; Matthew 12:28-29). The will to serve God is with us, but there is no power in our flesh to do so (7:18).

“Due time” = when the Gentiles were finally ready to believe the gospel and be saved (Galatians 4:4-5; Romans 9:22-24, 11:30-32).

“Christ died for the ungodly,” not for the righteous (4:5, Matthew 9:11-13).

5:7 The merit, for which Christ died, is found in God, not in us. “Love covereth all sins” (Proverbs 10:12; I Peter 4:8). Also, because we were ungodly, we can love God greatly once we accept God’s love. “To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little” (Luke 7:47). “We love Him, because He first loved us” (I John 4:19).

5:8 This verse shows that you do not turn from your sins before you are saved. Christ died for sinners, not people who have turned from their sins. The reason is because we have no strength (5:6) to turn from our sins.

5:9-10 “Much more then” in 5:9 and “much more” in 5:10 shows the abundant, eternal life that God gives us when we are saved (John 10:10). God does not just save us from hell, but He gives us His life in heaven.

“Being NOW justified by His blood” (5:9) tells us that we have already been given the gift of eternal life, which means we can live in Christ’s life right now (Galatians 2:20). Sadly, most all believers allow their vile flesh (Philippians 3:21), Satan as the god of this world (I Corinthians 4:4), and the world’s following of Satan’s course (Ephesians 2:2) to keep them from experiencing their life in Christ right now.

“God hath not appointed us to wrath” (I Thessalonians 5:9).

We were God’s enemies, due to our sin (Job 13:23-24; Isaiah 59:2).

Christ died to reconcile us to God. Once we are reconciled to God, we are saved from living in sin, due to Christ’s life (Galatians 2:20).

5:11 We have also “NOW received the atonement,” which again tells us that we are eternally secure in Christ. Reconciliation speaks of our new relationship with God. We are no longer God’s enemy. Atonement speaks of us not having any sin on our souls, which gives us joy in our new relationship with God.

In other words, reconciliation means we have peace with God because we are no longer God’s enemy. Atonement means we have joy in our relationship with God because we are holy (Colossians 3:12), like God is holy (I Peter 1:15-16).

5:12 When Adam sinned, he received the sin nature. He then passed that sin nature on to all of his descendants, which is everyone except Christ, because Christ was born of a virgin. The result is that all of us have sinned. Since the wages of sin is death (6:23), Adam also passed death on to us.

5:13 About 2,500 years passed from Adam’s sin until the Mosaic law was given. This verse tells us that, just because there was no law during that time, it does not mean that there was no sin during that time. Sin was in the world the whole time, being passed down from generation to generation. Man did not have sin

imputed to their account from breaking the Mosaic law.

5:14 However, people still had sin imputed unto them because they broke the law of the conscience (2:14-15). This is why death reigned from Adam to Moses, even though the Mosaic law had not been given yet, and even over people who did not sin in a similar manner as Adam's sin. As we will learn in 14:23, whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Therefore, sin is anything that is contrary to having faith in God.

Adam is the figure of the Lord Jesus Christ, because only Adam and the Lord Jesus Christ were born without a sin nature. They are the only two men in history who had a choice to sin or not to sin. Adam chose to sin; Jesus chose not to sin. Therefore, Adam chose death, while Jesus chose life.

5:15 The good news is that, since sin and death are automatically imputed to all those born of Adam, grace and life are automatically imputed to all those born of Christ. This means that you cannot work for your salvation. Eternal life is the natural consequence of being born of Christ. This is how we can NOW be justified by His blood (5:9) and NOW receive the atonement (5:11).

3:22 says that the righteousness of God is offered unto all, but it is only upon all them that believe. This is because only those, who believe the gospel, are given the faith of Christ, which causes them to be born of Christ. Salvation is "by grace...through faith" (Ephesians 2:8), meaning that salvation is given to you based upon the grace of God as a result of receiving the faith of Christ once you believe (6:23). The reason that grace abounds over your sin in order to give you eternal life is because Christ's death fully paid for your sin (3:24-25), such that "death is swallowed up in victory" (I Corinthians 15:54).

Adam's offence brings death; Christ's faithfulness brings life.

5:16 Adam's sin brings condemnation. All it took was one sin to condemn you to hell. However, Christ's sacrifice covers all sins (Hebrews 10:10-12) unto justification. So, condemnation came by one man (Adam) committing one sin, and justification comes by one man (Christ) bringing one sacrifice to pay for all of our sins. But, again, universal salvation is not true, because only faith pleases God (Hebrews 11:6), because only faith enables us to obey God perfectly in eternity. And so only those, who believe the

gospel, receive the faith of Christ, which results in God's righteousness being imputed unto us as a free gift from God. Those, who do not believe, are not willing to accept the free gift. Thus, they do not receive salvation. What this tells us is that none of us have the choice to sin or not, due to our sin nature, but all of us have the choice to accept God's righteousness or not.

5:17 Because Adam broke the law, he was guilty of breaking the whole law (James 2:10). Because we are sons of Adam, Adam's sin is imputed to our account, so that we also are guilty of breaking the whole law. This means that death reigned by Adam. The words "much more" and "abundance" tell us that Christ's life conquered Adam's death. Christ fought Satan and death (Isaiah 50:8-9) and won because He put His trust in the Lord (II Samuel 22:5-21). Therefore, God raised Him from the dead (Ephesians 1:19-20) with the keys of hell and of death in His hands (Revelation 1:18).

Note that this verse says, "they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness." Grace is God's undeserved favor given to us. It is in abundance, which means that it conquers Adam's death in our lives. Righteousness is also said to be a gift. This makes it clear that eternal life is God's gift to us. We do not earn our salvation or keep our salvation by doing any works. Rather, we believe the gospel, and salvation is given to us as a free gift. Christ's life abounds over Adam's death making Christ's life the new ruler of our lives. Christ purchased us with His Own blood (Acts 20:28; I Corinthians 6:19-20). Since God has already made the purchase of our souls, there is no way we can lose our salvation.

5:18 Adam's offence = judgment = condemnation
Christ's righteousness = free gift = justification = life
Based upon 5:18, we can understand that, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27), means that when we believe the gospel, we die to sin and are made alive unto Christ. This is the theme of Romans 6.

5:19 Adam's disobedience makes us sinners; Christ's obedience makes us righteous. This shows that it was crucial for Jesus to be a man. If Jesus was only God in the flesh, then our sin and death would not have been cancelled through the cross work of Christ. This is because Christ would not have been obedient, because God is over all. Therefore, there would have been no one

for Him to obey.

5:20 This verse tells us the purpose of the law. The wages of sin is death (6:23). However, because all men are sinners (3:23), we would not be able to recognize our dead condition without the law. The law causes the offence to abound (5:20). Specifically, the law works with our sin nature so that our sin might exceed our self-righteous pride (7:11-13). Therefore, the purpose of the law is for us to sin even more so that we will recognize our sinful condition and believe the gospel.

You may think that God giving us the law so that the offence may abound would be a bad thing. However, God's grace to cover our sin is limitless. Therefore, more sin does not present a problem to God. He just has His grace abound over our sin to give us eternal life.

5:21 The result of grace abounding over sin is that grace is now the king in your life, instead of sin. Sin reigned unto death, but now grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. Remember from 3:22 that this is the righteousness of God imputed unto you. Because it is God's righteousness, it can never be overthrown!

Romans 6 – Dead to Sin; Alive to Christ

6:1 Paul just said, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (5:20). Your flesh's natural reaction to that statement is what is stated here in 6:1. Should not we sin more so that grace abounds even more? In 5:15-19, we learned that, when we believe the gospel, we are taken out of Adam (sin and death) and placed into Christ (grace and life). Paul will now explain the implications of our new identity in Christ.

6:2 The answer to the question of 6:1 is, "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" The answer is that grace is not an excuse to sin, but it is an opportunity to live apart from sin. It is an opportunity to have Christ live in us.

Before you were saved, you were held prisoner by sin, and you would spend eternity in the lake of fire. Once you believe the gospel, God frees you from the sin prison and gives you eternal life in heaven. Why, then, would you go back to the sin prison and serve sin again? This is a ridiculous thing to do. If I put

myself back under the law, “I make myself a transgressor” (Galatians 2:18). Paul says that you received the Spirit by the hearing of faith, and so you are “foolish” if you think that “having begun in the Spirit” ye are “now made perfect by the flesh” (Galatians 3:2-3). In other words, why would anyone put themselves back under the law when there is no power in the law to perform the law (7:18), because the law is spiritual and my flesh is carnal (7:14)? All you do under the law is sin which works death. Instead, what you need to do is to live under grace in the life of Christ. That is the ONLY way that you can serve God.

Now, the reason that people think that they should sin that grace may abound (6:1) is that no good thing dwells in your flesh (7:18). All your flesh wants to do is sin. The flesh is so desperate to be wicked that it is even willing to deceive your mind (Jeremiah 17:9) into thinking that grace is a license to sin, when it is really the first opportunity you have ever had to allow Christ to live in you. So, your evil flesh tries to take advantage of the grace of God as an excuse to sin without consequences.

On the flip side, you may use your knowledge of good to try to serve God in the flesh. Churchianity says, “Jesus died for me. The least I can do is live for Him.” This is faulty thinking based upon a lack of understanding how wicked and deceitful the flesh really is. Once you understand your new identity in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17), you will desire to walk in the Spirit, rather than fulfilling the lusts of the flesh (8:1-2). Therefore, Paul will now explain our new identity.

6:3-4 “Know ye not” is the position that Churchianity is in. “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit” (Galatians 5:17). At the same time, God’s love “suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up” (I Corinthians 13:4). The result is that the flesh uses every evil trick it can to get you to obey it, while you have to desire and make the conscience decision to allow the love of God to come through you. The result is that the vast majority of people, who go to church, walk in the flesh, rather than in the Spirit. Therefore, Churchianity gets people to concentrate on the flesh so that people will continue to go to their churches and give them money.

They take these verses to mean water baptism, when water is not mentioned. The word “baptize” means “to identify with.” I Corinthians 10:2 says that believing Israel was “baptized unto

Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” “The sea” is a reference to the Red Sea. When Israel crossed the Red Sea, God had the waters depart for Israel, and they walked across on dry land. Then, Pharaoh’s army followed them, God closed up the waters of the Red Sea, and Pharaoh’s army drowned (Exodus 14:21-30). Therefore, in I Corinthians 10:2, “baptized” cannot mean water baptism, because the ones baptized in water were Pharaoh’s army, not Israel! This shows that it is possible to have a dry baptism.

In I Corinthians 1:14, Paul says, “I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius.” Why, because “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel” (I Corinthians 1:17). This means that water baptism is not for today. Otherwise, why would Paul thank God that he did not baptized many of the Corinthians? Later on in the epistle, Paul says, “by one Spirit are we ALL baptized into one body” (I Corinthians 12:13). So, Paul says that ALL of the Corinthians have been baptized by God’s Spirit into the body of Christ, even though not all of the Corinthians had been water baptized. This tells us that the way we are baptized into Jesus Christ’s death (Romans 6:3) is by a dry baptism that happens automatically when we believe the gospel.

Colossians 2:11-12 elaborates on this. It says that we have been “circumcised with the circumcision made without hands.” It then goes on to say that baptism is part of this circumcision: “Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.” Since the circumcision is “without hands,” the baptism must also be without hands.

All of this tells us that, when Paul says that “we are buried with him by baptism into death” (Romans 6:4), it means a dry baptism by the Spirit of God into Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. Ephesians 4:5 says that there is only “one baptism” today. This means that God does not recognize water baptism as valid today, because it has been replaced by the Spirit baptism into Christ’s death. Water baptism was just “a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Colossians 2:17).

It is absolutely essential that we recognize this Spirit baptism. When we do, we recognize that the only way we can serve God today is by walking in the Spirit. If this were a water baptism, our flesh would be baptized, meaning that we could serve God in our

flesh. But, we cannot. After we are saved, we are still in our “vile flesh” (Philippians 3:21). Why? So “that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (II Corinthians 4:7). **Because Churchianity does not teach Spirit baptism, they fail to understand who they are in Christ, because our new identity as Christians rests in being identified or baptized into Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection by the Spirit.**

Note that 6:4 says that we “SHOULD walk in newness of life.” It does not say that we have to. Just like we used our free will to choose to believe the gospel, we also have to use our free will to choose to walk in the good works God had ordained for us (Ephesians 2:10). We do not HAVE to walk in the Spirit, but why wouldn’t we?

6:5 “Planted” makes me think of a seed. The plant that comes out of that seed is much greater than the seed itself. Jesus used the same analogy in referring to His own death and resurrection. He said, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24). Paul says, “Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:” (I Corinthians 15:36). Therefore, when you believe the gospel, you are crucified with Christ (6:6). Your old man is buried with Christ, such that “ye are dead” (Colossians 3:3). Then, you experience the abundant life of Christ (John 10:10). Granted, you do not received your glorified flesh until the rapture, and so you do not HAVE to walk in newness of life right now, which is why the future tense is used in 6:5, regarding our resurrection. However, we can still walk in newness of life right now, because Christ has already risen from the dead.

6:6-7 The reason, that you can walk in newness of life right now, is because your “old man is crucified with Him” (6:6). This is in the present tense. The purpose of this crucifixion is so “that the body of sin might be destroyed.” This means that, when your old man is crucified with Christ, the Spirit of God performs a spiritual circumcision on you (Colossians 2:11). God “cuts off” or circumcises your flesh from your soul. This ensures eternal security. If you sin after you are saved, that sin is in the flesh. It cannot affect your soul because your flesh has been circumcised or cut off from your soul. Therefore, that sin never gets back to your soul to be counted against you.

This is why Christ’s sacrifice was “once for all” (Hebrews 10:10).

Churchianity has no problem saying that Christ's death paid for sins in your past. Where they get you is by saying that, if you commit sins in the future, you have to confess them or do good works to demonstrate your salvation. This shows that they do not understand what spiritual circumcision is all about. Christ's death paid for all sins in your past, and it is not needed for future sins, because no sins are imputed to your account once you are saved. This is why, once you are saved, "ye are not under the law, but under grace" (6:14), and "sin is not imputed when there is no law" (5:13). This makes you "freed from sin" (6:7).

6:8-9 Christ dying only once proves that "death hath no more dominion over Him" (6:9). It shows that He conquered death. Contrast this with the animal sacrifices under the Mosaic law which had to be "offered year by year continually" (Hebrews 10:1), because "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). Therefore, since Christ was raised from death to die no more and we are identified with His death (6:3-4), we also have been raised to life in Christ to die no more!

6:10 Christ died to sin once. Because He conquered sin, God raised Him from the dead because "it was not possible that He should be holden of" death (Acts 2:24). Therefore, Christ has eternal life, never to die again. Note that "He liveth unto God" (6:10). He does not live unto Himself. Since I am crucified with Christ, I am to live by the faith of the Son of God (Galatians 2:20). This means that I live unto God only through Christ. If I use my flesh to try to serve God, I will fail, because my flesh lives for myself, not for God.

6:11 "Reckon ye ALSO yourselves" shows that there is someone who has already reckoned you to be "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." That someone is God. I John 3:20 says that "God...knoweth all things." Psalm 139:1-5 says that God knows everything about us. Therefore, if God has reckoned that we are dead to sin and alive unto God, then that is an indisputable fact. Therefore, we should "let God be true, but every man a liar" (Romans 3:4), and reckon that we are dead INDEED unto sin and alive unto God. Therefore, we should never try to please God in our flesh, because we will never please Him that way. We are alive unto God "through Jesus Christ our Lord," and so we should present our bodies a living sacrifice to God (12:1) to be used by God for His service. As 6:13 says, "yield

yourselves unto God.”

6:12-13 The words “let” and “yield” in these verses show that you must make the free will choice after you are saved to either walk in the Spirit or walk in the flesh. It is up to you which one you walk in. Therefore, Churchianity’s teaching that, if you are saved you will serve God, is a false one. You can choose to live in sin or choose to walk in the Spirit. The choice is yours. Granted, after you are saved, you now “delight in the law of God after the inward man” (7:22), but that does not mean that you have to obey the inward man. (Perhaps this faulty teaching comes from thinking that we are under Israel’s new covenant, rather than the body of Christ’s new covenant, because Israel obeys God perfectly under their new covenant (See Ezekiel 36:26-28; I John 3:9).)

These verses emphasize that, since God has reckoned us to be dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God, we should yield our bodies to Christ to be used to live unto God. Before we were saved, we were dead in our trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1) and could not have Christ live in us. Now that our identity is Christ, we should make the free-will choice to allow Christ to live in us (Galatians 2:20).

Note also that we still have “mortal” bodies after we are saved, which again shows that God did not change our vile flesh the moment we were saved.

Yielding your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin (6:13) makes me think of following religion. The reason is because 6:12 already covers sin reigning in your mortal body. Then, 6:13 starts with “neither,” which makes it sound like 6:13 is talking about something different than 6:12. Therefore, yielding your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin may be referring to what we see in Colossians 2, where they are beguiled of their reward through a voluntary humility (Colossians 2:18-23). In other words, 6:12 probably covers using your knowledge of evil to sin, while 6:13 probably covers using your knowledge of good to sin.

6:14 This verse makes it clear that, once you are saved, you are no longer under the law. Rather, you are under grace. Colossians 2:14 says that, when you are forgiven of all your trespasses (Colossians 2:13), Christ blots out the handwriting of ordinances that was against you, nailing it to His cross. Therefore, when you

believe the gospel, not only does your flesh die, but also the flesh's system, which is the law, dies with it.

Operating under grace means that you operate by “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”, rather than by “the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:2). Since the words of God are spirit and life (John 6:63), living in grace means living by “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4), rather than living by the course of this world (Ephesians 2:2) and the lusts of your flesh.

6:14 says that sin SHALL not have dominion over you when you are in heaven; therefore, do not let sin have dominion over you now. Live in grace instead.

6:15 In 6:1, the question was if we should continue in sin that grace may abound. Now, in 6:15, the question is if we should continue in sin because we are not under the law. Both questions are answered with a “God forbid.” When you are a child, your parents put you under their law. When you become an adult, should you then disobey everything your parents told you? Of course not! Your parents gave you the law to give you general principles to live by.

Similarly, when you are saved, God takes you from being under the law and puts you under grace. You should still live by the principles of the law. The difference is that there is no power under the law to perform the law, but there is power to perform the law now that you are under grace. Therefore, you should use the power of the faith and the love of Christ to serve God. “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love” (Galatians 5:16). In other words, once you are saved, it does not matter whether you obey the law or not. Instead, you should allow the faith of Christ to work by love in your life so that others may be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth. When you do that, you will naturally obey the law, because all the law hangs upon the two commandments to love God and others (Matthew 22:37-40).

6:16 After you are saved, you can yield yourself to sin, which works death in you (not that you lose your salvation, but that the works that you do under the law are dead works (See Hebrews 9:14 and Galatians 2:19)). Or, you can yield yourself to obey grace

(living by the faith of the Son of God), which results in working righteousness (working righteousness means doing right things in God's sight). You are the servant of the one you yield yourself to. Why, then, would you serve sin, when you can serve God? "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:20). Do NOT serve your old master of sin and death!

6:17 Churchianity has fooled people into thinking that obedience always means obeying the law. This is not the case. Note that they obeyed from the heart "that form of doctrine." This is a reference to believing the gospel, not doing works of the flesh or even obeying the law. Romans 10:16 says, "But they have not all OBEYED the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath BELIEVED our report?" This shows that obeying from the heart that form of doctrine simply means believing the gospel.

6:18 "Being THEN made free from sin" shows that the link between your soul and sin is severed the moment you believe the gospel. Since you are free from sin the moment you believe the gospel, you have the gift of eternal life right now (6:23); you cannot lose your salvation.

From 6:17-18 we learn that we "WERE the servants of sin." Then, when we believed the gospel, we "BECAME the servants of righteousness." Therefore, righteousness is the master of all people who have believed the gospel. Why, then, would we serve sin, when it is no longer our master?

6:19 If Christians would simply believe God and His Word, Paul would not even have to speak this verse. However, "because of the infirmity of your flesh", it is easy to be tricked into thinking that: 1) Grace is a license to sin, and so you will use your knowledge of evil to sin more in grace than under the law, or 2) Grace is a license to use your flesh and your knowledge of good to try to serve God, which is also sin, because it is not of faith (Romans 14:23). Either way, your flesh will try to sin using grace. Therefore, Paul must tell us to "YIELD" our flesh over to God to be used as "servants to righteousness unto holiness."

Remember that, when we were unbelievers, we were in Adam. The natural process in Adam is to yield our flesh to uncleanness. Now, once we are saved, God has placed us into Christ. The natural process in Christ is to yield our flesh to righteousness.

Therefore, once we are saved, we need to abandon the process in Adam and let Christ use our flesh for righteousness' sake.

6:20 As servants of sin, we were free from righteousness. Now, as servants of righteousness, we should be free from sin (6:22).

6:21 Note how the “fruit” of sin is death. This shows that, if you live in sin after you are saved, death works in you (II Corinthians 7:10). Christ has overcome that death through His payment for your sin and His resurrection life. Therefore, we need not worry about this, thinking that we can lose our salvation, because we cannot lose it.

This also shows why any works of the flesh that you do after you are saved are burned up at the judgment seat of Christ (I Corinthians 3:12-15).

6:22 By contrast, any work of the Spirit in your life is “unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (6:22). Therefore, these works are rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ, because they are holy and survive the fire.

6:23 This is a popular verse used to present the gospel. It shows that sin results in death, and that the only way you have eternal life is by God's free gift to you, when you trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for your sin. Therefore, you cannot work your way to heaven.

While this is all true, the context of this verse is your life in Christ. If you live by the faith of the Son of God, you are living out the gift of eternal life that you have. If you walk in the flesh, you walk in death, which must be burned up at the judgment seat of Christ.

Romans 7 – Battle Between Flesh and Spirit

7:1 The Romans knew the law, but did they know grace?

The law only has dominion over you as long as you live. Since we are baptized into Christ's death (6:3-4), “our old man is crucified with Him” (6:6). Thus, we are “dead with Christ” (6:8). Since we are dead, the law does not have dominion over us.

7:2-4 Old Testament vs. New Testament. Our old covenant was

with the law. When we sinned, we earned death (6:23). When Jesus Christ became sin for us (II Corinthians 5:21), He made the sin payment for us. We were then baptized into or identified with His death, which means that we died, also. Since we died, we are no longer bound to the law of sin and death (8:2).

Furthermore, Jesus Christ wrote a new testament. A testament is a will. Therefore, when Jesus died, His new testament was now in force. Hebrews 9:16-17 says, “For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth” (Hebrews 9:16-17). This new testament is that we would live by “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (8:2).

When we believe the gospel, we die. We are then identified or married to Christ’s death, which means we are also married to His life. Thus, our death, by believing the gospel, results in sin and death dying in our lives, and Jesus’ death for us results in us receiving His life.

7:5-6 “The motions of sins” is used because we have a sin nature. This means that, before we are saved, we do not really have a choice to sin or not. We just go through the motions of sin.

Note that Paul says that “we WERE in the flesh,” in the past tense. This shows that, once we are saved, our identity is in our spirit, where Christ dwells, rather than in our flesh, where Adam dwells. We are not in the flesh any more because of the flesh being cut off through spiritual circumcision (Colossians 2:11-12).

Once we are saved, we are delivered from the law to serve in newness of spirit, not in oldness of letter. I Corinthians 3:6 says, “Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” “The letter killeth” because we do not have power within ourselves to perform the law, as Paul will soon teach us in Romans 7. That is why he says that we were “dead wherein we were held.” It is also why Christ had to deliver us from the law. Without Christ’s deliverance, we would all be dead in our trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1) and would go to hell.

7:7 Again, here is your deceitful flesh trying to pin the blame on someone other than yourself. In 6:1, your flesh wanted to sin so

that grace could abound. In 6:15, your flesh wanted to sin because you are under grace. Now, in 7:7, your flesh wants to blame the law for your sin. In 7:12, Paul will tell us that the law is holy. In 7:14, he will tell us that we are carnal, sold under sin. Therefore, the problem is not with the law; it is with me.

This verse tells us that the purpose of the law is to give us knowledge of our sin (3:20). Since all have sinned (3:23), if God did not give us the law, we would not know we are sinners. The reason is because we would compare ourselves with others and conclude that we are not sinners, since everyone is just like us. Paul says that those, who compare themselves with others, end up commending themselves, rather than noticing their own sin (II Corinthians 10:12). Therefore, God gave us the law so that we would have a holy standard by which to compare ourselves so that we would recognize our sin and need of a Saviour.

7:8 Although the law is not sin, the law does result in us sinning more. Since we have a sin nature, we will naturally sin. When the law comes into our conscience, our sin nature learns new ways in which we can sin. Our sin nature then works with his new knowledge to sin even more than it did before. It is like most sexual-harassment classes. The teacher gives examples of what constitutes sexual harassment with the goal of stopping the harassment. However, the examples give you new ideas of what you can try; thus, increasing the likelihood that you will sexually harass someone. So, too, the law increases the frequency and severity of your sin, as you have learned new ways for your sin nature to sin.

7:9 This verse is a good one to use to show that children, who do not know what sin is, will not be sentenced to hell, even though they have sin on their souls. God would not be a just judge if He condemned people to hell out of no fault of their own. This is why, “sin is not imputed when there is no law” (5:13).

Since Paul is writing to the body of Christ, who never received the Mosaic law, he must be talking about the law of the conscience. In 2:14-15, Paul said that the Gentiles “are a law unto themselves” because they “shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness.” Therefore, even though Gentiles were never put under the Mosaic law, we are still under the law of the conscience. If a baby dies before the conscience comes, sin is not imputed to the baby, and the baby

does not go to hell.

Once the conscience is developed, the sin nature revives, and we die. Therefore, the sin nature is dead until the conscience comes upon us. It is interesting that the contents of the conscience are not important to God. For example, when I was growing up, it was in my conscience that sodomy is a sin. Most people growing up today believe that sodomy is not a sin. The contents of the conscience are irrelevant because, whatever the contents are, the sin nature will work with the conscience so that I disobey the law of the conscience. God is not interested in us having perfect consciences. Rather, He gave us the conscience so that we would be cognizant of our sin so that we would recognize our need for a Saviour.

The dangerous thing happening in our society today is that sin has become a dirty word and truth is relative, such that people do not even recognize that sin exists. When a culture gets to that point, there is no way of saving it. That is why Jesus says that the tribulation period will end when it does. Otherwise, “there should no flesh be saved” (Matthew 24:22). In other words, Jesus’ second coming will take place just before the world is completely given over to a reprobate mind (Romans 1:28). The last thing that happens before a culture is given over to a reprobate mind is rampant sodomy (Romans 1:26-27), which is why I believe that, here in July 2020, we are in the last days of the dispensation of grace. This shows that sodomy is the most powerful force to destroy man’s conscience.

7:10 Because the sin nature works with the conscience to do things contrary to the conscience, the law ends up being death to me. We should note that sin is in the heart. I break the commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” when I hate someone without a cause within my heart (Matthew 5:22). “That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man” (Mark 7:20), and what comes out of the heart of man is the sin nature working with the conscience to create sins.

7:11 “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9). Therefore, it should not surprise us that our sin nature deceives us. It deceives us until thinking that we will follow the law, but the sin nature uses the law to sin more.

When we tell people that we “are not under the law, but under

grace” (6:14), they wonder how they should live. Churchianity is so used to having people tell them what to do, that the absence of commandments leads many to think that grace is a bad thing. However, this verse makes it clear that, whenever you put yourself under the law, you WILL sin even more. Paul said, “For if I build again the things which I destroyed [the law], I make myself a transgressor” (Galatians 2:18). Therefore, the only way we can serve God is in grace. There is no power to serve God in the law, but there is the faith of Christ in grace (Galatians 2:20).

Whenever anyone says that we must be under the law in order to serve God, point them to this verse, because this verse says the opposite. It says that the sin nature uses the law as a sword to slay your own soul! Instead, we should live in grace, and “let God be true, but every man a liar” (3:4). As Paul will say later, “love is the fulfilling of the law” (13:10), and God’s love is in Christ (5:8). Therefore, the ONLY way we obey the law is in grace, which is outside of the law. “And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 1:14).

Churchianity does not believe in eternal security, because they see it as a license to sin. Therefore, they put people under the law. However, by being under the law, Churchianity ends up being in more sin than the eternal-security folks. In their effort to avoid sin, Churchianity sins even more by putting people under the law. This is how the sin nature uses the law to deceive you and slay you.

7:12 There is no fault to be found with the law. The law is holy, just, and good. The fault is with my sin nature, which causes the law to work the wrath of God against me (4:15).

7:13 Since the sin nature works with the law to cause us to sin even more, the question now is if the law actually causes us to die. The answer is, “God forbid.” Remember what Paul said in 5:12, “As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Therefore, due to Adam’s sin, I already had death on me.

You may say, “Why didn’t God create everyone like Adam so that each person could choose to sin or not to sin?” There are two reasons: 1) All of us eventually would choose to sin. Maybe you would have lasted 5,000 years, but you would eventually choose

to rebel against God at some point. So, God might as well have you start in a rebellious state, so that He can start with the solution, and 2) God's goal in making man is not to make innocent people. God's goal is to make people on which He could shed forth His grace. Seraphim, cherubim, and angels are created beings that are innocent. They are not worthy to open the seven seals of the tribulation period (Revelation 5:3-5). They cannot sing the worship song of the 144,000 (Revelation 14:3). They cannot even understand the sufferings of Christ, the glory that followed, nor salvation for Israel (I Peter 1:10-12). The reason is because they have never been forgiven. "To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (Luke 7:47). Therefore, God created man, gave him dominion over God's creation in man's innocence (Genesis 1:26), man sinned and gave that dominion over to Satan (Genesis 3), and Jesus Christ got the dominion away from Satan (Jeremiah 31:11; Matthew 12:29; Revelation 1:18). Now, we can receive forgiveness of sin (Colossians 1:14) and dwell in Christ (Colossians 3:3-4) so that God can show the riches of His grace through us for all eternity (Ephesians 2:7).

What the law does is it works wrath within us (4:15). "That it might appear sin" and "Become exceeding sinful" are the two key phrases in here in 7:13. The reason God gave us the law is because the law works with the sin nature so that we sin more. Our sin needs to abound over our pride until we finally admit that we are sinners. We can then hear and believe the gospel in order to be saved. If God did not give us the law, sin may not appear to be sin to us, and we would never believe the gospel.

We see this borne out in Israel's program. At the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11, the whole world had rejected God in spite of having the law on their conscience. God then called out Abraham and started the nation of Israel, but Israel did not believe. Therefore, God had to give them an additional law—the Mosaic law—in order to get them to see their sin so that they might believe in God to save them by giving them His imputed righteousness. This shows that the law is necessary to show us our sin and need for a Saviour.

This is the function of the law: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Once the law teaches us that we are sinners and we believe the gospel, then we are justified by faith. Then, "after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Galatians

3:24-25). Once we believe the gospel, the law's purpose is fulfilled. Therefore, God takes it away and puts us under grace (6:14).

7:14 "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24). "I am carnal, sold under sin" (7:14). Two things need to happen in order to resolve the enmity between God and man, so that we can dwell with God forever. 1) Our sin must be paid for, or else we will receive eternal damnation in hell (6:23; Revelation 21:8), and 2) We have to accept that payment as atonement for our sin.

Jesus Christ took our sin "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Corinthians 5:21). That takes care of step 1. The second step is that I have to accept His sin payment for my sins. The problem is that "no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it" (Ephesians 5:29). Psalm 10:4 says, "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts." Therefore, a mediator between God and man is needed to overcome our pride so that we believe the gospel and receive the gift of eternal life.

This mediator is the law. It is a spiritual thing that shows that, due to our carnality, we are spiritually bankrupt. Galatians 3:19-20 says, "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one." God is a Spirit; we are carnal sold under sin. Therefore, God created the law. It was ordained by angels, since they are higher than us (Hebrews 2:6-7), and put into the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ (I Timothy 2:5 says, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."), so that we may learn that we are carnal, sold under sin.

Jesus Christ's accomplishment of both steps (He pays for our sin and is the mediator between God and man so that we may believe the gospel and have His sin payment applied to our souls.) is why Colossians 1:16-17 says, "All things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

7:15 This verse shows the quandary of our flesh. My flesh loves to sin. It is so desperate to sin that it will deceive me into thinking that I am not sinning when I really am (Jeremiah 17:9). Therefore, if God did not give me the law, I would not have an objective

standard by which to judge myself, and I would end up thinking I am okay with God, when I am really dead in my trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). Therefore, Jesus Christ brings the law to me (John 1:9), and I observe what is said in 7:15. I try to obey the law, but I fail. Instead, I do what I do not want to do, i.e., I sin.

7:16 The fact, that I want to obey the law, shows that I agree that the law is good. You only have to look at Churchianity to see that people want to obey the law. (Religion has been robbing individuals for 6,000 years based on this principle!)

7:17 Since I want to obey the law but I am incapable of obeying the law, it is not me, per se, who is sinning, but it is “sin that dwelleth in me” (7:17). The two-step process of receiving eternal life is to: 1) Recognize my sin, and 2) Trust in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for my sin (I Corinthians 15:3-4). 7:15-17 tells me that the law teaches me that “sin dwelleth in me” (7:17). Therefore, by giving us the law, God has made it easy for us to accomplish the first step of salvation. This is why, even when Gentiles were in the dark in Israel’s program, Paul said that they could “seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: For in Him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:27-28). In other words, God has made it easy for us to be saved. We just have to recognize the truth that we already know, i.e., that we are sinners and have fallen short of the glory of God (3:23), and then seek after God. We will then find God, because He rewards those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). Salvation could not be any simpler for fallen man!

7:18 I know that there is no good thing in my flesh because I have the will to perform the law, but I have no power to perform the law. Therefore, “there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (3:12). This means that I should “have no confidence in the flesh” (Philippians 3:3). Why, then, does Churchianity have such confidence in the flesh? This shows that Churchianity has a major deficiency in knowing Romans 1-8 doctrine, which is basic doctrine for today. Since their foundation is false doctrine, they know next to nothing about the things of God. Instead, they have coveted after money, piercing themselves through with many sorrows and drowning themselves in destruction and perdition (I Timothy 6:9-10).

Note that Paul puts “(that is, in my flesh)” in parenthesis. He does

this because, as a saved individual, “Christ liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20). I John 4:4 tells believing Israel that they “are of God...and have overcome...: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.” Now that we are in chapter 7, the Romans should already know this truth. Therefore, lest they misunderstand Paul and think that he is saying that there is no power to serve God within you after you are saved, he adds “(that is, in my flesh).” This shows that Paul is teaching the Romans the lesson of the law so that they will “walk in the Spirit, and...not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). In order to walk in the Spirit, you need to tell yourself this verse over and over again, so that you only glory in the cross of Christ (Galatians 6:14), not in your flesh.

7:19-20 The lesson of 7:15-18 is that I want to do good, but I cannot do it in my flesh. Instead, the only power, that my flesh has, is to do evil. Therefore, everything, that I do under the power of my flesh, is due to the sin nature that dwells within me. This is such an important lesson that Paul repeats it in these two verses. Even so, Churchianity remains ignorant of this simple, basic truth that nothing good is in your flesh, and that you are powerless, apart from Christ, to keep the sin nature from controlling your life. You must be transformed by the renewing of your mind and present your body as a living sacrifice to God in order to serve God (Romans 12:1-2). **You will never hear Churchianity teach this because they want your money by getting you to walk by sight, and not by faith (II Corinthians 5:7).**

7:21 The law, that Paul finds, is “the law of sin and death” (8:2). The sin nature in his flesh works death in him, which is why, when he wants to do good, evil is present with him.

7:22 Churchianity exalts the flesh. Their philosophy is that, once you are saved, God changes your flesh (even though this is contrary to Philippians 3:21) so that you now have the power within your flesh to serve God. Therefore, when it comes to Romans 7, Churchianity states that this chapter describes Paul BEFORE he was saved, while chapter 8 describes him ONCE he is saved. This is incorrect.

Romans 3:9-20 describes us before salvation. Romans 7 gives the detail of the inner struggle that takes place once you are saved. Galatians 5:17 says, “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and

the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” This is what Paul describes in Romans 7. Once you are saved, the Spirit of Christ is given unto you, and there is a struggle between your flesh and your spirit, as a result. We know that Paul is describing this struggle AFTER you are saved, because 7:22 says, “I delight in the law of God **after the inward man.**”

If Paul is not saved, then his inward man does NOT delight in the law of God, because it is dead in trespasses and sins. Only saved individuals delight in the law of God after the inward man. Thus, Romans 7 does not describe Paul’s struggles before he was saved. Rather than decreasing struggles, once you are saved, your struggles increase. Before you were saved, you went by the course of this world (Ephesians 2:2), propagated by the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4), and your spirit did not fight against that because it was dead. However, once you are saved, you suffer persecution for godly living (II Timothy 3:12) and must die daily (I Corinthians 15:31) to the flesh in order for Christ to live in you.

The only way you do not struggle after you are saved is if you completely give yourself over to the flesh. This is Churchianity’s goal for you. They enroll you in a program by which you try to serve God in the energies of your flesh. Since you follow the flesh, you do not struggle. Since you have “a form of godliness” (II Timothy 3:5), you allow your flesh to deceive you (Jeremiah 17:9) into thinking you are walking by the Spirit. Then, if a Bible believer tells you the truth, you probably will not listen, because your flesh is satisfied with the way things are going, as is your seared conscience (I Timothy 4:2). This is called being ensnared by the devil, being “taken captive by him at his will” (II Timothy 2:26).

7:23 Again, the fact, that there is a war between Paul’s flesh and his mind, shows that Paul is a saved individual. The mind of Christ (I Corinthians 2:16), as opposed to “his fleshly mind” (Colossians 2:18), tells him to serve God. The problem is that his flesh cannot do it. Thus, the law of sin and death in his members wars against the mind of Christ in order to bring him “into captivity to the law of sin” (7:23).

7:24 This causes Paul to look for a Saviour. Note that he says, “WHO shall save me.” He does not say, “WHAT shall save me.” Most people do not want to recognize their need for a Saviour.

Therefore, they ask the question: “What shall save me?” The answer is their religion. Even if they do hear and believe a clear, gospel message, their flesh lusts against the Spirit within them to the point that they usually run to religion for the answer to their walk with Christ. Therefore, if Satan cannot get them to keep from being saved, he can at least keep them from coming into the knowledge of the truth. This delays the rapture further as another person is not qualified to take a high position in the Body of Christ in heavenly places. By now, Satan knows that Jesus defeated him with the cross, but he knows he can still keep heavenly places from being reconciled back to God if there are not enough people believing sound doctrine in order to be qualified to occupy the higher positions in the Body of Christ. Thus, while Satan is interested in keeping people from being saved, he is also very much interested in keeping them from coming into the knowledge of the truth. Thus, the “Christian” religion is at his disposal to get people to ask “WHAT shall save me?” rather than “WHO shall save me?”

7:25 Since Paul asked the right question, he learned that “God through Jesus Christ our Lord” is the One Who saves him from having to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Again, only a saved person can “serve the law of God” (7:25). Therefore, Romans 7 talks about the struggles of a saved person, not an unsaved person.

This verse also shows that a Christian can live in the flesh and still be saved. Lot is a great example of this. His behavior, in Genesis 19, is of an unbeliever, yet II Peter 2:7-8 calls him “just” and “righteous.” When we get to 8:23, we find out that, when we do this, we “groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

Romans 8 – Walk in the Spirit

8:1 Most modern translations eliminate “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” They do this because it makes it sound like your salvation is conditional upon walking after the Spirit. However, the context shows that this verse refers to self-condemnation, not condemnation by God. Romans 7 went over the battle between the flesh and the Spirit. It ended by asking the question of WHO will save us from our vile bodies, and it answered the question with “God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (7:24-25). 8:1 then says, “Therefore,” which means that the no condemnation of 8:1 is based upon God delivering us from our

self-condemnation. Therefore, Paul starts Romans 8 by letting us know that, thanks to Jesus Christ, it is possible for us to walk in the Spirit. Romans 8, then, is about how we walk in the Spirit.

8:2 Our flesh operates by the law of sin and death, as we learned in chapter 7. Our flesh has a sin nature that works with the law to produce death within us. This is an automatic process. 7:5 says, “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.”

The good news is that, once we were saved, God set up another automatic process in us. That process is where the Holy Ghost teaches our spirits the sound doctrine of God’s Word as we read and believe it. If we go by that sound doctrine, then we operate according to “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (8:2).

Therefore, once we are saved, we can continue to use our fleshly mind (Colossians 2:18) to operate by the law of sin and death, or we can use the mind of Christ to operate by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (I Corinthians 2:16). The choice is ours.

8:3 The reason we could not operate in life before we were saved is because “the law...was weak through the flesh” (8:3). “The law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin” (7:14). So, the result is that I tried to use my carnal flesh to obey the law, and I failed, because I had no power to perform the law, due to my carnality. The result of trying to obey the law was that I actually sinned more (7:8,11,13)! However, now that I am saved, I have been given the Spirit of Christ (8:15). Christ’s Spirit is spiritual, meaning that it has life, because He conquered hell and death (Revelation 1:18), while my old spirit was dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). Therefore, the only way we can serve God is when we present our bodies a living sacrifice (12:1) to be used by Christ’s Spirit within us.

Note that this verse says that Jesus came “in the LIKENESS of sinful flesh.” He did not actually have sinful flesh because He was born of a virgin, which means He was born without a sin nature. His flesh also never turned into sinful flesh, because He never sinned (I Peter 2:22). Hebrews 10:5 says, “Wherefore when He cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me” (Hebrews 10:5). This shows why Jesus came in the LIKENESS of sinful flesh. He needed a body that looks like ours so that He would be our

kinsmen redeemer.

By being the fully satisfying sacrifice (propitiation) for our sin (3:25), Jesus condemned sin in the flesh. This means that grace can now reign in us through righteousness unto eternal life, instead of sin reigning in our bodies unto death (5:21).

8:4 This shows that the power to obey the law comes from Christ's resurrection life in us, rather than in our own flesh. In other words, we were given the law for us to see how powerless we are to perform the law, so that we would trust in God to give us His power to fulfill the righteousness of the law. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (II Corinthians 4:7).

Note that the righteousness of the law is only fulfilled in us if we "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (8:4). It is our choice to yield our bodies to "sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (6:16).

8:5 Before we were saved, we could only mind the things of the flesh, because our spirits were dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). By contrast, the Lord Jesus Christ never sinned, and so He always minded the things of the Spirit. Now that we are saved, we can either use our fleshly minds (Colossians 2:18) to mind the things of the flesh, or we can use the mind of Christ (I Corinthians 2:16) to mind the things of the Spirit. So, the question is, "Who will we follow—Adam or Christ?"

Therefore, this verse clearly states the impossibility of us to serve God in the energies of our flesh and the impossibility of Christ to sin through our flesh.

8:6 Since we all have fleshly minds, using those fleshly minds ALWAYS results in carnality. This means that, since the law is spiritual, I can NEVER serve God in the energies of my flesh. Even if I use my knowledge of good (Genesis 2:17) to try to serve God in my flesh, the sin nature within me will deceive into thinking I am serving God (7:11) when I am really being vainly puffed up by my fleshly mind (Colossians 2:18). For example, if I decide to quit drinking in my flesh, I can do it. However, that then means I stop committing the sin of drinking, but I start committing the sin of "will worship" (Colossians 2:23). Therefore, all I have done is replaced one sin with another. Thus, I have made myself a transgressor (Galatians 2:18). Instead, I should try

to quit drinking by allowing Christ to do that through me. It is all about attitude. If I quit drinking because Christ wants me to be sober minded (12:3; Ephesians 5:18), then I have not sinned, because it was Christ living in me (Galatians 2:20) that quit the alcohol, and not my fleshly mind that used my knowledge of good to do it myself.

Now, I do not die spiritually if I use my carnal mind, because Jesus Christ's sacrifice atoned for my sins, such that my soul is saved, even though my fleshly works are destroyed at the judgment seat of Christ (I Corinthians 3:15). I am simply to WALK in the good works of God by yielding myself to Christ (Ephesians 2:10).

8:7-8 Again, because the law is spiritual and my fleshly mind is carnal, it is impossible for me to please God by using my flesh, because it is carnal. Jesus Christ, however, can serve God in my flesh, because He is spiritual and not carnal. This is why Paul told the Galatians, "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Galatians 3:3).

8:9 God "quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were" (4:17). Therefore, as far as God is concerned, although I still have my "vile flesh" (Philippians 3:21), I am not longer "in my flesh" positionally speaking (8:9).

I would not know about my spiritual circumcision and baptism if not for God telling me (Colossians 2:11-12). Similarly, I would not know my flesh is dead if God did not tell me. Since God cannot lie (Titus 1:2), we need to trust God and "likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (6:11).

8:9-10 The "if's of these verses are not conditional "if's. In other words, Paul is not saying that he does not know if they have the Spirit of God in them or not, because he has already shared that they now have the atonement (5:11) and that Christ lives in them (6:13). Rather, the "if's mean that our flesh is dead and the Spirit of life is dwelling within us.

Why is your body dead? Because of sin. Why is the Spirit alive? Because of righteousness. In other words, since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (3:23) and the wages of sin is death (6:23), we "were all dead" before we were saved (II

Corinthians 5:14). Therefore, Christ came and conquered death through His righteousness. We are then placed into Christ's righteousness so that we also receive His life. Hebrews 9:27-28 says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." In other words, since we were all dead in sin and judgment comes after death, Christ might as well come and bear our sins in order to give us salvation.

This is the main reason why the sin nature is imparted to us from Adam. The sin nature causes us to be born into spiritual death. God gives us the law so that our sin nature becomes "exceeding sinful," i.e., it exceeds our pride so that we recognize our sin and need for a Saviour (7:13). So then Christ's sacrifice atones for our sin and gives us life in Him.

8:11 Note that God's Spirit quickens your "MORTAL bodies." In Genesis 2:7, "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." The breath of God is His Spirit. God gave man God's Spirit in order to give him life. Then, Adam sinned, and his body was corrupted by that sin, earning death (6:23). When Jesus was born of a virgin, He became the second Adam, meaning that He had God's Spirit in Him as well. Since He never sinned, He continued to have the life of God in Him. Since God lives forever, Christ's Spirit never died. This is why He said from the cross, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit" (Luke 23:46). Then, after Christ's soul was made an offering for sin (Isaiah 53:10-11), God gave Him His glorified body and Christ's living Spirit returned to Him. When you believe the gospel, you are "a new creature" in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17), meaning that God is breathed by Christ into you (This is why John 20:22 says, "He BREATHED on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."). This is how your mortal body is quickened "by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (8:11).

8:12 Our debt is to God, not to the flesh, as I Corinthians 6:20 says, "ye are bought with a price." That price is Christ's blood (Acts 20:28). Therefore, you should "glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:20), rather than obeying the flesh with the lusts thereof (6:12).

8:13 Again, Christ paid for your sins. Therefore, you cannot lose your salvation. The death and the life, then, that Paul talk about here, are in terms of what you are working (II Corinthians 7:10). You work death in you when you obey sin, because the wages of sin is death. You work life in you when you walk in the Spirit, because Christ has abundant life (John 10:10). Also, because the Spirit lives in you, you have the power within you to “mortify” or put to death the deeds of the flesh, as Colossians 3:5 says.

However, it is only “through the Spirit” (8:13) that you are able to put to death the sins of the flesh. You have no ability to do this by using your fleshly mind.

8:14 You are “led by the Spirit” when you believe the gospel, even if you do not yield to the leading by the Spirit. Lot is a great example of this. If you read only Genesis 19, you would conclude that Lot was an unbeliever, yet II Peter 2:7-8 calls him “just Lot,” and says that “that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.” Therefore, even though Lot did not do righteous deeds, he was still righteous, based upon believing the gospel. We will see this explained also in 8:23, which says that “we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body,” even though, by looking at the actions of Christians, you may not be able to tell this. Yet, we are told to “walk by faith, not by sight” (II Corinthians 5:7), and to “henceforth know...no man after the flesh” (II Corinthians 5:16). This includes ourselves! Therefore, we need to believe God that, if we have believed the gospel, we are “led by the Spirit,” even though people may not be able to tell it by our actions.

Also, being “led by the Spirit” is NOT an emotion! I Corinthians 2:9-16 teaches that the Holy Ghost teaches us the deep things of God when we read and believe God’s Word. Furthermore, the context of 8:14 is not talking about praying for God’s will for my life or feeling the spirit’s presence when I sing a worship song. The context is allowing Christ’s righteousness to live the Spirit’s life through us, rather than living by the lusts of the flesh.

8:15 “Abba, Father,” which means “Dear, Father,” is found three times in scripture—once by Jesus (Mark 14:36) and twice by the Body of Christ (8:15; Galatians 4:6). This tells us that the “Spirit,” referred to here, is the Spirit of Christ. Also, note the context of when Jesus cried “Abba, Father” is when He asked the Father to

take the cross away from Him if possible. This tells us that, the time when the Father is most dear to us, is when we struggle with temptations in our flesh. Therefore, it is the Spirit of Christ within us, calling “Abba, Father”, that is the way in which we are able to overcome temptation (I Corinthians 10:13). We cry “Abba, Father,” which means we solely trust in the applicable sound doctrine built up in the inner man to overcome the temptations of the flesh.

Also, the fact, that we have Christ’s Spirit within us, shows that we cannot lose our salvation. For God would have to deny Christ eternal life in order to deny us eternal life (II Timothy 2:13), because our lives are “hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). “Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear” (8:15). This tells us that those, who put themselves under the law are in bondage to it and are fearful. So many people, who attend churches, are not 100% certain that they will go to heaven when they die. Why? Because Churchianity has them in bondage to the law so that they fear they can lose their salvation. Paul tells us to “stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Galatians 5:1).

If we do put ourselves back under the law, then “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Galatians 5:4). Again, that is not to say that you lose your salvation, but it is to say that you live just like unbelievers, when you put yourself back under the law. This is why law living is so dangerous. You should not say, “Well, I am not sure if I understand correctly or not. So, just to be on the safe side, I will try to obey the law.” No! You hinder Christ’s ability to serve God through you when you decide you will try to secure your own salvation by your own performance under the law.

8:16 This verse shows that our spirits are alive in Christ when we are saved. Otherwise, God’s Spirit could not bear witness with our spirit, because our spirit would still be dead.

8:17 Being joint-heirs with Christ is not conditional upon us allowing Christ to live in us. We are already blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3) by the mere fact that we have been baptized into Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection (6:3-4). Granted, if we do not allow Christ to live in us, the position we take in heavenly places will be a lesser

position, but we are still joint-heirs with Christ. The parallel passage in Galatians 4:7 probably makes this clearer: “Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” Basically, the moment you believe the gospel, you are adopted as God’s Son by being placed into Christ. Therefore, you also receive an inheritance from God through Christ.

You may say, “But doesn’t 8:17 say we must suffer with Christ in order to be glorified with Him?” Yes, but 8:23 says that “we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Why? Because “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh” (Galatians 5:17). In other words, the moment you are saved, you end up suffering at the hands of your flesh. Even if you are like Lot and choose not to allow Christ to live in you, II Peter 2:8 still says that your righteous soul is vexed from day to day with the ungodly deeds of the wicked. Therefore, even the most carnal Christians among us still “suffer with Christ in order to be glorified with Him,” i.e., to receive our glorified bodies. Now, the more you suffer, the greater the eternal weight of glory you reap (II Corinthians 4:17), but you still are joint-heirs with Christ, even if you mostly follow the lusts of your flesh.

8:18 As we just noted with the parallel passage of II Corinthians 4:17, the more we suffer, the greater the glory that shall be revealed in us. Therefore, I do not think that our “reward” (I Corinthians 3:14) is some tangible, material thing like a fancy mansion or a bar of gold. Rather, our reward is that we are a greater reflection of Christ’s glory for all eternity.

Christ is called “the Sun of righteousness” (Malachi 4:2). The moon is a reflection of the sun’s glory. Sometimes, the moon reflects more light than at other times. So, too, we are a reflection of Christ’s glory for all eternity. Some of us reflect more glory than others. This illustration is proven to be true for Israel in Revelation 21:23. Therefore, it should also prove true for the body of Christ. “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light.” (Glory of God = believers; Lamb = the Lord Jesus Christ) therefore, God’s glory is our eternal reward.

8:19-21 “The creature” is the subject of all three of these verses. Who is “the creature?” From the context, it appears to be God’s

creation of man. All men have the sin nature as the result of sin. This is what I think is meant by the creature being subject to vanity. II Corinthians 5:17 says that believers are “a new creature.” Not, “a new creation,” as modern Bible versions like to say, but “a new creature.” Regarding Jesus’ birth, Mary is told that “that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). Jesus is not being called a thing here. Rather, what is born of Jesus Christ is the new creature in which all believers are placed. Thus, what Paul is saying here is that, once all the sons of God are manifest in today’s dispensation, i.e., the fulness of the Gentiles is come in (11:25), then the new creature, i.e., the body of Christ, will take its positions in heavenly places. This is why the creature earnestly expects to “be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (8:21).

8:22 The whole creation was placed under the curse of sin when Adam sinned. Therefore, all of the creation groans in pain. Perhaps this is why we have earthquakes. Psalm 98:7-9 says, “Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together before the Lord.” Why? Because “He cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity.” Furthermore, Isaiah 55:12 says, “For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands”. We do not hear singing, clapping, and joy from mountains, hills, floods, and trees today, but we will on God’s new earth, because they will no longer be in pain, due to the curse of sin being lifted.

8:23 Note that, while the whole creation groans, we only groan within ourselves. This is because our spirits are alive in Christ, and we are vexed by this sinful world. Our flesh, however, does not groan. This is why most people try to extend their lives as long as possible. Even Christians usually do not want to die, because they are in love with this world more than they are in love with God. However, because the Spirit of Christ is within us and He hates sin, we groan within ourselves, waiting for the redemption of our bodies, because it is that redemption that will overturn sin for us forever.

8:24-25 Our salvation is by hope. This is not hope in the sense of a wish, i.e., “I hope I win the lottery.” Rather, hope means, “a

confident expectation.” The reason I can go on in this life, in spite of the persecution I receive for godly living (II Timothy 3:12), is because I know I have eternal life and a reward waiting for me in heaven. Paul says that, “if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (I Corinthians 15:19). Our hope, then, is laid up for us in heaven (Colossians 1:5), and we have the confident expectation that we will receive it, such that we should set our “affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2).

Hope is only on things that we do not see. Paul says that we should “look...at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (II Corinthians 4:18). How do we look at things that we cannot see? By faith, because “faith is the substance of things HOPED for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is the substance and evidence of the spiritual realm. This is why we are given the faith of Christ when we are saved, because, if we do not have the faith of Christ, then we can only “see” the things of this world. This is why unbelievers think that Bible believers are so crazy, because we have a different reality than they do. When we have hope, or the confident expectation of the life to come, then we wait for it with patience. Remember 5:3-5, which says that tribulation works patience, which works experience, which works hope, which results in the love of God being shed abroad to others. Now, we know why “we are saved by hope” (8:24), because hope results in God’s love coming through us.

8:26 What in the world does this verse mean? If we do not know what to pray for as we ought, it means that we do not have enough sound doctrine built up in the inner man in order to know how to pray, since prayer is talking over verses and sound doctrine with God (Ephesians 6:17-18). Christ told Paul that His “strength is made perfect in weakness.” Paul then said, “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (II Corinthians 12:9-10). This means that infirmities make Christ strong in us. Therefore, since 8:26 says that “the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought,” the way the Spirit helps our infirmities is probably by increasing our infirmities so that Christ will be strong through us.

The “groanings which cannot be uttered” is probably then the

communication between the Spirit of Christ and God the Father. My guess is that these groanings cannot be uttered, because they are spiritual words. In other words, they are a high-level of communication that man cannot say, due to our carnality. This would not be Christ magically changing the words that we pray into the words that we should have prayed, as some surmise, because the words we should have prayed are words that can be uttered. Rather, it is Christ communicating with the Father in such a way as to increase or help our infirmities so that we walk in the Spirit more. Philippians 1:6 says that Christ will be faithful to complete the good work He has started in us. Perhaps this is part of the good work that He is doing in us so “that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:27).

8:27 Based upon Jeremiah 17:10, the one who searches the heart is the Lord, which is the Lord Jesus Christ. He also knows the mind of the Spirit. Therefore, the groanings, that the Lord Jesus Christ makes to the Father, are things that will further the will of God being done in our lives. The will of God is for “all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Timothy 2:4). Since saints are already, Christ’s intercession on our behalf is for us to come unto the knowledge of the truth. Since we will only turn to scripture when we consider it to be more valuable than our flesh, most people will only come unto the knowledge of the truth when things go bad in their lives, materially speaking. Therefore, my interpretation of 8:26, that the Spirit helps our infirmities by increasing them, makes sense in light of this. This is also why “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (II Timothy 3:12).

You may say, “But, I know many Christians who live carnally their entire lives, and they prosper materially.” Remember that helping our infirmities is in the context of prayer. Therefore, if Christians live carnally and prosper materially, it means that they are not praying, and so Christ is not helping them come unto the knowledge of the truth, because they have made the free-will decision to quench the Spirit’s work in their lives (I Thessalonians 5:19).

8:28 Since the way the Spirit causes the will of God to be done in our lives is by helping our infirmities, you may think that the suffering, that Christians go through for godly living, is all bad.

However, from a spiritual perspective it is good. This is why Paul need to tell us here that “all things work together for good to them that love God.” Joseph told his brothers, “Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive” (Genesis 50:20). The world would look at what happened to Joseph and conclude that it was bad, but, from a spiritual perspective, it is good. As Paul just told us in 8:18, “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Therefore, from a spiritual perspective, our sufferings are actually a good thing.

Note also that “all things work together for good to them that love God.” Christians, who are “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (II Timothy 3:4), do not have all things work together for good, because they are satisfying their flesh. Therefore, their fleshly work is burned up at the judgment seat of Christ, rather than receiving a reward (I Corinthians 3:15).

8:29-30 Note the progression in these verses. First, God foreknew. Second, God predestinated. Third, He called. Fourth, He justified. Fifth, He glorified. Then, in 8:33, we are called “God’s elect.” I Peter 1:2 says that believing Israel is “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” Therefore, God does not force us into heaven or hell. Rather, He elects us based upon His foreknowledge that we would make the free-will decision to believe the gospel. Thus, predestination is based upon God’s foreknowledge, not His sovereignty. Revelation 22:17 says, “whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely,” not “whosoever was chosen by God’s sovereignty.”

We are "called according to His purpose (8:28), meaning that we are called to fill heavenly positions in Christ (Ephesians 1:21-23). God foreknew (#1) that I would believe the gospel. Based upon His foreknowledge, God predestinated (#2) me to be conformed to the image of His Son. I was born in the image of Adam. Once I am saved, I am placed into the body of Christ. Christ then sanctifies me by the Word (Ephesians 5:26). The more I allow Christ to wash me, the more glorious I will be (Ephesians 5:27), and the more I will be conformed unto Christ's image, i.e., receive a high position in heavenly places. This dispensation will continue until all positions in heavenly places, that Satan and his angels currently hold, are filled with qualified members of the body of Christ. Paul says, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the

high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). In other words, we are called (#3) to a high position in heavenly places. The Son is the firstborn, while we are the "many brethren" (8:29) in Christ.

God justified (#4) us meaning that He forgave us of our sins. Then, He also glorified (#5) us. The degree of our justification is based upon the extent that we allow Christ to build us up in sound doctrine.

8:31 Since God is the one who does all five things in us and He is "the blessed and ONLY Potentate" (I Timothy 6:15) (all powerful one), no one can stop God from giving us a high position in heavenly places. Yes, we wrestle against Satan and his forces (Ephesians 6:12) and Satan is "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2), but the Lord is the ONLY Potentate. He bound the strong man, i.e., Satan (Matthew 12:29) and ransomed Israel from Satan (Jeremiah 31:11). Therefore, we can rest assured that the Lord has done the same for us, and no one can stop the good work that Jesus has started in us (Philippians 1:6).

8:32 The greatest thing God had was His Son, yet He gave Him up for us. II Corinthians 5:21 says that Christ was made sin for us. As a result, Jesus cried, "My God My God why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46). It pleased the Lord to bruise Him, and Jesus' soul travailed in agony (Isaiah 53:10-11). Since God freely did tis to save us, God will "also freely give us all things" with Christ (8:32). God has highly exalted Christ (Philippians 2:9), set Him at "His Own right hand" (Acts 2:34-35), and given Him a name above every name (Philippians 2:9). Since we are seated together with Christ in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6), we get to participate in Christ's eternal glory. Since God does all the work, then He also "FREELY" gives us all things.

8:33 The body of Christ, whom God foreknew (#1), predestinated (#2), called (#3), justified (#4), and glorified (#5), are collectively known as "God's elect" (8:33). No one can bring any charge against us, no matter how much we sin, because "God is the judge" (Psalm 75:7), and He is the One "that justifieth" (8:33). God knows all things about us (Psalm 139:1-5), and He has already justified us (5:9). Therefore, no one can bring a charge up against us.

8:34 No one can condemn us, because Christ has already been

condemned for us (Galatians 3:13). Because Christ did no sin (I Peter 2:22), it was not possible that He should be holden of death (Acts 2:24). Therefore, Christ "is risen again." Therefore, we are risen with Him (6:5). And, He "maketh intercession for us" (8:34) so that we may have greater glory with Him through suffering, as we learned i 8:26-27. As Paul said, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (Philippians 3:10). In so doing, He may "apprehend" "the prize of the high call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12-14).

8:35-36 No physical trial can "separate us from the love of Christ" (8:35). In fact, it is "for Thy sake" that "we are killed all the day long" (8:36; Psalm 44:22). In other words, just like Jesus was made "perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10), we must also suffer so that God's love can come through us (5:3-5). Therefore, not only do trials not separate us from the love of Christ, but suffering actually increases the love of Christ in us. This is why "we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (8:36).

8:37 Christ's love in us conquers all trials that come against us. Christ's love is greater than Satan and his forces.

8:38-39 Because we are "blessed...with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3), the list of possible things to separate us from the love of God is of things in heavenly places only. Even those things cannot separate us from the love of God. How much more, then, can no things of the earth separate us from God's love. This is why we should "be careful for nothing" (Philippians 4:6) and give thanks IN everything (I Thessalonians 5:18).

Romans 9 – Physical Israel is not God's Israel

9:1-2 Paul has sorrow because Israel is not saved. There are two reasons for this: 1) Due to their unbelief, Israel's program was put on hold at the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7. Therefore, they are not God's chosen people any more (Deuteronomy 7:6), and 2) They have rejected the gospel of grace, as Paul goes to Jewish synagogues in each city proclaiming it, before he proclaims it to the Gentiles (Acts 17:1-2).

9:3-4 I do not see how anyone can logically use Romans 11 to say that we are spiritual Israel today when 9:3-4 clearly says that

the promises of God to Israel are still for them. They did not get transferred to us. This is clear from Paul's use of "according to the flesh," and the use of "pertaineth" in the present tense. Also, the use of "the covenants," here, shows that both the old covenant and the new covenant are for Israel and their program. Therefore, when Paul mentions that we, today, are "able ministers of the new testament" (II Corinthians 3:6), he means that those, in today's mystery program, have a different new testament than Israel has. "The giving of the law" also show that we are not under the Mosaic law today, nor ever have been (3:1-2).

"The service of God" refers to all of the things Israel does in the temple, as well as being a kingdom of priests to the Gentiles in the millennial kingdom (Exodus 19:5-6). Also, note Deuteronomy 32:8, where it says that God divided the Gentiles into nations according to the number of the children of Israel. In other words, Israel's "service of God," ultimately, is to rule over the Gentiles in God's eternal kingdom on earth.

Note overall, from 9:4, how Israel has their own program, because there is an adoption, glory, covenants, law, service of God, and promises that ALL pertain specifically to Israel, even after the dispensation of grace had started. This shows that we are NOT spiritual Israel today.

Paul's saying that he could wish that he "were accursed from Christ" shows that his spirit has been made alive in Christ. He could not say this in his flesh, because "no man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Ephesians 5:29). Therefore, it can only be Paul's spirit, through the Holy Spirit, wishing to be accursed from Christ if Israel would be saved as a result. This is not unlike Moses' statement to God when Israel sinned against the Lord: "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written" (Exodus 32:31-32).

9:5 "As concerning the flesh Christ came" to Israel. John 1:11 says, "He came unto His Own." Paul will later "say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision...to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (15:8). Prophecy stated that the Messiah would be stricken "for the transgression of MY PEOPLE" (Isaiah 53:8). Jesus said that He gave "His life a ransom for MANY" (Matthew 20:28), i.e., the many of Israel. It is only later in

“due time” that it is revealed by God to man that Jesus gave His life “a ransom for ALL” (I Timothy 2:6). Granted, prophecy did state that the Messiah would be “a light to lighten the Gentiles” (Luke 2:32), but He was first given as “a covenant of the people,” i.e., Israel (Isaiah 42:6). In other words, first and foremost, Jesus Christ was sent “unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24). Thus, as pertaining to the flesh, Jesus Christ came as a Jew to save the Jews.

Note also that Christ is “over all” (9:5), meaning that He is “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named” (Ephesians 1:21).

9:6 So, why did Israel not receive all of the promises God gave them? (9:4). This is an important question to answer because, if the failure is God’s fault, how can we trust in God to give the body of Christ our promises today? The reason Israel did not receive their promises is because, “They are not all Israel, which are of Israel” (9:6). In other words, the group of people, known as Israel, are those who believed God’s Word to them, not everyone who is a physical Jew. They must be a Jew “INWARDLY” (2:29). God promised the land to all of Israel when they came out of Egypt. However, out of the two million or so Jews who came out of Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb are mentioned as having gone into the Promised Land (Numbers 14:29-30). The rest failed to enter in, not because God was unfaithful, but because of Israel’s unbelief (Hebrews 3:17-19).

Similarly, the Pharisees were Abraham’s physical children (John 8:33); Jesus affirmed this to be true (John 8:37). But, they were not Abraham’s spiritual children, because of their unbelief (John 8:39-40). Instead, they were children of the devil (John 8:44). By contrast, Rahab was a physical Gentile, but she is counted as a saved Jew, due to her faith (James 2:25). Thus, all those saved in Israel’s program are “of Israel” (9:6), regardless of what they are in the flesh, while all unbelieving, physical Jews are heathens in the eyes of God. (God calls them “the concision” (Philippians 3:2), i.e., circumcised pagans.) Therefore, “the Lord is not slack concerning His promise” (II Peter 3:9) to Israel. Rather, Israel simply failed to believe God. Therefore, they have yet to receive God’s promises to them.

9:7-8 Abraham had Ishmael and Isaac. They are both physical descendants of Abraham. But, it is only in Isaac that Abraham’s

seed is called (Genesis 21:12). Why? Because Isaac is the child of promise. He is the child of promise in two respects: 1) He is physically the child of promise, because he was not born of fleshly means, because both Abraham and Sarah were unable to bear children at the time (Hebrews 11:11-12), and 2) He is spiritually the child of promise, because Isaac believed God, while Ishmael did not. This shows, in type, the new spirit and the new body that all believers have in eternity.

9:9 “At this time will I come” shows that God came to both Abraham and Sarah at a certain time (Genesis 18:10) and gave them physical strength to bear a child. In other words, Isaac was born of natural means. He was not virgin born. It was God working through Abraham’s and Sarah’s productively dead flesh in order to produce life. Similarly, once we are saved, our flesh is functionally dead (Colossians 3:3), and we are to present our bodies as living sacrifices to God (12:1) so that Christ’s life (Colossians 3:4; Galatians 2:20) is lived through our dead flesh.

9:10-12 From Abraham came one child of flesh (Ishmael), then one child of promise or spirit (Isaac). From Rebecca came two children at the same time—one chose not to believe God (Esau), and the other chose to believe God (Jacob). God stated, in advance, who would be the believer, and who would not. God did not force either Esau or Jacob to not believe or to believe. Rather, Jacob was elected to have eternal life based upon God’s foreknowledge (1 Peter 1:2) of his future, free-will decision to believe God. Thus, God created the spiritual nation of Israel with Isaac. He then divided the nation into elected believers, who would receive God’s promises (Jacob), and unbelievers, who would not (Esau).

This is based on election, not on works. As we learned in 8:29-33, God’s elect are those He foreknew would use their free will to believe God. When Jacob believed God, God changed his name to Israel, signaling the start of “the Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16) being separated from apostate Israel (Genesis 32:28). God proved this to be the case by calling Jacob to be lord over Esau, while they were both still in Rebecca’s womb (Genesis 25:23)!

9:13 This is a quote of Malachi 1:2-3. 1 John 4:8 says that, “God is love.” He loves all. However, He only COMMENDS His love to those who believe the gospel (Romans 5:8). Unbelievers are seen by God as being dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). If

you are dead, you do not exist. In hell, their worm does not die, and they are an abhorring to all (Isaiah 66:24). Therefore, God does not view them as humans. He views them as “brute beasts” (II Peter 2:12; Jude 10). Therefore, God can hate Esau and still be love, because, functionally speaking in eternity, Esau is not a real person. Thus, God’s promises only apply to believers, which makes this verse a great proof-text that universal salvation is not true.

9:14 God is not unrighteous in hating unbelievers, because all have sinned and deserve hell (3:23; 6:23). Further, Jesus gave His life a ransom for all (I Timothy 2:6), meaning that all have the opportunity to be saved, as shown by the fact that God has shown Himself to all who have been born (Romans 1:19-20). Unbelievers “hold the truth in unrighteousness” (1:19). Since they hold the truth, they make the free-will decision to accept or reject God’s free gift of eternal life. Therefore, God is not unrighteous in sending unbelievers to hell.

9:15 This is a quote of Exodus 33:19. The context is that God showed mercy to Israel. He could have killed them instantly for worshipping the golden calf. Instead, God allowed unbelieving Israel to continue all the way through Acts 7 so that the Gentiles, in the dispensation of grace, would finally believe God (9:22-24). Otherwise, if God set aside Israel and started the dispensation of grace in Exodus 33, the Gentiles would not have believed God back then. Therefore, God, because of His foreknowledge, is the only one with the wisdom to know if He should show mercy to a group of people or not. Since God wants all men to be saved (I Timothy 2:4), we can be assured that God shows mercy in every case that will result in salvation (Israel under Moses), and He does not show mercy when not showing mercy also results in salvation (Egypt under Pharaoh) (9:17).

9:16 “Not of him that willeth” tells us that no one can think his way to heaven. No matter how good of a philosopher or thinker you are, you cannot figure out a way or find a loophole by which you can get God to judge you worthy of eternal life. “Not of him that runneth” tells us that no one can work his way into heaven. Therefore, neither brains (“willeth”) nor brawn (“runneth”) will get you eternal life. God must show you mercy by giving you the opportunity to recognize your sin and believe the gospel in order to receive the free gift of eternal life.

9:17 This verse is a quote of Exodus 9:16. In Pharaoh's case, God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 9:12), since Pharaoh was an unbeliever, so that God could show His power to destroy all unbelievers. In the case of Israel, God shewed mercy to them, in spite of their unbelief, so that God could show His power to save. Paul's point is that, through Israel and Pharaoh, God has shown Gentiles today God's power to destroy (Pharaoh) and to save (Israel), so that we have no excuse if we choose not to believe the gospel and receive the free gift of eternal life.

9:18 By having mercy on Israel, God showed the Gentiles that He is willing to forgive their sins. By hardening Pharaoh, God showed the Gentiles that He can destroy those who do not believe Him. Both are fleshly signs for people in today's dispensation to recognize their sin (Pharaoh) and trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for sin (Israel). Then, once the Gentiles are raptured up, that will be the sign for Israel to believe and be saved (11:25-26). Thus, God used His foreknowledge in Israel's program in order to save the body of Christ today.

9:19-20 Here comes man's argument again, trying to justify his wickedness to a holy God. The argument goes that, since you cannot resist God's will, God cannot find fault with you. However, God's will is for all men to be saved (I Timothy 2:4), and yet many people will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:13-15). "Whosoever will" (Revelation 22:17) may have life.

Therefore, you have the free will to choose to have eternal life or to spend eternity in hell. In the context, resisting God's will means being able to choose, if you are an unbeliever, for God to either have mercy on you or harden you. Since you are already judged to hell for your unbelief, God can choose what to do with you on this earth. This is much like a judge, after a criminal has already been found guilty, can choose to be hard or go lenient on the criminal. The judgment was fair, i.e., he is declared guilty for committing a crime, but the sentence is subject to leniency or hardness. Therefore, the criminal has no right to complain how the judge treats him. Similarly speaking, the sinner has no right to complain regarding how God treats him, especially since God gives him the choice of life or death and he has chosen death.

9:21 In the context, the vessel made unto honour is Israel, and the vessel made unto dishonour is Egypt.

9:22 “The vessels of wrath fitted to destruction” is unbelieving Israel. The Lord said that Israel corrupted themselves by bowing down to a golden calf. If God poured His wrath upon them at that time, He would have consumed them (Exodus 32:7-10). However, “the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people” (Exodus 32:14). The reason for this repentance was so He could endure with Israel “with much longsuffering” (9:22). By doing so, God made His power known that He could deliver anyone who believed on Him, even including stiffnecked Jews (Acts 7:51).

9:23 This showed to the Gentiles in the dispensation of grace, “the riches of His glory” (9:23). Therefore, after the Jews judged themselves “unworthy of everlasting life” (Acts 13:46), Paul went to the Gentiles with the gospel and they believed it (Acts 28:28). This makes the body of Christ “the vessels of mercy” today (9:23). Note that God “had afore prepared [us] unto glory” (9:23). This shows that God’s plan all along was to save the Gentiles first (Ephesians 1:4-6), but He kept that a secret until revealed to Paul (16:25-26; Galatians 1:11-12), so that Satan and his forces would have Jesus crucified (I Corinthians 2:7); thus, fulfilling God’s plan.

9:24 “The vessels of wrath fitted to destruction” is unbelieving Israel. God endured with them “with much longsuffering” (9:22) from the time they rejected the Lord in Exodus 32 until they rejected the Holy Ghost with the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7. The reason the Lord did this was so He could “shew His wrath....make His power known....and...make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy” (9:22-23), which is the Body of Christ today. In case you did not understand that the vessels of mercy are the Body of Christ, Paul specifically tells us that here in 9:24.

Note that the called Body of Christ includes both Jews and Gentiles. This shows that the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile has come down (Ephesians 2:14). Israel does not have favored nation status with God today, as they did before Acts 9 (See Deuteronomy 7:6). Both Jew and Gentile come directly to God by recognizing their sin and trusting in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for their sin (I Corinthians 15:3-4). By contrast, in Israel’s program, a Gentile had to go through a Jew to receive the gospel, because salvation was of the Jews at that time (John 4:22).

9:25 “Osee” is Hosea. This verse is a quote of Hosea 2:23. The context of Hosea 2 is God bringing judgment upon Israel for her unbelief, but then He restores her as His people in the end. By revelation of the Holy Ghost, Paul applies this verse to the Body of Christ today. The Body of Christ is not seen in Hosea, because it was a mystery until given to Paul (Ephesians 3:2-6). This mystery is “that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel” (Ephesians 3:6). Therefore, God had planned the body of Christ as part of Hosea 2:23 all along, but He did not reveal this until Paul. This is not to say that we are spiritual Israel today. Rather, it is to say that we are children of Abraham by faith (9:7-8), as Paul explained in Romans 4, specifically verse 16. We also know that we are not spiritual Israel today, because Paul addresses Israel’s program in 9:27-28, which he would not do, if the Body of Christ took over God’s promises given to Israel.

Therefore, although no one knew it at the time, God actually prophesied of the salvation of the Body of Christ in Hosea 2:23. God’s beloved is the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:16-17). All believers, regardless of program, are “accepted in the beloved” (Ephesians 1:6) and called “Beloved” by God (Romans 1:7; I John 3:2). Gentiles were not God’s beloved, when God gave them up at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11). They became God’s beloved when God started the mystery program with Paul in Acts 9. Israel is not God’s beloved during the dispensation of grace. They become God’s beloved when God resumes the prophecy program after the rapture of the Body of Christ. Therefore, 9:25’s statement that “I will call them My people, which were not My people” applies both to the Body of Christ in the dispensation of grace and believing Israel before the second coming of Christ.

9:26 This is a quote of Hosea 1:10. Again, it is only through the Holy Ghost that Hosea 1:10 can be applied to the Body of Christ, since Hosea 1:10 refers to “the number of the children of Israel.” Paul said that Isaac was Abraham’s seed, not Ishmael, and Jacob or Israel was Isaac’s seed, not Esau, because the children of promise are the seed, not the children of the flesh (9:7-13). Since the Body of Christ is Abraham’s seed “through the righteousness of faith” (4:13), we are also the children of Israel through faith.

9:27 Again, we need to make it clear that we not spiritual Israel in the sense of taking over their promises. Paul started Romans 9 by saying that the promises of God to Israel are still theirs (9:3-4).

He will now reiterate this through his quote of Isaiah 10:22 here. He starts 9:27 with “concerning Israel.” This must be physical Israel, because it says that the number of the children of Israel was as the sand of the sea, and a remnant shall be saved. If he were talking about spiritual Israel, all of them would be saved, not just a remnant. A remnant of Israel’s physical seed is saved, “according to the election of grace” (11:5). In other words, because God knows that He will save physical Israel after the Body of Christ is raptured up, God has left a remnant of physical Jews on this earth, through whom God can fulfill His promises to Israel. Here, Paul quotes Isaiah to show that this was God’s plan all along.

9:28 When God does save Israel after the rapture of the Body of Christ, He will “cut it short in righteousness” (9:28). The reason is because, after the rapture, Satan’s lie program will be so deceptive that, “if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24). Therefore, “except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matthew 24:22). The reason for this is that, after we take our positions in heavenly places, the devil has no more influence there. He is cast out into the earth, “having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (Revelation 12:8-9,12). Thus, Satan’s policy of evil is strongest when God resumes Israel’s program, requiring God to make a short work. The fact, that God finishes the work, shows that Israel is saved at Jesus’ second coming (11:26).

9:29 This is a quote of Isaiah 1:9. Isaiah 1:9 says, “Except the Lord of hosts,” while 9:29 says, “Except the Lord of Sabaoth.” The Lord of Sabaoth is the Lord of rest. It is interesting how God provides rest to believers through being the Lord of hosts. In other words, He provides rest by being “a man of war” (Exodus 15:3), Who defeats Satan and his forces, giving Israel rest in Him (Hebrews 4:9). It is only by going to war for Israel that the Lord leaves a remnant for Israel so that God can fulfill His promises to them after the rapture of the Body of Christ.

9:30-31 These verses tell us that faith is the key to salvation. Israel did not attain unto the law of righteousness because they “followed after the law of righteousness” (9:31). In other words, they tried, through their own self-righteous works, to obtain righteousness. They could not earn righteousness, because no good thing dwelled in their flesh. “For to will is present with me;

but how to perform that which is good I find not” (7:18).

Therefore, they did not obtain righteousness because they strove to obtain it. In other words, they did not rest in the Lord of Sabaoth.

By contrast, the Gentiles recognized their sin, and so they believed the gospel, meaning that they had faith, and so they obtained the righteousness of God, because God offers His righteousness to man “of faith” (9:30).

9:32-33 Since Israel sought righteousness by works, they “stumbled at that stumblingstone.” 9:33 is a quote of Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16. Based upon Matthew 21:42-44, we know that this stumblingstone is the Lord Jesus Christ. The reason He is a stumblingstone is that the cross of Christ says that “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). In other words, the cross says that no one can earn their salvation. God had to send His Son to die for our sins. Israel sought salvation by their own works, which means that they stumbled at the cross, i.e., they used wicked hands to crucify Jesus (Acts 2:23). They were looking for their Messiah to bring them into the kingdom based upon their own good works. When Jesus condemned their works (Matthew 23), they condemned Jesus.

By contrast, those, who recognize their own sin, see Jesus, not as a stumblingstone, but as their salvation. Isaiah 8:14 says, “And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” Therefore, for Israel, Jesus was a stumblingstone, but, for the Gentiles in the dispensation of grace, Jesus is a sanctuary. Believers rest in the finished work of Christ, while unbelievers wrest the finished work of Christ into a false gospel, that can never save them, because it involves works.

Romans 10 – Israel Failure Due to Unbelief

10:1-3 This chapter describes how salvation is received by believing, not by working. Because Israel sought salvation by working, they never received it. This is also the problem with Churchianity today. It is filled with people who “have a zeal for God” (10:2), but they are not even saved, because they are trying to establish their own righteousness. The problem is that they

use their fleshly pride with their zeal of God in trying to please God. They need to use their zeal to diligently seek the Lord (Hebrews 11:6). They will then have the learn the gospel, God will save them, and then they can serve the Lord according to knowledge. Paul said that, before he was saved, he also had zeal, but his zeal resulted in him “persecuting the church” (Philippians 3:6). By contrast, Jesus Christ used His zeal for God to cleanse the temple of the moneychangers (John 2:17). The problem is that people have misguided zeal. They let their emotions guide them in making decisions, rather than letting their zeal lead them to seek God so that they use their zeal according to knowledge. Satan is more than happy to oblige people, following their emotions, by blinding their minds so that “the light of the glorious gospel of Christ” (II Corinthians 4:4) does not shine on them.

10:4 Israel did not obtain God’s righteousness “because they sought it...by the works of the law” (9:32). “Christ is the end of the law” (10:4) means that He is the goal of the law. “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24). The law teaches Israel that they are sinners (3:23) and need Christ to save them.

10:5 This is a quote of Leviticus 18:5. The only way to obtain righteousness by the law is by doing the things contained in the law. Man’s problem is that he is “carnal, sold under sin” (7:14). Therefore, “there is none righteous, no, not one” (3:10). God gave Israel the law so that they would understand this. In Matthew 5:21-48, Jesus taught Israel that disobedience of the law is internal, not external. This is not something new. Jesus learned this from the law, and Israel should have, also. Since man cannot overcome his sin, Jesus had to come and fulfill the law perfectly in our place. He then became sin for us in order to make us the righteousness of God (II Corinthians 5:21) by Jesus’ death being the propitiation (fully satisfying sacrifice) for our sin (3:25).

10:6-8 Thus, Israel needs “the righteousness which is of faith,” not “the righteousness which is of the law”. These verses are a quote of Deut. 30:12-14. Deut. 30:12 says that the commandment is not in heaven for someone to go get the commandment for them. Deut. 30:13 says that it is not beyond the sea that they would have to ask someone to go over the sea for them to get it. Deut. 30:14 says that it is in their mouth and in their heart to do it. When you read Romans 10:6-8, however, Paul adds parenthetical notes which tell you that the question of,

“Who shall ascend into heaven,” is really asking, “Who will bring Christ down from above.” And, the question of, “Who shall descend into the deep,” is really asking, “Who will bring up Christ again from the dead.” Then, Romans 10:8 tells us that the word that is in your mouth and in your heart is really “the word of faith, which we preach.”

What this means is that, when Deut. 30:2,8,10 told Israel to obey the Lord’s voice and keep His commandments, it meant that they were to obey the Lord’s voice by trusting in God to give them His imputed righteousness to save them. If they did this, the Lord would circumcise their hearts (Deut. 30:6), which is the new covenant (Ezekiel 36:26-27). It takes a heart that seeks after God in order to see that Deut. 30 is really talking about Israel believing the gospel so that Christ could work in their hearts under the new covenant. The word that is nigh unto them, is the word of faith, because they are given the faith of Christ under the new covenant, which enables them to obey God’s law. Thus, Israel needs the righteousness which is of faith. However, because they did not diligently seek the Lord, they did not understand this, because they used their natural minds to conclude that they needed to obey the law in the flesh, which is why Israel, although they had a zeal of God, were ignorant of God’s righteousness.

Thus, God had set life and death before them (Deuteronomy 30:15,19). Israel thought they would get death if they disobeyed the law and life if they obeyed the law. The truth is that they already had death for disobeying the law; thus, the law was actually “the ministration of death” (II Corinthians 3:7) to them. They had to believe God to receive His righteousness imputed unto them by faith in order to have life. Thus, life = Christ and death = flesh trying to fulfill the law, while Israel thought that life = trying to fulfill the law, and death = those who do not try. This is why, even though the word of faith was nigh unto them, they did not believe it. They sought after God through their flesh, rather than seeking for God to save them from their vile flesh.

10:9-11 These two verses are often taken out of context to teach that you must physically confess your sins and make Jesus the Lord of your life in order to be saved. However, that is not what these verses are saying. 10:11 says, “For the scripture saith, whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.” By starting with “for”, 10:11 tells you that believing on Him is what 10:9-10 is talking about. In other words, 10:11 gives a summary statement

of what 10:9-10 is describing. Thus, confessing with your mouth and believing in your heart simply means believing the gospel. Also, we know that you do not believe in your physical heart, since your heart is an organ that pumps blood. Therefore, we also know that you do not confess with your physical mouth.

Remember what we just learned in 10:6-8. There, Paul quoted Deut. 30:12-14. Deut. 30:6 says that the way Israel will have life is when God circumcises their heart. This does not mean that God will cut a sliver off of their physical hearts. Rather, as we already mentioned, it means that God will give them a new heart under the new covenant, meaning that God will change them on the inside so that they will always obey God's laws. Thus, "heart" is used for their spirit, which was dead before they were saved, and is alive after they are saved (Ephesians 2:1).

Similarly, then, the mouth is also not a literal mouth. Isaiah 50:4 says, regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, that God has given Him "the tongue of the learned" because God "wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned." This does not mean that God cut Jesus' tongue out of His mouth and gave Him a new tongue. Rather, it means that, as Jesus learned God's Word, He learned "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deut. 8:3). Therefore, as Jesus read and believed God's Word, He "heard" the Word of God ("Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17).). This resulted in Him receiving "the tongue of the learned," meaning that His soul was the mouthpiece for the sound doctrine that was now in His spirit.

Therefore, what Romans 10:9-10 is saying is that, when you believe the gospel, your spirit ("heart") is made alive in Christ, and your soul then confesses ("soul") that Jesus Christ is Lord, because He has conquered death and hell for you (I Corinthians 15:55-57). In other words, "believe in thine heart" and "confess with thy mouth" simply describes the INTERNAL details of what happens when you believe the gospel. If you have read and understood Romans 10:6-8, in light of Deuteronomy 30, then you already understand this. But, as with anything else in God's Word, if you strip Romans 10:9-10 of its context, then you can make it say whatever you want it to say.

Also, remember that Romans 10:11 affirms that Romans 10:9-10 is referring strictly to believing the gospel. Romans 10:11 is a

quote of Isaiah 28:16. That verse basically says that the solution for Israel's condition is believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no mention of needing to confess with their mouth or making Jesus the Lord of their life. They simply need to believe on Him, as John 3:16 also affirms.

10:12 This verse shows that what God requires from man is the same, regardless of dispensation. In the Old Testament, Israel was to stop trusting in their own righteousness and trust in God to give them His imputed righteousness by putting themselves under the Mosaic law. Today, in the dispensation of grace, we are to stop trusting in our own righteousness and trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for our sin (I Corinthians 15:3-4). While the specific contents of the gospel are different for us today, God still requires us to believe on Him. Therefore, Paul can quote Isaiah 28:16, which applies to Israel in their program, and it still applies to Jews and Gentiles today, even though there has been a dispensational change.

10:13 This is a quote of Joel 2:32. The context of Joel is the at-hand phase of the kingdom for Israel's program. But, again, since it is a generic statement that God will save all those who call upon Him, it can be applied to Jews in the dispensation of grace. The reason Paul emphasizes this is because, although God set aside the nation of Israel in Acts 7, it does not mean that individual Jews cannot be saved today. Therefore, Paul's "desire and prayer to God for Israel" for them to "be saved" (10:1) is still a possibility, in spite of the dispensational change.

10:14 Here is Israel's problem. Although they would be saved if they called upon God, they have not believed God. Therefore, they have not called upon them, and they are unsaved. In 10:18, we will learn that they have heard the gospel. Therefore, Israel's lack of believing is not from ignorance, but it is from self-righteous pride.

The question, "How shall they hear without a preacher?" is often taken to mean that no one can be saved, unless the gospel is preached unto them. While this is true, God makes sure that all people hear a gospel, even if there is not a man in front of them preaching it. 10:18 says that Israel heard a gospel because "their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." This is a quote of Psalm 19:4 in reference to the everlasting gospel, i.e., that everyone knows there is a Creator

and He should be worshiped as God (Revelation 14:6; Romans 1:19-21). Jeremiah 23:1 says that the pastors in Israel “destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture.” In other words, they preached a false gospel to Israel. Nevertheless, Israel still heard the everlasting gospel, which means they are without excuse. Paul says that the Gentiles, on the wrong side of the middle wall of partition in Israel’s program, could still find God by simply feeling after Him (Acts 17:27-28). Therefore, “How shall they hear without a preacher?” cannot be used to say we must send missionaries to the whole world. God has given everybody the ability to recognize their sin and look for God. If they do that, God will be found by them and they will be saved, even if there is not a man preaching the gospel in front of them.

10:15 This is a quote of Isaiah 52:7. The context of that verse is that the believing remnant of Israel will go throughout Israel to preach the gospel to them at the at-hand phase of the kingdom, as in Matthew 10:5-8, which they will do until Jesus’ second coming. “Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come” (Matthew 10:23).

Probably the reason that Paul quotes this is to show that Israel failed in doing this. In Matthew 10, Jesus sent out only 12, and told His disciples: “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest” (Matthew 9:37-38). Unfortunately, by the time the Holy Ghost was given in Acts 2, only 120 people were gathered there (Acts 1:15). The Lord of the harvest sent very few labourers due to the unbelief of Israel. Therefore, God had to set aside Israel’s program.

10:16 This is a quote of Isaiah 53:1. It shows that, although God sent His Messiah to Israel, they would end up crucifying Him, due to their unbelief. Therefore, it is not surprising that Israel was still in unbelief at the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7, resulting in God setting Israel’s program aside and starting the dispensation of grace with Paul in Acts 9:23.

Note also that this verse makes it clear that obeying the gospel means to believe the gospel. It is important to understand this because most people think of obedience as using their flesh to obey the law. However, God uses obedience as using your spirit to believe the gospel. This is a lesson we should have learned in our study of 10:6-11. There, Paul quoted Deuteronomy 30:12-14,

which also has a context of obedience coming from belief, as obeying God's commands for Israel only comes when they allow God to circumcise their hearts (Deut. 30:6), i.e., when they believe God and are placed under the new covenant in God's coming kingdom on earth.

10:17 Paul's conclusion is that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." The "faith" that "cometh" is the "faith OF Christ", which is given to us once we believe the gospel (Romans 3:22). We only receive Christ's faith once we hear the Word of God. This "hearing" implies believing it, as well, since 10:18 shows that Israel "heard" the words of the gospel, but 10:16 tells us that they are not saved because they did not "believe" the report of the gospel.

Therefore, this is a good verse to show people today that you must believe the gospel in order to be saved. You cannot just "live a good life," "be a good person," or philosophize your way into eternity. Eternal life is only by one person, the Lord Jesus Christ (I Timothy 2:5), and His blood only atones for those who believe the gospel that God has given them.

10:18 We covered this verse in the notes on 10:14, and so we will not go into great detail here. This verse is a quote of Psalm 19:4. The context of Psalm 19 is that God has shown His glory to everyone through His creation (Psalm 19:1-4). Therefore, all people know about God and are without excuse when they do not humble themselves before the Lord (Romans 1:18-20). We would expect such an argument to be used to prove that the pygmies in New Guinea know about God and are without excuse, but this everlasting gospel (Revelation 14:6) never should have been the gospel that the Jews received. After all, they had a great advantage over all other nations because it was unto the JEWS that God "committed the oracles of God" (Romans 3:1-2).

Regarding Israel, Deuteronomy 4:7-8 says, "For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" Three chapters later, God says, "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy 7:6).

Therefore, Israel had a great advantage over all other nations in the world, because they were chosen by God to be a kingdom of priests to the nations to reconcile the earth back to God (Exodus 19:5-6). Yet, in the end, they did not even know that God wanted to circumcise their hearts (Deuteronomy 30:6) by having faith in God to save them from their sins. They were just as ignorant of God as all of the other nations. This is because Israel's pastors had kept God's Word from reaching them, much like what has happened throughout church history since then.

Jesus said, "Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:7). "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:9). Thus, Israel's religious leaders spiritually destroyed the nation. The Lord said, "Many pastors have destroyed My vineyard, they have trodden My portion under foot, they have made My pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto Me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart" (Jeremiah 12:10-11).

10:19-21 Based upon the answer, the question of "Did not Israel know?" means "Did not Israel know that they would lose their standing with God if they did not trust in God to save them?" The answer is "Yes." First, Paul quotes Deuteronomy 32:21 to show that God would use a foolish nation to provoke Israel to jealousy so that they might believe the gospel. In the verse before that, God said, "For they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith" (Deut. 32:20). This shows that God had to use a foolish nation to provoke Israel to jealousy because they had no faith. This "foolish nation" ends up being the believing remnant of Israel. (They are not foolish in the eyes of God, but they are foolish in the eyes of men, because men do not see them as a nation. "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise" (I Corinthians 1:27).) Jesus told the Jewish religious leaders, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matthew 21:43). Then, in Luke 12:32, Jesus told the believing remnant of Israel, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Therefore, this foolish nation is the believing Israel.

Then, Paul quotes Isaiah 65:1-2 and says that "Esaias is very

bold” in saying, “I was found of them that sought Me not.” This shows that, although God provoked Israel to jealousy through believing Israel, apostate Israel still did not believe. This explains why God had to set aside Israel’s program and start the dispensation of grace. So, what happened to Israel? The next verse explains it. God has stretched His hand to Israel all day long, but they are “a disobedient and gainsaying people.” They are gainsaying in that they twisted God’s Word into something that would please the flesh, in order to become rich in this world. (Church history since then shows man has continued doing this.)

They are disobedient in that, in spite of being provoked to jealousy by believing Israel, apostate Israel continued in their unbelief. At the writing of Romans, God still had His hands stretched out to Israel for them to be saved, but they would have to be saved in the new dispensation of grace. In 11:11, Paul will say that God is now provoking apostate Israel with the Gentiles, i.e., the body of Christ, so that Israel may still be saved. Romans 10 ends here, because this provoking ministry is still going on, and so Paul will go into more detail regarding it, as well as giving a warning to Gentiles, in chapter 11.

Romans 11 – God Has not Forsaken Israel

11:1 While God has set aside Israel’s program (Hosea 1:9), God did not cast them away. Until the book of Acts was completed (Romans was written around Acts 20.), Jews were diminishing away (11:12), meaning that Paul still preached the gospel “to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (1:16). However, even today, physical Jews can still believe the gospel of grace and be saved, because “there is no respect of persons with God” (2:11). This is why chapter 10 ended with God stretching out His hands all day long unto Israel (10:21). In spite of their unbelief, God will still save individual Jews, who choose to believe the gospel. Paul gives himself as an example of this.

11:2 The key phrase of this verse is “which He foreknew.” In Galatians 6:16, Paul says, Peace and mercy be “upon the Israel of God.” God never abandoned believing Israel. We must understand this, so that we can have confidence that all of the promises that God made to us today will come to pass. Since God foreknew that there would be 144,000 physical Jews who would believe in the first half of the tribulation period (Revelation 7:3-8), God has kept physical Jews alive so that those future believers would not be

forsaken by God.

11:2-5 This is a quote of I Kings 19:10,14,18. There was a God contest between Jehovah God and Baal, and God showed Israel that He is the only God. The result was that Queen Jezebel promised to kill Elijah. Elijah became fearful and ran into a cave. When God asked him what he was doing there, he stated twice (I Kings 19:10,14) that he was the only believer left in all of Israel. Yet, God responded by telling him that there were still 7,000 people in Israel who had not bowed down to Baal or kissed him (I Kings 19:18). This shows that, although Elijah did not realize it, God had reserved a remnant, who had not aligned themselves with the devil through Baal.

Similarly, although it may appear to man that Jews have aligned themselves with the devil, the truth is that there is still “a remnant according to the election of grace” (11:5). Paul is not referring to saved Jews in the dispensation of grace, because, in the current dispensation, “there is neither Jew nor Greek” (Galatians 3:28). Rather, he is saying that God has elected a group of unbelieving Jews, who will survive until Israel’s program resumes after the rapture, so that Israel can be saved. This is the same thing that happened in Elijah’s day. God did not tell Elijah that there were 7,000 people who were Bible believers and followers of God. Rather, there were 7,000 people, who had not aligned themselves with Baal. This meant that God kept pure the physical Jewish seed line so that God could fulfill His promises to Israel. The same is true today.

“The election of grace” (11:5), then, means that God has elected to keep physical Jews alive until the tribulation period, so that He can fulfill His promises to Israel and make sure that, the ones that He foreknew would be saved in the tribulation period, still have the opportunity to be born and believe the gospel of the kingdom at that time. The same could be said of the Gentiles saved today. In other words, a remnant of Gentiles were kept alive during Israel’s program, according to the election of grace, so that God could save believers today.

11:6 This is the definitive verse that shows that grace and works do not mix. Your flesh wants your salvation to be based upon your works, but you cannot be saved by works because in your flesh “dwelleth no good thing” (7:18). Therefore, salvation must be by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). When you come to God, you cannot

ignore the cross work of Christ, but you can get more people to come to your church if you preach works. Therefore, Churchianity teaches a mixture of grace and works for salvation. However, this verse makes it clear that it must be one or the other. Since salvation cannot be by works, then it must be by grace.

11:7 Since Israel sought salvation by works and salvation is by grace, Israel did not obtain salvation. However, there was still a believing remnant in Israel. People like David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Elijah, and Elisha, still obtained salvation, although Israel, as a whole did not obtain it. This shows the faithfulness of God. God gave eternal life to all believers in Israel, even though Israel, as a whole, did not believe. used wicked hands to crucify their Messiah (Acts 2:23).

Hebrews 3 also shows this was the case in Moses' day. Hebrews 3:19 says that Israel, under Moses, could not enter the Promised Land because of their unbelief. However, Hebrews 3:16 says that this does not refer to "all that came out of Egypt by Moses." Only the unbelievers did not enter in.

Since Israel chose not to believe, God gave Israel what they wanted. That is, God gave them blindness so that they could not see.

11:8-10 Isaiah 29:10 is quoted first, here. Isaiah 29:13 says that, the reason God gave them the spirit of slumber is because, "This people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart far from Me." Basically, God says that, since Israel used their eyes and ears to blaspheme God's name, God gave them blind eyes and deaf ears. In other words, Israel used their privileged status with God to make God look bad; therefore, God takes away their ability to believe so that they can no longer make God look bad.

The next passage quoted is Psalm 69:22-23. The context of Psalm 69 is Jesus' crucifixion. In other words, because of Israel's blindness and deafness, they crucified their Messiah. Therefore, Israel received even further blindness.

Note that this quote also says, "Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them." "Their table" would be their religion. In other words, Israel is

caught in a cycle. First, they did not believe God. Second, their belief resulted in them blaspheming God. Third, their blaspheming God resulted in God making them spiritually blind and deaf. Fourth, their blindness and deafness resulted in them crucifying their Messiah. Fifth, crucifying their Messiah caused further blindness.

11:11 This makes us think that this cycle will never end, which is why the question is now asked, “Have they stumbled that they should fall?” The answer is, “God forbid.” While Israel does get more steeped in their disobedience, God says that “all day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people” (10:21). In other words, God does not cause Israel to get worse and worse so that He can destroy them. Rather, He punishes them so that they may see that their own righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6) so that they will acknowledge that God is the potter and they are the clay (Isaiah 64:8), meaning that they need to trust in God to save them. God pushes Israel down further so that they may look to God for help.

This is the like the rebellious child. You keep pushing him down with punishment, not because you hate him, but because you love him and desire for him to see that you are right so that he will obey you. Similarly, God pushed Israel further and further down so that they would finally acknowledge that they are not righteous on their own and trust in God to save them.

Therefore, they stumbled, not that they should fall, but so they would be lifted up by God. We see God’s graciousness to Israel in sending them John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy-Ghost filled believing remnant to Israel. In spite of all of this, they stumbled and then fell after they stumbled.

They stumbled in crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ. We know this because Paul told us, in Romans 9:32, that “they stumbled at that stumblingstone,” and I Peter 2:6-8 tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ is “a stone of stumbling,” as does the parable in Matthew 21:33-44. After Israel stumbled, God sent the Holy Ghost to 120 believers in the upper room at Pentecost (Acts 1:15). Immediately, another 3,000 were added to the church in Acts 2:41. By Acts 4:4, the believing remnant had grown to at least 5,000, and “the number of the disciples was multiplied” in Acts 6:1. Nevertheless, the nation of Israel, as a whole, was in unbelief. This is seen in their stoning of Stephen.

That is when Israel fell. We know this because we are told that “through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles.” Acts 7:55-56 shows that, when Israel stoned Stephen, Jesus Christ was “STANDING at the right hand of God.” Isaiah 3:13 says that “the Lord standeth...to judge the people.” Then, in Acts 9, the Lord Jesus Christ gave salvation directly to the Gentiles by starting the dispensation of grace with Paul. Since salvation came to the Gentiles in Acts 9 as a result of Israel stoning Stephen in Acts 7, we know that Israel’s fall happened at the stoning of Stephen. Thus, Israel stumbled at the cross, and they fell at the stoning of Stephen.

Even so, God was still not done with Israel. 11:11 tells us that “salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.” The last thing Stephen said before he died was, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge” (Acts 7:60). Stephen said this, “being full of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 7:55). Therefore, although God set aside Israel’s program, Israel could still be saved in the dispensation of grace.

11:12 The fall of Israel is “the riches of the world” (11:12). Salvation was of the Jews (John 4:22) during Israel’s program. Once the middle wall of partition (Ephesians 2:14) between Jew and Gentile went down at the beginning of the dispensation of grace in Acts 9, the whole world had the opportunity to be reconciled to God directly by recognizing their sin and trusting in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for their sin (I Corinthians 15:3-4). They would be “blessed...with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:3). This is “the riches of the world.”

Since Stephen told the Lord not to lay Israel’s sin to their charge, God gave Israel a renewed opportunity to be saved by believing today’s gospel in the dispensation of grace. Thus, when the Lord Jesus Christ commissioned Paul, He had him go to “Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15). When Paul went into a city, he would go to the Jewish synagogue before going to the Gentiles (Acts 17:1-3). Three times, we are told that the Jews rejected the gospel, and so Paul went to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46, 18:6, 28:25-28). The book of Acts ends with the third rejection by the Jews, because it shows that the Jews would no longer hear the gospel first. **Thus, the time of Acts 9-28 is the diminishing away of the Jews in the dispensation of grace.**

During this diminishing time, God gave the gift of speaking in tongues to believing Gentiles (Acts 10:44-46). I Corinthians 12-14 records that other spiritual gifts were given to the body of Christ, as well. Paul also water baptizes some (Acts 18:8) and circumcises some (Acts 16:3), so as not to offend believing Jews during this time. However, by the time the book of Acts ends, the spiritual gifts have passed off the scene and Paul no longer does things to cater to the Jews.

Thus, the fall of Israel in Acts 9 and the diminishing away of the Jews in Acts 9-28 results in Gentile salvation. However, God had said that Israel will be a kingdom of priests to the Gentiles to reconcile the world back to Himself (Exodus 19:5-6). Ten men out of the nations of the Gentiles will listen to one Jew during the millennial reign to find out how the Gentiles can become God's people, too (Zechariah 8:23). Therefore, the fulness of the Jews will result in even greater riches to the Gentiles than the fall and diminishing away of the Jews did!

11:13-14 Paul is “the apostle of the Gentiles” (11:13). This means that, while the Lord Jesus Christ appointed 12 apostles to be over Israel's program (Matthew 10:1-4), He only appointed one apostle to be over the dispensation of grace. This is not to say that there were not more apostles than Paul, because Ephesians 4:11 tells us that there were. It just means that Jesus Christ commissioned one man—Paul—to be in charge of preaching the gospel of grace to all of the world, while He commissioned 12 men to preach the gospel of the kingdom to Israel. There were other apostles in both dispensations, but they were under the 12 in Israel's program and under Paul in the dispensation of grace. Paul says, “A dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me” (I Corinthians 9:17).

Notice that Paul does not magnify himself. He only magnifies his office (11:13). Paul said, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 6:14). Therefore, Paul does not glory in his office as the apostle of the Gentiles. Rather, he magnifies his office so that he might provoke the Jews to emulate the Gentiles (11:14). In other words, Paul magnifies his office so that the Jews might listen to him so that they might be saved.

11:15 This verse shows the power of the cross. Jesus grew up

“as a root out of a dry ground” (Isaiah 53:2), meaning that there was no spiritual nourishment for the Messiah from Israel, due to their apostasy. In spite of this, the Lord Jesus Christ was still able to reconcile the world back to God through the cross. Once the rapture takes place, God will resume Israel’s program. Revelation 7:4 says that 144,000 Jews will be saved halfway through the tribulation period. This is the “life from the dead” that Paul talks about (11:15).

11:16 Now, Paul begins to talk about the olive tree. Many people get confused about the olive tree, because mainstream Churchianity makes the olive tree out to be Israel, and that we are now spiritual Israel today. As we will soon see, this is not what the passage is all about. A simple way to understand the olive tree is by looking at the book of life first.

The book of life contains the names of every person who has ever been born. If you end up being an unbeliever, God will blot your name out of the book of life (Revelation 3:5), and you will be cast into the lake of fire on judgment day (Revelation 20:15). However, if you believe the gospel, your name stays in the book of life. The olive tree is just like this, except that Paul talks about God’s two programs, rather than individuals. God put Israel’s program into the tree, cut the unbelievers out of it in Acts 7, and grafted in the mystery program in Acts 9. At the rapture, God will cut the unbelievers out of it, and graft Israel’s program back in so that they may be saved. With this in mind, let’s now look at the verses.

Olive oil is type of the Holy Ghost in the Bible. When a priest was ordained, they were to be washed with water and anointed with oil (Exodus 29:4-7). When the at-hand phase of the kingdom started with John the Baptist, he said that he baptized believers with water but Jesus would baptize them with the Holy Ghost (Matthew 3:11). When the Holy Ghost was given in Acts 2, Peter said that it fulfilled Joel 2, which states, “I will POUR out of my Spirit upon all flesh” (Acts 2:17). The word “pour” is used to represent the pouring out of the olive oil of the Holy Ghost upon the person. Psalm 23:5 also says, “Thou anointest my head with oil.”

Since olive oil represents the Holy Ghost, the olive tree represents life in God. By comparing Judges 9:7-15 with Genesis 2-3, we can conclude that the tree of life is an olive tree. Therefore, Paul’s discussion of the olive tree, here, is of life that believers have in

God. **This life applies to all dispensations, since the tree of life is seen at the beginning (Genesis 2:9) and the end (Revelation 22:2) of the Bible.** (This is also why Jesus' second coming will be on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4).) By contrast, the vine represents the house of Israel ("For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant" (Isaiah 5:7).) Therefore, the olive tree is NOT Israel.

Granted, God does call Israel "a green olive tree" in Jeremiah 11:16, but the previous verse says that "the holy flesh is passed from thee" (Jeremiah 11:15), due to their apostasy. Therefore, God "hath kindled fire upon it" (Jeremiah 11:16). In other words, God took the vine of Israel and planted them into His olive tree so that they might "be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18). Because of Israel's unbelief, the firstfruit was not holy. This made the lump, i.e., the Gentiles, unholy, as well.

Therefore, God set aside Israel's program and started the dispensation of grace in Acts 9. The body of Christ, then, is the firstfruit that is holy and the lump that is holy is believing Israel after the rapture (11:16). The root, that is holy, is the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember that He grew up "as a root out of a dry ground" (Isaiah 53:2). The branches are holy if their root is holy.

11:17 There is also "the serpent's root", which is mentioned in Isaiah 14:29. Jesus said that Israel's religious leaders were of their "father the devil" (John 8:44), and he called them "ye serpents, ye generation of vipers" (Matthew 23:33). Therefore, while God made Israel part of His olive tree (Jeremiah 11:16), God had to break off those branches because they abode in the devil, rather than in Christ (John 15:5-6). Therefore, the branches, which "be broken off" (11:17), is Israel.

Basically, God had His olive tree, and He put Israel in that tree when He created the nation in the book of Genesis. Then, at the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7, God broke off the branches of Israel. Then, in Acts 9, God grafted in "a wild olive tree" (11:17), which is the Gentiles. Note that God only broke off "SOME" of the branches. The whole nation of Israel was in God's olive tree. God then broke off the unbelieving branches, while the believing branches remained in the tree. God then grafted in the Gentiles for the dispensation of grace. This does not mean that all people today are saved, because God will break off the unbelieving

branches today, just like He broke off the unbelieving branches in Israel in Acts 7. This also does not mean that we are spiritual Israel, because God's olive tree (the tree of life) started in the Garden of Eden. In other words, the tree is not Israel. The tree is life in Christ via the Holy Ghost.

The reason we partake of "the root and fatness of the olive tree" is because we have believed the gospel of grace. All unbelievers are still in God's olive tree until they die, but they do not partake of the root (Jesus Christ) and fatness (life in Christ) of the olive tree, because they are tapped into the serpent's root.

11:18 Remember that the branches left in the olive tree are believers from Israel's program. Therefore, when we are told: "Boast not against the branches" (11:18), it means that we should NOT say that we are spiritual Israel. Rather, we should recognize that God's olive tree contains believers from Israel's program, who will rule forever on the earth (Revelation 5:10), and it contains the Body of Christ, who will rule forever in heaven (Ephesians 1:3, 2:6-7; Philippians 3:20).

If we say that we are spiritual Israel, then we are boasting against the branches, as we are trying to steal God's promises to them away from them. This is why the rest of the verse says, "thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." In other words, if I am boasting against believing Israel, then I have pride. There is no charity in my boast, because "charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up" (I Corinthians 13:4). Therefore, I am not bearing Christ (the root) to the world through living by the faith of the Son of God (Galatians 2:20). Rather, Christ has to bear me up in that His blood has to cover my sinful pride, and I produce no fruit for Christ.

11:19-21 It is true that the branches were broken off so that we could be grafted in. However, that is nothing to boast about. As we stated in the notes on 11:17, God put all of Israel in the olive tree at first. He then put all of the Gentiles in the olive tree, starting with the dispensation of grace in Acts 9. Therefore, there is nothing special about us. It simply means that we have a chance to have eternal life with God, just like Israel did. If we choose not to believe the gospel, we will be cut out of God's tree, just like unbelieving Israel was cut out. Therefore, there is nothing special about us Gentiles today. It is simply that God loves the whole world (John 3:16) and wants all men to be saved

(I Timothy 2:4). Therefore, He gives everyone a chance to be saved, which means that we are not any better or worse than Israel.

Now, when 11:20 says that we should fear and 11:21 says that God may not spare us, this does NOT mean that we can lose our salvation. It just means that, when “the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (11:25), God will remove all unbelieving Gentiles from His olive tree at the end of the dispensation of grace. God will then graft in Israel again. If we have believed the gospel, we will remain in the tree, just like the believers in Israel remained in the tree when God cut off unbelieving Israel. The “fear”, then, is much like the fear that we should have in working out our salvation, as mentioned in Philippians 2:12. In other words, knowing that there will come a day when God will remove unbelievers from His olive tree, we should be good ambassadors for Christ (II Corinthians 5:20), working to get people saved now. When the rapture takes place, it will be a lot harder for people to be saved, since Satan’s deception only gets greater as time goes on (Matthew 24:21-24). Therefore, we should have fear for the unbelievers and work toward getting them saved before the Gentiles are cut out of God’s olive tree and God grafts Israel back in again.

11:20 says that “thou standest by faith.” This is the faith OF Jesus Christ (3:22; Galatians 2:16). We cannot lose our salvation because Jesus Christ’s faith is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8). “If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself” (II Timothy 2:13). God looks at us, based upon the merits of Christ, because we are “accepted in the beloved” (Christ) (Ephesians 1:6) and our lives are “hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). This means that, to deny us eternal life, God would have to deny Christ eternal life. Since “He cannot deny Himself,” we are guaranteed to have eternal life in Christ, because we stand by Christ’s faith.

11:22 Therefore, “if thou continue in His goodness” (11:22) is not talking to individuals, who have already believed the gospel. Rather, it is talking to the Gentiles as a whole. Once people stop believing the gospel, the Gentiles will not be in God’s goodness. This does not mean that there will be no believers when the rapture takes place. There was actually a last-days revival happening in Acts 2-6, when the Jewish religious leaders came along with the stoning of Stephen so that God set aside Israel’s

program. Perhaps this will happen as well in the dispensation of grace. Perhaps a last-days revival will bring about the fulness of the Gentiles (11:25). Then, there will be one event, that Churchianity's leaders do, that prompts God to end the dispensation of grace and start Israel's program again. Maybe it will be the martyr of a prominent Bible believer, just like it was with the stoning of Stephen.

In the meantime, God's goodness is upon the body of Christ today for believing. We need to fear that this "one event" could happen at any time, and God's severity would be back on the Gentiles with the resumption of Israel's program.

God's "severity" is "on them which fell" (11:22). We know this to be unbelieving Israel. This is not unlike Jesus' statement in Matthew 21:44, "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." Israel stumbled over the stumblingstone of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. Then, they fell at the stoning of Stephen. Since they fell, God brought severity upon them, meaning that they were ground to powder. Spiritually speaking, this means that they go to hell. This is seen in Luke 3:17, where John the Baptist says that Jesus, "will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His garner; but the chaff He will burn with fire unquenchable." The chaff is the "powder" of Matthew 21:44.

11:23 This verse says that Israel will be grafted into the olive tree again, "if they abide not still in unbelief." Israel will come out of unbelief at the rapture of the church. Why is this the case? I Corinthians 1:22 says that "the Jews require a sign." Being in unbelief, Jesus called the Israel of His day, "an evil and adulterous generation" (Matthew 12:39). He said that the only sign given to that generation is "the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:39-40). In other words, the resurrection of Jesus is their sign that God's Word is true. Today, we are the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:27). Jesus is "the firstfruits" of the resurrection. "Afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (I Corinthians 15:23). Therefore, the sign of the prophet Jonas is completed when Christ's body rises from the grave at the rapture. This will be the sign that the evil and adulterous generation of Jews will need to "abide not still in

unbelief” (11:23). Therefore, Israel’s program will be grafted into the olive tree again, once the rapture of the body of Christ takes place. (This is also confirmed by 11:25-26).

11:24 The olive tree, that we were in, was “wild by nature” (11:24). It is “wild,” spiritually speaking, because of our sin nature. “There is none that doeth good, no, not one” (3:12). Meanwhile, “there is none good but one, that is, God” (Matthew 19:17). Therefore, the “GOOD olive tree” (11:24) must be God the Holy Ghost, as we have already established.

Israel is called “the natural branches,” and this tree is said to be “their own olive tree” (11:24). This may lead you to believe that the tree is Israel. However, it is not a “GOOD” olive tree if Israel is the olive tree, because there is no goodness in Israel. Any goodness in them is of God, just like for us today. The tree is said to be Israel’s, here, because God started reconciling the world back to Himself through the nation of Israel. Therefore, Israel were the original, or natural, branches.

You could also say that the olive tree is Israel’s from the same standpoint that Abraham “is the father of us all” (4:16). God started reconciling the world to Himself with Abraham. God also started the nation of Israel with Abraham. Abraham is our father today because God justified him by faith in Genesis 15 (See Romans 4:3). Abraham is believing Israel’s father because God justified him by faith plus works in Genesis 22 (See James 2:21-24). Therefore, Abraham is the father of all believers (4:16), but we generally think of Abraham as the start of the nation of Israel. Similarly, we could say that the olive tree is Israel, because God started reconciling the world back to Himself through Abraham, who is generally associated with Israel. But, the tree is really God the Holy Ghost, and all believers, who are in Christ, are in the tree, because it is God’s goodness that makes the olive tree “good,” not Israel.

11:25 This is the first time in the Bible that Paul uses the word “mystery.” The mystery, that is now revealed here, is “that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved” (11:25-26). This should establish, once and for all, that we are not spiritual Israel today. If you say that you are spiritual Israel, Paul says that you are “wise in your own conceits” (11:25). Reformed Churchianity believes that, the promises to Israel in the Old

Testament, go to us today, and that Israel will never receive these promises because of their unbelief, i.e., they believe they are spiritual Israel. Note that God's Word clearly states that this is a conceited view. Therefore, Paul makes it clear, here, that God has not forsaken Israel. Rather, they are blind "in part," meaning that there will still be some Jews who are saved in the dispensation of grace. However, the majority of the people, who are saved today, will be Gentiles. Therefore, members of the body of Christ are called "Gentiles," even if they are physical Jews, just like saved members of the bride of Christ are called "Israel," even if they are physical Gentiles. Then, once the rapture takes place, God will resume Israel's program, and "all Israel shall be saved" (11:26).

"The FULNESS" refers to heavenly positions being filled with members of the body of Christ. When Satan rebelled against God, 1/3 of the angels rebelled with him (Revelation 12:3-4). All of the higher ranking angels rebelled with Satan, except for Gabriel and Michael (Daniel 10:21). Amos 9:6 says that God "buildeth His stories in the heaven," which tells us that there is a governmental structure in heaven. Ephesians 1:21 says that heavenly places consist of the following positions: principality, power, might, dominion, and every name that is named. Colossians 1:16 adds "thrones" to this list. Ephesians 1:22-23 goes on to say that all things are under Christ's feet, Christ is the head of the church, and Christ uses the body of Christ, i.e., saved people in the grace dispensation, to fill the positions in heavenly places that Satan and his forces will be kicked out of halfway through the tribulation period (Revelation 12:7-9). This is what is meant by: "The fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:23). This is what Paul means when he says "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (11:25).

This can be either a quantitative or a qualitative issue. For example, if there are 2 million positions to be occupied by members of the body of Christ, Christ must wait until at least 2 million people are saved, in the dispensation of grace, before the rapture takes place. This is the quantitative issue. The qualitative issue is, if Christ needs 12 thrones, 120 principalities, and 1,200 powers, for example, the rapture cannot take place until enough members of the body of Christ are qualified to take those positions. I Corinthians 6:3 says that we will judge angels. I do not think this refers to judging them to heaven or hell, because "God is the judge" of those things, not us (Psalm 50:6, 75:7). I think this refers to ongoing judgments.

Hebrews 1:14 says that angels are “ministering spirits,” who minister for believers. Therefore, in eternity, we will send angels out to perform certain tasks (See John 1:51). We will then need to judge how these tasks are to be performed, when questions come up. This is how we will judge angels. This is not unlike Moses, who appointed judges/rulers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens (Exodus 18:25-26), for the children of Israel.

Romans 8:2 tells us that the material realm operates by “the law of sin and death,” while the spirit realm operates by “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” Therefore, the way we become qualified for higher positions in heavenly places is by allowing the Holy Ghost to build more sound doctrine in our inner man and using the mind of Christ to make decisions based upon that doctrine (I Corinthians 2:9-16). The more we do this, the more knowledge and experience we will have so that we will be able to handle more difficult issues that come up.

So, is the rapture delayed waiting for more people to be saved or for the higher positions to be filled? My guess is that it is the latter. When you think of a regular company, it is usually a lot easier to fill the lower positions than the higher positions. Also, as mentioned previously, 1/3 of the angels rebelled with Satan but all of the higher ranking angels, except Gabriel and Michael rebelled. Therefore, there are more top-level positions that need to be filled. When you look at Churchianity today, there are very few people who even understand their eternal security, even fewer who understand their life in Christ, and it is very rare to find someone who knows these things and studies God’s Word on a daily basis. Therefore, it makes the most sense, to me, that it is the higher positions that need to be filled, which is why the rapture has not taken place yet. Perhaps, with the recovery of right-division and life-in-Christ doctrines over the last 150 years, the rapture will take place very soon.

11:26-27 Once “the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (11:25), “all Israel shall be saved” (11:26). This is not to say that every physical Jew will be saved. As we learned in 9:6, “they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.” It means that all of the “Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16) will be saved, meaning that all “the lost sheep of the house of Israel will believe the gospel of the kingdom” (Matthew 10:6, 15:24). This will happen quickly, because Romans 9:28 says, “For He will finish the work, and cut it short in

righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.” This is because Satan’s deception will be so strong during the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period that, if the Lord did not make a short work, “there should no flesh be saved” (Matthew 24:21-24).

11:26b-27 is a quote of Isaiah 59:20-21. It says that the Lord Jesus Christ will turn Israel from their ungodliness. Isaiah 59:16 says, “And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness, it sustained Him.” This shows that salvation is solely the Lord’s work. Even in Israel’s program, man’s work does not play a part in his salvation.

Now, Jesus already came the first time to deliver Israel. So, why is He called the Deliverer, here, in reference to His second coming? The reason is that 11:27 says that the way the Lord Jesus Christ delivers Israel is by putting them under the new covenant and taking away their sin. Ezekiel 36:26-27 gives the detail of this by saying, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” We often think of salvation as God giving us our eternal home. While that is true, a deeper meaning of eternal life is that we will ALWAYS do what God wants us to do because God’s Spirit is within us, and our vile flesh is taken away from us (Philippians 3:21). Therefore, when Jesus is called “the Deliverer” in 11:26, it means that He is delivering Israel from walking according to the lusts of their flesh. Yes, He forgives their sin, but He also gives them His Spirit so that they always do what God wants them to do. This is the true meaning, here, of “the Deliverer,” and explains why He is called “the Deliverer” at His second coming, instead of His first coming. In other words, Jesus is the Deliverer at His second coming, because that is when Israel is put under the new covenant.

11:28 Paul comes full circle and will now summarize the incredible wisdom of God to save Gentiles first, in the dispensation of grace, and Israel second, after the rapture up to the second coming of Christ. This is not to say that there were not Gentiles or Jews saved before the dispensation of grace. However, the vast majority of Gentile salvation occurs in the dispensation of grace, as the vast majority of Jewish salvation occurs after the

rapture up to Jesus' second coming.

Paul says that the Jews are enemies for our sakes, as concerning the gospel. Jews are enemies because they are in unbelief. They have been blinded by God (11:7-10) so that we will believe the gospel. It is sort of like a sibling rivalry. We (Gentiles) pick up what our sibling (Jews) have discarded, i.e., eternal life with God.

Regarding election, Jews "are beloved for the fathers' sakes" (11:28). Remember that, in spite of their unbelief "there is a remnant [of Jews] according to the election of grace" (11:5), meaning that God has elected to keep physical Jews from being wiped off the face of the earth, in spite of their unbelief. Isaiah 1:9 says, "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." Sodom and Gomorrah were utterly destroyed (Genesis 19:24-25; Jude 7), but God has left a remnant of Jews alive so that He can fulfill His promises to Israel. "The fathers," who trusted in God to save them in Israel's program, will still receive an inheritance in God's coming eternal, earthly kingdom. Therefore, unbelieving Israel is "beloved for the fathers' sakes" (11:28).

11:29 Why did God keep Israel alive? "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (11:29). Numbers 23:19 says, "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?"

God actually delays fulfilling His promises on purpose. That way, you must have faith in God in order to receive the promises. Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." The reason God desires faith is because faith is the currency of God's kingdom. Everything operates on faith, because God's kingdom is all about sharing God's love for all eternity. You must have faith in God in order to share God's love; otherwise, you will fulfill your own will.

Romans 4:20-21 gives a great definition of faith. It says that Abraham "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform." If you are fully persuaded that God will perform what He had promised, then you will always obey God in eternity,

because you are confident that God's way is the best way. Since God's ways and thoughts are higher than our ways and thoughts (Isaiah 55:9), we should always have faith in God.

Therefore, God gave promises to Israel and intentionally delayed thousands of years in fulfilling those promises to them so that only those with faith in God would receive the promises, since only the faithful ones will be perfect servants of God in His eternal kingdom. Therefore, we should not think that we are spiritual Israel today.

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9).

11:30 11:30-32 is Paul's summary of how brings salvation to all people through the two programs: 1) Israel, and 2) The Body of Christ.

Paul says "times past," not "time past," to show that Gentiles, as a whole, never believed God in order to be saved until the dispensation of grace started with Paul in Acts 9. The reason, that the Gentiles believe God now, is because of Israel's unbelief. God made promises to Israel (9:4), and Israel did not obtain them, due to their apostasy. The Gentiles saw that God could give these promises to Israel. Therefore, when God gave similar promises to the Gentiles, in the dispensation of grace, the Gentiles believed God and received the gift of eternal life in heavenly places.

11:31 You would think that Israel would see God's promises go to the Gentiles and then Jews would believe God. However, because of their unbelief, God blinded Israel (11:7-10). Therefore, it is mostly Gentiles who believe God in the current dispensation.

We also need to keep in mind that God made the Jewish mind and the Gentile mind to be different from each other. "The Jews require a sign, and the Greek seek after wisdom" (I Corinthians 1:22). Since God is concentrating on saving Gentiles, due to the hardness of Israel's heart, God is using wisdom to save people today. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:21). This is one reason why the sign gifts of speaking in tongues, physical healings,

miracles, etc. are not being done today.

Once the dispensation of grace is over, God will resume Israel's program, and these sign gifts will also be resumed. Therefore, Israel will obtain mercy through our mercy. In other words, once the dispensation of grace is over, Israel will see that God is faithful to keep His promises, because they will have seen the Gentiles realize God's promises to them. They will then trust God in order to be saved (11:26) so they finally receive the promises that God made to them (9:4).

11:32 First, Paul said, "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin" (3:9). Now, Paul says, "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all." God concluded the Gentiles in unbelief at the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 (1:28). God concluded Israel in unbelief at the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7. This shows that, before any group of people—Jew or Gentile—would believe the gospel and be saved, God had to prove that the whole world were sinners and unbelievers. Only then could God have mercy on all.

Based on the next verse, I do not think this means that God could not OFFER mercy until all were sinners and unbelievers. Otherwise, how could He have offered mercy to Israel from Genesis 12 through Acts 7? I think it means that, the only way man would overcome his own selfish pride, was that man had to be proven to be sinners and unbelievers. In other words, all men had to be clearly shown by God that they have a sin problem and they had to reject God's solution to their problem before a group of people would arise who would actually believe the gospel and be saved. This shows how utterly depraved man really is.

11:33 This also shows God's immeasurable wisdom and knowledge. Only God has such depth in wisdom and knowledge that He could come up with a plan to save fallen man. This is why Satan went along with God's plan. If Satan knew that God's plan was to have Jesus crucified on a cross, he never would have had Him crucified (I Corinthians 2:8). Because Satan is not smart enough to figure out God's plan, Satan played right into God's hands and actually helped God's plan to come to fruition.

This is also why man never figured out the mystery that was revealed to Paul. Therefore, both I Timothy 1:17 and Jude 25 call the Lord Jesus Christ "the only wise God." This is also why

Proverbs 8:22-24 says, “The Lord possessed me [wisdom] in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water.”

This is seen in Paul’s statement that God’s judgments are “unsearchable..., and His ways past finding out!” God judged man to be sinners, man to be in unbelief, Jesus’ blood to satisfy the sin payment of death, and man to have eternal life when he believes the gospel God gives him. These things are unsearchable. God has to share them with us in order for us to understand them. This is why I Corinthians 2:9-16 says that the natural man cannot understand the deep things of God. It takes the Spirit of God communicating with our spirit to understand these things. His ways are also past finding out because God’s ways and thoughts are higher than our ways and thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9). Therefore, not only can we not search God’s judgments to understand them, but we also cannot understand anything God does, unless God reveals those things to us by His Spirit.

11:34 This verse is a quote of Isaiah 40:13. Again, this shows that God is the only wise God, since no one was with God when He created everything.

11:35 This is a quote of Job 41:11. In Job, it comes in the middle of God’s description of leviathan. In the physical realm, leviathan is a crocodile. In the spiritual realm, leviathan is Satan. There, God makes the point that, “None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before Me?” (Job 41:10). In other words, since God created such a ruthless creature, no one can stop the Creator from doing what He wants to do. No one existed before God that he could give something to God, and God is not indebted to anyone. This is why He is God.

11:36 Colossians 1:16 makes a similar statement by saying that “all things were created by Him, and for Him.” In that verse, it says that this includes all created things in heaven and in earth, which includes the governmental structure of heaven and earth. Therefore, 11:36 may be building some foundational doctrine, here, in order to understand the heavenly structure, that Paul will talk about in Ephesians 1 and Colossians 1.

This shows that God created all things in order to bring glory to

Himself and to us in the person of Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:17).

Romans 12 – Grace Living

12:1 Paul does not command us to do things in the dispensation of grace, because we are adult sons of God, not children (Galatians 4:5-7). Rather, he beseeches us, which means to encourage strongly. He beseeches us “by the mercies of God,” which, again, shows that God gives us the free-will to make our own decisions.

Presenting our bodies as living sacrifices goes along with 6:13, where he says to “yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” Basically, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” I am baptized into or identified with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection when I believe the gospel (6:3-4). This means that my life, after being saved, is really Christ’s life living through me. Therefore, I should present my body as a living sacrifice. This means that I should sacrifice my body’s lusts so that Christ lives through me by the Spirit of God.

When we think of sacrifices, we usually think of animal sacrifices that are killed. We, as believers, are killed, too. Colossians 3:3 says, “Ye are dead.” However, we are LIVING sacrifices, because Christ has given us His life (John 10:10), and He then lives through us. “For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter” (8:36). Note that our sacrifice is “holy” (12:1), because we are “accepted in the beloved” (Ephesians 1:6), who is Christ.

Note also that this is our “reasonable service” (12:1). This shows that our service to God as living sacrifices is based upon reason. We have reasoned out that we should allow Christ to live in us, rather than living by the lusts of the flesh. This shows that the Christian life should be based upon the rational, reasonable thinking of using the mind of Christ (I Corinthians 2:16) to apply sound doctrine found in Paul’s epistles. This is in contrast to emotionalism, which most of Churchianity follows today.

12:2 This verse does NOT say that we are to avoid all sinners or

not live in the world. I Corinthians 5:10 says that, in order for us to do that, we would have to go out of the world. Rather, it says we are not to be conformed to the world. We are to be transformed by having our minds renewed.

All people have a “fleshly mind” (Colossians 2:18), and all believers have “the mind of Christ” (I Corinthians 2:16). The more sound doctrine we receive in our inner man, the more our mind is renewed by the mind of Christ. Thus, we are transformed from operating by a fleshly mind into operating by the mind of Christ. We do all of this while still living in the world. Of course, this also may mean that we choose not to participate in things that we used to participate in. We, then, are not conforming to the course of this world (Ephesians 2:2), but we are allowing Christ to live in us (Galatians 2:20) while still in the world.

Therefore, our inner man is transformed, so that others may see Christ in us and desire to have the same transformation, i.e., “to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man” (Ephesians 3:16). This results in the love of Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith (Ephesians 3:17). Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). When we do this, we prove God’s will. God’s will is for “all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Timothy 2:4). Therefore, God’s will is naturally done through us, when we are transformed by the renewing of our minds.

12:3 Paul says that grace is given unto him. I Peter 5:5 says that God “giveth grace to the humble.” We see a progression of humility in Paul’s life. First, he says that he is “the least of the apostles” (I Corinthians 15:9). Then, he says that he is “less than the least of all saints” (Ephesians 3:8). Finally, he calls himself the chief of sinners (I Timothy 1:15). The more grace God gives you, the more God humbles you, and you see yourself for who you are, not what your pride says you are. Therefore, as Paul received more grace, he instructed the Romans “to think soberly” (12:3), meaning that they should think depending on who they are in Christ.

This is “the measure of faith” (12:3). We learned, in 10:17, that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Therefore, the more I read and believe my Bible, the more sound doctrine I have built up in my inner man, which means my

measure of faith has been increased. Since I am to recognize that I am crucified with Christ and I should live by the faith of the Son of God (Galatians 2:20), I should live according to the sound doctrine built up in my inner man. The more sound doctrine in my inner man, the greater the faith of the Son of God built up in me, and Christ can live in me to a greater extent. This is sober thinking. If I try to act more Christlike than I know how to act, then I am living by my emotions, rather than by the faith of the Son of God through God's Word in me.

12:4-8 Now, Paul starts talking about spiritual gifts. I Corinthians 13:8-10 tells us that, when God's Word is completed, the spiritual gifts will cease. Ephesians 4:11-16 confirms that, once we are no more children, but can stand in sound doctrine, spiritual gifts will cease. This took place when God's Word was completed. Therefore, we should not be seeking the spiritual gifts that this passage mentions. However, we can still learn the principles in these verses.

First, we learn that we are all members of the body of Christ (12:4-5). This means that we are not the bride of Christ. That is what Israel is (Revelation 21:2,9-14). This tells us that we should work together, just like the members of a body work together. Christ is the head of the body (I Corinthians 11:3; Colossians 1:18), and Christ is the Word (John 1:1). Therefore, our primary duty, as a member of the body of Christ, is to receive nourishment from God's Word (Colossians 2:19) and operate in that Word that we know. This is operating "according to the proportion of faith" (12:6).

Second, we should understand that the spiritual gifts were given by the Spirit based upon how much spiritual maturity a person had, i.e., how much sound doctrine was built up in his inner man (I Corinthians 12:11). Paul goes into much greater detail on this in I Corinthians 12-14. Basically, if you were just saved, you would start out with the gift of tongues. Once you had more spiritual maturity, you could move up to interpretation of tongues or to prophesying (I Corinthians 12:28). While we do not have spiritual gifts today, the more sound doctrine that is built up in our inner man, the greater the capacity for Christ to live through us. This is based upon what we learned in 12:3 about the grace given unto us.

We should also note, from these verses, how insignificant the

spiritual gifts were. Paul spent two chapters (I Corinthians 12 and 14) telling the Corinthians about the gifts, but that was only because they were carnal (I Corinthians 3:3). For the Romans, Paul only talks about them for 3 verses. He basically just tells them to use their spiritual gifts, according to the faith built up in their inner man. Then, he moves on to more important things. Why, then, would Pentecostals focus so much on tongues in I Corinthians 14? Doing so shows their carnality, because, even when spiritual gifts were in operation, they were not that important. Paul's emphasis to the Corinthians, regarding spiritual gifts, is more about making sure they are done correctly, just like he emphasizes here.

Also, note that that the gifts listed here are prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, ruling, and being merciful. In Ephesians 4:11, the gifts listed are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Tongues and healings are the gifts that Pentecostals emphasize today, and those are absent from these lists. **This shows that only carnal Christians seek out such gifts.**

12:9 Love being without dissimulation means that you should not have an ulterior motive when you show love. In other words, love should not be an attempt to get ahead or to get something from someone else. Rather, your decisions should be based upon the faith of the Son of God working in you.

It is no accident that love is mentioned right after spiritual gifts, just like it is in I Corinthians 12-13. The reason is that, if Jesus Christ were to give you a spiritual gift, the tendency would be to become puffed up in the flesh. Therefore, Paul reminds the Romans of love so that they will realize that the purpose of spiritual gift is to show Christ's love to others, rather than to puff up themselves.

12:10-11 When you are not lazy in business and you are passionate about your work, you are serving the Lord. Note that nothing is mentioned about praying to find out what occupation God would have you do. This means you do not have to be a pastor, a missionary, a worship leader, or other "ministry" position. You serve the Lord simply by doing well at your job.

12:12 "Rejoicing in hope" is a good way to summarize what our attitude should be in this present evil world. We have the hope of

eternal life and a position in heavenly places that is laid up for us in heaven (Colossians 1:5). Therefore, we can “rejoice evermore” (I Thessalonians 5:16) over this hope, even though we suffer for godly living (II Timothy 3:12) in a world that is operating by Satan’s course (Ephesians 2:2). We do not rejoice over what happens in the world, but we rejoice in hope of the glory awaiting us in heaven. This is also how we can be “patient in tribulation”, and we continue “instant in prayer” so that we are not “distressed” nor “in despair” when we suffer (II Corinthians 4:8).

12:13 This verse says, “distributing to the necessity of SAINTS.” It does not say “distribution to the necessity of the world around us.” Today, Churchianity is so concerned with the social gospel that they neglect to give a saving gospel. Even if they do preach Paul’s gospel, it is not seen as important. Churchianity has set their affection on things on the earth, rather than on heavenly things (Colossians 3:2).

I Timothy 5:8 says that we are to take care of those of our household first and foremost. Then, we can take care of widows in the church that meet the qualifications given in I Timothy 5:9-10. That is the extent to which we are to take care of others. Note also that we are to distribute “to the NECESSITY of the saints,” which means that we only need to provide for their basic needs. While there is nothing wrong with helping out with charities and with unbelievers, our primary focus should be giving them the gospel, not taking care of them materially.

12:14 Jesus said, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.... For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?” (Matthew 5:44,46). In other words, if I do good to those who love me, it does not show Christ to them, because even unbelievers do good to those who love them. However, if you “bless them which persecute you” (12:14), you are showing Christ’s love to them. Only God’s love “suffereth long...,envieth not,” and “seeketh not her own” (I Corinthians 13:4-5). Therefore, loving your enemies gives them an opportunity to see Christ in you so that they may be saved. Your enemies may use this as an opportunity to take advantage you, but who cares? It is no big deal if you lose material possessions, because those all go away when you die anyway. But, the affliction we suffer for Christ “worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”

(II Corinthians 4:17). Therefore, if others persecute you for Christ, all they are doing is increasing your reward in heaven. “For great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matthew 5:12).

12:15 Because we are the body of Christ, “whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it” (I Corinthians 12:26). Therefore, we should help each other out. After all, we are not of this world, and so we should not expect the world to be on our side. We need to take care of each other.

12:16 Today, the word “condescend” means to act like you are superior to someone else. When the KJV was written, it meant just the opposite. Of course, you can tell from the context that “condescend” must mean that you are to bring yourself down to “men of low estate” to help them out. We are not saved because we worked our way up to heaven. We are saved because Christ came down from heaven and saved us. When Jesus died, “the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom” (Matthew 27:51), showing that God came down to us to save us.

Therefore, if we are spiritually more advanced than others, we should not be puffed up with pride over how much we know. Rather, we should come down to their level and allow Christ to use us to lift them up in sound doctrine.

12:17-18 These are some tough verses to obey. Our sin nature loves revenge. Therefore, it can be difficult not to get back at people for the evil they do unto us. In a parallel passage in I Peter 3:8-9, we are told that, when someone does evil toward you, you should bless them instead, which goes along with 12:14.

Not only should you not recompense evil for evil, but you should also provide all things honest to people. The old saying, “My word is my bond,” comes to mind here. In fact, Psalm 15:4 says that one of the characteristics of an upright man is that he “sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.” In other words, we should be honest with others, even when doing so hurts ourselves, because doing so honors Christ, so that the world may see Christ in us.

As if all of that is not enough, we are next told to live peaceably with all men, as much as is possible. This means that, if at all possible, we should try to avoid arguments and strife that cause

division. Today, people see this as passive behavior, but it is really godly behavior. We only need to look at the Lord Jesus Christ's behavior in going to the cross, in order to see what living out these two verses is like. When Peter cut off a soldier's ear, Jesus healed it (Luke 22:50-51), so that evil was not recompensed for evil. When Jesus was asked questions by Pilate, He responded honestly, even though He was punished for His answers. Then, when they crucified Him anyway, He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). So, too, we should have the same mind as Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5) and look out for others' salvation and sanctification, rather than for our own justice.

12:19 Paul quotes Deuteronomy 32:35 to tell the Romans that vengeance belongs to the Lord. The context, of the Deuteronomy passage, is that God will bring vengeance upon the apostate nation of Israel for leading Israel astray. This shows that our enemies are usually those who claim to represent God. Paul had experience with this, as it was the Jewish religion, who primarily persecuted him, rather than the pagan unbelievers around him. Similarly, Jesus' persecution came from the Jewish religion. Therefore, as Bible believers, we should expect that our enemies are those in Churchianity. This makes sense when you consider that most people do not get involved in religious stuff. Therefore, they do not care if you take a stand for God's Word. If anything, they may think it is great that you stand up against the hypocrites of Churchianity. However, Churchianity's leaders hate Bible believers, because Bible believers show the truth, which may lead some of Churchianity's adherents to leave. Churchianity's adherents also hate the truth, because it ruins the religion they are following. So, they have to go against their family and friends and their own consciences in order to believe God and His Word. This is something that very few people are willing to do. Therefore, most all people in Churchianity are the enemies of Bible believers.

Regardless of the opposition, we should allow the Lord to take vengeance upon these unbelievers. If this includes Churchianity, we should "mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (16:17-18).

12:20-21 Given that Paul quotes Proverbs 25:21-22 here, the enemy, that Paul has in mind, are probably unbelievers, who are not part of Churchianity. Now, if I truly love my enemies, I do not want any harm to come to them. So, why would I want to heap coals of fire upon their heads? The answer is that heaping coals of fire on their heads means that we are basically giving them a taste of hell fire. Since God is love (I John 4:8), in eternity, the greatest punishment upon unbelievers is that they do not get to experience that love, but they get to see God's love in action in God's kingdom. Therefore, if you show love to your enemies, you are showing them what God's kingdom is like, which they can see in contrast to what Satan's kingdom is like. If they go to hell, there is no getting out of Satan's kingdom, and so they experience the fires of hell for all eternity. However, if they recognize God's love coming to them through you, perhaps they will accept God's love by believing the gospel. You have then overcome evil with good (12:21). In other words, by doing good to them, they get a glimpse of eternity, which is why we are told that you heap coals of fire on their heads. Then, they have the opportunity to change where they will spend eternity by believing the gospel. Thus, evil is overcome with good. At the same time, evil does not overcome us, because we allow Christ to live in us, rather than yielding to the lusts of our flesh.

Romans 13 – Charity with the World

13:1 When this verse says that, “there is no power but of God” (13:1), it is not saying that God sanctions everything that Satan does or that specific world leaders were placed there by God. Rather, it is saying that God created “the higher powers.” God created nationalism in Genesis 11, and so the powers over different nations, e.g., Daniel 10:20, come from God. God maintains control over the world by making sure that those, in those higher powers, do not go any farther than God allows them.

For example, both Job 1:6 and 2:1 show Satan and his devils having to present themselves to the Lord on certain days. Satan had to get permission from God to afflict Job, even though Satan is “the god of this world” (II Corinthians 4:4). If these higher powers disobey God's restrictions against them, they are punished. I Peter 3:19-20 mentions the devils that disobeyed God by having sex with women in order to create superhuman creatures. It says that they are in prison. II Peter 2:4 says that “God...cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of

darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” Therefore, God is in control of the higher powers, even if they are doing evil things.

For example, God allowed the Illuminati to manufacture two world wars (1914-1918 and 1939-1945) in order to create a new world order with the United Nations (1945) and establish the land of Israel (1948) so that they could bring in their Antichrist to sit on the throne. However, it was not God’s timing yet for the tribulation period to start. Therefore, 72 years have passed since then, and the dispensation of grace continues without the Antichrist ever appearing.

13:2 Given that God is over all the powers, we should be subject to them. If we do not obey them, we are indirectly disobeying God.

When this verse says that “they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation,” it is not talking about eternal damnation by God in the lake of fire. 13:3-4 tells us that rulers have the power to execute wrath upon those who do evil. Therefore, the damnation is the kings, judges, and other rulers declaring punishment upon you for disobeying them.

Note that this is a general statement. In general, we should obey the government, because they are placed there by God to keep the sin nature in check. It only took 10 generations or about 1,000 years from Adam to Noah (Genesis 5) for God to destroy the earth with a flood, and another 6 generations or about 700 years from Noah to Peleg (Genesis 10:21-25) before God divided the world into nations. The world has had nations for over 4,000 years since, and God has not had to destroy the earth again. This shows how effective nationalism is in keeping the sin nature in check.

Of course, there are exceptions when we should not obey those over us. In Acts 5:28, the Jewish high priest said that he told the disciples not to teach in Jesus’ name to which the apostles replied, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). In Acts 23:2, the high priest commanded that Paul be hit. Paul rebukes him, but, after he finds out it was the high priest’s command, Paul said, “I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people” (Acts 23:5). Therefore, even though the high priest disobeyed the law, Paul still had no right to speak against the high priest. In the future, the Antichrist will get the world to bow

down to the image of the beast and take the mark of the beast. God tells people not to do that, because they will receive eternal damnation as a result (Revelation 14:9-11).

Therefore, we should always obey those who have rule over us, unless doing so disobeys God. After all, we are seated together with Christ in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:5-6). Therefore, our highest priority is to be good ambassadors for Christ (II Corinthians 5:20), which means we should always obey Christ above government, if it comes down to this. This does not give us an excuse for disobedience. If the government implements a stupid rule, we should obey the stupid rule, as long as it does not affect Christ living in us. For example, when the United States declared we should wear masks due to COVID-19, we should obey that rule, even if we do not agree with it, because obeying it does not affect our walk with Christ.

13:3-4 The reason nationalism has worked so well is that rulers are a terror to evil works. The lusts of the flesh are entirely selfish. Left to himself, man will “work all uncleanness with greediness” (Ephesians 4:19). Therefore, if left unchecked, society will eventually destroy itself in its lusts. This is why God brought in nationalism, which enables leaders to kill people who do not comply with their rules. This keeps the sin nature from getting too bad, provided the rulers create and implement good laws. This is how a ruler “is the minister of God to thee for good” (13:4). This simply means that rulers keep the sin nature from destroying society. It does NOT mean that rulers are preaching the Bible or upholding godly principles.

13:5-7 13:5 gives us two reasons to obey rulers: 1) So they do not punish us, and 2) So we have a clean conscience. For this cause, we should also pay our taxes. You may say, “But, the government is corrupt and wastes trillions of dollars on pork-belly projects, while the politicians grant favors in order to get rich. Therefore, since government is corrupt, we should not pay taxes.” I do not doubt these accusations against government are usually true. However, government is in place, not to do the right thing, but to keep society from destroying itself by following the lusts of the flesh. Over 4,000 years of operation proves that God’s check against the sin nature of nationalism works. Therefore, we need to pay our taxes, follow the government’s customs (such as wearing face masks for COVID-19), obey government’s rules, and honour our leaders (13:7). Implied in this is that we need to pray

for our president, even if you do not like him. In fact, if he is an evil unbeliever, you need to pray for him all the more!

13:8 Some people have taken this verse to say that Christians are not allowed to go into debt. For example, the Salvation Army used to use this verse to say they would only pay cash for a building. However, this is not what this verse is saying. It is telling you to pay your bills. In this modern age, all of us go into debt to some extent. Even if you saved up money and paid cash for your house, you still go into debt with your electricity, gas, water, etc., because they provide services and then bill you afterward for those services. If you rent a house, you are still in debt, because you are indebted to pay the monthly rent. Buying a house with a mortgage is closer to not being in debt than renting is, because, with renting, you will always owe the next month's rent, while, if you buy a house, you may eventually pay off the mortgage and not have to make a monthly payment. Therefore, "owe no man anything" simply means that you should always pay your bills. If you are not able to pay your bills, then you should not agree to those services. The reason is that, when you do not pay your bills, you are now a dishonest person, and your ability to be an ambassador for Christ is diminished as a result.

However, the one thing that we do "owe" others is to love them. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). Also, as Romans 13:8 says, "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." The law is holy and spiritual, "but I am carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:12,14). However, "God is love" (I John 4:8), and "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24). Therefore, if I "live by the faith of the Son of God" (Galatians 2:20), then God's love fulfills the law through me. This is why Jesus said that all the law and the prophets hang upon the two commandments of loving God and loving your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-40).

Therefore, obeying commandments is all about attitude. If my attitude is to live by the sound doctrine found in God's Word, then God's love overcomes my carnality and fulfills the law through me. However, if I try to obey the law in my flesh, the sin nature within me revives, and I end up disobeying the law, because my carnal flesh cannot obey the spiritual law of God (7:8-11). Therefore, I obey the law, not by trying to obey the law, but by allowing God's love to come through me as a result of applying sound doctrine to my everyday decisions.

13:9-10 The first five commandments in Exodus 20 are regarding your relationship with God (Love the Lord thy God). The last five commandments are regarding your relationship with others (Love your neighbor). Since Paul's context is loving others, he only lists the last five commandments and says that they are "briefly comprehended" in saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (13:9). Why? Because "love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (13:10).

In other words, if I always place others' interests before my own, I will never sin against them. Similarly, if I always place God's interests above my own, I will never sin against God. It is the man who seeks to justify himself who wants an itemized list of commandments to follow. Then, when he sins, he can pick the commandments apart and try to say that he really did not sin. We see this in Luke 10. There, "a certain lawyer" tempted Jesus by asking Him what he must "DO to inherit eternal life" (Luke 10:25). Jesus turned this right back on him, to which the man replied that he should love God and love his neighbour as himself (Luke 10:26-27). Then, we are told, "but he, **willing to justify himself**, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?" (Luke 10:29). Jesus then proceeded to tell him of the good Samaritan to teach him that everyone is his neighbour.

Your flesh is always looking for ways to deceive you into thinking it is good, when it is not (Jeremiah 17:9). Therefore, it will ask clarifying questions so it can come up with an excuse to justify itself. This is why we "are not under the law, but under grace" (6:14), so that love is our primary goal, not justifying ourselves in the sight of others.

13:11-12 We do not know when the rapture will take place, but we can always say that "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (13:11). Even if the rapture does not take place in our lifetimes, we will go to heaven soon, because our lives are but for a moment ("all flesh is as grass" (I Peter 1:24)). Therefore, we need to follow Paul's instructions in Ephesians 5:15-16, "See then that ye walk circumspectly [cautiously], not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15-16). We should never use our liberty in Christ as "an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). Therefore, our remaining time on earth should be used reading and believing God's Word so that others may see Christ in us and

desire to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4).

“Night” is used to refer to this present evil world, while “day” is used to refer to God’s kingdom. Although nearly 2,000 years have passed since Paul wrote these words, the day is still at hand when viewed from eternity. “The armour of light” would be sound doctrine found in God’s Word, especially in Paul’s epistles. In Ephesians 5:14, Paul says, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” This is because Christ is “the Light” (John 1:8-9). Therefore, I “put on the armour of light” (13:12) by reading and believing God’s Word.

13:13-14 Although we are in the night because Satan is “the god of this world” (II Corinthians 4:4), we are “light in the Lord” (Ephesians 5:8). Therefore, you should, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). When we walk in sound doctrine, it provides a great contrast to the world, so that those, seeking for the truth, may come to us to find it. This is done by putting off the lusts of the flesh (Colossians 3:5,8-9) and by putting on the new man (Colossians 3:10). The new man is “renewed in knowledge” (Colossians 3:10). Thus, putting on the Lord Jesus Christ (13:14) simply means that we read and believe sound doctrine and make decisions based upon that doctrine, rather than based upon our flesh’s lusts.

Romans 14 – Charity with Weaker Brothers

14:1 There will always be people, who are weaker or stronger in the faith, than we are. We should never reject fellowship with weaker brethren, as long as that fellowship does not lead to doubtful disputations. In other words, if a brother is weaker, doctrinally speaking, due to ignorance, we should receive him so that we might edify him in the truth. However, if a brother is weaker, due to being steeped in religion and he will not allow God’s Word to change his bad doctrine, we should not have fellowship with him, because he will seek to bring us into the doctrinal trap with which Satan has him held captive (II Timothy 2:26).

14:2 God prohibited Israel from eating certain animals (Leviticus 11). There were also people who thought that they should not eat meat sacrificed to idols (I Corinthians 8:7). (Today, vegetarianism

is part of occult worship and other religions, which may be why some people do not eat meat.) However, in the dispensation of grace, God says that we can eat whatever we want (I Timothy 4:3-5). Therefore, the correct, doctrinal position is to eat whatever we want. However, some weaker brethren may not understand this.

14:3 We should not disregard weak brethren, just because they do not eat meat, because they may be able to help us out with sound doctrine that we do not know. Conversely, the weak brother should not say that the strong brother is sinning because he eats meat, for God has received both the strong and the weak brethren.

14:4 I Corinthians 2:15 says, “He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.” Therefore, 14:4 is not saying that we cannot judge a vegetarian to be a weaker brother. Rather, it is saying that we should not condemn weaker brethren by saying that they will not be able to serve God in heavenly places. God is their master, not us. We are not to have dominion over their faith, but to be helpers of their joy, because they stand by faith (II Corinthians 1:24). Even if the weaker brother refuses to grow in sound doctrine, God’s grace will cause him to stand so that he has eternal life, because he was given the faith of Christ the moment he believed the gospel (Galatians 2:16,20). Therefore, we can judge him to be a weaker brother, but we should not condemn his walk with Christ, because God will be faithful to give him eternal life and to complete the good work of sanctification within him (Philippians 1:6).

14:5-6 Colossians 2:16-17 says that holy days, new moons, and sabbath days, “are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” Therefore, we should not be observing sabbath days, because every day in Christ is a day of rest. Nevertheless, if other Christians choose to observe the sabbath or every Sunday as a “holy day,” we should let them do so. There are two reasons for this: 1) “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (14:23), which means that, if someone’s conscience tells him to observe Sunday as a holy day but he does not do it in order to appease me, he sins against his own conscience. This is why Paul says, “Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind” (14:5), and 2) By believing that Sunday is a holy day, he “regardeth it unto the Lord” (14:6), which cannot be a bad thing, as long as it is not simply a religious observance.

14:7-8 “Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (I Corinthians 6:20). Christ purchased you with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Also, “ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:2). Therefore, whatever we do, we are the Lord’s (14:8). This means that, while it is good if we learn sound doctrine and apply it in our lives, we should never write Christians off, just because they do not do this. As long as they have believed the gospel, they are seated together with Christ in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:7-8), and so whatever they do is for the Lord. If they live out sound doctrine, they will be rewarded. If they operate in their flesh, the blood of Christ atones for that sin, and they lose their reward (I Corinthians 3:11-15). Either way, they still belong to the Lord. This is why II Corinthians 5:16 tells us that, once we are saved, we are to know no man after the flesh. Judging someone, based upon whether he eats meat or not or he observes the sabbath or not, is judging him based upon the flesh. Instead, we should look at the weaker brother as a fellow member of the body of Christ and respect him as such, desiring to lift him up in sound doctrine if possible, but not condemning him if he will not listen to sound doctrine.

14:9 This verse tells us that the reason that Christ died, rose, and revived was so He could be God of both the dead and the living. “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Matthew 22:32). This makes me believe that, when Jesus was on earth, Satan was the god of the dead. Then, when Jesus died on the cross, He took the keys of hell and death from Satan (Revelation 1:18) and became the God of the dead, as well.

Why are we told that Christ “rose and revived”? Perhaps this refers to His spiritual position, which is at God’s “right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion” (Ephesians 1:20-21). In other words, Christ did not just rise from the dead, but He also revived, by claiming the highest position in heaven, since He bound Satan (Matthew 12:29), ransomed Israel (Jeremiah 31:11) and us (Titus 2:13-14), conquering death and hell (I Corinthians 15:55-57). In other words, Christ redeemed us, He rose from the dead after He defeated Satan through the cross, and He revived with the power over death to rule over God’s entire universe. In other words, His reviving means He is Lord over all (Philippians 2:10-11) by taking “the keys of hell and of death” (Revelation 1:18) away from Satan.

It is almost as important that Christ became the Lord of the dead as it is that He became the God of the living. By becoming the God of the dead, the Lord Jesus Christ ensures that the devil, his angels, and all unbelievers are not part of God's kingdom, so that God's love and glory can fill God's entire realm (Isaiah 6:3). Otherwise, God's kingdom would be a lot like what the earth is now, which is ruled by Satan (II Corinthians 4:4). This is why God must punish unbelievers with hell. Thus, there are two reasons Jesus needed to conquer hell and death: 1) To give believers abundant life (John 10:10), and 2) To separate unbelievers into hell, apart from God's kingdom (Luke 13:28). In other words, it was "to this end" (14:9) that Christ died, rose, and revived, so He could conquer death, making Him "Lord both of the dead and living" (14:9).

II Corinthians 5:15 tells us that Christ's conquering of death enables us to have the in-Christ life. ("And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.") Otherwise, we would only live for ourselves, which would result in death, because we did not accept God's love. Life is only in Christ (Colossians 3:4,11). People think that God is mean by sending people to hell. They do not understand that true life is only found in Christ. Without God's love, people would be miserable. Since unbelievers reject God's love (Romans 5:8), they would be miserable if God let them into heaven, and they would ruin it for everyone else.

14:10 You can judge your brother, in the sense of determining if he is living in Christ or according to the flesh, and you can act accordingly so that your walk with Christ is not impeded (II Corinthians 6:14-17). (We are to "judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).) But, it is not your job to get a spiritual superiority complex and tell your brother what to do or to condemn his works when he is not willing to listen. We are to be helpers of his joy (II Corinthians 1:24). "God is able to make him stand" (14:4), and Christ will judge his works and reward him accordingly at the judgment seat of Christ (14:10). You also need to consider that, if you have spiritual pride, you may not be in the right when you speak out against your brother: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12).

14:11-12 Paul quotes Isaiah 45:23. The context is that Israel is in idolatry, and God has to tell them: "I am God, and there is

none else” (Isaiah 45:22). There will come a day when all people will recognize that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11). According to Romans 14, that day is judgment day. For the body of Christ, we will bow at the judgment seat of Christ, just after the rapture takes place (I Corinthians 3:11-15). Unbelievers will bow at the Great White Throne Judgment after Jesus’ millennial reign (Revelation 20:11-15). Paul’s point is that, if a weaker brother is following false doctrine, it is not our job to correct him if he is not willing to receive correction. His idolatry will be tried by the fire of the judgment seat of Christ, and he will confess, at that time, to God, that he followed false doctrine. If he is not willing to listen to God’s Word today, do not force him to do so, because God’s love “suffereth long” (I Corinthians 13:4). You cannot force someone to live the in-Christ life. If you do, it is not the in-Christ life, because love cannot be forced. Therefore, just let him wait until the judgment seat of Christ for him to give an account of himself to God.

This does not mean that believers’ secret sins will be revealed. When you believed the gospel, God forgave “ALL” your trespasses—past, present, and future—nailing the law to His cross (Colossians 2:13-14). Rather, all believers, at the judgment seat of Christ, have laid the foundation of Jesus Christ, i.e., eternal life in Christ in their lives. The question is, “What doctrine did they lay upon that foundation?” If they laid false doctrine, they will lose their reward. If they laid sound doctrine, they will receive a reward of a heavenly position (I Corinthians 3:11-15). Therefore, they give account unto God (14:12), not regarding their sins, but regarding what they allowed Christ to do through them. If they believed and applied sound doctrine, they will receive a reward. If they followed false doctrine, they will lose their reward.

14:13 Since God is able to make someone stand (14:4) and believers must give account to God (14:12), our job is not to cause a believer to stop growing in Christ. Legalism seeks to replace the in-Christ growth process under grace (6:14) with man’s religion in order to puff up the flesh, rather than edifying the spirit (Galatians 5:4).

We may know that it is not a sin to eat meat (I Timothy 4:3-5). However, that is not the issue. The issue is living by the faith of the Son of God (Galatians 2:20). If I set up a rule that says you can eat meat, and you eat meat because I say so, then you are following man and not God. Therefore, you are sinning by eating

meat. This shows that my job is not to set up rules; my job is to teach the in-Christ life to Christians who are willing to listen.

14:14 Paul is not just talking about food. This shows that attitude determines if something is a sin or not, not a specific activity. I could sit at a bar and drink alcohol and be doing the Lord's work, if I share Christ with someone while I do it. Conversely, I could preach Christ out of envy, strife, and contention (Philippians 1:15-16) and be sinning. As Jesus said, "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man....For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders....All these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:15,21,23).

God commanded Israel to observe the feast days. Yet, when they did so out of a heart of religious pride, God said, "I hate, I despise your feast days" (Amos 5:21). God wants you to "walk by faith" (II Corinthians 5:7). Otherwise, you are living in sin (14:23), regardless of the activity. Therefore, if you esteem something to be unclean, you sin by participating in the unclean thing, because you did not walk by faith (14:14). "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled" (Titus 1:15).

14:15 Now, if I am strong in Christ and understand grace living, while my brother lives under the law I should not lord myself over my brother. If I do, my brother's weak conscience may be destroyed, and he might not desire to follow God at all. Therefore, I should obey my weak brother's rule while I am around him so that he may continue to grow in grace.

The issue is that all of us have religion in our conscience that may take years to let go of. We need to trust the gradual sanctification process of the Lord Jesus Christ in our weak brother's life (Ephesians 5:25-27). If we flaunt our liberty in Christ in front of our weaker brother, the weaker brother may go back to paganism. We would then be destroying him with our "meat for whom Christ died" (14:15). We would not be destroying his salvation, because "he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (I Corinthians 3:15), but we would be destroying the work that Christ is doing in him. If we let him continue in his weakness, he will eventually become strong when HE is ready to

give up his religious observance—not when YOU force him to. The key point is: “Now walkest thou not charitably” (14:15). You are not suffering long (I Corinthians 13:4) with your weak brother.

14:16 When you do something that is allowed under grace but your legalistic brother does not think so, the weaker brother will speak bad about your liberty in Christ. Therefore, “use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13). The moment you flaunt your liberty in front of a weaker brother, you start a flesh contest that ends up biting and devouring one another in legalism (Galatians 5:15). Thus, your good is evil spoken of (14:16).

14:17 This verse tells us that God’s kingdom is all about walking in the Spirit with the in-Christ life, as opposed to walking in the flesh. In other words, fleshly ordinances are irrelevant. What is important is walking according to “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” rather than by “the law of sin and death” (8:2). Colossians 2:16-17 says that the rules of the Mosaic law were “a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ.” Hebrews 9:10 calls them “carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.” Therefore, we do not need to follow these rules any more. However, if following the rules will allow a weaker brother to grow in Christ, then we should continue to follow them. Our goal should be to get the weaker brother to experience the “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (14:17), rather than the carnal things of “meat and drink.” If we set our “affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2), we will have our brother’s spiritual well-being in mind, such that we will forego carnal pleasures for their spiritual growth.

14:18 In 12:16, we were told to “condescend to men of low estate.” How much more, then, should this apply to weaker brothers in Christ? If we do not offend the rules of the weaker brother, we are “acceptable to God” because we do not destroy Christ’s works in him (14:15). (“He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).) We are also “approved of men” (14:18), because we did not offend our brother. Therefore, we can still affect him for good.

14:19 Two goals when it comes to the weaker brother: 1) Have peace with him. This involves not offending his religious observances, and 2) Edify him. So, we should acquiesce to the weaker brother so that he is not offended by us, and then we can

use our good standing with him to teach him sound doctrine so that he grows. I Corinthians 8:1 says, "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth." Too many right dividers like to show others how smart they are. Instead, they should have charity with the weaker brethren; otherwise, they will miss their opportunities to edify them with sound doctrine.

14:20-21 "All things indeed are pure" (14:20), because it is the heart attitude that makes something a sin or not. So, here is a man with the correct heart attitude, but incorrect doctrine because he thinks eating meat is a sin. Then, the strong brother with correct doctrine, but an incorrect heart attitude, eats meat that the weaker brother thinks it is a sin to eat. He then eats the meat and sins. Then, the strong brother has changed the heart attitude of the weaker brother so that he sins against his own weak conscience by eating the meat himself. This is why it is good not to do anything that would cause thy brother to stumble, be offended, or be made weak.

Stumbling means to go against your own beliefs. That is a sin. Being offended means to stop pursuing the in-Christ life. Being made weak means that he seeks to walk by the flesh more than by the spirit. In Paul's example, I make my weaker brother stumble by him eating meat and he still believes in his conscience that it is not okay to eat meat. Therefore, he sins by going against his conscience. I offend him by him taking a stand against me by thinking that I am a sinner by eating the meat, and so he gives up on trying to be Christ like because he sees Christians as being hypocrites, and so he will not listen to anything that a Christian tells him now. I make him weak by him seeing me eat the meat and concluding that he can eat the meat, too. However, his conclusion is a fleshly conclusion, rather than a spiritual one. In other words, he now uses grace as an occasion to the flesh, rather than learning principles of the in-Christ life. In general, lackadaisical Christians, such as Catholics, stumble (They are drunk and do not care.); legalists are offended (They are drunk and cover it up.); and grace churchgoers are made weak (They are drunk and promote drunkenness.).

14:22 Living by the faith of the Son of God is an internal thing, unless brothers seek out sound doctrine from you. In this way, others do not stumble, are not offended, and are not make weak. You simply read and believe God's Word and live it out quietly so that others may be saved and come unto the knowledge of the

truth (I Timothy 2:4) by them seeing Christ living in you (II Corinthians 4:7), rather than by you telling them how Christ should live in them. This is what Paul means when he says, “And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you” (I Thessalonians 4:11). As such, you do not condemn yourself in the thing you allow (14:22). In other words, your in-Christ life is not cancelled out by being puffed up with your knowledge of grace.

14:23 This verse gives God’s definition of sin. If you have faith in God’s Word and do something based on that faith, you have not sinned. If you do something without having faith in God’s Word, you have sinned. It does not matter what that thing is. This is how Abraham could kill his son (James 2:21), and Rahab could lie to city officials (James 2:25) and, not only not sin, but also be commended for their faith in God.

Romans 15 – Ministering Jesus Christ to the Gentiles

15:1 This verse is a summary of Romans 14. Basically, the job of strong brethren is to build up the weaker brethren in sound doctrine, not doing anything that will cause them to stop their edification process. II Timothy 2:24-26 is a good summary of this. We need to “be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness” so “that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil.” This is a responsibility, not just of the pastor, but of all believers. We are ambassadors for Christ (II Corinthians 5:20). God wants “all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Timothy 2:4). Therefore, if we know of a weaker brother, we should be working toward getting him edified in sound doctrine, not pawning this off onto someone else, because all saved people are ambassadors for Christ.

Bearing the infirmities of the weak also applies to your wives. I Peter 3:7 says, “ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, **as unto the weaker vessel**, and as being heirs together of the grace of life.” “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (I Timothy 2:14). The wife is more likely to be deceived my false doctrine than the husband is. Therefore, God has made the husband the head of the wife (I Corinthians 11:3). He is to give himself for his wife, as Christ gave Himself for the church, in order to sanctify us by the Word (Ephesians 5:25-27). This means that it is every Christian husband’s responsibility to

read God's Word and teach it to his wife so she may live out the doctrine. This is the application of the weaker-brother principle within the family, and we should see this same weaker-brother principle being carried out in the church by stronger brethren with weaker brethren.

15:2 Pleasing your neighbour, I believe, is saying the same thing as 15:1. It cannot be talking about a literal neighbour because that person probably is not saved; therefore, he cannot be edified in the doctrine. It is basically saying that we need to consider the doctrinal needs of our fellow brethren above our own liberties. We are not under the law, but under grace (Romans 6:14). We should not use our liberty under grace to sin, but we should use it to edify others. This means, in the case of Romans 14, that we forego eating meat when our weaker brother believes it is a sin to eat meat. Galatians 5:13 says, "Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Churchianity likes to say that those, believing in eternal security, are following "easy believism." In other words, we are using God's grace as a license to sin. Actually, if you are allowing Christ to live in you, you are doing just the opposite. You are actually using your eternal security to limit your liberties in order to edify other believers.

15:3 This verse specifically tells you that the in-Christ life involves sacrificing for others. "Christ pleased not Himself," but bore the reproaches of those who reproached God, as the quote of Psalm 69:9 mentions here. This means that Christ bore the wrath of the religious leaders, who were lashing out against God by lashing out against Christ. So, too, we will have Churchianity criticizing our doctrine, calling us heretics and cult members, and bringing false accusations against us for believing God and His Word. These are their attacks against God, since they hate the truth and all those who believe it. Since Christ bore these reproaches and we should be allowing Christ to live in us, we will also bear reproaches for believing sound doctrine. We should take this punishment so that others may be edified (15:2).

15:4 This verse tells us how scripture for Israel's dispensation can benefit us. It is there for us to learn to have patience and comfort as we go through suffering. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12), which means that the in-Christ life always involves suffering. Even if the government or people do not persecute you, at least your flesh will do so, because you listen to your spirit, rather than your

flesh. “No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church” (Ephesians 5:29). Therefore, it takes great determination to live a life of suffering for Christ. This determination comes from hope (15:4). This hope is “the hope which is laid up for you in heaven” (Colossians 1:5), meaning that the resolve to suffer comes by setting our affection on things above, not on things on the earth (Colossians 3:2). The way we continue to walk by faith and not by sight (II Corinthians 5:7) is by getting encouragement from scripture. We can see previous believers have patience, waiting for their eternal reward. We then get comfort from the God of all comfort (II Corinthians 1:3-4), as we see that God is always true to His Word. Therefore, we can read the scripture written to Israel as examples not to lust after evil things (I Corinthians 10:6) and as ensamples to admonish us to trust in the sound doctrine given to us in Paul’s epistles (I Corinthians 10:11).

15:5-6 The way, that we have “one mind and one mouth,” is by us all reading and believing the Bible. I Corinthians 2:16 says that we have the mind of Christ to be used to judge all things (I Corinthians 2:15), based upon the sound doctrine that the Holy Ghost teaches us as we read and believe God’s Word (I Corinthians 2:9-13). We learned, in 10:8-10, that the mouth refers to your soul. If we use the mind of Christ to walk in sound doctrine, then my soul will make the same decisions as your soul does, because we are both using the same information that Christ has revealed to us through His Word. This is how we have “one mouth.” We will, then, bring glory to God, because Christ always brought glory to God because He always obeyed His Father. However, if we do not have patience and comfort through the scriptures, we will never allow Christ to live in us. We will then not be holding the head (Colossians 2:19), i.e., Christ. Therefore, we must be grounded in sound doctrine in order for God to be glorified through us.

15:7 Since we should all be living out the in-Christ life, we should receive one another. This is why we are to help out weaker brothers. Think of it like a baseball team. For the team to do as well as possible, each member needs to do his best to do his job and to help his fellow team members to do their best, as well. Similarly, Christ has received all of us (15:7), i.e., He has placed us on His team, with the goal of bringing glory to God. Therefore, we need to help each other out to be the best team members possible. Therefore, we need to help our weaker brethren to grow

up in Christ, rather than having spiritual pride to try to make ourselves look better by tearing them down. Our goal is to bring glory to God (15:7), not to ourselves; therefore, we must help weaker brethren become stronger brethren.

15:8-9 These are good verses to show people God's two programs of Israel and the Body of Christ. Jesus Christ did come to give His life a ransom for ALL, but this was only revealed in due time when it was revealed to Paul in Acts 9 (I Timothy 2:5-7).

Israel's prophecy program revealed "that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (15:8). This clearly tells us that Jesus Christ came to minister to the Jews. He had to do this so that God's promises to Israel would come to pass. "The fathers," then, would be Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. Israel would then be a kingdom of priests to the Gentiles to reconcile the earth back to God (Exodus 19:5-6). Thus, Jews would be saved first, and then the Gentiles would be saved.

It is a common misconception among Churchianity to think that God did not have Gentile salvation in mind in Israel's program. Isaiah 42:6 says that the Messiah was called "for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." Simeon, by the Holy Ghost, confirms, in Luke 2:32, that Jesus is the one who would do this. This is why Paul says that Jesus was a minister of the circumcision but that He also came for the Gentiles to be saved. This is all part of Israel's program.

Paul quotes Psalm 18:49 here. Psalm 18:43 says, "Thou hast made Me the head of the heathen: a people whom I have not known shall serve Me." This is a prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ in God's millennial kingdom on earth. Psalm 2:8 says, "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." Again, this is a prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ in God's millennial kingdom. This shows that God had Gentile salvation in mind in Israel's program.

Now, in the context of Romans 15, verses 8 and 9 are showing how Jesus Christ did exactly what His Father asked Him to do so that God's will would be done through Him. He came in Israel's program. Therefore, He came to bring God's promises to Israel in their program so that the Gentiles could then be saved. For us,

this means we are to do exactly what God wants us to do, which means we are to help the weaker brothers to edify them with sound doctrine so they can then demonstrate God's love to others so they may be saved, just like Jesus came to the Jews so they could then go out as a kingdom of priests to the Gentiles in the millennial reign so they may be saved.

15:10-11 Paul follows up verse 9 with 2 more Old Testament quotes regarding the Gentiles praising the Lord in Israel's kingdom on earth. The first is from Deuteronomy 32:43, and the second is from Psalm 117:1. The first quote is the Gentiles rejoicing over God executing vengeance upon those who oppose believing Israel. This shows that, if God does not punish the wicked with hell, the Gentiles would not even have the opportunity to be saved in Israel's program. This is important to note, since most unbelievers like to claim that God is evil if He sends people to hell. This verse shows the opposite to be true.

15:12 Jesse was David's father. This shows that the Messiah would be the son of David.

This is a quote of Isaiah 11:10. The context of Isaiah 11 is the millennial reign. This again confirms that Gentile salvation in the prophecy program does not take place until the millennial reign. However, it does show that Gentile salvation, even in prophecy, was God's plan all along.

15:13 Paul has given four Old Testament quotes to show that Gentiles will worship the Lord in Israel's program. Therefore, it should not be a surprise that, when Israel remained in unbelief, God saved the Gentiles in spite of Israel. Although Paul does not say so explicitly, it seems like Paul is saying that these four Old Testament quotes were also speaking of the mystery program.

Regardless, God is "the God of hope" for the Gentiles, based upon these Old Testament verses. This hope is now realized as Gentiles are saved in the mystery program, such that they now "abound in hope." "The power of the Holy Ghost is to bring the Gentiles from being on the wrong side of the middle wall of partition (Ephesians 2:14) to being God's people. The reason is because the Gentiles believed (15:13), while Israel did not believe (10:16).

15:14 The Romans are "filled with all knowledge" (15:14), because the Holy Ghost (15:13) can guide them into all truth

(John 14:26; I Corinthians 2:9-16), since God has “abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence” (Ephesians 1:8). This means, for us today, that we do not have to go to a church or submit to the authority of a pastor in order to grow in Christ. All we have to do is submit to the authority of Christ as our head (Colossians 2:19) by reading and believing God’s Word.

15:15 In spite of the Romans having “all knowledge,” Paul still writes this epistle to them, because he wants to impart unto them “some spiritual gift” (1:11). The grace given unto Paul was that Jesus called him to preach to all unbelievers (Acts 9:15), committing unto him the dispensing of the mystery gospel (I Corinthians 9:17) and its associated doctrine. Therefore, Paul operates in this grace of God by writing this epistle in order to put foundational doctrine in the Romans’ mind.

15:16 15:8 says that, at His first coming, “Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision...to confirm the promises made unto the fathers,” i.e., Israel. Now, Paul is “the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles” (15:16). Jesus Christ brought salvation to all those in the past who believed the gospel in Israel’s program. Now, in the present and the future, Jesus Christ brings salvation to all those who believe the gospel in the body of Christ’s program. Galatians 4:4-5 says that “when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son...to redeem them that were under the law.” This “fulness of the time” refers to two things. First, it refers to the iniquity of the world reaching its fulness so that both the Jews and the Gentiles would have Jesus Christ crucified so that He could be a ransom for all (I Timothy 2:6). Second, it refers to the crossroads in history between the salvation of Jews and Gentiles. Jews had been saved in the past 2,000 years through a minority of Jews being saved in each generation in Israel’s program. Then, God started the dispensation of grace with Paul, and a minority of Gentiles have been saved in each generation in the body of Christ’s program for the past 2,000 years. Thus, “Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision” to save Jews in the past in Israel’s program (15:8), and Paul ministered Jesus Christ to the Gentiles in the 2,000 years after the cross so that Gentiles are saved (15:16). (In addition, there will be Jewish salvation after the rapture and Gentiles salvation in Israel’s program in the millennial reign after Jesus’ second coming.)

After His resurrection, Jesus ascended to the Father and gave

gifts unto the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:8). One of these gifts was the apostleship of Paul to the Gentiles (Ephesians 4:11; Romans 11:13). At His first coming, Jesus spent three years with 12 men (Matthew 10:1-6), resulting in 120 people being saved (Acts 1:15). After His ascension, Jesus spent three years with Paul (Galatians 1:11-12,18), made him the apostle of the Gentiles (11:13), and he went out to the whole world with the gospel so that many would be saved (15:16). This does not show the power of Paul, but it shows the power of the grace of God. “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (I Corinthians 15:10). God’s grace laboured in Paul to save many people. “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (II Corinthians 4:7). “This treasure” ends up being “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Corinthians 4:6). In other words, the mystery gospel and mystery doctrine is the power of God, operating in the grace of God, in order to save people and get them to come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4).

This is how “the offering up of the Gentiles [is] acceptable” to God, because it is “sanctified by the Holy Ghost” (15:16). In other words, when a person recognizes his sin, that person seeks after God, and the Holy Ghost gets the gospel to him. Then, when a saved person recognizes the foolishness of the wisdom of this world (I Corinthians 1:19-21), this person seeks after God’s wisdom, and the Holy Ghost gives it to him. Paul was used by the Lord Jesus Christ to dispense the mystery gospel and mystery wisdom to these believers. This changes these people from being people bound for hell into people who can be used by Christ in heavenly places for all eternity, because they operate in sound doctrine. This is how the offering up of the Gentiles is acceptable to God.

15:17 The only glorying Paul can do is “in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 6:14), because it is the cross that makes “the offering up of the Gentiles...acceptable” (15:16) unto God. In other words, the only thing Paul can glory in is the labouring he does in the grace of God, because that is “gold, silver, precious stones” (I Corinthians 3:12), which will be Paul’s only treasure (Matthew 6:19-20) that will transfer into the spiritual, eternal realm of heavenly places.

15:18-21 Most of Churchianity emphasizes missionaries to other countries. That way, they can raise a lot of money, and you cannot see if it is being spent appropriately or not. This is a gold mine for major “Christian” denominations. They use Matthew 24:14, which says that the gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world before the end comes. Of course, we know this refers to Israel’s program, making sure that all the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:6) hear and believe the gospel so that all Israel may be saved (11:26). Then, 15:20 is used, where Paul says that he does not want to build upon another man’s foundation, to support needing to send missionaries out to the unreached people groups of the world. The meaning of these verses become clear only when we rightly divide the Word of truth (II Timothy 2:15).

“A dispensation of the gospel” was committed unto Paul (I Corinthians 9:17). The Lord Jesus Christ gave to Paul (Galatians 1:11-12) his very own gospel (16:25) to preach to the whole world (Acts 9:15). Paul was specifically commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ to “preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery” (Ephesians 3:8-9). This is why Paul did not want to build upon another man’s foundation, because Paul was given something new by the Lord Jesus Christ, and he needed to preach it to “Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15). Because Paul is “THE apostle of the Gentiles” (11:13), Paul was solely responsible for preaching the gospel of grace to the entire world. He says, “Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (I Corinthians 9:16). This is why Paul would not build upon another man’s foundation. An employee, who is in charge of getting new customers in a new sales territory, would not be doing his job if he tried to get sales from other people’s sales territory. Similarly, Paul would not be doing the job Jesus Christ gave him if he built upon another man’s foundation. This is why Paul “will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me” (15:18).

Jerusalem to Illyricum is an area of about 1,000 miles that Paul has already covered by the time he writes Romans, which was probably written around Acts 20. Note that Paul did not have a missionary fundraising campaign or a GoFundMe page. Rather, he was a tentmaker (Acts 18:3), and he would not take any money from the Corinthians, lest people said that he did it for the

money, which would make vain his glorying in Christ (15:17; I Corinthians 9:14-15).

By preaching only to those who had not heard the gospel, Paul was able to fully preach the gospel of Christ (15:19) over this entire 1,000-mile territory to fulfill Isaiah 52:15. As would be expected, the Isaiah quote refers, in its context, to the Gentiles hearing the gospel of the kingdom during Jesus' millennial reign. However, due to Israel's unbelief, "salvation is come unto the Gentiles" (11:11) apart from Israel. Therefore, the Holy Ghost says that this prophecy is also fulfilled by Paul going to the Gentiles with the gospel. Thus, the verse has both prophecy and mystery fulfillments.

Paul had a very unique situation that we do not have today. Paul fully preached the gospel of Christ to a 1,000-mile area, making the Gentiles obedient "through mighty signs and wonders" (15:19). Since God is not doing these signs today with the Word of God being completed (I Corinthians 13:8-10), we also are not commissioned to reach all nations with the gospel, as Paul was, nor should we refrain from building upon another man's foundation as Paul did.

15:22-23 Paul desired to come unto the Romans (1:10; 15:23), but Paul was commissioned to reach the whole world with the gospel. Therefore, he has "been much hindered from coming to" the Romans (15:22). He has already covered 1,000 miles, but Rome is west of Illyricum, and so he has not gotten there yet. However, he has "no more place in these parts" (15:23), meaning that he can move beyond the 1,000-mile territory that he has already covered.

15:24 Rome is about 400 miles past Illyricum, while Spain is another 850 miles past Rome. Therefore, Paul can see the Romans when he journeys to Spain, since he must go to the whole world with the gospel. Stopping in Rome and seeing their faith, which "is spoken of throughout the whole world" (1:8), will give Paul the encouragement he needs to go all the way to Spain with the gospel.

In Colossians 1:5-6, Paul says that "the truth of the gospel" has "come unto you, as it is in all the world." In Colossians 1:23, he says that "the gospel...was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister." Therefore,

Paul did reach the entire world with the gospel of grace before he died. You may wonder how he did that. First, we need to realize that Paul did not personally preach the gospel to every creature. God has made Himself known unto all people (Romans 1:19-20). Most people reject this internal witness of God (Romans 1:21), and so Paul did not need to preach to them. However, he did need to preach the gospel of grace to everyone who recognized their sin, so that they may be saved by the blood of Christ. Apparently, God supernaturally led Paul to the places he needed to go in the world to reach these people with the gospel. Thus, the gospel was preached to every creature under heaven with Jesus giving light to every man who comes into the world (John 1:9) with the everlasting gospel of recognizing their sin and recognizing God as the Creator (Revelation 14:6). Paul was then sent by God to preach Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for their sin (I Corinthians 15:3-4). This explains why Paul had to travel over the entire world, and how he was able to preach the gospel to the whole world. So, the everlasting gospel was preached to every creature under heaven, and then Paul was made a minister of the gospel of grace to those who believed the everlasting gospel. Therefore, Paul knows that he will get to Rome, but he has not gotten there yet.

15:25-28 Before Paul can go to Spain, he must first go back to Jerusalem. The reason is that grace believers in Macedonia and Achaia have given some money to Paul to give to "the poor saints which are at Jerusalem" (15:26). These are saints from Israel's at-hand phase of the kingdom. In that phase, they were to sell all they had (Luke 12:33), and lay it at the apostles' feet to be distributed to believers as every man had need (Acts 4:34-35), since they had all things in common (Acts 2:44-45). The reason for this was that, according to the seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24-27, Jesus would be coming back soon, and the little flock of Israel needed to preach the gospel of the kingdom to all of the lost sheep of the house of Israel before Jesus would come back (Matthew 10:6, 24:14). Halfway through the tribulation period, the mark of the beast would be instituted. Those, who do not take the mark of the beast, would not be allowed to buy or sell (Revelation 13:16-17), and Israel cannot take the mark, or else they will go to hell (Revelation 14:9-11). Therefore, Jesus had them sell all their possessions so they could pool their money together and use it to finance reaching the lost sheep of the house of Israel with the gospel of the kingdom.

However, when Stephen was stoned in Acts 7, God set aside the nation of Israel and started the mystery dispensation with Paul in Acts 9:23. This means that Jesus did not come back and set up God's kingdom on earth, which means that the saints in Jerusalem are now poor. Therefore, Macedonia and Achaia have come up with a collection to give them, and Paul will deliver this collection to Jerusalem. This works out well for Paul, because his "heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved" (10:1). Therefore, Paul can go to Jerusalem to deliver the money to the saints and to preach the gospel to unbelievers.

The saints in Macedonia and Achaia see themselves as being indebted to the saints in Jerusalem (15:27), because they are partakers of their spiritual things. This is NOT to say that they are spiritual Israel. If we understand the olive tree in Romans 11, we already know this. God put Israel into His olive tree first. Then, God cut out the unbelieving branches and grafted in the Gentiles. Because the Gentiles are now part of the same olive tree as believing Israel, they are partakers of Israel's spiritual things. At the same time, the promises of Israel's program still belong distinctly to Israel (9:3-5), just like the promises God made to the Gentiles through Paul still belong distinctly to the Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:3, 2:6-7).

Therefore, the Macedonian and Achaian saints desire to impart carnal things, i.e. money, to the saints at Jerusalem so they may continue to survive in the flesh. Once Paul gives this contribution to the Jerusalem saints, the Macedonian and Achaian saints will receive spiritual fruit for their carnal contribution. Therefore, Paul wants to "seal to them this fruit" (15:28) by going to Jerusalem with the contribution. Paul will then come to the Romans when he is on his way to Spain (15:28).

15:29 An added benefit in waiting to come to the Romans is that Paul knows that, when he comes, he "shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" (15:29). In other words, Paul will have all mystery doctrine to share with them at that time. Jesus Christ gave mystery doctrine to Paul in phases. First, Jesus spent three years with Paul in Acts 9:23, as mentioned in Galatians 1:18. Then, Paul was caught up into the third heaven, where he received more sound doctrine (II Corinthians 12:1-7). This probably took place when he was stoned and left for dead in Acts 14:19. There must have been a further revelation later, as well. This is in line with Jesus' promise to Paul, when he was

stopped on the road to Damascus in Acts 9, for Paul to be “a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee” (Acts 26:16).

Therefore, while Paul does not like that he has not yet seen the Romans, he can take comfort in the fact that, when he does see them, he will have the full revelation of mystery doctrine to impart to them. In the meantime, he writes this epistle to them of foundational mystery doctrine, and God has preserved it for us in His Word so that we can be edified in this foundational doctrine, as well.

15:30-31 In Acts 20:22-23, Paul said that he was going to Jerusalem, “not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.” This is why Paul asks the Romans to pray him in Jerusalem. He wants to “be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea” (15:31) so that he may continue to Rome, Spain, and the rest of the world with the gospel. He also wants his service in Jerusalem to be accepted by the saints. Reading what happens in Acts 21:17-26, James may have set up Paul to get arrested there in Jerusalem. Therefore, you can see why Paul asks the Romans to pray to be delivered from unbelievers and to be accepted by believers in Jerusalem. After all, since Paul knows that bonds and afflictions await him in Jerusalem, he needs prayer to be delivered from them so he can continue ministering to the rest of the world.

Note also that Paul does not ask for deliverance for his sake, but “for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit” (15:30). The afflictions that await him in Jerusalem do not move him, nor does he count his life dear unto himself. Rather, his goal is to finish his “course with joy, and the ministry, which [he has] received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24). Therefore, Paul is not seeking an easy road, but he is seeking for people to be saved. This is “for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake,” and it is also showing “the love of the Spirit” in that the Spirit can guide people into being saved and coming unto the knowledge of the truth.

15:32-33 If people are saved in Jerusalem, Paul can come to the Romans “with joy” (15:32), and all of them “may...be refreshed” (15:32) that more people will be in heaven as a result.

Romans 16 – Follow Mystery Doctrine

16:1-2 Cenchrea is part of Corinth. It was there that Paul shaved his head for a Nazarite vow that he had (Acts 18:18), and so he probably established a church there. 16:27 makes it clear that Phebe delivered this epistle to the Romans. Phebe was a businesswoman, who probably took care of herself. She also helped many people. This shows, contrary to popular belief, that our modern society is not that much different from the society of Paul's day.

16:3-5 A lot of people claim that Paul was a male chauvinist. If that were the case, why did Phebe help him? Also, why would he mention Priscilla before he mentioned Aquila? This shows that Paul, rather than being a male chauvinist, was simply recognizing God's order of things when he said that "the head of the woman is the man" (I Corinthians 11:3), and "let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak" (I Corinthians 14:34). We also see that believing women are not offended by this. Only unbelieving women have a problem with God's rules regarding men and women.

Like Phebe, Paul met Priscilla and Aquila in Corinth. They were tentmakers, just like Paul was (Acts 18:1-3). They originally lived in Rome, but they had to flee from there when Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2). Then, they journeyed with Paul from Corinth to Syria and then to Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19). They helped Apollos understand mystery doctrine, when they were at Ephesus (Acts 18:24-26). They had a church in their house when Paul wrote to the Corinthians the first time (I Corinthians 16:19), and so it is probably this house church in Rome that Paul is greeting when he writes this epistle.

Romans was probably written after Acts 18 (probably around Acts 20:1. I Corinthians also would have been written around the same time, due to the reference to Priscilla and Aquila there.), since Paul mentions that Priscilla and Aquila had "laid down their own necks" in order to spare Paul's life (16:4). This is probably a reference to the trouble that occurred in Corinth in Acts 18:7-18. This would mean that Priscilla and Aquila had come back to Rome after Ephesus.

16:6 Mary was a common name, and so it is probably not a Mary mentioned elsewhere in the Bible.

16:7 People use this verse to say that the current dispensation of grace began in Acts 2, not with Paul, because Andronicus and Junia “were in Christ before me.” However, we learned from Romans 5:12-21 that all of the world is either in Adam or in Christ. If you have believed the gospel given to you, regardless of the contents of the gospel or when you received it, you are taken out of Adam and placed into Christ so that you pass from death to life (John 5:24). “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (I Corinthians 15:22). Therefore, all Paul is saying is that these two Jews believed the gospel of the kingdom in Israel’s program, and so they were taken out of Adam and placed into Christ, which means that they “were in Christ before me” (16:7).

This does NOT mean that the current dispensation started before Paul. Paul says that the gospel he received was given to him by revelation of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:11-12). Paul was the first one saved by this new gospel, as Paul states: “That in me FIRST Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting” (I Timothy 1:16). Paul was then charged by the Lord Jesus Christ to dispense this gospel to the whole world (Acts 9:15). (“A dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me” (I Corinthians 9:17).) Paul will soon say that he preached “my gospel,... according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest” (16:25-26).

Therefore, rather than being a proof that the current dispensation began in Acts 2, Romans 16:7 is simply Paul greeting fellow Jews, who are also in Christ, because they were saved in Israel’s program before Paul was saved and the Lord Jesus Christ began the dispensation of grace.

16:8-9 Paul calls two people here “my beloved.” All believers are beloved by God. Since Paul says that Amplias and Stachys are “my beloved,” it probably means that they were saved as a direct result of Paul sharing the gospel with them. Therefore, Paul mentions them here due to this special connection.

Urbane is said to be “our helper in Christ.” In 16:3, Paul called “Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus.” Apparently, there was a group of people who helped Paul’s ministry in one way or another (see 16:21-23).

16:10-11 The Roman believers could not afford to meet in a church building. Rather, they met in people's houses. Two house churches are mentioned in these verses. There are also house churches in Cenchrea (16:1), Priscilla and Aquila's house (16:5), one in 16:14, and one in 16:15 for a total of at least 6 house churches that are specifically addressed by Paul in this epistle.

We also see another Jew, Herodion, being saluted by Paul. This one was probably saved after Paul was, and so he would be part of the body of Christ.

16:12-15 More people are mentioned as labouring in the Lord.

I do not think that Rufus was Paul's brother in the physical sense. My guess is that Rufus' physical mother treated Paul like her son when he was in Rome. This is why she is referred to as Paul's mother. I say this because this verse is the only Biblical reference to Paul's mother. It seems strange that Paul would refer to his own mother in this manner without another mention of her anywhere else.

Also, note that there is a Rufus mentioned in Mark 15:21. He is the son of Simon, who carried Jesus' cross. If this is the same Rufus as mentioned here, then Rufus' mother would be the wife of the man who carried Jesus' cross. Perhaps Simon, Rufus, and Rufus' mother became believers as a result of Simon carrying Jesus' cross. Then, Paul became acquainted with them after his conversion and she treated him like a son, since she was intimately involved with Jesus' crucifixion. Therefore, it seems likely that Paul is saying that Rufus' physical mother is like a mother to him, not Paul's biological mother. This is just my opinion.

16:16 Paul concludes four of his epistles with the command to greet one another with "an holy kiss" (16:16; I Corinthians 16:20; II Corinthians 13:12; I Thessalonians 5:26). Paul is the only one who uses this term. This is because, as members of the body of Christ, our sins have already been atoned for (5:11). Therefore, we are already holy (Colossians 3:12). Therefore, if we kiss each other, it is, by definition, "an holy kiss." Believing Israel, on the other hand, is told to greet each other "with a kiss of charity" (I Peter 5:14), because their sins are not forgiven until Jesus' second coming (Acts 3:19-20). Therefore, they are not holy until

then.

"The churches of Christ" (16:16) is not Churchianity's denomination today. In fact, God is against denominationalism. He says that those, who boast in being part of a denomination, are carnal (I Corinthians 1:11-13 and 3:3-5). Instead, if someone asks you what church you are a part of, you should say that you are part of "the church of the living God" (I Timothy 3:15). If he likes that answer, he may be willing to listen to the truth. If he does not like it, he probably will consider you a heretic for not being part of an established church. You then know not to waste your time with him, because you will not be able to edify him in the knowledge of the truth. "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16).

16:17-18 Serving their own belly means that they are satisfying their flesh with false doctrine. They use "good words and fair speeches" because they cater to the flesh. Churchianity is full of such people. Many people will give a lot of money to those who make them feel good about their spiritual condition without having to allow Christ to change them. Our hearts are desperately wicked and deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9). This means that we will even take on a form of godliness (II Timothy 3:5) if it means we never have to admit our sin and our need for Christ's blood to atone for our sins. The same thing is true after someone is saved. He often only believes in Jesus' death as atonement for his sin as a way of cleaning up his life. Once he acknowledges what Christ has done, he feels like he can take over from there and try to serve God in the energies of his flesh. This means that he will be offended by sound doctrine that says, "I am crucified with Christ:...and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Galatians 2:20). Many times, people only agree to go to church and supposedly become good people in order to keep their marriages, families, and/or social networks intact. Therefore, they never truly believe the gospel, but play the church game in order to keep from losing what they have in the flesh. They may even believe the gospel and be saved but will not allow Christ to live in them afterward, as they are only concerned with a "fair shew in the flesh" (Galatians 6:12).

Therefore, others are more than happy to oblige them with false doctrine so that these other people can be rich themselves. As Paul said, "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in

destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (I Timothy 6:9-10).

It is for these reasons that Paul says to mark and avoid those which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine they had learned. Those, teaching against sound doctrine, are trying to build up their own flesh. Then, many people will listen to them, because most people, even Christians, are trying to build up their own flesh. You only have to take a cursory look at Churchianity today to discover this to be the case. This is why Paul says, “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (I Corinthians 5:6). In other words, it only takes one person, coming into a household church teaching false doctrine, to lead the whole household astray. Therefore, they should be marked as troublemakers and avoided by the churches.

But, where do you draw the line? In other words, how much false doctrine has to be taught before you mark and avoid someone like this? The answer is that it all comes down to the person’s motivation. Titus 3:10-11 says, “A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.” If a person teaches false doctrine, you admonish him with sound doctrine. Then, you listen to what he says. If he does not change his position or he does not have sound scriptural support for his different position, then he is not a Bible believer. It means he is trying to undermine the authority of God’s Word, and so he must be kicked out of your fellowship. The issue is with the attitude of the person, because that determines if he is in the flesh or in Christ, which will affect how others in your fellowship act.

You also cannot be too critical with this standard because all people, no matter how sincere they are, will cater to the flesh to some extent. Therefore, if a person accepts the Bible as his final authority in most matters, while only having a couple of minor hang ups with the flesh, that person should still be accepted. The question is if his attitude will lead others to trust in the flesh. If so, he should be kicked out. If not, you should stay in fellowship with him. Also, he could simply be ignorant that he is wrong about several things, because he has been in doctrinal error for a long time. As long as he has an attitude of letting the Bible be his final authority, he should stay in the fellowship, because he will

eventually allow the Holy Ghost to teach him regarding those doctrinal errors, resulting in his maturity.

Unfortunately, when you are a right divider, others will often use this verse against you to cease fellowship with you. I know this firsthand, having been expelled from a Bible college, because I stood on the authority of God's Word, while the college stood on the authority of their tradition to expel me. This also comes down to attitude. Their attitude is that they or their church are right and everyone else, including those trusting in the Bible, are wrong. If you are kicked out in this situation, you are better off not being associated with that church, because they will limit your growth in Christ.

16:19 Their obedience coming abroad unto men primarily means that they have believed the gospel, receiving the gift of eternal life. Remember our discussion in 10:16 of how obeying the gospel means believing it. Therefore, we need to think of the Romans' obedience as them believing God's Word, as opposed to just doing "good" works that make them look like a Christian. A second way, in which they could obey God, is by allowing sound doctrine work in them so they live out the in-Christ life. I am sure they have done this to at least some extent. However, remember that Paul's goal in writing to them was to "impart unto [them] some spiritual gift" (1:11), which we defined as being edified in sound doctrine. Therefore, "their obedience" (16:19) probably refers more to them believing the gospel in order to be saved than it does to them coming unto the knowledge of the truth.

The last part of 16:19 also confirms this to be true. He wants them to be "wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." This is a great verse to teach us that it is probably not a good idea to investigate the depths to which people sin. If you do, you are giving your flesh ideas of how it can "work all uncleanness with greediness" (Ephesians 4:19). Paul says that "it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Ephesians 5:12). Therefore, we should be "simple concerning evil" so that we do not give our sin nature an occasion to sin. After all, you cannot commit a sin if you do not even know it exists. Paul talked about this in 7:9-11, where he said that he "was alive without the law once." However, once "the commandment came, sin revived, and I died....For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." If you do not know about a particular evil, then your sin nature

cannot deceive you into doing that evil. Therefore, in the case of evil, it is best to be “simple” or ignorant of those works of darkness.

16:20 In Genesis 3:15, God promised that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of Satan, and Satan would bruise His heel. Galatians 3:16 identifies that seed as Christ. This must mean that Christ would step on Satan’s head, spiritually speaking. Now, Paul says that God will bruise Satan under the feet of the Roman believers shortly. In other words, believers are in the same position against Satan as the Lord Jesus Christ was. That is because our lives are “hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3).

Contrast this with Israel before the cross. There, Israel was Satan’s lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24-25), and Satan was stronger than Israel (Jeremiah 31:11). In our flesh, we are no better than Israel was then. The difference is that Christ defeated Satan, and we have been placed into Christ (6:3-5). Therefore, rather than being Satan’s captive and being weaker than him, we are in a position of authority over Satan because of who we are in Christ. In other words, when we learn and practice sound doctrine in our lives, God bruises Satan’s head under us, just like God did with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection! This is how the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with us (16:20). Therefore, rather than being a license to sin, grace is the power of God to defeat Satan through us. This victory comes only through believing and applying sound doctrine, which is why Paul says that we are to take “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Ephesians 6:17).

16:21-24 1:1,6 says that Paul wrote this epistle to the Romans. Therefore, when 16:22 says that “Tertius...wrote this epistle,” it simply means that he wrote down the words that Paul told him to write. Paul had bad eyesight, presumably from all of the physical punishment he received for standing on the truth of God’s Word (II Corinthians 11:23-27). If he wrote down the words, he would have had to use large print (Galatians 6:11) and it would have taken him longer. Therefore, he got Tertius to transcribe the words for him.

Paul mentions Timotheus as being his workfellow. Timotheus seems to be the primary young man who followed in the footsteps of Paul. Lucius is probably Luke, who wrote Luke and Acts, since Luke starts using the word “we” in Acts 16:10 in describing Paul’s

journeys. Gaius is mentioned in Acts 19:29 and 20:4 as being one of Paul's travelling companions. Romans was probably written during that time. Apparently, Paul was staying with Gaius in Macedonia when he wrote Romans, and Gaius had a church in his home.

16:25 In 1:11, Paul wanted them to be “established.” Now, he says that God can “stablish” them. “Establish” is when they first believe something, while “stablish” is to continue in a state of being established. Therefore, he started the epistle by wanting to be established, and he ends the epistle with God being able to stablish them.

“My gospel” is used three times in Paul's epistles (2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8). No other person uses that term. That is because Jesus Christ gave Paul his gospel by revelation (Galatians 1:11-12). Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles (11:13), in charge of dispensing his gospel (I Corinthians 9:17) to the whole world (Acts 9:15). By contrast, the 12 apostles soon grew into 120 on Pentecost (Acts 1:15) and then 3,000 more souls were added to the church that day (Acts 2:41). They preached that you must repent and be water baptized in order to be saved (Acts 2:38), while Paul preached to trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for your sins (I Corinthians 15:3-4). Therefore, “my gospel” is a distinctive term that shows that Paul preached a different gospel than the other apostles, and Paul says that we must believe his gospel in order to keep from being accursed (Galatians 1:8-9).

What stablishes us is “my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery” (16:25). Most of Churchianity today preaches Jesus Christ, but they do not so according to the mystery. Instead, they primarily preach the red letters of Jesus found in Matthew – John. That is what Peter preached. Peter said that he preached was what “God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21). Clearly, this is information that is different than what Paul preached, “which was kept secret since the world began” (16:25).

The reason Paul says that you would be accursed if you do not believe his gospel is because his gospel is different from what Peter preached. Think of this in terms of contracts, because covenants are contracts. God made a covenant with Israel that

they would have eternal life on the earth if they believed the gospel (Revelation 5:9-10). During Peter's day, this gospel was to change your mind ("repent") and be water baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). God set aside the nation of Israel in Acts 7 and started the dispensation of grace with Paul in Acts 9:23. Paul's gospel is to trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for sin (I Corinthians 15:3-4) in order to have eternal life in heaven. If I believe the gospel that Peter preached, I am not saved, because that contract has not been offered to me.

You can only take God up on any offers He has made to you. God told Noah that He would give him eternal life if he built an ark (Genesis 6:14-18). That was the gospel to Noah. I do not receive eternal life if I build an ark, because God never made me that offer. God told Abram that He would give him eternal life if he believed God would make his seed as innumerable as the stars in heaven (Genesis 15:4-6). That was the gospel to Abram. I do not receive eternal life if I believe that today.

Therefore, we must trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for our sin today in order to receive the gift of eternal life, and we must be established in the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, because those are the terms of the contract that God made with us today. I will not be established in Christ if I try to follow the instructions of Matthew – John, because those instructions are part of Israel's contract with God, not today's contract that God made with the body of Christ.

16:26 People read "by the scriptures of the prophets" and immediately think that this refers to the Old Testament prophets. This cannot be the case because Paul says, "But now is made manifest." If he were referring to the Old Testament, he would have to say that the mystery was made manifest in time past, not "now."

We need to understand that God gave prophets to the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:8-13 says that, when Jesus ascended on high, He gave prophets to the church "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God." This tells us that prophets existed in the body of Christ until God's Word was completed. This is confirmed by the following statement by Paul: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him

acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (I Corinthians 14:37). Therefore, when Paul refers to “the scriptures of the prophets,” he is referring to his own writings.

You may ask, “Why doesn’t he just say that the mystery is made manifest by his own writings?” The reason is because, by referring to them as “the scriptures of the prophets,” it shows that Paul’s epistles are the very words of God. In addition, it differentiates his God-given epistles from letters that he personally wrote, such as the letter he wrote to the Corinthians before he wrote I Corinthians (see I Corinthians 5:9). In other words, by the prophets verifying Paul’s writings, it gives the authority of God’s Word to these epistles, rather than being just letters that Paul came up with. This is what Jesus did with the Pharisees. He said, “If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true....The Father Himself, which hath sent Me, hath borne witness of Me” (John 5:31-32,37).

Paul says that the revelation of the mystery is “according to the commandment of the everlasting God.” This, again, shows that Paul’s epistles have the authority of scripture, just as much as the red letters of Matthew – John do. Yet, Churchianity somehow subordinates Paul’s epistles underneath the red letters of Jesus. In reality, the opposite should be true. Paul’s epistles are the preaching of Jesus Christ as sound doctrine for us today. The red letters of Matthew – John are Jesus’ words to Israel in their program, which is not in operation today. Therefore, just like I do not try to follow God’s command to build an ark, because that commandment was for Noah, not for me, I also should not try to follow Jesus’ red letters, because those were commandments for Israel, not for the Body of Christ today.

Note also that “the revelation of the mystery” is “for the obedience of faith.” Therein lies the answer as to why Churchianity teaches the red letters over Paul’s epistles. Churchianity seeks to put people under the law so they can control them through fear and guilt. Fear and guilt are emotions that relate to the flesh. Love and grace are motivations of the Spirit. Since most “Christians” operate in their flesh, fear and guilt are used by Churchianity, rather than love and grace, so that they can get more money and power over people. Jesus’ red letters teach obeying the law, because He primarily talked to unbelieving Israel. Paul’s epistles teach that we are under grace (6:14) because they are written to

believers. Therefore, Paul's epistles do not accomplish the fear and guilt that Churchianity desire, which is why they follow Jesus' letters, and not Paul, even though Paul is the one we should be following, because his words are "the preaching of Jesus Christ" (16:25) today, as verified by the prophets, to be "the commandment of the everlasting God," which Churchianity goes against when they follow the red letters.

When we believe the sound doctrine in Paul's epistles, we have "the obedience of faith." When we put ourselves back under Jesus' red letters, we are believing man over God and are entangled in the yoke of bondage (legalism) that we had before we were saved (Galatians 5:1). Since "we ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29), let's have the obedience of faith by obeying the adult instructions of Paul's epistles to us today, rather than the childish instructions of the red letters to unbelievers in Israel's program.

16:27 This is not merely a benediction that should be skipped. It says that God is the only wise one. In other words, God is the only one wise enough to come up with a plan to save man that would actually work. Therefore, we should not use our human logic to say that right division is not true. Rather, we should recognize that God used wisdom (Proverbs 8:22-23) when He developed the plan to start Israel's program with Abram, set them aside with the stoning of Stephen, started the dispensation of grace with Paul, and will resume Israel's program once the rapture of the body of Christ takes place. Since God's ways and thoughts are higher than our ways and thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9), let us trust God's Word rightly divided, instead of following our own ideas of what God did. When we do this, God's glory plan (Ephesians 1:17) works through Jesus Christ (16:27) in us for ever.