

Paul's Letter to the ROMANS

A letter from Christ's messenger, Paul, to all those in Rome who love God.

Greetings, from Paul, a slave-servant^a of Jesus Christ, who called me to be His messenger,^b taking me away from all other pursuits to broadcast God's Great News—

²the same Great News that God had long ago promised in the Holy Writings thru His prophets.

³And the Great News is about God's incomparable Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. He was born as a human being into the royal line of King David.

⁴That He was indeed the Son of God was clearly proven by His miraculous power, by the perfectly sinless life He lived, and by the fact that God raised Him from the dead.^a

⁵Yes, it was Christ^a who gave me the undeserved privilege of representing Him as His messenger of this Great News, calling people in every nation to believe in and obey Him.

⁶You in Rome are also included among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

⁷I am writing this to all of you there, because you are all dearly loved by God, and called to be fully devoted to Him. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ grant you undeserved favor and give you great peace of mind and heart.^a

Paul's Burning Desire To Visit Rome

⁸Let me say first of all, I thank my God thru Jesus Christ for every one of you, because people everywhere thruout the world are talking about your genuine faith.

⁹And God, whom I serve with everything that's

in me by preaching the Great News about His Son, is my witness that I continually talk to Him about you in my prayers,

¹⁰always pleading that somehow He will finally clear the way for me to visit you, if He is willing.

¹¹I want so very much to see you, in order to share with you some spiritual gift that will help you to become even more firmly grounded in the faith.

¹²That is, that thru each other's faith and faithfulness—both yours and mine—we can encourage each other as we spend time together.

¹³Now I don't want you to be unaware, my brothers and sisters, that I had often planned to visit you, but until now something has always come up to keep me from doing so.^a I've wanted so much to enjoy some results from working among you also, just as I've experienced among the other Gentiles.^b

¹⁴I am under obligation to reach out to all people, both to the cultured Greeks and the uncivilized, to the educated and the uneducated.

¹⁵So now, with all that's in me, I'm ready and eager to preach the Great News to you in Rome as well.

The Powerful Great News

¹⁶Because in no way am I ashamed of the Great News^a that Christ came to bring us and be to us!^a In fact, that amazing news is God's powerful way of saving everyone who believes.^b This is especially true for the Jew, but also for everyone else.

¹⁷Because the Great News reveals how God is now able, in a just and righteous way, to offer us for-

1:1a The word means one who is totally subject to the will and wholly at the disposal of another. It expresses the condition of one who has a master and is in every respect under his control. By using the word, Paul expresses such absolute subjection and devotion to the Lord Jesus, such as he would never have yielded to a mere human.

1:1b Or *apostle* which means *messenger*.

1:4a God certainly would not have raised Him from the dead if He had been an imposter.

1:5a ... and not any human agency ... 1

Corinthians 15:1-8; Galatians 1:12; Ephesians 3:1-3.

1:7a ... as you give Him your total dedication in trust, worship, obedience, and service.

1:13a In 15:18-24, he tells what prevented him.

1:13b Anyone who is not a Jew.

1:16a The Great News—the Son of God died for our sins, and rose back to life again, that we too might rise and live forever!

1:16b ... believes and puts into practice what Jesus taught, and believes that Jesus, the Son of God, died as a sacrifice for our sins.

giveness for our sins.^a So we are now to progress from faith and obedience to God's previous commands and sacrifices, to faith and obedience to Christ's commands, and to faith in the great sacrifice He made for us.^b Because as the Scripture says,

The one who gains right standing with God will receive eternal life because he believes both what God has promised and commanded.^c

The Guilt of Mankind

¹⁸Because even now, God is revealing His fierce anger from Heaven against all who oppose what is right, and live in sin.^a And in their sinfulness they continually try to suppress^b the truth,

¹⁹in spite of the fact that what is clearly plain to understand about God is right there in their hearts and consciences. In fact, God is the One who put the evidence there in the first place.

²⁰Because God's invisible qualities—His great everlasting power and all the other things that prove that God does indeed exist—have been clearly seen ever since He created the world. They are understood by the things God has made! So sinners everywhere are without any excuse.

²¹But even though they knew about God, they didn't honor and glorify Him as God, nor were they thankful. But they became foolish in their speculations. Then their irresponsible hearts and minds became darkened.

²²Even though they claimed to be wise, they

became utter fools instead.

²³Instead of worshiping, obeying, and rejoicing in our glorious and ever-living God, they carved images made to look like mortal man, birds, animals, and crawling creatures, and worshiped them.

²⁴So, because of their inflexible determination to do only what they themselves wanted to do, God stopped holding them back and abandoned them to the filthy desires of their hearts, allowing them to dishonor and shamefully degrade their bodies among themselves.

²⁵So they threw overboard the truth about God in exchange for the lie, and worshiped and served created things instead of the Creator, who is to be praised forever! And may He indeed ever be praised.

²⁶That's why God finally gave them over to freely indulge their shameful passions. Then even their females^a perverted the natural use of their bodies and became lesbians.

²⁷The males^a also abandoned natural sexual relations with females and burned with passion for each other. Males committed filthy homosexual acts with other males, and as a result they brought upon themselves the continuing punishment they so justly deserved for such filthy perversion.

²⁸And because they didn't want to continue knowing what they so definitely knew about God, God gave them over to a morally corrupt mind. The result was that they continued indulging in

1:17a ... and bring us to Heaven.

1:17b God could not simply say, "I forgive you." His entire Kingdom would fall unless He dealt severely with all rebellion. So God did what was necessary and *right* when He punished sin on the cross in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior. We are now saved from God's judgment by believing on Christ as our Savior and obeying Him as our Lord. See Acts 16:31 note.

1:17c Habakkuk 2:4. See also Romans 2:1-11; 6:16; 10:10; Galatians 3:11 note; Hebrews 5:9. This verse is an expanded translation, in order to bring out the full meaning of the Greek text.

1:18a Galatians 6:7-8.

1:18b Present participle, indicating ongoing action.

1:26-27a Paul so abhorred the lives these people were living that he recoiled at even using the words "women" and "men", but used words that merely denoted the female and male sex, which could also refer to animals in a different context.

Don't Blame God!

Many homosexuals claim they were born this

way. They say, "If God made me this way, what's wrong with my living as I do?" The answer is, God never made anyone homosexual. The God who calls homosexual acts *an abomination* (Leviticus 18:22,28) would never create anyone to live this way. See also Deuteronomy 23:17-18.

In *Barnes' Notes*, Albert Barnes says in regard to Romans 1:26-27, "Perhaps there is no sin which so deeply shows the depravity of man as this; none which would so much induce one to hang his head, and blush to think himself a man."

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, the Apostle Paul lists homosexuality along with many other sinful acts condemned by God.

Someone says, "But I've had these homosexual urgings ever since I was a little kid." Well, the same is true with the rest of us concerning wrong heterosexual urgings, and other sins. Many can say, "I have lied to cover up my actions, and to get what I wanted, ever since I was a little kid." Another can say, "I've had the urge to steal what belonged to others, and to take whatever I could lay my hands on from the time I was a little kid." And the rest of

those acts that should never be indulged in.

²⁹Their lives have become glutted with all kinds of wicked thoughts and actions—sexual immorality, desire for what belongs to others, envy, desire to harm others, quarrels and fights, even murder, lies, and malicious hatred.

³⁰They gossip and speak evil of one another. They hate God. They are violent, proud, arrogant, and boastful. And they're always thinking up new ways of sinning, and added to that, they're disobedient to their parents.

³¹They have no conscience, so they can't be trusted. They don't even love their own family members. They are unforgiving and unmerciful.

³²Even though they know very well that God will do the right thing and fearfully punish all who indulge in such sinning, and that their punishment is living death,^a they not only continue in their sins, but they also applaud and cheer others who continue in the same sins.

The Fairness of God's Judgment

2 But consider now, all you who are passing judgment on others—you are inexcusable, because when you pass judgment on others and then practice the same thing yourself, you are condemning yourself!

²Yes, we all agree that God is just and unerring in His judgment against those who do such things.

³But listen, man, do you actually believe that

when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things, and then continue doing them yourself, that you will escape the unbiased and unerring judgment of God?

⁴Or do you think you can get away with your contemptible attitude toward the abundance of God's kindness, tolerance, and patience toward you? Don't you realize that God, *in giving you all this time*,^a is showing His kindness toward you so that you'll turn from your sinning and turn to Him in faith and obedience?

⁵But the way you're going now, in your hardness, and stubborn, unrepentant attitude, you are piling up a mountain of anger that will be released upon you on the Day when God's great anger is revealed in righteous judgment.

⁶*Don't be fooled!*^a **God will reward each person according to what his actions deserve.**^b

⁷There are some who continue to live for the glory, honor, and everlasting life that God has promised. With patient endurance, they continue doing what is good and right. God will reward these people with eternal life.

⁸But those who live to please themselves and refuse to obey the truth,^a who resist what's good and right and yield to what's wrong—they will most definitely receive the fullness of God's wrath and indignation in great suffering and anguish.^b

⁹This will be true for every person who practices doing evil, especially for the Jew, but also for everyone else.

us have had other strong temptations since we were kids. The reason such things happen is because we have an enemy. His name is Satan. And Satan is allowed by God to test us, and he does so from the time we are very young.

God Is Your Answer!

The answer to your problem and the problem of all other sinners is that you must be born again, as Jesus said. See John 3:1-21 and the notes. And to be born again means to unconditionally surrender all that you know of yourself to all that you know of God, and to aim from this time on to please and obey Him fully. This must be your sincere aim even if you are not always able to perfectly fulfill your intention. No, you can't do that in your own strength. But God has promised to be with you to help you overcome. See Philippians 2:12-13. He has also promised to forgive your past sins thru the suffering and death Jesus suffered and died for you on the cross when He, the Son of God, came to this earth in the form of man, to be your Savior.

God has no desire to condemn you to Hell. He wants to save you from your sin and forgive you, so

that He might bring you to be with Himself forever. *God loves you so very much.* He has been so good to bring you into existence as one of His children, made in His image and likeness. He has such great plans for you, both for this life and for all eternity. But as a homosexual, you must deal with your sin just as the rest of us must deal with any and all temptations that Satan sends our way. Don't settle for defeat when God has made such great provisions for your victory thru Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior!

1:32a Revelation 20:10,15.

2:4a Implied.

2:6a Implied.

2:6b Psalm 62:12; Proverbs 24:12.

2:8a ... *about how God has told them they are to live* ... See Hebrews 5:9.

2:8b ... *in an awful Hell, and then the lake of fire.* Revelation 19:19-21; 20:1-15; 21:8. And remember, God will not accept partial obedience. Such a person is a rebel still. None of us are perfect, but our aim and intention must nevertheless be absolute obedience.

¹⁰ But everyone who practices doing what is good and right will receive glory, honor, and great peace. Again, this is especially true for the Jew, but also for everyone else,

¹¹ because God doesn't have any favorites.

¹² All who have sinned without knowing God's written laws will perish just the same, in spite of not knowing the written laws.^a And all who have sinned in spite of knowing God's laws, will be judged by those very laws.

¹³ Because no one is made free of guilt before God by just hearing what God commands. It's those who do what God commands who are free of guilt.

¹⁴ In fact, when Gentiles, who don't have God's written laws, still instinctively obey their own conscience and thereby do what God has commanded, they are in effect obeying God's commands, even though they don't have the Law of Moses.

¹⁵ They give evidence that the requirements of God's laws are actually written in their hearts. Their conscience, which sometimes accuses them and other times defends them, also shows that this is true.

¹⁶ *God will take all these things into consideration^a on the Day when thru Jesus Christ, God's appointed Judge,^b He will judge the secrets of all people, according to the Great News I preach.*

The Jews and the Law

¹⁷ Yes, you are called a Jew, and you're relying upon the fact that you have the rules and regulations given you by Moses. You boast that you are God's chosen people.

¹⁸ You claim you know how God wants you to live—having superior standards of morality, and knowing right from wrong because you've been taught from the Law.

¹⁹ You are, you insist, a guide for the blind—a light for those in spiritual darkness—able to correct the foolish and teach the ignorant.

²⁰ That's how sure you are that in the Law you have all knowledge and truth.

²¹ You, then, who teach others, don't you teach yourself? You who teach that it's wrong to steal, do you steal?

²² You who teach, "You must not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor the worship of idols, do you rob God of tithes, offerings, and the passionate worship you owe Him?^a

²³ You who boast about having God's Law, are you bringing shame on God by breaking the Law?

²⁴ As the Scripture says,

"The name of God is being scorned by the Gentiles because of your actions."^a

²⁵ Circumcision is indeed profitable if you obey the Law, but if you break the Law, your circumcision is of no more value than if you had never been circumcised!

²⁶ So, if a man who is not circumcised obeys what the Law requires,^a won't God regard him as good as circumcised, even though he isn't?

²⁷ And won't the uncircumcised person, who obeys what the Law requires, condemn you, when you still break the Law, although you have the written code and are circumcised?

²⁸ Because one is not truly a Jew just because of visible evidence, nor is true circumcision a visible, physical thing.

²⁹ No, the evidence that one is a real Jew is on the inside. And true circumcision is a circumcision of the heart. Such a person obeys because of a changed heart attitude,^a not because of written laws. And he will be praised by God, even if not by others.

God's Faithfulness

3 What's the advantage then of being a Jew? And what's the benefit of being circumcised?

² There are all kinds of advantages! First of all, it was thru the Jews that God gave His messages to mankind.

³ True, some in Israel refused to believe and obey God, but God's faithfulness^a certainly won't be cancelled out by their unfaithfulness, will it?

⁴ Certainly not! In fact, God will keep His word even if every one of us is discovered to be a liar. As David wrote concerning God:

It will indeed be proven that You spoke the truth, and You will be cleared of all charges when You are judged.^a

2:12a ... *because they have not even lived up to the light and the laws of conscience they do have.* See following verses, also 1:18-25; Luke 12:47-48.

2:16a Implied.

2:16b Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2 Timothy 4:1,8.

2:22a ... *by worshipping money, things, pleasures, creature comforts, and security here, etc.*

2:24a Isaiah 52:5; Ezekiel 36:22.

2:26a ... *in regard to morals* ...

2:29a See 10:9-10 note.

3:3a ... *to His promises and warnings* ...

3:4a Psalm 51:4. David, speaking to God.

3:11a ... *to learn how to please Him.* Not one of us searched for God. It was He who made the first move and searched us out.

3:12a Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Ecclesiastes 7:20.

⁵But if our sinning causes people to become more aware of how good God is, what about that? Isn't it then unfair of God to punish us? (I'm just repeating how some people reason.)

⁶Certainly not! If that were so, how could God then judge any who have rebelled and sinned against Him?

⁷Still others might argue, "If God's glory becomes more obvious when His truthfulness is contrasted with my lies, why then am I still condemned as a sinner?"

⁸Well, if that's the case, we might as well say, "Let's live it up in sin so that good may come from it," as some falsely charge that we believe and live, and as others firmly declare that we teach. Such people are justly being condemned by God!

We Are All Guilty

⁹What's the answer then? Are we Jews better than others? Not at all! We've already shown that Jews and all others are alike, under the firm grip of sin.

¹⁰As the Scriptures say:

No one lives like he ought to, not even one person!

¹¹**Not one of them really understands the wisdom of serving and obeying God, and not one earnestly searches for God.^a**

¹²**Every one of them has turned aside to other pursuits. All of them, together, have become worthless. None of them practice true goodness and kindness, not even one!^a**

¹³**Their throats are like stinking, open graves,^a and snake poison is under their lips,^b from which their tongues discharge lies.^a**

¹⁴**Their mouths are open, running sewers of curses and bitter cynicism.^a**

¹⁵**They murder for any reason.**

¹⁶**They leave a trail of ruin and misery wherever they go.**

¹⁷**They know nothing about pursuing peace.^a**

¹⁸**They have no real concern about respecting God or fearing Him.^a**

¹⁹Now we know that whatever God's Law says, it says to those who are under its authority. The result is that we find ourselves with absolutely no

argument—because everyone in the whole world is found guilty before God.

²⁰And we can't become free of our guilt before God by merely reforming now and obeying God's laws, because God's laws can't cancel the sin we've already committed. They only reveal what we should be doing and haven't done.

God's Way of Making People Right

²¹But now God's way of freeing people of guilt before Himself has been clearly revealed. It has nothing to do with obeying the Law, although the Law of Moses and the Prophets spoke about it.^a

²²We can now make peace with God by believing in Jesus Christ!^a Right standing with God is now available to everyone, and will be given to all who become true followers of the Lord.

²³Because there's no difference,^a for all of us have sinned, and we all fall far short of God's perfect standard and character.^b

²⁴But now we can all make peace with God because of what Christ Jesus did to redeem us.^a And it's a free gift—a favor from God that we don't deserve.

²⁵It was God who designed the plan to have Jesus make amends for us by suffering and shedding His blood for us on the cross, so that He could look upon us with kind approval when we believe and accept His gift by faith. He did this to show how altogether right, fair, just, and honorable He is.

²⁶Although in the past God was tolerant, and left sin unpunished, He has now demonstrated His high standards of always doing what is altogether right—by being altogether just in dealing with our sin, and at the same time being the One who forgives all who come to Him, believing and trusting in Jesus. And God Himself declares that they now have right standing with Him.

²⁷So who can boast? No one! Boasting is excluded. Thru what principle, then, can you be pardoned? Is it by some good works that you do? No, but by means of your faith in what Jesus did for you.

²⁸So we conclude that a person is declared to be in right standing with God by means of his faith,

3:13a Psalm 5:9.

3:13b Psalm 140:3.

3:14a Psalm 10:7.

3:17a Isaiah 59:7-8.

3:18a Psalm 36:1.

3:21a Deuteronomy 18:15,18-19; Isaiah 45:24-25; Jeremiah 23:5-6.

3:22a What does it mean to believe in Jesus

Christ? See Luke 14:26-33; John 3:36; Acts 16:31; Galatians 3:11, and the notes there.

3:23a ... *between the Jew and everyone else ...*

3:23b Or short of *the glory of being like God in righteousness.*

3:24a ... *from our sins and the consequences of their just penalty, when He suffered and died on the cross to redeem us.*

and not by obeying the Law.^a

²⁹Is God only the God of the Jews? Isn't He also the God of everyone else? Of course He is.

³⁰Since there's only one God, it is He who will bring Jews to right standing with Himself as a result of their faith, and everyone else to right standing by means of their faith.

³¹Does that mean that because we are now freed from guilt by means of our faith, we no longer need to be concerned about obeying God's laws? Never! On the contrary, we confirm the fact that God's laws must be honored and obeyed.

The Example of Abraham

4 What shall we say then about Abraham, the father of our Jewish nation? What did he discover about this?

²Because if Abraham obtained right standing with God by something he did, he had something to brag about. But he couldn't brag before God!

³Because what does the Scripture say?

Abraham believed what God had promised him.

And because of that he was credited with right standing with God, because he believed.^a

⁴Now when a man works, his wages are not a gift, but the payment of what his employer owes him.

⁵But when a person does no work to become right with God, but believes the One who makes ungodly people right with Himself, he obtains right standing with God because of his faith.

⁶David said the same thing when he wrote about the happy state of those who were declared "not guilty" by God, even though they hadn't worked to obtain this pardon. He wrote:

⁷ **How happy are those whose rebellion is forgiven, whose sins are pardoned.**

⁸ **Yes, how extremely happy and blessed is the person whose sins will never be charged against him by the Lord.^a**

⁹Does this blessing of forgiveness apply only to the Jews, who have been circumcised, or to the uncircumcised Gentiles as well? Remember, we discovered that right standing with God was credited to Abraham because he believed what God

promised him.

¹⁰Now think: What were the circumstances when he believed and was given right standing with God? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was before he was circumcised, not after.^a

¹¹It was later^a that he was circumcised. This was a seal, as it were, an outward indication of the right standing he already had, because he believed God while he was still uncircumcised. So he is actually the spiritual father of all uncircumcised people as well, who believe and are made right with God because of their faith.

¹²Of course, he is the father of the Jews—but only of those who are not only circumcised, but who also live the same obedient life of faith that Abraham lived even before he was circumcised.^a

¹³Because God did not promise to give the whole world to Abraham and his descendants because Abraham had obeyed His laws, but because Abraham believed what He promised him. That's how he came to be declared right with God.

¹⁴After all, if they had become God's heirs by obeying His laws, then our faith has no value and God's promise to Abraham is worthless,

¹⁵because God's laws only bring His angry judgment.^a But where no law is involved, there is no breaking of any law.

¹⁶So, in order to guarantee His promises to all of Abraham's spiritual children,^a God forgives us by granting us favor we don't deserve when we believe Him. This applies not only to those who had the Laws of Moses, but also to everyone else who lives by the kind of faith that Abraham had. Indeed, Abraham is the spiritual father of all of us.

¹⁷God told Abraham,

I have made you the father of many nations.^a

This is how God sees the matter—the God whom Abraham trusted—the God who raises the dead to life and speaks of those things not in existence with as much certainty as though they existed already.

¹⁸And Abraham lived in hope when there was absolutely no logical reason to hope. He believed he would have a son and become the father of many nations, just as God had promised when He

3:28a But two things are necessary for salvation. This Scripture concerns our justification, our right standing with God, but we must also be regenerated (born again). See Galatians 6:8; 1 Timothy 6:18-19; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 1:2; Revelation 16:15, and the notes on these Scriptures.

4:3a Genesis 15:6.

4:8a Psalm 32:1-2.

4:10a Genesis 15:1-6.

4:11a Genesis 17:1-27.

4:12a Hebrews 11:8-10,17-19. Abraham not only believed the facts God revealed about Himself, and His instructions, but he also obeyed Him. All other belief is counterfeit.

4:15a The only function of any law is to warn and inform us of what we must do or not do, and what

said,

Your children will be as numerous as the stars in the heavens. It will be impossible for you to count them all.^a

¹⁹When Abraham was almost 100 years old, he knew his body was dead, as far as fathering children was concerned, and that Sarah was much too old to have children.^a But his faith was still strong.

²⁰He didn't doubt that God would still fulfill His promise.^a He didn't stop believing. In fact, his faith increased as he praised and thanked God for what he knew God would do.

²¹He was absolutely sure that God was able to do what He had promised.

²²And so, because of his faith, God credited him with right standing with Himself.

²³But those words, "God credited him with right standing," were written not only for him.

²⁴They were also written for us, to whom right standing will be given, if we believe the promises made to us by the One who raised our Lord Jesus from among the dead.

²⁵Jesus was handed over to die for our sins. And He was raised to life again in order to grant us right standing with God.

Peace with God

5 So we too have been made right with God by believing what He promised us. And the great peace we are now enjoying with Him is a result of our believing what He promised regarding what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us.

²Having gained this peace by faith in Jesus, we are now in a position of undeserved favor with God. As a result, we are now continually in high spirits in the hope we have of sharing God's glory.^a

³Not only that, but we are also highly elated even as we endure all kinds of severe trials, because we know that these trials produce in us patience to remain true to the Lord to the end.

⁴And patient endurance builds character that is approved by God; and when we have a character that is approved by God, we can hope with great certainty.

⁵We know we will never be disappointed in the hope we have, because God has already poured out His love in our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom He has given us.^a

⁶Because at the right time, while we were still utterly helpless, Christ died for those who were living in complete disregard for God.

⁷It's rare that anyone is willing to die, even for a good, honest person. But someone might be willing to die for someone truly good.

⁸But God reveals how intensely and deeply He loves us, because Christ died for us when we were still living in rebellion against obeying or pleasing Him in any way.

⁹Since we have now been made right with God by the blood Jesus shed when He died for us, it is even more certain that we will be saved thru Him from God's fierce punishment of sinners.

¹⁰Because if God made it possible for us to become His friends by means of the death of His Son while we were still His enemies, how much more certain we can be—now that we have been won over to friendship with Him—that Jesus will save us, now that He's a living, exalted, and triumphant Redeemer!

¹¹But that's not all; we now also rejoice in the extreme in our glorious relationship with God as a result of our restored friendship with Him, which all came about thru our Lord Jesus Christ.

Adam and Christ Compared

¹²Here's what had happened: Sin entered the world because of what one man did,^a and the result of sin was death. Therefore death strikes everyone, because everyone has sinned.^b

¹³So sin was in the world even before the Law of Moses was given, but a person is not charged with committing sin where there is no law.

¹⁴Just the same, death still reigned over everyone from the time of Adam until Moses appeared on the scene, even over those who hadn't sinned in the same way that Adam had.^a

¹⁵In some ways, Adam was like Christ, who was to come later. But what a huge difference there is between the results of the sin of Adam and the free

the penalty will be if we break the law.

4:16a Abraham's spiritual descendants are those who practice the same obedient faith that Abraham did. Hebrews 11:8,17-19; James 2:20-24.

4:17a Genesis 17:5.

4:18a Genesis 15:5.

4:19a Literally *Sarah's womb was dead*.

4:20a ... and give him a son.

5:2a Romans 8:18; 1 Corinthians 15:43; Colossians 3:4; Hebrews 2:10; 1 Peter 5:10.

5:5a John 14:17c; 20:19-22; Luke 11:13; 24:49; Acts 1:7-8; 2:1-21.

5:12a Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-24.

5:12b Romans 3:23; 6:23.

5:14a ... *by disobeying a direct command from God*. They had no direct commands from God, but

gift offered thru Christ. Because death came to many thru Adam's sin, but now in a much greater way, God's mercy has come in overwhelming measure to many thru the gift of mercy offered us thru the other Man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁶There's another great difference between Adam's sin and God's gift: The one sin of Adam resulted in judgment and condemnation to death for everyone. But the free gift offered thru Christ, even after we had been guilty of so many sins, has resulted in right standing with God being offered to everyone.

¹⁷Yes, God allowed death to rule because of the action of one man, because he sinned. But how much greater are the results from what the other Man, Christ Jesus, did. Just think: Those who follow Him receive God's abundant mercy, and the gift of right standing with Him, and the promise that they will live and reign with Him in a life that is unimaginably glorious, and everlasting!

¹⁸So just as one sin resulted in all people being condemned to death, in the same way, one morally right action^a resulted in life-giving peace with God being offered to everyone.

¹⁹So just as everyone came under judgment as sinners because of one man's disobedience, now everyone can be made right with God because of one Man's obedience.

²⁰In fact, the Law was given so that everyone could see how much sinning was actually going on. But while sinning was shown to be taking place everywhere, God's mercy has been shown to be rich and overflowing in far greater superabundance.

we do.

5:18a ... *the Son of God dying for us* ...

6:2a "What Paul is saying is, 'How shall we, who have become aware of the evil of sin, and have renounced it by solemn declaration, continue to practice it? It is therefore abhorrent to the very nature of the Christian pledge.'

"It is just as senseless to suppose that a Christian should want to live in sin as it is that a dead man should show actions of life. A dead man is uninfluenced and unaffected by the affairs of this life. He is insensitive to sounds and tastes and pleasures. They have all lost their influence over him. Christians are, in fact, dead to sin. They do not live to sin; nor does sin have rule over them."—*Barnes' Notes*

By becoming Christians, we profess that we are dying to sin. It is our understanding when we con-

²¹So while sin ruled over us, it caused our death! But God's mercy was triumphant by means of His plan which enabled Him to offer us right standing with Himself and eternal life, all thru Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dead to Sin, Alive to God

6What shall we say then? Shall we keep on sinning now so God can show kindness and mercy to us in ever greater ways?

²Never! It just can't be! How can we now continue to wallow in sin, if it was sin that we died to?^a

³Don't you know that when we were baptized into union with Christ Jesus, we were baptized into union with Him in His death?

⁴Realize this: Our baptism in water pictured the fact that we had died to our old life of sin, and that the old life was now being buried with Christ. But then, just as Christ rose from the dead thru the power of the Father, we too, by that same power, are raised from death to live in the freshness of a new life.

⁵Because if we have become joined with Christ in a death like His,^a we will certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.^b

⁶Also realize that our old evil self was nailed to the cross with Him, so that the sinful person we were would be destroyed, and we would no longer be slaves to sin.

⁷Because sin has no power over anyone who is dead.^a

⁸Now if we died to sin with Christ, we believe we will also live an altogether new life with Him.^a

⁹We know that Christ was raised from the dead.

vert to Christ that we are to resist all of sin's temptations, and thru the help of God to overcome them. So how then can we continue in the practice of that which we have so solemnly renounced?

Our very baptism into Christ implies and pictures a baptism into His death. We are still tempted to sin, but Christ gives us the power to overcome. Philippians 2:12-13; Revelation 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21.

6:5a As He died and was laid in the grave, so have all true Christians, by faith in Him and dedication to Him, died to sin.

6:5b "This does not mean that we will resemble Him when we are raised up at the last day—which may be, however, true—but that our rising from sin will resemble His resurrection from the grave. As He rose from the tomb and lived, so shall we rise from sin and live a new Life."—*Barnes' Notes*.

6:7a "It's like, when a slave dies he is liberated

He won't die anymore. Death no longer has any power over Him.

¹⁰Because in regard to the reason He died, He died once, and only once, in order to make amends for the sins of all of us. But now that He's alive, His only concern is to live to please God.

¹¹The same must now be true of all of you! You must recognize yourselves to be dead and unresponsive to the influence and control of sin over you, but alive to the will and desires of God for you because of your union with Christ Jesus our Lord.

¹²So don't allow sin to continue any longer to reign as king on the throne in your mortal body, making you obey it and fulfill its various passions.

¹³This means you must refuse to surrender any part of your body as a tool of wickedness, to be used for sinning. Realize that you are now alive after being dead! Therefore, surrender yourselves completely to God, so that all the parts of your body may become tools for God to use in a right and honorable way.

¹⁴So you must refuse to allow sin to lord it over you any longer! Remember, you are now under the sway and influence of God's undeserved kindness, and not under the Law of Moses.

Be Slaves Now to Righteousness

¹⁵And what does that mean? Does it mean we are free to sin, because we are no longer under the Law, but under the mercy of God's undeserved kindness? Never!

¹⁶Don't you know that you are the slaves of the one to whom you make a practice of obeying?^a

Either you are slaves of sin, which ends in death,^b or you are slaves sincerely dedicated to obeying God,^c resulting in right standing with Him.^d

¹⁷I thank God that although you were slaves of sin, now you've become obedient with all your heart to the truths you were taught.

¹⁸And upon being set free from sin, you became slaves to doing what's right and honorable and pleasing to God.

¹⁹I'm using these common, everyday terms because of the weakness of your spiritual understanding. Just as you once offered the various parts of your bodies as slaves to immoral conduct and to ever-increasing vile actions, now, in the same way, give yourselves wholeheartedly as slaves to doing what's right and good, resulting in pure, blameless lives.

²⁰When you were slaves of sin, you were free of any desire or concern to do what was right and pleasing to God.

²¹But honestly now, what good did you gain from doing those things of which you are now ashamed? Because the end result of such living is death!^a

²²But now, after being set free from slavery to sin, and becoming slaves of God, the benefits you gain are all the blessings that result from a life wholly dedicated to God. And the end result is everlasting life.^a

²³Because the wages paid for sinning is death,^a but the gift that God offers us is forgiveness and everlasting life in close personal fellowship with^b Christ, when we trust in Him as our Savior^c and obey Him as our Lord.^d

from the power and dominion of the one who formerly dominated his life ... It is evident that he who is not freed from this bondage here, will not be in the future world with Christ ... Paul is not saying that the Christian is perfect, but that sin has ceased to have dominion over him, as a master ceases to have power over a slave when he is dead."—*Barnes' Notes*.

6:8a 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Ephesians 2:10; 4:21-24.

6:16a Romans 2:1-10; John 3:36; 2 Corinthians 10:6; Hebrews 5:9; 2 Peter 2:10.

6:16b The second death, which is the Lake of Fire. Revelation 20:6,14; 21:8.

6:16c ... *which is evidence of a life born again* ... 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 2:3 and 17, and many others.

6:16d "The meaning is that by our conduct we show which master we are under; and we cannot

serve two (Matthew 6:24)." —*Pulpit Commentary*. Loyalty to Christ does not permit one to practice selective obedience, and make even occasional crossings to Satan's side. True, there are times when we may fail. Read 1 John 1:8-10, and the note there, as to what we must do if we fail.

6:21a Actually, the second death—in the lake of fire. Revelation 20:11-15.

6:22a The implication is that if you continue living in sin there will be no eternal life for you, only Hell, and then the second death, the lake of fire.

6:23a Note carefully, that the warning here is addressed, not to outsiders only, who make no profession of faith in Christ, but to Christians as well, to whom Paul is writing. Paul states here that they will continue toward eternal life with Jesus Christ only as they continue to submit to His rule, as opposed to the rule of sin. See Colossians 1:21-23, and note. See also Romans 7:15-23 note.

An Illustration From Marriage

7 All of you know something about law. So surely, my brothers and sisters, you know that the law has power over a person only as long as he's alive.

²For example: A married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives. But if he dies, she is free to marry someone else.

³If she lives with another man while her husband is still living, she will be called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, the law no longer considers her married, and she does not commit adultery if she marries another man.

⁴For that reason, my dear friends, when the Messiah suffered and died on the cross for your sins, you were released from your marriage to the Law of Moses.^a So now you can be married to another—to the One who was raised from the dead, so that thru your marriage to Him, you might produce the fruit of faithfulness and obedient service to God.

⁵When we lived mainly to satisfy the various appetites of our flesh, our corrupt desires became rebellious and inflamed when the Law challenged our actions, and we kept on bearing fruit that would result in death.

⁶But now we've been set free from the Law, because that which once controlled our lives is

now dead. Now we joyfully serve God with new understanding and a new heart, no longer hoping to get right with God in the old way by performing the rites and ceremonies of the Law.

Our Fight Against Sin

⁷What shall we conclude then? Is the Law sinful? Of course not! In fact, I wouldn't have known what sin was unless the Law had revealed it to me. For example, I wouldn't have known that it's wrong to eagerly desire what belongs to someone else if the Law hadn't said, "You shall not covet."^a

⁸But sin, pouncing upon the opening it had when I began thinking about the things the Law said were wrong, caused me to have all kinds of evil desires. When there was no Law, sin was dormant.

⁹I was once alive when I knew nothing about the Law. But when I came face-to-face with God's commands, sin came alive in me, and I soon realized I was doomed to death!

¹⁰So I found that the very commands that should have led me to life, resulted in death instead.

¹¹My sinful nature seduced me to sin because of the very rules and commands of the Law. So it was really my sinful nature that put me to death by the demands of the Law.

¹²Still, there is nothing wrong with the Law. What the Law demands is altogether right, just,

6:23b This is the primary meaning of *in* in the Greek in this context and grammatical setting.

6:23c The name *Jesus* means *Savior*.

6:23d To say there is nothing in the text here regarding obedience is erroneous, because obedience is fully and clearly expressed in the name *our Lord*. See Hebrews 5:9, and the note there.

7:4a This doesn't mean we are released from our obligation of obedience to the moral law of God, which Christ and the apostles taught.

7:7a Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21.

7:14a Implied.

7:15-23a Does this mean that Paul was living a defeated life at the time he wrote this? This is what some claim. But what Paul was actually doing was putting himself in the shoes of the Jews who were not converted to Christ, showing how dominated they still were by sin.

To say that this was describing Paul's present life is to say that it's natural for a person claiming to be a Christian to continue living in sin. But in the previous chapter (chapter 6), Paul so clearly states the fact that those who live in sin will not receive eternal life, but will be consigned to death—the second death.

Paul says the same thing in chapter 8. Notice how emphatic Paul is about the fact that a true Christian lives a life that is pleasing to God. It's true that we cannot live to please God in our own strength. We need God's constant help. And God has promised thruout His word that He is always present with us to give us that help. Philippians 2:13; et al.

No one can walk in two directions at the same time. No one can go toward eternal life, living for God, and at the same time live in sin, headed toward destruction. One can walk in only one direction! If he lives for God, even though imperfectly, he is a Christian. He may stumble at times, and even have a bad fall. But if his heart's true desire and determination is to live to please God, he is walking in one direction.

* * *

God is patient and understanding. *In the same way that a good father is tenderly compassionate towards his children, that's how compassionate God is toward those who are greatly concerned about pleasing Him, because He knows where we've come from—that we are from the dust.* Psalm 103:13-14. God takes pity on His children

and good.

¹³So has something good been the cause of my death? Not at all! But it was sin, revealed for what it really is, that brought death to me thru what is good. It was by means of God's commands that sin was exposed as the horrible and deceitful thing that it really is.

The War Within Us

¹⁴Because we know that the Law is pure. But *when I'm living as a Jew under the Law;*^a I act like a slave who's been sold for wicked purposes. I continue to obey my lower nature.

¹⁵In fact, I can't explain why I do what I do, because the good I'm determined to do, I don't do. But I keep doing things I hate.

¹⁶So then, I must consent to the fact that the Law is good, especially when it condemns those wrong things I really don't want to do, but still keep doing.

¹⁷But I'm really not the one doing the wrong; it's the sinful nature within me.

¹⁸Yes, I know full well that nothing good is living within me—that is, within my unrenewed nature—because even though I want to do what's good, I can't follow thru and do it!

¹⁹Because the good I want to do, I don't do, but I keep on doing the evil things I don't want to do.

²⁰So if I keep on doing what I don't want to do,

this means I am no longer the one doing it, but it's the sinful nature within me that's doing it.

²¹So I've discovered the rule, that, when I want to do what's right, evil is always there to pull me down.

²²In my heart, I take delight in the Law God has given us thru Moses.

²³But I find another law working within me, fighting against what my mind wants. It's the sinful nature within me, bringing me into captivity to do what it wants me to do.^a

²⁴Oh, what a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that's taking me to death?

²⁵Thank God! There is abundant deliverance thru Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, to sum up what I've just said: As for myself, my mind is set and determined to obey God's laws, but if I depend on my own strength to do so, I will buckle under and serve the law of sin.^a

Living By the Power of God's Spirit

8 So there is now no longer any judgment of the second death^a awaiting those who belong to Christ Jesus. Because they no longer seek to live right solely by means of their own will and determination, but with the powerful help and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

²Because the power of life thru Christ Jesus has not only granted me forgiveness and the promise

who have fallen, and helps them up again. His true children want to be lifted up so they can live to please their Heavenly Father. They are not constantly being overcome by sin. *Don't you know that you are slaves of the one to whom you make a practice of obeying? Either you are slaves of sin, which ends in death, or you are slaves sincerely dedicated to obeying God, resulting in right standing with Him.* Romans 6:16.

"It is hard to understand how the opinion ever crept into the Church, and continues there, that Paul was speaking here of his experience as a Christian, and that Paul's experience must be true of all other Christians. This shameful teaching has lowered the standard of Christianity and destroyed its influence in many places."—*Adam Clarke's Commentary*.

Remember, *Unless you are living a holy life you will never see God!* Hebrews 12:14. And preacher, unless you are living this truth yourself, and are most earnestly preaching it to your people, you have denied the faith!

* * *

Actually, this opinion came into the Church because some theologians misinterpreted and mis-

applied this 7th chapter to Christians. But this chapter is addressed to Jews, possibly Christian Jews who were still trying to add to their justification by Mosaic Law keeping, as vs 1-4 clearly indicate.

In v 9 Paul takes himself back to his "bar mitzvah" (son of the Law or Commandment) experience at age 13. Before the Law was applied to him he was alive in the sense of having no guilt or condemnation. But when he became morally responsible before God under the Mosaic Law, his sin nature rebelled and brought guilt and condemnation.

Paul then goes on to describe his struggle and failure as a Jew, under the Law, trying to keep its spiritual and moral meaning. He is not describing the conflict of two natures in the Christian. He is describing the conflict that a Jew has with the sin nature when trying to live for God under the Law of Moses, as vs 7-8 clearly state.

Paul so clearly states in v 25 that he, at this writing, as a Christian, was no longer living the defeated life he described in the previous verses.

7:25a See Galatians 5:16-17; this is where the struggle between the sin nature and the Holy Spirit in the Christians is set forth by Paul.

8:1,2 & 6a The second death. Revelation 20:6,14;

of eternal life, but also power thru Him to be set free from the power that the law of sin had over me, which if I had continued in, would have sent me to the second death.^a

³Because what the Law could not do, God did. The Law was powerless to change the natural passions and selfishness of our evil hearts, but God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful man as a sin offering for our sins. He thereby condemned to death the sin in our flesh in the human body of Jesus.

⁴God did this so that the right actions which the Law demands could now be carried out by us, who no longer try to live right only by means of our own will and determination, but by the powerful help and guidance of the Holy Spirit.^a

⁵Because those who are unrenewed, who still live as their sinful nature dictates, are always thinking about how they can further please their corrupt desires. But those who have been renewed by the Holy Spirit have firmly set their minds on pleasing God.

⁶The mind-set of sinful man leads to death, but peace and everlasting life are the promised possessions of those whose minds are firmly set on pleasing God.

⁷Because the one whose mind is set on giving supreme attention to satisfying the desires of the flesh is at war with God! He is not living in obedience to the will of God. In fact, it's impossible for him to do so.

⁸So then, those who are still controlled by the desires of the flesh are unable to please God.

⁹But if the Spirit of God is indeed living within you,^a you will not be living to gratify fleshly desires, but to please God. On the other hand, if the Spirit of Christ is not allowed to effectively live within you, to influence and guide you, you don't belong to Him at all.

¹⁰But even if Christ is living within you, your body will still die because of its corrupt passions and desires, but your spirit will live forever because you have right standing with God, and are now living as God would have you live.

¹¹And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead is indeed living within you,^a then the God who raised Christ from the dead will also bring your mortal bodies back to life again by means of^b His Spirit who lives within you.^c

¹²So then, my dear friends, we have a duty to fulfill—but not a duty to obey what our flesh begs us to do.

21:8.

8:1-4a God not only judged our sin on the cross in Jesus our Savior, enabling Him to now offer us forgiveness for our sins when we come to Him in true repentance, Christ's death also weakened Satan's power over those who trust in Christ to save them, by destroying the strangle hold he had on us. Now with God's help (vss 13, 26, 37; John 15:1-5; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:13-16; Jude 1c) we can do what we couldn't do when Satan controlled us.

8:9,11a John 14:23.

8:11b Or *because of* ...

8:11c 1 Corinthians 15:40-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18.

8:13a The second death. Revelation 20:11-15. See Matthew 7:13-14, and note.

8:13b Romans 6:21-22. If you do not kill the sinful desires of your flesh, they will kill you!

8:12-13c In regard to God's helping us to live a holy life, see also John 15:1-5; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 2:12-13; 1 Peter 1:13-16; Jude 1, as given in note for 8:1-4.

8:14a All others are still lost, and will go down to Hell. Psalm 9:17; Isaiah 55:7.

8:16a Are you truly born again? Have you allowed God to change your life from selfishness and sin to a life lived to truly please and obey God?

Does the Spirit of God witness with your spirit that all is well? If not, you have no sure evidence that you belong to Him.

8:16-17a What a wonder it should be to all humanity to consider that God created mankind in His own image (Genesis 1:26-27), to be like Him, to be His children. Even more wonderful is the knowledge that even though we fell into sin and rebelled against our Father, Jesus, God's Son, thru whom the Father created all things (John 1:2-4; Ephesians 3:9c; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2), suffered and died to redeem us so that we might become *children of God* by adoption. Galatians 4:4-7.

And as *children of God* we become His *heirs*. In this case, the inheritance is available without the death of the donor. Ordinarily an inheritance is not received until the one who makes the will passes away. But God will never die. God's last will and testament, however, did require a death. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died, that we might live and receive so great an inheritance. Hebrews 9:15-17.

* * *

But the test of sonship here is *suffering*. Those who are truly Christians are persecuted both by those who definitely oppose God and by those who wish to appease God, but not obey Him. *And everyone who determines to live for Christ Jesus in a way that will truly please God will be persecuted.*

¹³Because if you are living for the purpose of gratifying the passions and appetites of your body in a wrong way, you are on the road to death^a! But if by means of the power and help which the Holy Spirit will give you, you smash to death the wrong desires your flesh begs you to satisfy,^b you will live!^c

¹⁴Because it is only those who make a practice of submitting themselves to the influence and control of the Spirit of God who give proof that they truly are children of God.^a

¹⁵When you were converted to the Lord you certainly didn't feel like you were in slavery again, causing you to fear; but you sensed that you had been adopted. For that reason we cry out, "Father! My Father!"

¹⁶Then we experience God's Spirit warmly witnessing with our spirit, assuring us that we are indeed His children.^a

¹⁷And if we're God's children, we're also His heirs! Think of it! Heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ! However, if we are to be glorified with Christ, we must also be willing to suffer with Him.^a

Our Wonderful Future Glory

¹⁸But I don't regard the sufferings of this present

time worthy of even being considered when we think of the amazing glory that will soon be revealed in us.^a

¹⁹Because all of creation is waiting with eager anticipation, longing for the curtains to be drawn aside to reveal the children of God in all their glory!

²⁰In fact, all of God's creation has been subjected to hopelessness, not by their own choice, but by the decision of the One who put them under subjection.

²¹But they look forward in hope that they too will be freed from their slavery to decay, and share in a glorious liberty together with the children of God.^a

²²Because we know that all of creation groans together in birth pangs up to this very moment.

²³And it's not only God's creation in general that's in that condition. But even those of us who have been given a small taste by the Holy Spirit,^a of what it will actually be like to be with the Lord, groan within ourselves as we wait for the finalizing of our adoption, that is, the changing of our bodies into immortal, glorified bodies.^b

²⁴Because we were given this hope when we were saved, but hope that's been fulfilled is no longer hope. No one hopes for what he already has and

2 Timothy 3:12. You may say that you love the Lord but that you have never suffered persecution for Him. Then you had better examine the feeble stand you have taken for the Lord and his truth..

When you take a definite stand for the Lord and live as God commands in His word, you will find the opposition very keen. Most people do not love light, they love darkness, because their deeds are evil. And they will be quick to persecute the one who endeavors to turn on the light.

Persecutions may not necessarily come in the form of bodily harm, but will surely include mocking, ignoring, criticizing, slandering, belittling, and disassociating.

But the persecutions we suffer as a Christian strike no deeper than the things of time, and last no longer than the present time. It is a "light affliction" and lasts for only a moment, compared with the frightful and everlasting punishments in store for the ungodly and the hypocrite.

But we shall not be treated as co-heirs with Christ unless we give undeniable proof that we are truly united to Him, by being willing to take our stand with Him and suffer with Him. 2 Tim 2:12. You face the possibility of being wounded in some way every time you speak out for Christ (Romans 10:9-10) and every time you take a stand for the full truth in God's word. What does your witness and stand for

Christ say about you?

Are you demanding that the whole truth be preached in your church, no matter how tough the opposition? If you're the preacher, are you preaching the whole truth, as it is, or are you compromising in order to satisfy those unregenerate ones who don't want you to meddle with their sin? Remember, the Lord is always listening and watching.

8:18a ... *when we become like Jesus*, 1 John 3:2, *and discover the great and everlasting adventure God has planned for us*. See 1 Corinthians 2:9.

8:21a All of nature was affected by the fall of man (Genesis 3:17-19), and all of nature will share in the glorious redemption of man, when Christ returns to rule and make things right. Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25; Hosea 2:18.

8:23a Luke 11:13.

8:23b Even those of us who have this hope and have *been given a small taste by the Holy Spirit of what it will actually be like to be with the Lord*, groan and are dissatisfied. And this dissatisfaction will continue until Christ *transforms our weak bodies that die, into bodies just like His own glorious, incorruptible body*. Philippians 3:21.

No matter how much joy or satisfaction we may receive in this life, something is always missing. But that something will be supplied in all of its fullness when Christ claims us as His redeemed ones.

is enjoying.

²⁵ But if we keep on hoping for what we don't yet have, that means we are continuing to wait for it with patient endurance.^a

²⁶ And it's also at this point^a that the Holy Spirit comes to our aid and helps us in our weak efforts, because at times we don't even know what we should pray for, or how we should pray. But then the Spirit Himself prays for us and thru us with such intensely deep feelings that we cannot express them in our own words.

²⁷ Now the One who searches out and takes note of everything that's in our hearts also knows what's in the mind of the Holy Spirit as He prays, because He pleads with God for His people in perfect harmony with God's will.

²⁸ And we know that God causes all things to work together for our good, if we love Him and are fitting into His plans.

²⁹ Because God always knew who would sincerely accept His invitation to eternal life,^a and He had decided way back then that they would become just like His incomparable Son,^b so that He would be the firstborn of many children of God.

³⁰ And those whom He decided would be like His Son, He also called to Himself; and those He called, He brought into right standing with Himself; and those He brought into right standing, He also glorified.^a

God's Great Love for Us

³¹ What can we then conclude about all these

things? Obviously, if God is so much in favor of us, who can ever win out against us?

³² Surely,^a if God didn't even spare His own dear Son, but delivered Him up for the sake of us all, how can we ever think that along with Christ, He won't also give us everything else He has promised us?^b

³³ Who can ever successfully condemn us and bring a valid charge against us when God has declared us not guilty, and has chosen us as His very own? God won't, because He's the One who brought us into right standing with Himself.

³⁴ So just who is it that's condemning us? Christ isn't, because He's the One who died for us.^a But what's even more important, He rose from the dead^b and is right now in Heaven in the place of highest honor and power at God's right hand, pleading before God for us.^c

³⁵ Who then can ever come between us and the love that Christ has for us? Those who persecute us and cause us all kinds of misery and suffering can't; nor can any distress, famine, lack of clothing, nor danger of any kind, nor even the threat of death.

³⁶ They only remind us of what King David wrote:

"For Your sake we are in danger of being killed all day long. We are treated like sheep on their way to be slaughtered."^a

³⁷ But every time we are attacked by these things we can keep on winning overwhelmingly glorious victories, by means of the help we receive from the One who loved us so.^a

8:24-25a *We were saved in hope.* We have the promise, and the assurance, because we know that God cannot lie. So one day, finally, we will have the reality. Therefore, let us *continue to wait for it with patient endurance!*

8:26a ... *when we continue to wait on God in prayer, with patience,* ... Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-8; Hebrews 11:6.

8:29a ... *on His terms* ... See Matthew 22:14; Acts 20:20-21; 1 Peter 1:2, and the notes.

8:29b John 3:16.

8:30a The *glorification* is yet future, but our eternal God sees the end of His plan from the beginning, as though it were already accomplished. What a glorious, incomprehensible future is promised us!

8:32a This emphatic particle in the original Greek must not be left out, as so many translators do.

8:32b When God gave us His Son He gave us His greatest treasure. Nothing else in all of God's great Kingdom can be compared to His Son. So, if He has already given us His greatest treasure, surely He will

give us everything else He has promised us.

8:34a What can separate us from love like that?

8:34b Romans 4:25. See 1:4 note.

8:34c ... *as our defense attorney and Savior.*

8:36a Psalm 44:22.

8:37a Philippians 2:13.

8:39a But we must be careful to distinguish between all the foes that Paul mentions (every possible foe) and the believer himself. There is no possibility that some power or circumstance may snatch from Christ's hand even the weakest one who trusts and obeys Him. There is perfect safety and security in the Savior and in the Father for the weakest sheep who follow the Good Shepherd and pay attention to what He tells them. John 10:27-29.

The only peril is that we ourselves may fail to listen to His voice and follow Him obediently.

Many translations imply that the moment we receive Christ as Lord and Savior, we are suddenly made conquerors for all time to come, without further difficulty, and regardless of any and all possible occurrences or circumstances. They strongly

³⁸ So I'm firmly convinced that neither death, nor any circumstance in life, nor fallen angels, nor governments, nor powers of any kind, nor present or future situations,

³⁹ nor anything above or below us, nor any other created thing of any kind, can ever separate us from the love that God has for us because of Christ Jesus our Lord!^a

God's Choice of Israel

9 As a Christian, I'm telling you the truth. I am not lying. The Holy Spirit also bears witness in my conscience that this is so, as I tell you:

² My heart is broken and I am in great and continual sorrow for my people, for those related to me by flesh and blood.

³ I've even wished that it were possible that I myself could be doomed to Hell and separated from Christ for the sake of my brothers and sisters.

⁴ I'm speaking of the people of Israel. God adopted them as His people, and then revealed His glory to them in so many ways. He gave them His Law, and came very close to them in their Temple worship. He also made them many promises.

⁵ The Jews of today are the descendants of the great fathers of the faith, and it is thru them that Christ came and received His earthly body of flesh. May God, who rules over all, be praised forever! Yes, so may it indeed ever be.

⁶ However, I'm not saying that God hasn't kept His promises to Abraham, because not all the people of Israel are the true Israel.

⁷ Nor are all the descendants of Abraham children of God. Because God's promise was,

The children I promised you will come thru Isaac.^a

⁸ What I'm saying is: It's not the descendants of Abraham by natural birth who are the children of God. But it's Abraham's descendants thru the promise God made to him,^a who are regarded by God as Abraham's true descendants.

⁹ For this is what God promised:

At the appointed time for life to be conceived, I will return and Sarah will have a son.^a

¹⁰ And not only that, but years later Rebecca also conceived and had twins by our forefather Isaac.

¹¹ But even before the twins were born, before they had done anything good or bad, so that God's plan would work out as He had decided, and thru whom He chose, and not because of what anyone had done,

¹² God told Rebecca,

The older one will serve the younger.^a

¹³ That's why the Scripture records that God said, **I have loved Jacob, but I have rejected Esau.^a**

¹⁴ What shall we conclude then? Was this action by God unfair? Certainly not!

¹⁵ Because God told Moses,

I will be merciful to whomever I wish. If I wish to show kindness to someone, I will.^a

¹⁶ This shows that it was not we who had intense desire and put forth great effort to be saved, but it was God, who continually shows how merciful He is.^a

suggest that the conflict is immediately resolved in glorious victory, and the conqueror's garland is placed upon our brows as we recline in ease and splendor.

But the text does not teach this! Our conflict only begins the moment we accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior! It is unfortunate that what Paul sounded as a battle cry has been regarded by many as a lullaby. We cannot be excused from "fighting the good fight that must be fought in living the Christian faith." We are to be active, not passive, in the conflict.

And the conflict, in which we are called to be engaged, is real. The issues are life and death!

"The eighth chapter of Romans," as someone has said, "begins with no condemnation and ends with no separation." It is well to observe, however, that it is punctuated with sharp warnings such as *If you are living for the purpose of gratifying the passions and appetites of your body in a wrong way,*

you are on the road to death! But if by means of the power and help which the Holy Spirit will give you, you smash to death the wrong desires your flesh begs you to satisfy, you will live (v 13); that it is only those who make a practice of submitting themselves to the influence and control of the Spirit of God who are truly children of God (v 14); that only if we suffer with Christ will we be glorified together with Him (v 17); and that, in spite of our weaknesses, but helped by the Holy Spirit, we must continue in the faith (Colossians 1:23) and wait in patience and hope (vs 24-27) for the ultimate realization of salvation and the full manifestation of our divine sonship. See also 2 Timothy 2:12.

9:7a Genesis 21:12.

9:8a The promised son—Isaac.

9:9a Genesis 18:10,14.

9:12a Genesis 25:23.

9:13a Malachi 1:2-3.

9:15a Exodus 33:19.

9:16a All the good that happens has its real origin

¹⁷ For instance, in the Scriptures it's recorded that God said to Pharaoh, King of Egypt,

The reason I raised you up as King of Egypt was that I might display My power in My dealings with you, and so that as a result, I might be praised thruout the whole earth.^a

¹⁸ So God shows mercy to anyone He wishes; and according to His desire, He further hardens the stubborn hearts of others.

God's Anger and Mercy

¹⁹ So you will very likely ask me, "Well, why does He still find fault then? Because who can resist God Almighty?"

²⁰ And just who are you, that you would dare to challenge God's judgment? What created thing would ever say to its creator, "Why did you make me like this?"

²¹ Doesn't a potter have the right to make a distinctive bowl and a common one from the same lump of clay?

²² God really wanted to show how angry He was and reveal how powerfully He could destroy these rebels^a who were fit only to be destroyed. But instead He patiently put up with them.

²³ He did this in order to reveal the immeasurable greatness of His kindness in showing mercy to those He had earlier created to share His glory.^a

²⁴ This includes us, whom He has also called—

not only if you are a Jew, but also if you're not.

²⁵ As God says in the book of Hosea:

I will call them My people even though they were not my people. And the one whom I did not love, I will now call "The one I love."^a

²⁶ **And the time will come when in the very place where people were told, You are not my people, the people there will be called Children of the living God.^a**

²⁷ Isaiah also cried out concerning Israel:

Even if the people of Israel are as many as the grains of sand of the sea, still, only a few of them will be saved.

²⁸ **The Lord will finish His work and cut it short in righteous judgment, because He will do a quick work upon the earth.^a**

²⁹ Before that Isaiah had said:

Unless the Lord of vast multitudes had left at least a few of us, we would have ended up as utterly destroyed as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.^a

Israel and the Great News

³⁰ What does all this mean? Just this—that the Gentiles, who were not trying to make peace with God, obtained right standing with Him just the same, a right standing which they obtained by faith.

³¹ But Israel, while working to obtain right standing with God by obeying the Law of Moses, did not

and accomplishment from and thru God.

9:17a Exodus 9:16.

9:22a ... *who rejected and crucified Christ* ...

9:23a See references for 5:2.

9:25a Hosea 2:23, referring to Gentile followers of the Lord.

9:26a Hosea 1:10, again referring to Gentile followers.

9:27-28a Isaiah 10:22-23.

9:29a Isaiah 1:9.

9:33a Isaiah 8:14, 28:16.

10:4a ... *by His death for our sins and by His resurrection to make us right with God* ... See 4:25.

10:4b And what does it mean to believe in Christ? See Galatians 3:11; Luke 14:26-33; John 3:36; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-10, and the notes there.

10:5a This would mean perfect and continuous obedience. Galatians 3:10; 5:2-3.

10:5b Leviticus 18:5.

10:6-8a The quotations are from Deuteronomy 30:11-14. Paul says the same now in regard to salvation by faith in Christ. You don't have to look any further, just believe it with your heart and confess it with your mouth.

10:10a Belief that saves is not mere belief in facts, going no deeper than the mind. Belief that saves must come *from the heart*, as well as from the mind, resulting in appropriate life dedication and action. Notice Jesus' warning in Luke 9:26, and His promise and warning in Matthew 10:32-33 and Luke 12:8-9.

10:10b If your heart is full of love for Christ, will your mouth speak only of things pertaining to this world? Jesus said, *Whatever fills a man's heart comes out in what he says*. Matthew 12:34. Your head and heart are both involved in your salvation, and so is your mouth.

A person must first believe in his heart that God has indeed raised Jesus from the dead before he can honestly confess it to others. But if God has not raised Christ from the dead, then there is no truth in the Bible about sin and the need of a Savior, nor about Heaven or Hell nor the judgment, nor our own resurrection to eternal life. If Jesus Christ has not been raised from the dead, then all is lost!

But if Jesus Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, then the teachings of God's word are true, and we have a hope that is absolute, and one which should so overflow from our hearts that we cannot

receive God's approval.

³²Why not? Because they were not seeking it by faith, but by what they did in obedience to the Law. That's the stumbling stone they stumbled over.

³³As God says in Scripture:

Look, I am placing a Stone in Zion that will cause many to stumble. It is a Rock that will cause violent opposition. But no one who is truly believing in Him will be ashamed of Him.^a

10 Dear friends, my heart so earnestly desires and cries out for—and I pray most intensely for—my people of Israel to be saved.

²Yes, they indeed have great zeal for God, but a zeal that is not based on a right understanding of the truth.

³Because they are ignorant of God's great plan for them to become right with Him. So instead of accepting God's wonderful plan, they keep trying to become right with Him by their own efforts.

⁴But Christ^a has put an end to any need to try so hard to get right with God by obeying the Laws and customs of Moses. All anyone needs to do is to truly believe in Him.^b

Anyone Can Be Saved

⁵This is what Moses wrote about getting right with God by obeying God's Laws:

The person who obeys^a these laws will live forever by doing so.^b

do anything else than share the Great News with others, everywhere.

If Jesus has been raised from the dead, then all is true. Then it is true that He came from God, that He died for our sin, that God approved and accepted His work. Then it is true that He ascended into Heaven, and is exalted to rule over the universe, and that He will return to judge the living and the dead. So to profess that Christ is our Lord and that we believe that God raised Him from the dead is to profess virtually all the truths of the Christian faith.

And our confessing Christ as our Lord is not to be merely a one-time confession. It is to be the very overflow of our lives.

We are to confess Christ to a lost world at every opportunity. And our duty lies in the opportunity that is nearest us, whatever and whoever that may be at the time. Confessing Christ with the mouth is always an important duty. The present moment is most important, because we have no promise of another opportunity.

The Apostle Paul shows here that our confessing Christ as our Lord and Savior to others is just as

⁶But right standing with God by means of faith says this: "You don't need to ask yourself, 'Who will go up to Heaven?'" (That is, "Who will go up to Heaven and bring the Messiah down to save us?")

⁷"And don't wonder, 'Who will go down among the dead?'" (That is, "Who will go down among the dead and bring the Messiah up to save us?")

⁸But notice what that Scripture says next: "The prescribed means by which you can be saved is with you right now. It's in your own mouth and in your heart."^a And that's the message we preach in regard to obtaining salvation by faith. It's this:

⁹If you will open your mouth and share with others what you know and believe about the Lord Jesus, and if you truly believe in your heart that God has indeed raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰Because it's when you are sincerely believing with your heart^a that you gain right standing with God. So when as a result of true heart-belief, you make a practice of opening your mouth to share with others what you know about the Lord,^b the results will include your own salvation.

¹¹Because as the Scripture says,

No one who is truly believing in Him will be disappointed, or be ashamed^a to talk to others about Him.^b

¹²This also applies to everyone, both to Jews and to those who are not, because we all have the same Sovereign Lord, and He richly blesses everyone

important as our believing in our mind. One cannot say he has been born again if he is unwilling to share with others what he knows about Jesus.

Many believe all the truths set forth in the Bible, but they are still not saved. They love the approval of others more than the approval of God. So their pride keeps them from taking these truths into their hearts and confessing them. And only heart-belief overflows in a confession that saves. See Matthew 10:32.

If you needed to know about Jesus as Lord and Savior in order to be saved, so do others. If you withhold the Bread of Life from them, how can you say you love Jesus and that you love those whom He loved enough to die for? See Ezekiel 33:1-9; Matthew 10:32-39; 12:30; 16:24-26; Mark 8:34-38 and notes; Luke 12:8-9; 14:34-35; John 15:8; Colossians 4:5-6; Hebrews 3:6-19, and the notes there; Revelation 3:14-16; 21:7-8.

Some may justify their failure to talk to others about the Lord Jesus by claiming that not many Scriptures teach us that we must. And perhaps you've never heard your preacher say that we are

who calls on Him.

¹³ So you see,

Everyone who calls on Him and acknowledges Him as his Sovereign Ruler will be saved.^a

¹⁴ But how can they call on Him if they haven't come to believe in Him? And how can they believe in Him if they haven't even heard about Him? And how can they hear about Him unless someone tells them the Great News?

¹⁵ And how can they speak about the Lord to those who need to hear unless they are sent out? That's what the Scripture is talking about which says:

What a beautiful sight it is to see those who are going forth to preach the Great News about peace with God, who bring Great News about so many good things!^a

¹⁶ But not everyone who has heard this Great News has been glad to hear it. Because Isaiah says,

Lord, who has believed what we told them?^a

¹⁷ So then, faith can only come by sincerely listening—that is, by listening to what God wants to tell you.^a

¹⁸ But I ask you: Didn't they hear God's message? Of course they did. Because the Scripture says:

The sound of their voices as they witnessed has been heard all over the world. And their message has been given wherever there are people.^a

¹⁹ Again I ask you: Didn't Israel know this would happen?^a Yes, first of all, Moses prophesied:

I will provoke you to jealousy by a people who are not a nation. I will make you angry by a people who have no understanding.^b

²⁰ And without hesitation Isaiah boldly reported

that God said:

I was found by those who were not looking for Me. I revealed Myself to those who were not even asking about Me.^a

²¹ But about Israel God says thru Isaiah:

All day long I have stretched out My hands to you, a disobedient people who continually oppose Me.^a

God Has Not Rejected Israel

11 But listen: Has God now disowned His people? No, He certainly has not! After all, I'm an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham thru the tribe of Benjamin.

² God hasn't rejected His people whom He had previously chosen. Don't you remember what the Scripture says about Elijah, how he cried to God about Israel?

³ Elijah said,

Lord, they have killed all your prophets and torn down your altars. I'm the only one left, and they're trying to kill me too.^a

⁴ And how did God answer him? God said,

I still have 7,000 men who have not kneeled in front of the idol of Baal.^a

⁵ It's the same today as then. There are still a few who remain true as a result of God's undeserved kindness in choosing them.

⁶ The point is, if we benefit by a favor from God that we don't deserve, we can't claim that we earned it by working for it. Otherwise the promise that our salvation is by God's grace doesn't really mean that it's "by God's grace." Because if our salvation is obtained by working for it, it's no longer a gift from God. In that case the word work would-

duty bound to do so. Well, not many Scriptures warn about Hell, either; just enough to let us know for sure that Hell is certain and awful and calamitous, and will be the judgment for all who refuse to believe and obey the Lord. How many times must the Lord state a truth before you will believe and act upon it?

Most preachers don't preach that it's imperative that you witness to the lost because they don't do so themselves. But by failing to do so they are blatantly disregarding and disobeying Jesus' command to teach *everyone* to follow Him. Matthew 28:18-20. How can they teach others to follow and obey Jesus when they are not doing so themselves.

As we stated in our Matthew 10:33 note: When Heaven or Hell are at stake, silence is worse than treason!

* * *

Do realize this: The message in these two verses is not directed to unbelievers, but to you who say you

believe, telling you what you must be willing to do to ensure your own salvation. If you are cowardly (Revelation 21:8) and are not willing to obey the Lord and make yourself vulnerable to persecution by sharing your faith in Christ with others, who need God's forgiveness as much as you do in order to be saved, you are not yet born again!

If your only real concern is salvation for you and yours, you are still selfish, uncaring, and unconverted. Wake up! And Live! And bring life and joy to all others you can possibly reach, whatever the cost. Yes, give, so that others may go with the message, but God expects you to use every power you have, and that includes your mouth. Do it! And you will be surprised at what God will do thru you.

* * *

Be sure to read Appendixes 212, p 477, and 226, p 486; also Matthew 28:18,19,20, and the notes.

10:11a Isaiah 28:16. The Greek word Paul uses here means to either be ashamed or disappointed.

n't really mean work either.

⁷So what are the facts? Most of the Jews haven't found what they're looking for. But the chosen ones have,^a while the hearts and understanding of the rest have become calloused and hardened.^b

⁸The very thing that was written about them has happened:

God has caused them to become drowsy, so that they can't see with their eyes or hear with their ears. And that's true to this very day.^a

⁹And David said:

May even the abundant food on their table become a snare and a trap to them. May it become a stumbling block^a and the reward for their hard hearts.

¹⁰**May their eyes become so darkened that they can't see,^a and their backs continually bent down with troubles.^b**

¹¹But again, listen: Have they stumbled so badly that their fall puts them beyond recovery? Certainly not! But their fall has resulted in salvation being offered to people everywhere, and this in turn will make the Jews want it for themselves.

¹²Now then, if the sinful mistake they made has resulted in the rest of the world being enriched by it, and if their loss has enriched people in all other nations, think how much greater the results will be when Israel fully recovers and recognizes Christ as their Lord and Savior.

¹³I'm saying all this to you Gentiles,^a because I'm a messenger of Christ to everyone who is not a Jew.

¹⁴If I make a big thing of the assignment given me, it's only to provoke my own people to envy, so

that some of them might be saved.

¹⁵Now then, if the temporary throwing aside of Israel has resulted in many thruout the world being reconciled to God, isn't it the same as a resurrection from the dead when Jews accept Christ?

¹⁶Also, if the first fruits^a were dedicated to God, the same is true of the entire harvest, and if the root was dedicated to God, so are the branches.

¹⁷Now then, if some of the branches have been broken off, and you, being just a wild olive branch, have been grafted in among the remaining branches, you are now being nurtured by the rich sap coming from the root of this olive tree.

¹⁸But don't ever boast that you are better than those broken-off branches. If you do, just remember that you are not giving nourishment to the root, but the root is giving nourishment to you.

¹⁹"But," you might say, "these branches were broken off so I could be grafted in."

²⁰True, but they were broken off because of their unbelief, and you are standing firm only because of your faith.^a But don't be proud about that! Instead, stand in awe and reverent fear.^b

²¹Because if God didn't spare the natural branches, take heed, or He may not spare you either.

²²Seriously consider then, both God's kindness and His severity—His severity toward those who had fallen away, and His kindness toward you. This kindness will continue if your faith and conduct make it proper for God to continue His kindness toward you.^a Otherwise, you too will be cut off.

²³As for those who were cut off, if they turn from

In the context in which he uses it here, it means both.

10:11b Implied.

10:13a Joel 2:32.

10:15a Isaiah 52:7.

10:16a Isaiah 53:1.

10:17a And God will speak to you in various ways: By what you read in His word, by the preaching of it, by a testimony from someone, by the happening of circumstances, by His marvelous creation (both far and near), and by various other means.

10:18a Psalm 19:4.

10:19a In other words, *Didn't Israel know from their own Scriptures, of God's intention to include the Gentiles in His plans?* Paul then refers to some of those Scriptures.

10:19b Deuteronomy 32:21 ... no understanding *about the true God.*

10:20a Isaiah 65:1.

10:21a Isaiah 65:2.

11:3a 1 Kings 19:10,14.

11:4a 1 Kings 19:18.

11:7a 8:28-30; 1 Peter 1:2, and the notes.

11:7b *Hardened* by their own willfulness and stubborn desires.

11:8a Deuteronomy 29:4; Isaiah 29:10.

11:9a In other words, may their false sense of God's blessing upon them prove to be a curse.

11:10a From the fulfillment, we know this refers to *ability to discern mentally, to perceive the truth.*

11:10b Psalm 69:22-23. Be sure to read these two verses in Psalm 69 in their context.

11:13a Literally *to the nations*, meaning to *everyone who is not a Jew.*

11:16a The first fruit offerings of Israel acknowledged that the entire harvest belonged to God. The reference here is likely to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob being dedicated to God, and therefore all of Israel belongs to God.

11:20a Or *faithfulness.*

11:20b Luke 12:4-5; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Philippi-

their unbelief they will be grafted back in, because God is well able to graft them in again.

²⁴Think about it: If you've been cut out of a wild olive tree, and have been grafted against your nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will God want to take these, who are the natural branches, and graft them back into their own olive tree?

All Israel Will Be Saved

²⁵Now, my brothers and sisters, I don't want you to be in the dark about this previously unrevealed truth, and come to your own conclusions. The truth is, part of Israel has been hardened, but only until all other nations have had ample opportunity to receive God's mercy.

²⁶Eventually, all of Israel will be saved. This is what the Scriptures say about this:

The Savior^a will rise up out of our own nation, and will turn the descendants of Jacob away from all their ungodliness.

²⁷**Then My promise to Israel will have been fulfilled, when I have forgiven their sins.^a**

²⁸So it's for your benefit that they are now so violently opposed to the Great News about Jesus the Messiah. But, because they are the descendants of those chosen by God, they are dearly loved by Him because of their forefathers' unshaken faith in His promises.

²⁹Because God never takes back a gift,^a nor does He change His mind about any assignment or promise He has given anyone.

³⁰In the past, you were rebels when it came to obeying God. But when the Jews rejected God's gift of life thru Jesus, He was merciful to you instead.

³¹Now the Jews are the rebels, refusing to have anything to do with the mercy you have accepted. But this is your chance to now show them kind-

ness, and explain God's mercy to them.

³²Because God has allowed all of us to be imprisoned by a rebellious spirit, so that He might show mercy to all of us.

To God be the Glory

³³Oh, how immeasurably deep are the riches of both God's wisdom and knowledge. It's impossible to even begin to probe into and understand why He makes the decisions He makes. And His ways of doing things are way beyond our present ability to even begin to look into and understand. As the Scripture says,

³⁴**Who has ever understood how the Lord's mind works? Or who has ever been able to give Him advice?^a**

³⁵**And who has ever given anything to God, that would put God under obligation to pay him back?^a**

³⁶Because everything has been created by God, and it all comes to us thru Him and for His purposes. May He forever be glorified! Indeed, so be it!

Give Your All to God

12 For that reason, my brothers and sisters, because God has been so very merciful toward us, I plead with you: Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, dedicated to be lived in a manner totally pleasing to Him. This should be the intelligent, faithful response of your whole being.

²So don't blindly and obediently run with the pack and allow the world crowd to force you to conform to their low standards. Instead, you must now allow God to continually transform you by the renewing of your mind,^a so that you may be able to examine and choose what is good, acceptable, and altogether pleasing to Him.

³Now, by authority of the undeserved assign-

ans 2:12; Hebrews 4:1; 12:28; 1 Peter 1:17.

11:22a Colossians 1:23.

11:26a This is *Jesus*, which means *Savior*.

11:27a Isaiah 59:20-21.

11:29a It's true, God never takes back a gift He has given. But you can lose a gift for various reasons—even the gift of life. See verses 21 and 22; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2; Galatians 5:4; and many more.

11:34a Isaiah 40:13.

11:35a Job 41:11.

12:2a ... *by daily reading His word, and meditating on it* ...

12:3a ... *as a messenger of Christ* ...

12:3b "We are to know that whatever we are or have of good or excellence, we have it from God; and that the glory belongs to the Giver, and not to

the one who has received the gift."—*Adam Clarke 12:5a* ... *as the head*, Ephesians 1:22-23. Compare John 15:1-7.

12:6a But your prophecy must be in agreement with God's printed word, otherwise it is suspect. From *Albert Barnes' Notes on the New Testament* for Romans 12:6 and 1 Corinthians 14:1 is this explanation of the gift of prophecy:

"The word properly means to predict future events. But it also means to declare the divine will; to interpret the purposes of God; or to make known in any way the truth of God, which is designed to influence men. Its first meaning is to predict or foretell future events; but as those who did this were messengers of God, and as they commonly connected with such predictions, instructions and exhorta-

ment God has given me.^a I have something to say to every one of you: Do not think more highly of yourself than you ought to think.^b Instead, look at yourself as you really are, and judge yourself in regard to how you have responded by faith and action and laid hold of the knowledge and spiritual gifts that God offers you for the good of all.

⁴We all have one body with many parts, and the parts don't all have the same work to do.

⁵In the same way, although we are many, we are one body in union with Christ,^a and we are all joined to each other as different parts of the one body.

⁶Each of us have different gifts, according to how God has blessed us. If your gift is prophecy, you should faithfully prophesy according to what you are confident that God has revealed to you.^a

⁷If your gift is to serve and help others, you should do so with all the ability and opportunity God has given you. If you are gifted to teach, teach God's word faithfully, without any compromise.^a

⁸If you have the gift of preaching, you should be most diligent in your preparation and in your preaching. The one who gives should give generously, but not in a way that will bring praise to himself.^a If you have the gift of leadership you should lead with earnest diligence and enthusiasm. And when you show mercy, do so cheerfully.

Rules to Live By

⁹Your love must be genuine, with your whole heart. Always turn away from what is evil with real hatred for it, but continue to cling to what is good.

¹⁰Love each other like brothers and sisters, and honestly desire that others be honored instead of yourself.

¹¹Don't be lazy or haphazard about your work^a

or business. Serve the Lord in every situation, burning with fervent zeal.

¹²Continually rejoice in the sure hope we have, and always be patient when you are going through severe trials and persecution.^a In regard to prayer: Keep praying earnestly until you receive the answer.^b

¹³Always share what you have with God's people who are in need. And always be delightfully hospitable, sharing your home and blessings there with others.

¹⁴Also keep helping and encouraging those who are persecuting you.^a Don't ask God to curse them, but sincerely keep asking Him to bless them.

¹⁵Rejoice with those who are rejoicing,^a and weep with those who are weeping.^b

¹⁶Have the same interest and concern for everyone. Don't cater to the rich, the intelligent, the beautiful, and other so-called important people, but show equal interest in the common people. And don't get puffed up with your own importance.

¹⁷Never harm anyone in repayment for the harm they did to you. Others are always watching you, so for their sake make it a matter of fixed principle and practice to always be open about doing what is right.^a

¹⁸Whenever possible, when the decision is yours, live at peace with everyone.

¹⁹The main reason you should not take revenge and give vent to your anger, my friends, is because you should allow God to handle the situation. God has said,

Revenge for wrongdoing is my responsibility. I will repay him.^a

²⁰**So if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink. Because in so doing, it**

tions in regard to the sins, and dangers, and duties of men, the word came to denote any who warned, or threatened, or in any way communicated the will of God; and even those who uttered devotional sentiments or praise . . .

"While the one with a gift for teaching spoke in a calm, connective, didactic discourse adapted to instruct and enlighten the hearers, the prophet spoke more from the impulse of sudden inspiration, from the light of a sudden revelation at the moment, and his discourse was probably more adapted, by means of powerful exhortation, to awaken the feelings and conscience of the hearers."

12:7a The implication might well be . . . *should teach the whole truth, simply and honestly so that all may understand, realizing that one day you must give an accounting before God for every*

word you have taught, or have failed to teach.

12:8a Original word means both *generously* and *with simplicity*.

12:11a This certainly includes the work of the ministry of our Lord.

12:12a Always remember: The future for the true follower of Christ is bright, exceedingly bright. See 8:18-28.

12:12b Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-8; 17:6, and the note.

12:14a Continue to bless them, no matter how long or intense the injury may be.

12:15a Don't be jealous and wish you were the one who had reason to rejoice. Be genuinely glad for them.

12:15b You can diminish the sorrow of others by genuinely sorrowing with them.

12:17a 2 Corinthians 8:21.

will be the same as heaping coals of fire on his head.^a

²¹Never allow evil to conquer you. Instead conquer evil by doing good.

Obey Those in Authority

13 Everyone must obey the civil authorities that are over him, because there is no government except that which God has established, and the persons in authority have been placed there by God.

²So anyone who rebels against the government is actually rebelling against what God has established, and those who do so will be punished.

³Those who do what's right have no reason to fear civil authorities, but those who do wrong have very good reason to fear. Do you wish to be unafraid of those in authority? Then practice doing what's right, and you will have praise for doing so.

⁴Because the police are servants of God, working for your good. But if you're doing wrong, then you have good reason to be afraid, because they don't carry their weapons for no reason. They have been placed where they are by God as His servants, to bring His avenging anger against those who do wrong.

⁵So you must put yourself under the authorities, not just to avoid punishment, but because you know it's the right thing to do.

⁶That's why you pay taxes, because the governing authorities are God's servants, devoting full time to His work.

⁷So pay what's due to everyone: taxes, where taxes are due, customs, to those collecting customs, respect, to those you should respect, and honor, to those whom you should honor.

Show Genuine Love for Others

⁸Don't be in debt to anyone for anything. But do

remember the debt of love we owe to one another, because the one who practices loving others has fulfilled the Law.

⁹Because God's commands, **You must not commit adultery, you must not murder, you must not steal, you must not lie about others, you must not wrongfully desire what belongs to someone else,**^a and all other such commands of God are summed up in the one rule that states, **Love others in the same way that you love yourself.**^b

¹⁰Love does no wrong to others in any way; so the law that we are to love others is the only law we really need.

Wake Up to What Time It Is

¹¹Also think of this: Since you know what time it is, you know it's high time that you rouse yourself from your sleep! Because the moment when we will finally be saved and taken to be with the Lord is much nearer now than when we first believed.

¹²The dark night is almost over, and the great Day is about to break. So we must throw aside all deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.^a

¹³We must live honorable lives, as we do in broad daylight, not attending wild parties and getting drunk, not indulging in sexual immorality or other wrong indulgences to gratify our various appetites, nor in fights and jealousies.

¹⁴Instead, live as our Lord Jesus Christ would live if He were in your place. Don't even think about satisfying the desires of your sensual appetites in a wrong way.

Do Not Judge Your Brother

14 Welcome the one who is weak in faith; but not for the purpose of arguing with him about what he allows or refuses.

²One person believes he may eat everything, but the one who is weak in knowledge and doesn't understand the facts eats only vegetables.

12:19a Deuteronomy 32:35.

12:20a Proverbs 25:21-22. Kenneth Wuest in *Word Studies From The Greek New Testament* says, "In Bible times an Oriental needed to keep his hearth fire going all the time in order to insure fire for cooking and warmth. If it went out, he had to go to a neighbor for some live coals of fire. These he would carry on his head in a container, Oriental fashion, back to his home.

"The person who would give him some live coals would be meeting his desperate need and showing him an outstanding kindness. If he would heap the container with coals, the man would be sure of get-

ting some home still burning. The one injured would be returning kindness for injury, the only thing a Christian is allowed to give back to the one who has injured him. This act of kindness God could use to soften the heart of the person and lead him on to repentance and the offering of a recompense for the injury sustained. In this way the Christian would overcome evil with good."

13:9a Exodus 20:13-17; Deuteronomy 5:17-21.

13:9b Leviticus 19:18.

13:12a See Ephesians 6:11-18.

14:10a ... *where we will all be judged regarding our acts and motives in everything we have done*

³The one who eats everything must not despise the one who doesn't. And the one who doesn't eat meat must not judge the one who does, because God has accepted him.

⁴Who do you think you are, judging someone else's servant? It's his Master's responsibility to tell him if he's doing right or wrong. And he will be made to do what pleases the Lord, because God is able to help him do it.

⁵One person considers one day more sacred than other days. A second person considers every day to be of equal importance. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

⁶The one who considers a certain day as sacred, honors that day for the Lord. And the one who does not consider that day as special, considers that day no more sacred to the Lord than any other day. The one who eats anything, eats to please the Lord, and gives God thanks. And the one who refuses to eat certain food, abstains for the purpose of pleasing the Lord, and he gives God thanks.

⁷Because no true follower of the Lord lives to please himself, and none of us even dies to certain things for our own advantage.

⁸So whether we live or die to these things, we do so for the Lord. In either case, we belong to the Lord.

⁹That's why Christ both died and rose to live again. It was so that He might be our Lord and Ruler in all circumstances, both when we live in regard to these things and when we die to them.

¹⁰Why, then, do you continue to judge your brother? And you, the other one, why do you continue to look down on your brother? After all, we will all stand before Christ at His judgment seat and be judged by Him.^a

¹¹For the Scripture declares:

As surely as I live, the Lord says, every knee will bow before me, and every tongue will confess to God.^a

or said, or have failed to do or say.

14:11a Isaiah 45:23.

14:17a A Christian recognizes God as his King, both now and forever. *The Kingdom of God is within you*, with God enthroned as King. Luke 17:21. One day soon, God's visible Kingdom will cover the earth, with Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. 1 Timothy 6:14,15.

14:17b Righteousness refers to the right standing a Christian has with God, and the promise of eternal life by believing on Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. It also refers to the right living that God expects of His children.

14:17c Peace refers to the peace there is now

¹²So then, each of us must give an account to God about what we have done.

Do Not Cause Others to Sin

¹³So we shouldn't be judging each other anymore. But we should also make up our minds never to do anything that may cause a fellow follower to stumble and fall into sin.

¹⁴As for myself, I'm fully convinced by all that the Lord Jesus has taught me, that nothing in the way of food, in itself, is wrong to eat. But if a person believes that something is wrong, then for him it is wrong.

¹⁵If you put pressure on someone by the food you eat, your actions are no longer motivated by love. Christ died for this brother. Don't tempt and destroy him with the food you eat!

¹⁶So don't do what you believe is good, in such a way that people will speak against you for it.

¹⁷Because what you eat and drink is not the important thing in the Kingdom of God.^a What is important is all that's implied by the words **righteousness,^b peace,^c and joy in the Holy Spirit^d**

¹⁸When you serve Christ in this way you truly please God, and you will also be well regarded by others.

¹⁹So let's keep emphasizing the things that result in peace,^a and the things that enable us to build each other up in the faith.

²⁰Don't destroy the work of God in a person's life simply for the sake of exercising your freedom to eat certain food! Even if all food is acceptable, it is sinful for you to eat that food if by eating it you cause a fellow believer to fall into sin.

²¹It is best that you don't eat certain meat, or drink wine, or do anything else that may cause a follower of the Lord to be offended, or weakened, and even fall.

²²Do you have confidence in what you are doing? Have it between yourself and God. Happy is the

between God and His children. It also refers to the wonderful peace of mind His children have. We are winners, no matter what happens. All the great adventure of God's great eternity is ahead of us.

14:17d Joy in the Holy Spirit is ours now in the degree that we draw near to God in praise, worship, obedience, and service. And the joy we will soon experience in the presence of God is beyond anyone's ability to even imagine. 1 Corinthians 2:9.

14:19a Peace with God, and also peace with our fellow men. *When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.* Proverbs 16:7.

15:3a Psalm 69:9. In other words, Christ was will-

one who does not continue to doubt what he has carefully looked into and is honestly convinced is proper action.

²³ But if you doubt the rightness of eating certain food, you are condemned if you eat it, because you are not eating it with the assurance that it is right and proper to do so. Whatever is not done in confident assurance is sin!

Please Others, Not Yourself

15 So those of us who are strong in our assurance ought to be patient with the frailty of those who are weak, and not insist on pleasing ourselves.

² Each of us should do what pleases others, for their good, to build them up in the faith.

³ Even Christ didn't live to please Himself, but as the Scripture says of Him,

The insults of those who raged at You have now fallen on Me.^a

⁴ This and everything else that was written in former times was written that by means of these Scriptures we might learn to patiently continue faithful, and that we might receive encouragement by the continuing hope they give us.

⁵ Now may the God who Himself is patient and long-suffering, who constantly encourages us, help each of you to have this same attitude toward one another, as you seek to live for Christ in a way that is pleasing to Him.

⁶ And may all of you in a united way, with one voice, continue to glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.^a

⁷ So accept each other in the same way that Christ has accepted each of us, and as a result, God will indeed be glorified.

The Great News Is for Jews and Everyone Else

⁸ What I'm saying is that Jesus Christ became a servant of the Jews, bringing them God's truth, in order to fulfill the promises God had made to their forefathers.^a

⁹ And this has also caused even many who are not Jews to praise God for His mercy. As the Scripture declares,

This is why I will tell even those who are not Jews about You, and I will continually sing praises to

Your name.^a

¹⁰ Another Scripture says,

Listen, all you other people, rejoice with God's chosen people!^a

¹¹ And another,

Praise the Lord, all nations. All of you people, praise Him!^a

¹² And still another, where Isaiah says,

The Descendant of Jesse^a will rise up to rule the nations, and they will put their hope in Him.^b

¹³ Now may the God who offers hope fill all of you with supreme and unsurpassed joy and peace as you continue to believe, causing you thru the enabling power of the Holy Spirit to receive most joyous and ever-enlarging views of the hope that is ours.

Paul's Reason for Writing So Boldly

¹⁴ But I also have an inner conviction, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are also filled with earnest desire to do what is right, and that you have also been given all the knowledge necessary to be able to urgently warn, counsel, and instruct one another.

¹⁵ Just the same, dear friends, I've been very bold in what I've written you. I did this partly to remind you that, because of a favor from God that I certainly don't deserve,

¹⁶ He called me to be a servant of Jesus Christ to the whole world, to act as His minister in giving out His Great News to everyone. And I've been very concerned that the offering I make to God, of people from all nations, be one that has been thoroughly purified by the Holy Spirit, so that they will be accepted by God.^a

¹⁷ So I have good reason to boast about what Christ Jesus has enabled me to accomplish in God's service.

¹⁸ And for that reason, I wouldn't think of speaking about anything except about what Christ has accomplished thru me in leading people everywhere to obey God by what I have both said and done.

¹⁹ Thru the power of miracles and wonders, performed thru the power of the Holy Spirit, the Great News was proclaimed and so emphatically proven to be true. So from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and everywhere in between, I have preached the full

ing to suffer or be inconvenienced in order that others might live. Are we?

15:6a ... even though you do not agree on all things.

15:8a Deuteronomy 18:18-19.

15:9a 2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 18:49.

15:10a Deuteronomy 32:43.

15:11a Psalm 117:1.

15:12a Jesse was the father of King David. Jesus was their descendant.

message of the Great News about Christ.

²⁰ I have always made it my aim to not preach the Great News where people already know about Christ, so that I would not be building where someone else had already laid the foundation.

²¹ Instead, as the Scripture declares:

Those who had not yet been told about Him will now see,^a and those who had not heard before will now understand.^b

Paul's Plan to Visit Rome

²² So it's been my pioneer work for the Lord that has hindered me so many times when I wanted to get out to visit you.

²³ But now I have no more areas to cover in this region, and since I've had such great desire for so many years to see you, I'll do so whenever I make my trip to Spain.

²⁴ So I hope to see you on my way there, and hopefully I'll have your help in making that trip, after I've first had the pleasure of enjoying your company for awhile.

²⁵ But right now I'm on my way to deliver a relief offering to the Lord's followers in Jerusalem.

²⁶ His followers in both northern and southern Greece have taken pleasure in giving toward this offering to help the poor among the followers there.

²⁷ They have, in fact, taken great pleasure in doing so. But they actually owe this to them, because if the Jews shared their spiritual blessings with those who are not Jews, their duty is certainly now to share their material blessings with the Jews.

²⁸ So when I've completed my mission there, safely delivering these gifts of love, I will head for Spain and visit you on the way.

²⁹ And I know that when I do come your way, I will come with a full measure of Christ's blessing to minister His Great News.

³⁰ But I beg of you, please, my brothers and sisters, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ and by means of the love given you by the Holy Spirit, that you most fervently and earnestly work together with me by means of your prayers to God for me.

³¹ Pray that God will protect me from those in Judea who are not obedient to our Lord. And pray that the gifts I bring to Jerusalem will be willingly and gladly accepted by the Lord's people.

³² That would bring me to you, if God is willing,

filled with joy and ready for a refreshing visit with you.

³³ May the God of peace be with all of you. And may that always be true.

Personal Greetings

16 And now, I can't speak too highly to you of Phoebe, our sister who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea.

² Please extend to her, when she comes your way, a warm Christian welcome, in a manner worthy of those who truly love the Lord. Assist her in whatever ways she may need your help, because she has been such a help to so many, including me.

³ Greetings to Priscilla and Aquilla, my fellow workers in the service of Christ Jesus.

⁴ They risked their own lives to save mine. I'm not alone in giving them thanks; all the Gentile churches join me in doing so.

⁵ Also my greetings to the church that meets in their home. And greetings to my very dear friend Epaphroditus. He was the first convert to Christ in southern Greece.

⁶ Greetings to Mary, who worked so hard for us.

⁷ And greetings to Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me. They are highly regarded by the apostles, and became Christians before I did.

⁸ My best regards to Amplias, whom I love so deeply in the Lord.

⁹ My greetings to Urbanus, our fellow worker in the service of Christ, and to my dear friend Stachys.

¹⁰ Greetings to Apelles, who has proved himself faithful to Christ. And greetings to all who belong to the household of Aristobulus.

¹¹ Greetings to my relative, Herodion, and to all who are followers of Christ in the household of Narcissus.

¹² Greetings to Tryphena and Tryphosa, who are working so very hard in serving the Lord. And greetings to much loved Persis, who has also worked so diligently in the Lord's service.

¹³ Greetings to Rufus, one of the Lord's choice people, and to his mother, who has been a mother to me, too.

¹⁴ Extend my greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and all the brothers and sisters who are with them.

¹⁵ Greetings to Philologus and Julia, to Nereus

15:12b Isaiah 11:10.

15:16a 2 Corinthians 11:2.

15:21a ... see *Christ for who He really is*. See

Just Who is Jesus Christ? Appendix 246, page 512.

15:21b Isaiah 52:15.

16:17a He is no doubt referring to what he taught

and his sister, to Olympas, and to all of God's people who are with them.

¹⁶Greet one another with sincere Christian affection and love. All the churches of Christ here send you their greetings.

¹⁷Now, my brothers and sisters, I urge you to be on the lookout for those who cause divisions and cause believers to stumble by means of teachings contrary to what you have been taught. Have nothing to do with them.^a

¹⁸Such people are not serving our Lord Jesus Christ, but only the cravings of their own appetites. By smooth arguments and flattery they continually deceive the minds of unsuspecting people.

¹⁹Everyone has heard about your obedience to Christ. I'm very happy about that. But I want you to be very wise in your understanding about what is good, and inexperienced in things that are evil.

²⁰The One who is the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May our Lord Jesus Christ give you wisdom and strength to be obedient and steady in your devotion to Him. Indeed, may it ever be so.

²¹Timothy, my fellow worker, sends you his greetings, and so do my relatives, Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater.

²²And I, Tertius, the one writing this letter for Paul, greet you in the Lord.

²³Gaius, my host, who has opened his home to the whole congregation, sends you his greetings. And Erastus, the city treasurer, and Quartus, a brother in Christ, send you their greetings.

²⁴Again, may God's richest blessings thru our

Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. So be it.

²⁵And now, according to the Great News which I preach, God is able to establish and confirm you in the faith by means of the preaching of these truths about Jesus Christ. These are truths that have just recently been revealed, having been concealed since the world was created.

²⁶But now they have been revealed, and we discover them even in the prophetic Scriptures! Now the eternal God has commanded that these truths be revealed to people in every nation, in order to bring them to obedience to Him thru faith in Jesus Christ.

²⁷So now to God, who alone is wise, may all praise and honor be given forever, as we worship Him because of all we have and are thru Jesus Christ. And so may it ever be.

Sincerely in Christ Jesus,
Paul

them in 14:1-23 and 15:1-7.

For that reason, my brothers and sisters, because God has been so very merciful toward us, I plead with you: Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, dedicated to be lived in a manner totally pleasing to Him. This should be the intelligent, faithful response of your whole being.

²So don't blindly and obediently run with the pack and allow the world crowd to force you to conform to their low standards. Instead, you must now allow God to continually transform you by the renewing of your mind, so that you may be able to examine and choose what is good, acceptable, and altogether pleasing to Him.

—Romans 12:1-2