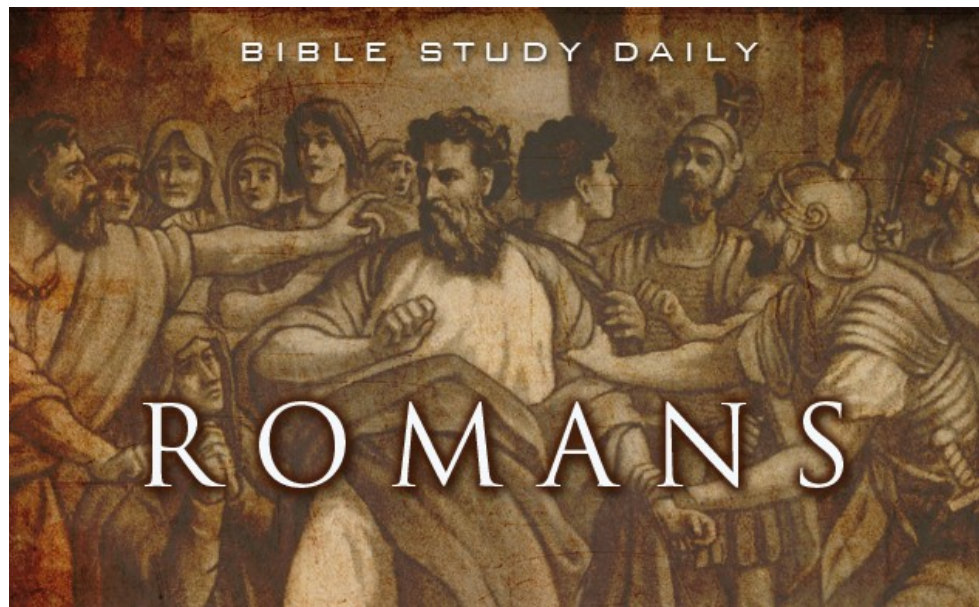




BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of Romans as well as my study notes for the book.

Name

The title “Romans” comes from the intended audience designated in 1:7, “To all who are in Rome, loved by God, called as saints.” The opening description as well as the body of the epistle makes it clear that Paul’s intended audience in Rome is both Jewish and Gentile Christians.

Author

The consensus of scholars agree Paul is the author of Romans. Pauline authorship is claimed in 1:1, “Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ...”

Genre

Epistle

Literary Form

The majority of the epistle to the Romans takes on the form of a tractate (treatise) in which a series of arguments are presented to the reader.

Time Frame


The epistle to the Romans was written in late winter A.D. 57 or the spring of A.D. 58 from Cenchrea, Corinth ([Acts 16:1](#)). This was during the final three months of Paul’s third missionary journey ([Acts 20:3](#)) while in Greece, and before he left for Jerusalem to celebrate the Pentecost ([Acts 20:16](#)).

Emphasis

The emphasis of the book of Romans is on the Gospel of God. Although written to address a specific situation and set of circumstances it is the most complete statement of the Gospel contained in the New Testament.

Outline

- Formal greeting and introduction (1:1-15)
- The world is under God’s wrath (1:18-3:20)
 - Gentiles are under God’s wrath (1:18-32)
 - Jews are under God’s wrath (2:1-3:8)
 - All people are under God’s wrath (3:9-20)
- The imputation of God’s righteousness to mankind (3:21-4:25)
- Justification and reconciliation through Jesus Christ (5:1-21)
- Our new life in Christ (6:1-8:39)
 - The domination of sin in man (6:1-23)
 - The old life under the Mosaic Law (7:1-25)

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- The new life with the Holy Spirit (8:1-39)
 - God's righteousness and Israel's response (9:1-11:36)
 - The transformed Christian life (12:1-15:13)
 - Epilogue (15:14-16:27)

What I Noticed Today

(Romans 1-3)

Romans 1

In verses 1-7 Paul identifies himself as a slave of Jesus Christ, an apostle singled out to present the Good News.

Note: Some translations read “servant of Jesus Christ.” A better translation of the Greek word *doulos* is “slave.” A slave is owned, bought for a price, receive no wages and cannot quit. A servant is a free person who can quit, and receives wages.

Note: Paul follows the traditional letter opening formula in Romans: 1) naming the author (v. 1), naming the recipient (v. 7a), and 3) a salutation (v. 7b). This formula is used in each of the New Testament letters except Hebrews and 1 John.

Note: Verse 7 some translations read “and called to be saints.” This does not mean we are “to be” saints. A better reading is “called as saints” in that as Christians we are saints based on the sovereign call of God.

In verses 8-15 Paul begins the letter with a prayer of thanksgiving for the faith of the believers in Rome, and how it had spread over all the world (meaning the Roman empire). Paul had planned on many occasions to come to Rome but had been prevented. Now, however, he wanted his ministry to accomplish three things:

- to impart some spiritual gift to them (v. 11),
- to give and receive encouragement (v. 12), and
- to have a fruitful time of ministry with them (v. 13).

Paul said he felt obligated to preach the Gospel to both the Greeks and the barbarians, the wise and the foolish.

Note: The word translated “non-Greeks” (v. 14) in some translations literally means “barbarians.” Paul’s point is he must take the Gospel to those who speak Greek as well as those who do not.

In verses 16-17 Paul presents the theme of the letter to the Romans. The Gospel of God is to everyone who believes (Jews and Gentiles) in God’s power of salvation. God’s righteousness is revealed and comes to us based on our response to Him in faith (quoting Habakkuk 2:4).

Romans 1:18-3:20

Paul sets out the universal need of mankind for God’s righteousness. First, based on the guilt of the Gentile world (Romans 1:18-32). And second, based on the guilt of the Jews (Romans 2:1-3:20).

In verses 18-25 God's wrath is being revealed against the godless and unrighteous who suppress the truth.

Note: The phrase "is revealed" (v. 18) should not be read as past tense. It is present tense with continuing action, which means "God's wrath is *being* revealed."

Since creation man engaged in sin, exchanging the glory of God for images (idols). They exchanged truth for a lie. They worshiped a creation rather than the Creator.

In verses 26-32 because of this God allowed them their sinful passions. Because they did not think it important to glorify God He allowed them to engage in all kinds of immoral behavior: unrighteousness, evil, greed, and wickedness. They are full of envy, murder, quarrels, deceit, malice, gossips, slanderers, God-haters, arrogant, proud, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, and unmerciful. They continue to do these things in full knowledge that they deserve death, and by encouraging others to behave the same way they receive God's condemnation.

Romans 2

God judges based on three divine standards: truth (vv. 2-4), impartiality (vv. 5-11), and Jesus Christ (vv. 12-16).

In verses 1-4 Paul says every one of you when you judge another, also condemn yourselves. The point being everyone has sinned, so no matter how moral or righteous you think you are, you stand condemned before God because you do some of the same things.

In verses 5-11 because of their hardness and unrepentant hearts they were storing up God's wrath for the day of judgment. He will repay everyone according to their works: eternal life to those who are righteous, and judgment for those who are unrighteous. The judgment of God applies to both Jews and Gentiles; there is no favoritism with God.

Note: In verse 6 the phrase "according to their works" should not be taken as works righteousness, or salvation by works. Christians receive salvation by faith alone. Rather, works are seen as a reflection of one's heart toward God.

In verses 12-16 Paul's demonstrates God's impartiality in judgment will account for a person's knowledge of God. The Law of Moses did not save people. Rather, it served to show how Jews had fallen short of God's standard of righteousness. Those that did not have the Law of Moses (Gentiles), but did good, showed they had the Law written on their hearts, as confirmed by their consciences.

Note: The emphasis of this section is on God's impartiality in judgment of both Jews and Gentiles. All have fallen short of God's standards of righteousness, and all will face judgment. God knows every secret in a per-

son's life and Jesus Christ will be the final judge (Acts 17:31).

In verses 17-24 Paul addresses Jews specifically, and their belief in their moral superiority over Gentiles. He listed eight ways in which Jews thought themselves superior to Gentiles:

- they rely on the law and think themselves special because of it,
- they boast about their relationship with God,
- they say they know God's will,
- they judge what they say is best,
- they are instructed by the law,
- they thought of themselves as superior to Gentiles – they were to be their guides, a light, instructors of the foolish, and teachers of infants,
- they thought they had the knowledge and truth, and
- they thought they had the right to teach others even though they were guilty of breaking the Law themselves.

They ended up dishonoring God by breaking the Law causing the name of God to be blasphemed among the Gentiles.

Note: Paul's aim is for Jews to recognize their hypocrisy. Why would Gentiles honor God, when His own chosen people did not follow Him?

In verses 25-29 Jews trusted not only in the Law of Moses but also in their traditions and rites. Paul continues saying circumcision (a sign of the covenant between God and Israel, Exodus 12:44-49) benefits only if you observe all of the law, but if you violate any of the Law your circumcision has become uncircumcision. When you violate the law, it's as if you had never been circumcised. On the other hand, if an uncircumcised man keeps the law, his uncircumcision will be counted as circumcision.

True circumcision, says Paul, is not a matter of the flesh, but of the heart by the Spirit of God.

Note: Paul again points out the impartiality of God in judging man according to His righteous standard. The outward sign of circumcision in compliance with the letter of the law means nothing if the heart has not been circumcised by the Spirit of God.

Romans 3

In verses 1-4 Paul asks what advantage does a Jew have, or what benefit is there to circumcision.

Note: Paul says there are many (advantages) in every way. Then he says "first" implying there will be a list of things, but he addresses only this one thing; they have been entrusted with the Word of God.

Paul says even if some Jews did not believe, God would still be faithful to his

promises; their lack of faith does not negate God's faithfulness.

In verses 5-8 Paul addresses the issue of righteousness and truth. Some Jews would say their unrighteousness highlights God's righteousness, and therefore God would be unrighteous in judging the sinful Jews. By extension, if God could not fairly judge the Jews, He certainly could not fairly judge the world.

Following the same logic, some Jews would say their lack of truth enhances God's truth. How then can God condemn him as a sinner? By extension, such people would say let us sin all the more so that good will come out of it.

Paul concludes saying people who make these kinds of arguments are themselves condemned.

In verses 9-20 Paul concludes saying the whole world is guilty before God.

Paul asks are we Jews better than the Gentiles? And he answers, no, we are all guilty, we have all sinned. To make his point Paul quotes six Old Testament passages:

- Psalm 14:1-3. We are not righteous. They do not understand or seek God.
- Psalm 5:9 (v. 13a). They are full of lies and deceit.
- Psalm 140:3 (v. 13b). Their lips are full of poison.
- Psalm 10:7 (v. 14). They are full of cursing and bitterness.
- Isaiah 59:7-8 (vv. 15-17). They shed innocent blood and do not know peace.
- Psalm 36:1 (v. 18). They have no fear of God.

Note: Paul's description of the wickedness of man involves our throats, lips, and mouths, our feet, and our eyes. Our wickedness is seen in our speech, in what we do, in how we behave with others, in our dishonesty, and in our bitterness towards others. All this culminates in no fear of God.


All are subject to God's judgment. No one will be justified by works of the Law because the Law only serves to bring knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:21-5:21

In verses 3:21-5:21 Paul reveals the only person who met God's perfect standard of righteousness is His Son Jesus Christ. We are justified through God's imputation of Christ's righteousness upon us, and that by faith in Christ alone.

In verses 21-26 Paul provides a complete description of God's righteousness coming to man through faith in Christ:

- Righteousness comes from God through faith in Jesus Christ (v. 22).
- All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (v. 23).

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- We are justified by God's grace because we were redeemed by Jesus (v. 24).
 - God presented Jesus as a propitiation (atoning sacrifice) through faith in His blood (v. 25a).
 - God's righteousness is seen in His justice. He passed over previous sins in order to declare righteous those who profess faith in Jesus (vv. 25b-26).

Note: In Greek this entire section (vv. 21-26) is one long sentence. Paul's beginning "But now," marks a dramatic shift from the previous section.

In verses 27-31 Paul anticipated four questions and provided answers:

Where then is boasting? It is excluded (v. 27a). Jews have no special position to boast from.

By what kind of law? By one of works? No by a law of faith (v. 27b). Because man is justified by faith (v. 28).

Is God a God of the Jews only? Is He not also for Gentiles? Yes, for there is one God for Jews and Gentiles who will justify the circumcised and uncircumcised by faith (vv. 29-30).

Is the Law nullified by faith? Absolutely not, we uphold the Law through faith (v. 31).

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *The **Gospel of God** is the power of God alone to salvation by the grace of God. We have all sinned, we have all fallen short of the glory of God.*
- *We are justified (declared righteous) because of Jesus' death on the cross.*
- *Jesus' shed blood was a propitiation (an atoning sacrifice) for our sin.*
- *It is only through faith in Jesus and His finished work on the cross, that we may be made righteous before God.*

What I Noticed Today

(Romans 4-7)

Romans 4

In verses 1-8 Paul presents an argument from the Old Testament examples of Abraham and David that God declares someone righteous based on their faith, not on their works.

In verses 1-4 Paul quoted Genesis 15:6 in which God declares Abraham righteous based on his faith.

In verses 5-8 Moses quotes Psalm 32:1-2 in which David says the man is blessed whom God declares righteous apart from works.

Note: Verse 1 “What then can we say” is the first of six instances of this phrase (1:1, 6:1, 7:7, 8:31, 9:14, 9:30), which Paul follows with a question and an answer.

In verses 9-12 Paul asks the question is this blessing only for the circumcised (Jews) or also for the uncircumcised (Gentiles). Moses received the blessing of righteousness before he was circumcised. He received the circumcision as a sign of the righteousness credited to him by faith. Therefore, while Abraham was the father of the nation of Israel, he is also an example to both the Jews and the Gentiles.

Note: Paul’s argument concludes the Jews have no special position of righteousness before God just because of their circumcision. Righteousness was credited to Abraham because of his faith before he was circumcised.

In verses 13-25 Paul now addresses the Jewish belief they had special standing before God because they had the Mosaic Law. In fact, Paul said, righteousness comes through faith. All the Law produces is wrath, because it establishes the basis for transgressions against God. Without the Law there is no transgression.

Note: Paul is not saying that sin did not exist prior to the giving of the Mosaic Law, but that sin was not reckoned as a transgression apart from the Law.

Using Abraham as an example, Paul says, Abraham became the father of many nations on faith, even though he considered his own body to be dead (since he was about 100 years old). Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness because he believed God had the power to do exactly what He had promised.

Paul says the promise of the kingdom of God comes by faith through the grace of God.

Note: Paul’s argument here is that if Jews could become heirs to the king-

dom of God through the Law, then faith has no value whatsoever, and the promise of righteousness through faith is an empty promise.

As he concludes this argument Paul says the same faith and promise exists for those who believe that Jesus was delivered up for our transgressions and raised for our justification.

Note: Paul is saying both Christ's death and resurrection are central to our justification. Christ's death on the cross and His shed blood paid for our sins, and His resurrection is proof that God accepted His Son's sacrifice on our behalf.

Romans 5

In verses 1-5 Paul says because we have been declared righteous through faith we have peace with God through Jesus Christ.

Note: Paul begins verse 1 with "Therefore" which links this section back to the close of chapter 4.

Note: The phrases "we have peace with God," and "we rejoice in the hope" can both be written in a way that implies continuous action: "we can *keep on enjoying* peace with God," and "we can *keep on rejoicing* in the hope."

Not only do we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, but we also rejoice in our affliction, knowing that affliction produces endurance, endurance produces character, character produces hope, and the hope of God will never disappoint because God's love has been poured into our lives through the Holy Spirit.

In verses 6-11 Paul explains those who are declared righteous are reconciled to God.

God proved His love for us by giving us his Son who died for us (literally "*in our place*") just at the right time, while we were still sinners. Christ's death on the cross reconciled us to God, we are saved by His life.

Note: Christ's finished work on the cross accomplished three things: we were *redeemed* by God (Romans 3:24), Christ's death was a *propitiation* (an atoning sacrifice, Romans 3:25), and we are *reconciled* to God (Romans 5:10-11).

In verses 12-21 Paul contrasts the death that came through Adam with the life that comes through Christ.

Note: Paul used four parallel examples to make his point (vv. 13-15, vv. 16-17, vv. 15-16 and, vv. 18-19).

Example 1. A parallel example of contrast. Sin entered the world through one man, Adam, and with sin came death. Death came to all men because sin spread to all men (Genesis 6:5-7).

However, the gift of Christ is not like the sin of Adam. The sin of Adam spread to all mankind, but the gift of God's grace through Jesus Christ comes

to many.

Note: The gift of God's grace is available to all, but not appropriated by all.

Example 2. A parallel example of difference. From one sin came judgment, resulting in condemnation, but from many sins came the gift.

Example 3. A parallel example of difference and kind (combining the previous two examples). Death reigns through one man because of sin. Righteousness reigns in life through one man, Jesus Christ.

Example 4. A concluding parallel example of contrast. Consequently, one trespass (sin) resulted in death (condemnation) for all men, one act of righteousness was justification that brought life to all men (Christ's death on the cross).

Paul concludes saying the Law came to multiply the sin, and where sin multiplied grace multiplied even more so that as sin reigned in death, grace will reign in righteousness, resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Note: No matter how great man's sin became, God's grace increased even more!

Romans 6-8

God's righteousness is revealed in sanctification.

Romans 6

In verses 1-4 Paul describes the basis for our sanctification by asking, should we continue to sin so that grace might multiply. No, he says, how can someone who died to sin, still live in sin.

Note: The aorist tense (past tense) for "died" indicates an action that occurred at a specific point. In this case, the Christian "died" to sin when he received salvation by accepting Christ.

Note: There was a time in church history when false teachers suggested we should sin more to receive more grace. This was a topic of some debate during the Reformation.

All who were baptized into Christ Jesus were also baptized into His death, so that just as He was raised from death, so also we are raised to a new life.

In verses 5-14 Paul now describes the process of sanctification. The "old man" (or self) was crucified with Christ, so the power of sin over us is broken, we have been freed from sin.

Note: The perfect tense of "has been freed" indicates a continuing and ongoing action.

Because we know that Christ died to sin once for all, we can consider ourselves dead to sin because we are alive in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, Paul concludes, do not let sin reign in your life. Sin no longer rules over you, because you are no longer living under the Law, but under grace.

In verses 15-23 Paul continues the theme of being dead to sin with an analogy; we are either slaves of sin or are slaves of righteousness.

A slave obeys his master. The end of a slave to sin is death, whereas the end of a slave to God is righteousness. Therefore, offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness which leads to sanctification.

Note: Sanctification is the process of being made or becoming Holy. To be sanctified means to be [Christ-like](#). We will never be fully sanctified, or Christ-like, this side of heaven.

Note: Paul wrote that sin results in death three times in this one chapter (Romans 6:16, 21, and 23), but believers are free from sin (Romans 6:18, 22), and are slaves to righteousness (Romans 6:16, 18-19), because they are alive to God (Romans 6:11).

Romans 7

In verses 1-6 Paul uses an example from the law to illustrate the concept of being dead to sin.

Note: Verses 1-6 relate back to Romans 6:14. Paul digressed in Romans 6:15-23 to answer the question he raised in 6:15.

Note: Paul's illustration is appropriate for both Jewish and Gentile believers because both would be familiar with either Mosaic Law regarding marriage, or the Roman law regarding marriage, or both.

A woman whose husband dies is no longer bound under the law to him and is, therefore, free to remarry.

Similarly, believers had died to their "old self" and were now free to marry another (Jesus Christ) who was raised from the dead. Being released from the Law frees us to bear fruit for God through the Spirit.


In verses 7-13 Paul discusses the relationship between the Law and sin.

Note: In this section Paul switches to first person singular, indicating that he is speaking of his own personal experience.

Paul asks is the law sin, and answers, of course not. He would have not known sin except for the law. The Law is not sinful, its purpose is to reveal sin (I would have not known sin apart from the Law). The Law was intended by God to bring Life, but sin deceives and brings death.

In verses 14-25 Paul transitions from the relationship between the Law and sin (vv. 7-13), to the relationship between the believer and sin.

Note: This passage (Romans 7:14-25) is perhaps the most difficult to understand and the one which is most controversial in the book of Romans. For the purpose of this study the assumption is made that Paul is referring to



himself specifically and in general to all believers and that he is regenerated (a believer, after his conversion experience).

Paul confesses he does not understand what he does. He knows the law is spiritual, but he is made out of flesh, sold into sin's power (v. 14). Paul's conflict is between his old nature (old self) and his new nature in Christ. He knows the good he wants to do but finds himself still sinning. His inner self wages war inside him, so with my mind I am a slave to God, but in my flesh to the law of sin.

Note: Paul's point is believers will continue to endure conflicts between their regenerated (new self), and their sin nature (old self).

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *Abraham and David were saved through faith, not works. Faith and God's promise go together.*
- *Christ's finished work on the cross accomplished three things: we were redeemed by God. Christ's death was a propitiation (an atoning sacrifice for our sins). We are reconciled to God*
- *The believer's battle between the old sin nature and the new nature in Christ is real, but through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can claim victory over our sin nature.*

What I Noticed Today

(Romans 8-10)

Romans 8

In chapter 8 Paul addresses the question of how a Christian can lead a holy life. The prominence of Paul in chapter 7 as he described his own difficulties is replaced in chapter 8 by a focus on the role of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life

In verses 1-11 Paul proclaims there is no condemnation (punishment) for those in Christ Jesus because the Holy Spirit has set us free from the law of sin and death.

Note: Paul mentioned the Holy Spirit only twice in chapters 1-7, but eighteen times in chapter 8.

Note: The phrase “*set me free*” is aorist tense which suggests a once and for all action that occurred at a specific point in time (when you confessed Christ you were once and for all set free from the law of sin and death).

God sent His Son in flesh, under sin's domain, as a sin offering, and He accomplished what we could not.

Note: Jesus' accomplishment (v. 4) is that He conquered sin and death by living a righteous life according to the Holy Spirit.

Paul draws a comparison between those who live according to the flesh versus those who live according to the Spirit. Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the flesh and this is contrary to God. They cannot please God. This mindset of the flesh ends in death. Those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the Spirit, and have peace and eternal life.

Paul addresses believers directly saying you, however, do not live in the flesh since you have the Spirit. If the Spirit is in you the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life. The Spirit that raised Christ will also raise your mortal bodies.

Note: The Holy Spirit give us a spiritual resurrection now, and will raise our mortal bodies in the future.

In verses 12-17 therefore, Paul concludes, we are not obligated to live in the flesh, but by the Spirit which brings life. All those who are led by the Spirit are God's sons. The Holy Spirit has adopted us into God's family, that we might call God Father (*Abba*, Father). The Holy Spirit testifies that we are heirs of God and coheirs with Christ.

Note: “Abba” is Hebrew for “Father.”

Note: As coheirs with Christ, believers will share in His sufferings in this world, but will also share in His glory in eternity.

In verses 18-27 Paul describes the goal of the Holy Spirit—our sanctification.

Despite the suffering that may come to us, Paul says he believes the glory that will come to us in the future far outweighs any suffering we face on this earth.

Paul says creation awaits the revealing of God's sons when God's children will be set free from the bondage of corruption and our bodies will be redeemed. While the redemption is promised we await it with patience.

Note: The phrase “*eagerly awaits*” is used seven times in the New Testament and in each case it is a reference to Christ's return (Romans 8:19, Romans 8:23, Romans 8:25, 1 Corinthians 1:7, Galatians 5:5, Philippians 3:20, and Hebrews 2:10).

The Spirit helps us in our weakness. Because we do not know what to pray, the Spirit intercedes for us, searching our hearts making requests on our behalf according to the will of God.

Note: The “*unspoken groanings*” (v. 26) is not a reference to speaking in tongues. The Greek word for groanings is *stenagmois*. It is used only twice in the New Testament and means either to sigh or to groan.

In verses 28-30 after describing the goal of sanctification (vv. 1-27), Paul now describes the certainty of sanctification in the believer's life.

Paul begins by explaining that all things work together for good in the lives of believers who have been called according to His purpose.

Note: This does not suggest that all things in the believer's life are good. They are not, we still live in a fallen world. However, for those who love God and have been called according to His purpose, He has promised to weave even the trials together for good.

Paul explains the relationship between the believer and God. We are first called (Romans 1:6), we are justified (Romans 3:24), and are being glorified (Romans 8:17).

In verses 31-39 switching from prose to poetry Paul completes his discussion of the certainty of sanctification with five questions:

Question 1. If God is for us who can be against us? Clearly, no one. God gave His own Son for us, who died and was raised, and sits at the right hand of God.

Question 2. How will He not also with Him grant us everything?

Question 3. Who can bring an accusation against God's elect?

Question 4. Who is the one who condemns?

Question 5. Who can separate us from the love of Christ?

Note: Paul lists seven things (all of which he experienced) that

believers might think would separate us from Christ's love (in increasing intensity): trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, and the sword.

Paul concludes saying he is convinced not even death or life, angels, or rulers, things present, or things to come, hostile powers, height or depth, or any living thing has the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Jesus Christ.

Romans 9

The focus of chapter 9 is on God's sovereignty as it relates to the nation of Israel.

In verses 1-5 Paul expresses deep sorrow over the Israelites because of their rejection of the Gospel. They had the benefit of 1) adoption as sons (Exodus 4:22), 2) the divine glory (Exodus 16:10), the covenants (Genesis 15:18), the Law (Deuteronomy 1:1-22), the temple worship (Deuteronomy 7:6), and the promises of God (Acts 2:39). From them came the Messiah who is God over all, praised forever.

In verses 6-18 the rejection of the word of God (Gospel) does not mean that it failed. Paul gave three examples of God's sovereignty with respect to Israel:

- Isaac and Ishmael (vv. 7b-9). God chose Isaac.
- Jacob and Esau (vv. 10-13). God loved Jacob.
- Pharaoh (vv. 14-18). God raised up Pharaoh to display His power.

God's sovereignty means He will have mercy on whom He wishes to have mercy, and will harden whom He wants to harden.

Note: God sovereignly raised up Pharaoh to display His power, but Pharaoh was responsible for his own actions in rejecting God's message.

In verses 19-29 Paul anticipates the questions of his readers asking:

- Then why does God still find fault, and
- Who can resist His will?

Paul affirms God's sovereignty by explaining the clay does not tell the potter what to do. Neither should man presume to tell God what to do or question His purpose.

What if God wants to be patient, and not pour out His wrath?

What if He did this to display His mercy to those He prepared beforehand for glory (Jews and Gentiles).

Paul quotes Hosea 2:23, and 1:10, Isaiah 10:22-23 and Isaiah 28:22, Isaiah 1:9 to demonstrate God, in His sovereignty, always preserves and protects a remnant of Israel.

In verses 30-33 Paul concludes saying Gentiles who did not pursue right-

eousness have obtained the righteousness that comes through faith, while the Israel who pursued righteousness through the Law has not achieved righteousness. Why? Because they (Israel) did not pursue righteousness by faith, but by works. The works became a stone over which they stumbled (Isaiah 8:14, Isaiah 28:16).

Romans 10

In verses 1-13 Paul emphasizes righteousness comes by faith alone.

In verses 1-4 speaking to the Christian brothers Paul explains he prays for the salvation of the Jews. He knows they have zeal for God, but not true knowledge of God. They attempted to create their own righteousness rather than submitting to the righteousness of God. Christ is the end of the Law of righteousness for everyone who believes in Christ.

Note: To serve God, one must have both zeal for God, and true knowledge of God. Paul is saying while the Jews had great zeal for God, their zeal was not based on a true understanding of God.

In verses 5-13 Paul quotes from the Old Testament to prove his point:

- Leviticus 18:5. You shall keep my statutes and if you do you shall live.
- Deuteronomy 9:4 and 30:12. Do not wonder who will go to heaven.
- Deuteronomy 30:13. Do not wonder who will go to the abyss.
- Deuteronomy 30:14. The message is in your heart and mouth. If you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth Jesus Christ is Lord, then you shall be saved. Belief in the heart results in righteousness, and confession with the mouth results in salvation.
- Isaiah 28:16. Everyone who believes in Him will not be put to shame.
- Joel 2:32. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. There is no distinction between Jew and Greek, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.


In verses 14-21 Paul describes what must occur for someone to call on the name of the Lord (in reverse order).

- How can they believe without hearing?
- How can they hear without a preacher?
- How can the preacher preach unless he is sent?

Note: The word translated “preach” means “to herald, or to announce.” Paul is not limiting who should do this announcing to a professional preacher!

Paul says the feet of those who announce the Gospel are beautiful (this means their message is welcome, see Isaiah 52:7).

In verses 16-18 Paul acknowledges not all Israelites accepted the Gospel. He



uses several Old Testament passages to illustrate how the message had been preached, but the Jews had not responded (Psalm 19:4, Deuteronomy 32:21, and Isaiah 65:1). Paul repeats faith comes through hearing, and the message is about Christ. He concludes (quoting Isaiah 65:2), God had held out His hands to them, but they were disobedient and defiant.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *In Christ we have a new life, an inheritance in God's family, the hope of future in heaven, the Holy Spirit to guide us, and the knowledge that nothing can separate us from the love of the Father. In this we are more than conquerors!*
- *God is sovereign. He was not obligated to save anyone, yet in His tender mercy, he made a path for us to become an heir and coheir with Christ.*
- *The message of the Gospel is not just for professional pastors to proclaim but is for all of His children.*

What I Noticed Today

(Romans 11-13)

Romans 11

The focus of chapter 11 is on God's sovereign choice in His election of Israel, and Israel's rejection of God does not mean God will reject His people.

In verses 1-10 Paul asks, has God rejected His people.

Note: The question in Greek is designed to demand a negative reply; of course God has not rejected His people.

Paul offers two proofs that God has not rejected His people:

- God did not reject Paul (v. 1).
- Elijah pleaded with God for His people (1 Kings 19:10, 14), and God replied He had saved a remnant of 7,000 (1 Kings 19:18) by grace not by works (vv. 2-5).

Paul concludes just as then God has chosen a remnant to save by grace.

Note: The Jews had hoped to achieve righteousness through works, ignoring God's sovereign grace.

Therefore, God hardened the hearts (Deuteronomy 29:3-4 and Isaiah 29:10) of others and they became spiritually blind (Psalm 69:22-23).

In verses 11-24 Paul asks, have they (the Jews) stumbled in order to fall.

Note: Again, this question in Greek is worded to expect a negative reply; no, not at all!


On the contrary, says Paul, the Jews' stumbling created the opportunity for salvation to come to the Gentiles, to make the Jews jealous (envious). The world was enriched by Gentiles coming to know the Lord and will be enriched even more when all the Jews accept Jesus as Messiah.

Turning his attention to the Gentile believers, Paul says he hopes building his ministry with them will cause some of the Jews to be jealous and also accept Jesus.

Israel's rejection of the Gospel provided the opportunity for the Gospel to come to them (reconciliation of the world).

Paul used two illustrations to explain why he thought Israel's rejection was temporary and they would be restored to God (v. 16):

- If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then so is the whole lump of dough.
- If the root of the tree is holy, so are its branches.



Paul then compared the Gentiles to a wild olive shoot that had been grafted in, and now shares nourishment from the root of the plant. So the wild branches have no reason to boast and should recognize their indebtedness to the plant.

He then warns the Gentiles that God had broken off some natural branches of the olive tree (because of their unbelief) to make room for them, and He could do the same to them.

Note: Paul's point is if God did not spare Israel for their unbelief He would not spare the Gentiles either. If the Gentiles do not continue in their faith they too will be cut-off.

In verses 25-32 Paul explains a partial hardening has come to the Israelites until the full number of Gentiles has come in, and then all of Israel will be saved. Paul quotes from Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Note: Two important points about this hardening: 1) it is partial, and 2) it is temporary. Not all of Israel has hardened their hearts and rejected God. And there will come a time when God will save the remnant of Israel.

God's gifts and calling upon the Israelites is irrevocable. Their disobedience brought God's mercy to the Gentiles, but God's mercy will turn again to Israel. God has imprisoned all men in disobedience (Romans 3:23, all have fallen short of the glory of God) so that He can show mercy to all.

In verses 33-36 Paul concludes the chapter with a hymn of praise to God. He quotes Isaiah 40:13 proclaiming the wonder of God's mind; His wisdom, and knowledge. He is the beginning and the end, the Creator of all things.

Romans 12-15:13

Paul shifts from his discussion of matters of doctrine to matters of practicality: how should the Christian live.


Romans 12

In verses 1-2 Paul urges believers to present their bodies as a living sacrifice to God, which is their spiritual worship. He cautions not to be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that one will know and do the perfect will of God.

Note: The idea of "being transformed" is a Greek tense (present passive imperfect) which implies continuous action; *keep on being transformed*.

Note: The word translated "transformed" is from the word *metamorphousthe*, (our word metamorphosis comes from this). It means a total change from the inside out.

In verses 3-8 Paul explains God has distributed a measure of faith to each person. Just as the body has many parts and they all have their own function, so those in the body of Christ each have their own function. Through God's grace, He has given each believer different gifts. Paul lists seven gifts (six of



which are serving) and exhorts the believer to use well whatever gift God has given them: prophecy, service, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading, and mercy.

Note: The proper use of the gifts God gives each believer is a matter of stewardship.


In verses 9-21 Paul describes specific examples of behavior in the transformed believer:

- Love must be sincere (without hypocrisy).
- Detest evil, cling to what is good.
- Have brotherly love for other members of the family of believers.
- Be diligent; be fervent; serve the Lord.
- Rejoice in hope, be patient in affliction, be persistent in prayer.
- Share with brothers who are in need. Practice hospitality.
- Bless those who persecute you.
- Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.
- Live in harmony with one another.
- Do not be proud, instead, associate with the humble.
- Do not be wise in your own eyes.
- Do not repay evil with evil.
- Try to do what is honorable in everyone's eyes.
- As much as is possible, live at peace with everyone.
- Do not avenge yourselves, leave vengeance to the Lord.
- If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If thirsty, give him a drink
- Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.

Romans 13

In chapter 13 Paul discusses the Christian's duties to the state (civil government).

In verses 1-10 Paul exhorts believers to submit to governing authorities because these authorities have been established by God. When we resist government authority we are resisting God, and this will bring judgment. Rulers are a terror to bad conduct, not to good, so do what is good and you will have the approval of the government. Government is God's servant for good. Therefore submit to avoid the wrath of the government, but also for your conscience' sake: pay taxes, pay tolls, give respect and honor to those in which it is due.



Note: Government is an institution created by God for the benefit of man. However, it can be used for evil. It is important to remember that when Paul wrote this the Romans had already put Jesus to death. No government is perfect because it is served by sinful man, yet Paul clearly wanted believers to be good citizens.

In verses 8-14 Paul continues his exhortation to believers, saying believers should not have a debt to others, except the debt to love one another. The commandments (Exodus 20:13-17) are summed up in the commandment, “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18). Love does no wrong, therefore love is the fulfillment of the Law.

In verses 11-14 Paul concludes the chapter with a warning that the time of our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. It is time to discard the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Walk with decency: not in drunkenness, carousing, sexual immorality, promiscuity, quarreling, or jealousy. Rather, put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no plans to satisfy fleshly desires.

Note: Paul’s reference to “our salvation being nearer than when first believed” is a reference to when the Lord will return. This day is almost here, he says, so stop the old sins of the flesh, and be prepared to live in the light of Christ.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *Paul explains doctrine along with an accompanying behavior or duty. What we understand and believe about God must be evident in how we live.*
- *The transformation or metamorphosis of every believer is a life-long journey. We will never be fully transformed this side of heaven. The transformation begins on the inside with our hearts and is evident in our actions and how we live out our lives as believers.*

What I Noticed Today

(Romans 14-16)

Romans 14

In chapter 14 Paul's focus narrows to a more specific discussion of the interpersonal relationships between believers.

In verses 1-12 Paul admonishes believers to accept others who are weak in the faith, and not to argue about doubtful issues. One who eats everything should not look down on one who eats only vegetables. God has accepted us all.

Note: The exact problem Paul addresses here is unknown, but it is quite possible that with Christian brothers coming from different backgrounds there were different beliefs about what food was acceptable and that which was not. Some believed eating meat offered to idols was unacceptable, others believed it was not an issue.

A second example Paul raises is whether one day of the week is more important than another. Some consider one day holy, others consider all days equal. Whatever we believe, do it for the honor of the Lord.

We should not pass judgment on our brothers in these kinds of matters. One person's belief is not above another's. We will all give an account for our beliefs to the Lord.

In verses 13-23 Paul now focuses on how our own behavior may affect other believers. We should help one another grow spiritually. We should not be a stumbling block to other believers. Jesus said nothing is unclean in itself, but some may still believe it to be unclean. Eating what a brother views as unclean may grieve them, and this is not acting in love to our brothers.

The kingdom of God is not built on what we eat or drink but on righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, Paul concludes, we should do things that promote peace and build each other up. If you have a strong conviction about eating or drinking keep it to yourself, and do not condemn your neighbor for their belief.

Note: Jewish Christians in particular may have had long held beliefs about what kinds of food were clean and acceptable to God, and those that were not. Paul's point is we should not create disputes with our brothers over such things. If they believe out of faith they honor God.

Romans 15

In chapter 14 Paul discussed interpersonal relationships between believers and specifically we should not condemn or look down on weaker brothers and to be aware of how our behavior affects other believers. In Chapter 15



Paul's focus turns to our need to be Christ-like in our dealings with our Christian brothers and sisters.

In verses 1-6 Paul summarizes the teaching of chapter 14. The strong should help the weak in the faith, to edify them (build them up).

The scripture was given as instruction so that we might have endurance and encouragement in the present and hope for the future. Paul's prayer is this endurance and encouragement will allow them to live in harmony with one another so that they might glorify Christ with a united mind and voice.

Note: Paul is emphasizing the importance of the instruction found in the Scripture ("written in the past" is a reference to the Old Testament) in believer's lives.

In verses 7-13 Paul exhorts believers to accept one another, just as Christ accepted us. The purpose of unity among Christian believers is to bring glory to God.

Note: Jewish and Gentiles believers had difficulties accepting one another because of differences in culture and beliefs. Paul is admonishing them to accept one another because Christ accepted all of them regardless of their culture and background.

Messiah became a servant of the Jews (the circumcised) to confirm the covenants of God. Paul quotes 2 Samuel 22:50 and Psalm 18:49 (God will be praised among the Gentiles). And quotes Deuteronomy 32:42 and Psalm 117:1, directing the Gentiles to rejoice and praise the Lord. Paul closes this section quoting Isaiah 11:10, the Gentiles will be ruled by the Lord.

Note: There is a progression in these four Old Testament scripture Paul quoted:

- David praised God among the Gentiles.
- Moses exhorted the Gentiles to rejoice in the Lord.
- The Psalmist commanded Gentiles to praise the Lord.
- The Gentiles will be ruled by the Lord and place their hope in Him.


Paul concludes this section with a prayer asking for a blessing on all believers that they might be filled with joy and peace so that they might overflow with hope and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:14-16:27

This section contains Paul's closing remarks. It is the longest closing of all the letters he wrote.

In verses 14-21 Paul compliments the Roman believers saying he is convinced they are full of goodness and complete in knowledge and perfectly able to instruct one another.

Nevertheless, Paul wrote boldly on some points because he saw it as his



priestly duty and part of his responsibility to proclaim the Gospel. Paul's purpose is the Gentiles will be an acceptable sacrifice (to God), sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, Paul says, He glories in his service to the Lord, and what Christ accomplished through him in leading Gentiles to the Lord, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Because of God's enabling, Paul had been able to preach the Gospel from Jerusalem around to Illyricum (modern Albania). His goal was not to build on other's foundation, but to take the Gospel where it had never been heard before (quoting Isaiah 52:15).

Note: Paul viewed himself as a church planter, an evangelist called by God to take the Gospel where the message had never been heard. He did not see himself as called to build a church someone else had started.

In verses 22-33 Paul details his future travel plans.

Since he saw no more work to do in these provinces, he planned to visit Rome on his way to Spain.

Note: Spain was a Roman colony on the western edge of the Roman empire. A large Jewish population lived there. His hope was to visit the brothers in Rome and have them assist in his journey to Spain.

Paul's immediate plan was to go to Jerusalem to deliver a gift from the brothers in Macedonia and Achaia. After delivering the gift to the poor brothers in Jerusalem he planned to journey to Rome and then on to Spain.

He concluded asking the brothers in Rome to pray in three specific areas:

- That he would be rescued from unbelievers in Judea (v. 31).
- That the gift he was bringing would be acceptable to the saints in Jerusalem (v. 31).
- That if it is God's will he would visit the saints in Rome and be refreshed by them (v. 33).

Note: Ultimately, all three of these prayers were answered, although perhaps not in the way Paul might have expected!


Romans 16

Paul closed his letter to the Romans by extending personal greetings to friends in Rome, a warning about division, and gave glory to God for all He had done.

In verses 1-2 Paul commends Phoebe, a servant in the church in Cenchreae, asking the Romans brothers to welcome her and care for her.

Note: Cenchreae is a seaport village just east of Corinth.

In verses 3-16 Paul extends greetings to 26 people by name, and a number of others (members of a named household).



Note: The importance of women in Paul's ministry circle is evidenced by the fact that nine women are named.

He exhorted them to greet one another with a holy kiss and said the churches of Christ send greetings.

In verses 17-18 Paul issued one final warning to be mindful of brothers who would cause dissension and teach doctrine contrary to what they had learned. These people do not serve the Lord, but only themselves.

In verses 19-20 Paul commends the obedience of the Roman believers and says he rejoices over them. At the same time, he wants them to be wise about what is good and wary of what is evil. God, says Paul, will crush Satan under your feet.

Note: Paul was especially wary of those who brought false teaching into the church. They used smooth talk and flattering words to lead believers astray.

In verses 21-24 Paul closed the book with a final greeting from Timothy, Lucius, Jason, Sosipater, Gaius, Eraster, and Quarter, along with the church (in Corinth), greet you.

Note: Verse 24 is a benediction that repeats verse 20b. It is not found in major Greek manuscripts and is not considered genuine.

In verses 25-27 Paul offers his closing benediction. He wished the Gospel he preached about Christ, revealed in the Scriptures, would be preached among all nations according to God's command to advance the obedience of faith. To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *Paul exhorted believers to be accepting of one another despite differences of backgrounds, and cultural beliefs as long as those differences did not compromise the Gospel message. We should be careful when we judge or reject other believers because Jesus accepted us and He is the final judge.*
- *It is important to remember that Paul's ministry was aided by a large following of faithful believers. Never think that we can or should be alone in our service to God! God created us unique with unique gifts so we can help each other. Nowhere is this more apparent in Paul's life than in his final greetings to the believers in Rome.*