

## Paul's Epistle to the ROMANS

### INTRODUCTION

The Epistle to the Romans is one of the most scholarly theological works in all of Scripture. More formal than any of Paul's other writings, the epistle to the Romans sets forth the doctrine of justification by faith in a very systematic presentation - the kind of presentation we might expect to receive from the pen of one as well-trained as the Apostle Paul.

### AUTHORSHIP

The Apostle Paul is essentially uncontested as the author of the epistle to the Romans. Though critics of 1800 and following have questioned Paul's authorship, internal evidence points to his authorship (see 1:1, along with historical references, matters of style, and doctrinal content which all support Pauline authorship). External confirmation was universal among early church fathers.

Paul (also known as Saul in his earlier years) was born in Tarsus (Acts 21:39), a center of wealth, education, art, philosophy and law located at the northeast corner of the Mediterranean Sea. He was of pure Jewish descent, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:6). He was born a Roman citizen (Acts 22:28).

In keeping with the teaching of Gamaliel that "He that does not teach his son a trade teaches him to steal," Paul was trained as a tent-maker (Acts 18:3). In addition he was a Pharisee, trained "strictly according to the law" (Acts 22:3) under Gamaliel, a leading Jewish rabbi of the day (Acts 5:34). As a young Pharisee, he saw Christianity as a threat to Judaism

and set out to destroy it (Acts 7:58; 8:1,3; 9:1,2) - until his life was radically transformed by a divine encounter on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-19) and he became Christianity's most prolific spokesman.

Though Paul is the book's author, the person who served as his scribe is identified in Romans 16:22 as Tertius.

#### DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

Romans was probably written in the spring of 57 A.D. during Paul's three-month stay at Corinth, just before he sailed for Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Pentecost, taking along the offering collected from the churches of Macedonia and Achaia for the poverty-stricken believers in Jerusalem (cf. 15:25-27). At this time Paul was nearing the end of his third missionary journey, about three years before he arrived in Rome. That Paul wrote to the Romans from Corinth is suggested by (1) his mention of Gaius (16:23), who was probably a Corinthian (see I Corinthians 1:14), as his host and (2) his commendation of Phoebe from the nearby church at Cenchrea (16:1). Erastus, mentioned in Romans 16:23, is also associated with Corinth in II Timothy 2:20.

#### RECIPIENTS AND OCCASION

The letter is clearly addressed to the saints at Rome in 1:7. Though the background of the Roman church is not known, the argument of the letter indicates that it was made up of both Jewish and Gentile believers (1:13; 2:17-29; 4:1; chapters 9-11; 11:13). Paul wrote Romans, in view of his desire to minister at Rome (1:10-15), to prepare the way for his anticipated a visit to Rome on his way to minister in Spain (15:22-29). Though Paul had never visited the Roman church, his mention by name of 26 people in chapter 16 makes it very

clear that he knew many people who were a part of the church - people he had no doubt met in his extensive travels throughout the Roman world.

## PURPOSE AND THEME

Paul's purpose in writing Romans (in addition to preparing the way for his anticipated visit to Rome) was that of sharing information about his immediate plans to travel to Jerusalem to deliver the collection for the impoverished saints, and sharing important truths about God's plan of salvation and its practical application in the believer's life. The theme of Romans is God's plan of salvation and righteousness for all men through Christ. The famous phrase from Romans 1:17 (a quote from Habakkuk 2:4) which so stirred the mind of Martin Luther many centuries later, sums up the message of the book: "But the righteous man shall live by faith."

## OUTLINE OF ROMANS

### I. Introduction to the Roman Epistle 1:1-17

### II. The Doctrine of Salvation 1:18-8:39

- A. The Universal Sinfulness and Condemnation of Man 1:18-3:20
- B. God's Provision of Justification by Faith 3:21-5:21
- C. God's Plan for the Believer's Sanctification 6:1-8:39

### III. The Dealings of God with Israel 9:1-11:36

- A. Israel's Past Failure to Achieve Righteousness and Salvation 9:1-33
- B. Israel's Present Relationship to God's Salvation 10:1-2
- C. Israel's Future Experience of God's Salvation 11:1-36

IV. The Practical Application of Salvation 12:1-15:13

- A. The Believer's Relationship to God 12:1-8
- B. The Believer's Relationship to the World 12:9-21
- C. The Believer's Relationship to the State 13:1-7
- D. The Believer's Responsibility of Love and Alertness  
13:8-14
- E. The Believer's Responsibility to a Weaker Brother  
14:1-15:13

V. Conclusion to the Roman Epistle 15:14-16:27

## “To the Saints in Rome”

Romans 1:1-7

Q - With all that goes on in a nation’s capital, what is the most important message you can think of to share with people in the capital city of any nation?

The opening verses of Paul’s epistle to the Romans identify the focus of his message to the church in Rome - the capital city of the Roman Empire.

### I. Paul’s Identity 1:1

Q - What three things (besides his name) does Paul cite in identifying himself as the author of the Roman epistle?

1. A bond servant of Christ Jesus
2. Called as an apostle
3. Set apart for the gospel of God

### II. Paul’s Gospel 1:2-6

#### A. The Gospel Anticipated 1:2

Q - Can you recall any promise of the gospel in the writings of the prophets of Scripture? If so, where? Yes - Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 61:1; plus many messianic prophecies.

Cf. Luke 24:27,44

#### B. The Gospel’s Focus 1:3-4

##### 1. The Background of God’s Son 1:3

Q - Who does Paul identify as the central focus of the

gospel? The Son of God.

Q - What is important about the lineage as the “seed of David”? The O.T. promised a Messiah in David’s line (II Samuel 7:12-16; Psalm 89:3ff.; Psalm 132:11; Isaiah 9:56-7).

## 2. The Declaration of God’s Son 1:4

Q - What did the resurrection of Christ demonstrate according to Paul? That Christ Jesus was God’s Son.

Q - Who did Paul credit for His role in the resurrection of Christ? Paul credited the Spirit of holiness.

## 3. The Commission from God’s Son 1:5-6

Q - What did Paul acknowledge having received through Christ in verse 5? Paul acknowledged having received grace and apostleship.

Q - How did Paul describe his calling in Christ according to verse 5? He described his calling as the call “to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name’s sake.”

Q - How did God’s calling in Christ impact Paul’s readers according to verse 6? Paul said that they were included among those called in Christ.

## III. Paul’s Readers 1:7

Q - What two phrases did Paul use to identify his readers in Rome? He identified them as those who were “beloved of God in Rome,” and as those who were “called as saints.”

Q - What was Paul's wish for his readers in Rome? It was his wish that his readers experience “grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Think About It: The Apostle Paul acknowledged Christ Jesus as the focus of the gospel and of his own life and ministry.

Apply It: There is no focus in life more significant for any person than the gospel of Christ Jesus because “it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (1:16).

## “Reasons for Going to Rome”

Romans 1:8-17

Q - What might you enjoy doing if you could take a trip to the ancient city and imperial capital of Rome?

Romans 1:8-17 anticipated a visit on the part of the Apostle Paul to the city of Rome and explains what it was that Paul was eager to do when he arrived in the city.

### I. Paul’s Prayer 1:8-10

#### A. His Thankfulness 1:8

Q - What motivated Paul’s thankfulness in prayer on behalf of the Roman Christians? Paul was motivated by the faith of Roman Christians which, as he said, was being proclaimed throughout the whole world.

#### B. His Faithfulness 1:9

Q - To what did Paul call the Lord Himself as his witness before the saints at Rome? Paul called the Lord as his witness that he was praying for the Roman saints “unceasingly.”

#### C. His Emphasis 1:10

Q - What was apparently Paul’s first request before the Lord when he prayed about the saints at Rome? Paul was apparently praying first that he might succeed in going to visit the saints in Rome.

### II. Paul’s Longing 1:11-15

A. To See the Romans Established 1:11

Q - What did Paul hope to do in order to see the Romans established? Paul hoped to impart some spiritual gift to the Roman saints to see them further established.

B. To Share Mutual Encouragement 1:12

Q - What did Paul anticipate would provide mutual encouragement for both himself and the Roman Christians? Paul anticipated that the mutual sharing of faith - his and theirs - would provide mutual encouragement for him and for the saints at Rome.

C. To Obtain Spiritual Fruit 1:13

Q - What spiritual fruit might Paul have obtained among other Gentiles which he was also hoping to obtain in Rome? He might have obtained the fruit of saved souls and the fruit of spiritual growth (fruit of the Spirit) among other Gentiles as he looked forward to similar fruit among the Roman believers.

D. To Preach the Gospel 1:14-15

Q - How would you account for the sense of obligation to all classes of men which Paul expressed? Paul's sense of obligation to preach the gospel in Rome, as he had in other places, probably came from the Lord's call on his life (cf. Acts 9:15-16; I Corinthians 9:16).

III. Paul's Conviction 1:16-17

A. The Power of the Gospel 1:16

Q - What is the gospel powerful to accomplish? The

gospel is powerful to accomplish salvation in the lives of those who hear it.

Q - What does a person have to do with the gospel in order to experience its unique power? The person who hears the gospel has to believe what he has heard.

B. The Revelation of the Gospel 1:17

Q - How does the gospel reveal the righteousness of God? The gospel's message that man's salvation required the sacrificial death of Christ for man's sin reveals the seriousness of sin and the power and love of God in addressing the problem of sin.

Q - In what sense does the gospel take a believer "from faith to faith"? The gospel is received by faith on the part of those who believe it, leading them to growth as they walk by faith in the Lord and His word.

Think About It: Paul longed to get to Rome in order to promote the gospel of Christ and the growth of the church there.

Apply It: The gospel of salvation in Christ takes those who embrace it from the initial step of faith to the righteousness which comes by ongoing faith. How is growing faith and fruitfulness evident in our experience with the gospel?

## “Replacing God”

Romans 1:18-23

Q - Where have you seen the Lord revealed in that which He has made?

Many of man's problems come from his failure to acknowledge the hand of the Lord in the creation around us.

### I. The Revelation of God 1:18-20

#### A. Revelation of His Wrath 1:18-19

##### 1. His Wrath Against Man's Ungodliness 1:18

Q - How is God's wrath revealed from heaven against man's ungodliness? God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness when He acts in judgment upon men - as He often has done through the centuries (with Adam and Eve; with Noah's generation; at the Tower of Babel; etc.)

Q - What does Paul reveal as a root of unrighteousness? Paul's reveals that the root of man's unrighteousness is his suppression of the truth of God in unrighteousness.

##### 2. His Wrath Against Man's Rejection 1:19

Q - How would you say that what is known about God is evident within mankind? Every man has within him a measure of intelligence and a conscience which makes it possible for him to observe what is around him and come to some sensible conclusions about it.

## B. Revelation of His Nature 1:20

### 1. The Clarify of the Revelation 1:20a

Q - What invisible attributes of God have been clearly seen since the creation of the world? Since the creation of the world the deity of God and the power of God have been clearly seen in the amazing features of earth and its creatures and features.

### 2. The Consequences of the Revelation 1:20b

Q - What has resulted from man's refusal to understand creation's revelation about the Lord? Man's refusal to understand and respond to creation's revelation about the Lord has left him without excuse for responding to what is obvious.

## II. The Rejection of God 1:21-23

### A. Rejection of His Deity 1:21

#### 1. Man's Realization 1:21a

Q - How has Paul demonstrated that men knew God?  
Paul has demonstrated that men knew God by his observation that God's existence and power are clearly seen in what He has made.

#### 2. Man's Response 1:21b

Q - What four failings of man in response to creation's revelation does Paul identify?

1. They did not honor the Lord as God;
2. They did not give thanks to God;
3. They became futile in their speculations;

4. Their foolish hearts became darkened.

B. Rejection of His Priority 1:22-23

1. Man's Folly 1:22

Q - How has foolish man falsely professed wisdom? Man has imagined that he knows more than what God has revealed in His inspired word.

2. Man's Foist 1:23

Q - What has man passed off as genuine in place of God's glory? Man has exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

Think About It: Gods wrath will come upon men who reject creation's witness to His reality and power, worshiping creation instead of the Creator.

Apply It: Are we seeing clearly the revelation of the existence and power and glory of God in every display of intelligent design in the world and the universe around us - and are we responding as we should by honoring Him and thanking Him?

## “Mankind’s Downhill Slide”

Romans 1:24-32

Q - When have you most been shocked by the condition of human depravity?

Man’s refusal to acknowledge the Lord as Creator and God has caused (as a part of divine judgment) his slide into vile forms of depravity.

### I. Man’s Deliverance to Impurity 1:24-25

#### A. The Fact of Man’s Deliverance 1:24

Q - What has resulted from man’s deliverance by the Lord to impurity? Human beings have dishonored their own bodies in their pursuit of the lusts of their hearts.

#### B. The Reason for Man’s Deliverance 1:25

Q - What motivated the Lord to allow man’s impurity to do what it has done? The Lord has allowed man’s impurity to do what it has done because mankind has exchanged the truth of God for a lie by worshiping and serving creatures rather than the creator.

### II. Man’s Deliverance to Degrading Passions 1:26-27

#### A. The Fact of Man’s Deliverance 1:26a

Q - How does Paul account for man’s plummet into “degrading passions”? Paul accounts for mankind’s plummet into “degrading passions” by the fact that God has given them over to “degrading passions.”

## B. The Result of Man's Deliverance 1:26b-27

Q - What examples of “degrading passions” does Paul cite in verses 26b-27? Paul cites the examples that women exchanged their natural function for unnatural things and men engaged in indecent acts with each other.

Q - What descriptive words does Paul use which exhibit the Lord’s feelings toward the behaviors which he lists? Paul describes men’s actions in terms of “degrading passions,” “unnatural function,” “indecent acts,” and “error.”

## III. Man’s Deliverance to a Depraved Mind 1:28-32

### A. The Reason for Man’s Deliverance 1:28a

Q - Why has the Lord given people over to a depraved mind? The Lord has given people over to a depraved mind because they did not see fit to acknowledge Him as God any longer.

### B. The Fact of Man’s Deliverance 1:28b

Q - What does a “depraved mind” lead people to do according to verse 28? A “depraved mind” leads people to do those things which are not proper.

### C. The Result of Man’s Deliverance 1:29-32

#### 1. The Description of Man’s Depravity 1:29-31

Q - How would you characterize Paul’s description of man’s depravity? I would characterize Paul’s description of man’s depravity as lengthy, wide-ranging, punchy, and discouraging.

## 2. The Approval of Man's Depravity 1:32

Q - What makes the depraved nature of mankind's acts inexcusable in the eyes of the Lord? Mankind's evil actions are inexcusable in the eyes of the Lord because they possess the ordinance of God (in their conscience and in His written word), making them aware that their degraded behavior is worthy of death.

Q - What makes mankind's response toward his degraded behavior even more despicable? Human beings not only personally engage in degraded behavior, but they also heartily approve of others who engage in degraded behavior.

Think About It: Man's decision to reject the Lord has resulted in all kinds of indecency - which is God's judgment of man's rejection.

Apply It: Any person who rejects the knowledge of God will pay the "wages of sin" (death, in its various forms) for their rejection as the Lord's response to their degraded behavior.

## “Impartial Judgment”

Romans 2:1-8

Q - What is the fatal flaw in the common notion that those who are good will go to heaven (cf. Proverbs 14:12)?

Paul’s argument that the wrath of God has already fallen upon sinful mankind for rejecting the revelation of creation (1:18-32) is followed up (in 2:1-8) by his argument that mankind is headed for even more of God’s wrath on the basis of personal sinful behavior - unless a person repents of sin and perseveres in doing what is good!

### I. Man’s Guilt Before God 2:1-4

#### A. Man’s Self-Condemnation 2:1

Q - Who does the Apostle Paul seem to be addressing in the opening verses of Romans 2 (as distinct from those he addresses in verse 17 and following)? Paul seems to be addressing moralistic people who look down on others because of their sinful behavior.

Q - What is the problem with looking down smugly upon those who are committing sins which are common among mankind? The person who looks down on the sins of others may well be guilty of the same sins he condemns in others.

#### B. God’s Righteous Judgment 2:2-3

##### 1. Upon the Wicked 2:2

Q - Why can Paul safely assume that his readers are in agreement with him that God rightly judges sin? Because Paul

was writing to the church in Rome, made up of believers, he could safely assume that they recognized that the Lord judges sinful behavior.

2. Upon the Critic 2:3-4

a. The Guilt of the Critic 2:3

Q - What trouble do all who can see the sinfulness in others bring upon themselves, and why? When the person who sees sinful behavior in others and passes judgment on them for their sins is himself guilty of the same sins in his own life he is passing judgment upon himself as well.

b. God's Call to the Critic 2:4

Q - Instead of passing judgment on those who have fallen into sin and not yet been annihilated for it, how **should** we who can see sin in others respond? We should respond to the riches of God's kindness and tolerance and patience toward sinners by repenting of the sins in our own lives.

II. Man's Judgment by God 2:5-8

A. Man's Worthiness of Wrath 2:5

Q - What will be the fate of all who stubbornly refuse to repent of sins they find repugnant in others? Those who stubbornly refuse to repent of sins they find repugnant in others are storing up God's judgment on themselves in the day when the Lord judges sins.

B. God's Rendering of Judgment 2:6-8

1. The Standard of God's Judgment 2:6

Q - How does the Lord intend to guarantee fairness in His judgment of all men? The Lord intends to guarantee fairness in His judgment of all men by rendering to each person according to their deeds.

2. The Meting Out of God's Judgment 2:7-8

a. Reward for the Righteous 2:7

Q - What does a person have to do in order to deserve eternal life? In order to deserve eternal life a person needs to persevere in doing good (as defined in the Scriptures - which see faith in God as an indispensable "good").

b. Punishment for the Unrighteous 2:8

Q - What do people deserve who, as a result of selfish ambition, do not obey the truth? People who, as a result of selfish ambition, do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, will receive wrath and indignation as their deserved outcome from the Lord.

Think About It: Mankind is universally worthy of God's judgment upon sin.

Apply It: In order to avoid God's judgment upon sin every person needs to repent of their sins and persevere in doing the good to which the Lord is calling all who will be saved.

## “Fairness for All”

Romans 2:9-16

Q - On what basis will God eventually bring all men to judgment and be fair to all in the process?

Many have wondered how the Lord can deal fairly with people all around the world in view of the differences in their access to and awareness of His revealed word. Paul’s message in Romans 2:9-16 is God’s answer to this important question.

### I. The Lord’s Impartiality in Dealing with Mankind 2:9-11

#### A. His Response to the Evil Man 2:9

Q - What does Paul anticipate as God’s just response to the evil which people commit? Paul anticipates “tribulation and distress” for every soul of man who does evil.

#### B. His Response to the Good Man 2:10

Q - Why does the Lord, in His dealings with evil and good, respond “to the Jew first and also to the Greek”? The Lord responds to the Jew first because of the privileged position the Jewish people have experienced in their relationship with Him and His word (cf. Deuteronomy 7:6), and to the Greek because all men are accountable to God as their creator and judge.

#### C. His Impartiality with All Men 2:11

Q - Is God’s impartiality good news or bad news for mankind? It is good news that God treats all people impartially, “according to their deeds” (v. 6), because treating all

people on the same basis makes His treatment of all people  
“fair.”

II. The Lord’s Comprehensiveness in Dealing with Mankind  
2:12-16

A. God’s Application of the Law 2:12-13

1. The Law as a Measurement 2:12

a. The Fate of Those Without Law 2:12a

Q - To whom does Paul refer as those “who have sinned without the Law”? Paul refers generally to the Gentile people of earth who were not aware of the Law of Moses, which was given to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai.

b. The Fate of Those With Law 2:12b

Q - Who are those “who have sinned under the law” who will be judged by the Law? Those who have sinned under the law and will be judged by the Law refers primarily to the Jewish people.

2. The Law as a Means of Justification 2:13

Q - For whom would Paul’s point in verse 13 be a devastating revelation? Paul’s point in verse 13 would be a devastating revelation for people (primarily the Jews) who had the knowledge of the Mosaic Law but who failed to conform their lives to its instruction.

B. Man’s Accountability to the Law 2:14-16

1. The Obedience of Instinct 2:14

Q - When do Gentiles without the Law ever “do instinctively the things of the Law?” Because Gentiles who live all around the world have a “sense of right and wrong” hard-wired into their conscience, they instinctively do what the Law says when they conform their behavior as individuals and as societies to the common sense instructions which are found in the law - seen clearly in the early sense of what is “fair” and what is “right and wrong” evident in the minds of infant children.

## 2. The Ministry of Conscience 2:15

Q - How does Paul account for the fact that even people without the Law know what the Law requires of them? Paul accounts for the fact that people without the Law know what the Law requires of them because their conscience informs them of many of the basic instructions of the Law.

## 3. The Day of Judgment 2:16

Q - When can we expect that “God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus?” We can expect that God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus when they are judged by Jesus at either the judgment seat of Christ (as believers) or the great white throne judgment (as unbelievers).

Think About It: God will judge all men by the way their works measure up or fail to measure up to the light they have received - whether through the Law or through their conscience?

Apply It: Because judgement is coming upon all people on the basis of their response to God’s instruction - both in the pages of His word and in the witness of their conscience - we all need to conform our behavior to His revelation as fully as possible.

## “Privileged but Proud”

Romans 2:17-24

Q - What is it that has given the Jewish people a special place in God's plan for the ages?

Having presented the lostness of mankind in general, the Apostle Paul next evaluates the position of his own people of Israel in the eyes of the Lord. Because the Jewish people were specifically selected by the Lord as His “chosen people,” they considered themselves a cut above all other peoples. But the status of Israel as God’s “chosen people” was not intended to make them proud; it was intended to make them holy. So the Apostle Paul challenged his people to carefully evaluate their privileged position before the Lord in terms of their conformity to His Law.

### I. The Boast of the Jew 2:17-20

Q - What is special about being Jewish (2:17)? Because the Jewish people were chosen by God as His own “possession” (Exodus 19:5), they were privileged above all other people on the earth.

Q - In what sense have Jewish people relied upon the Law (2:17)? Because they received the Law by special divine revelation through Moses at Mount Sinai, they knew they possessed revelation unparalleled among all other people on earth.

Q - What has given Jews any reason to boast in God (2:17)? The Jews knew, academically at least, that the Lord their God was the only God in existence (Isaiah 43:10) - by contrast with other nations who worshiped “so-called gods” which were not gods at all (cf. Isaiah 44:10ff.; I Corinthians

8:4-6).

Q - What claim does Judaism have upon the knowledge of God's will (2:18)? Because the Jews possessed the word of God they had reason to know what the Lord wanted them and others to do in obedience to His will.

Q - What advantage do Jews have over others in determining what is essential (2:18)? Attention to the teaching of God's word reveals what the Lord's priorities are for His people. For example, the fact that He set aside the Ten Commandments from the many other commands in His word reveals that they are essential; and there are indications throughout His word of things He prioritizes in the lives of His obedient people (cf. Deuteronomy 10:12; Micah 6:8).

Q - In what sense have Jews been instructed out of the Law more fully than non-Jews (2:18)? The fact that the Jews possessed God's Law provided more opportunities for them to be aware of its contents, and the fact that God challenged His people to pay close attention to His Law (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2) provided incentive to respond to its instruction.

Q - Who are the "blind" for whom Jews might provide guidance (2:19)? The Lord stated His intention that His people be a "light to the nations," observing that people who did not possess His light were "blind" (cf. Isaiah 42:6-7).

Q - Who are those "in darkness" for whom Jews might provide light (2:19)? Because they possessed the light of God's word, the Jews viewed all who were not Jews as denizens of darkness, though the Scriptures specifically identified those who were wicked (Proverbs 4:19) as those who lived in darkness.

Q - Who are the “foolish” for whom Jews might provide correction (2:20)? Because the Jewish people feel enlightened by the revelation of God’s word, it is easy to look upon people who are not enlightened by the revelation of God’s word as “foolish” people.

Q - Who are the “immature” to whom Jews might teach maturity (2:20)? The Jewish people would have looked upon anyone who was not informed and guided by God’s word as immature in a spiritual sense.

Q - Where did the Jews obtain the “embodiment of knowledge and of the truth” (2:20)? Jews obtained the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth from the Law of God revealed to them through Moses.

## II. The Challenge to the Jew 2:21-24

### A. The Evaluation of the Jewish Position 2:21-23

Q - On what basis did Paul challenge the qualification of the Jews for teaching others, for preaching against stealing, for opposing adultery, or for abhorring idols (2:22)? Paul based his challenge of the qualification of the Jews for teaching others on the question as to whether they were applying their teaching in their own lives;

He based his challenge regarding their preaching regarding stealing on their own care not to practice stealing themselves;

He based his challenge regarding their opposition to adultery on their own sexual purity;

He based his challenge regarding their abhorrence of idolatry on their own abhorrence of idolatry.

Q - How did Paul call into question the Jewish boast

regarding God's Law (2:23)? Paul observed that the Jewish people dishonor God because, though they boast in God's Law, they break God Law.

#### B. The Scriptural Charge 2:24

Q - How did Paul substantiate the implied charge that the Jews have failed to honor the Lord and His Law? Paul substantiated his implied charge that the Jews failed to honor the Lord and His Law by quoting Old Testament Scripture to the effect that they blasphemed His name (Isaiah 52:5) and they profaned His name (Ezekiel 16:20).

Think About It: The potential benefits of Judaism are nullified when Jewish people don't live by the light which they have in the Law of God.

Apply It: What is true for the Jews is also true for Christians, because it is not the believer's possession and understanding of God's word which is most important, but his practical application of and obedience with respect to God's word.

## “True Spirituality”

Romans 2:25-29

Q - What is it that made a person a member of God's ancient family of Israel?

The Apostle Paul listed, among his claims to confidence in the flesh as a righteous Jew (Philippians 3:2-6), the fact that he was circumcised on the eighth day. The Jewish people prided themselves in possessing the Law of God delivered to them through the ministry of Moses at Mount Sinai. Though the rite of circumcision was introduced to Israel prior to the giving of the Law, it was a significant rite in their thinking in terms of Law observance as they understood it. In Romans 2:25-29 the apostle explodes the confidence of the Jewish people in their observance of the rite of circumcision (Genesis 17:9-14) while failing to open their hearts to the work of God's Spirit.

### I. The Value of Circumcision 2:25-27

#### A. Circumcision and Law Observance 2:25

Q - What is the difference between practicing the “law” of circumcision and practicing the Law? Practicing the “law” of circumcision is only a part of practicing the Law - and a relatively insignificant part for anyone who puts it ahead of the weightier matters of the Law.

Q - What was Paul's assessment of the circumcised Jew who failed to observe other provisions of the Law? Paul observed that a circumcised Jew who failed to observe the Law of the Lord might just as well have never been circumcised.

#### B. Law Observance and Uncircumcision 2:26-27

1. The Law Observance of the Uncircumcised Man  
2:26

Q - What did Paul suggest the status of an uncircumcised Law-observer would be? Paul stated that the uncircumcised Law-observer would be considered as good as circumcised by his observance of the provisions of the Law.

2. The Judgment of the Jew by the Uncircumcised  
Man 2:27

Q - In what sense might the physically uncircumcised Law observer “judge” the physically circumcised transgressor of the Law? The physically uncircumcised Law observer would be a judge of the circumcised transgressor of the Law because he would have a better standing with the Lord than the physically circumcised transgressor of the Law.

Q - What significant distinction was Paul making by his reference to the Jew who possessed the “letter of the Law” (along with circumcision) but was a transgressor of the Law? Paul was stating that a man’s awareness of the teachings of the Law, without the necessary step of living by its instruction, was of no benefit even if his awareness of its teachings was accompanied in his case by circumcision.

II. The Real Meaning of Circumcision 2:28-29

A. The Man Who Is NOT a Jew 2:28

Q - What did Paul argue does NOT make a person a Jew? Paul argued that merely appearing to be a Jew by practicing its religious rituals did not make such a person a true Jew because Jewishness is not a matter of religious ritual, but it is a matter of actual conformity to the teaching of the Law.

Q - What misunderstanding of the rite of circumcision did Paul expose in the last half of verse 28? Paul exposed the fact, misunderstood by some, that the rite of circumcision was intended to be more than a physical sign of commitment to the Lord and the teachings of His word.

#### B. The Man who IS a Jew 2:29

Q - What did Paul reveal to be the true measure of Jewishness? Paul revealed that the true measure of Jewishness is deeper than any merely outward conformity with religious ritual, but it is the inner commitment of the heart to obedience to all that the Law teaches.

Q - What did Paul mean by his reference to circumcision which is of the heart (cf. Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4)? Just as physical circumcision involves the removal of some unnecessary flesh from the physical body, the reality to which it pointed is the removal of undesirable thoughts and behaviors from the heart out of which they arise.

Paul's argument reaffirms the Lord's words to Samuel: "God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (I Samuel 16:7).

Think About It: It isn't the correct physical characteristics or outward observances which bring a person into harmony with the Lord, but the correct condition of the "heart."

Apply It: There is no number of righteous deeds any person can do to win the Lord's approval if he is not properly related to the Lord by the healthy condition of his "heart."

## “Just in Judgment”

Romans 3:1-8

King David spent some time one evening walking in the fresh air on the roof of his palace. It was from his rooftop that he saw Bathsheba bathing herself on her own rooftop in his neighborhood. Because he saw that she was beautiful, he inquired about her and invited her to his palace where he committed adultery and caused her to become pregnant. Though he tried to cover up his behavior, the Lord sent the Prophet Nathan to confront him, leading to his acknowledgment “I have sinned against the LORD” (II Samuel 12:13). Though David possessed God’s Law, he failed to keep it - leading to his confession in Psalm 51:4: “Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in your sight, So that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge.”

### I. The Advantages of the Jews 3:1-2

#### A. Paul Examines Jewish Advantages 3:1

Q - Why does Paul raise the question of Jewish advantage (cf. 2:17-29)? Paul has just argued (2:17-25) that Jews who believe that their possession of God’s Law, and their practice of the rite of circumcision, give them an advantage over non-Jews and the uncircumcised are probably “skating on thin ice” because of their failings when it comes to their performance of the Law and their misunderstanding of the true significance of its rituals.

#### B. Paul Affirms Jewish Advantage 3:2

Q - What is the Jew’s greatest advantage in pursuing a relationship with the Lord? Though the Jews possess many

advantages over others in their relationship with God, the fact that they were entrusted with the oracles of God provided them with a decided advantage over any other people on earth.

## II. The Unbelief of the Jews 3:3-4

### A. Paul Examines God's Faithfulness 3:3

Q - Why would anyone suggest Jewish unbelief might nullify God's faithfulness? Someone might argue that the fact that some Jews (arguably most of them) did not demonstrate saving faith in their relationship with God and His word is evidence that the Lord was not as faithful to the Jews as He might have been.

### B. Paul Affirms God's Faithfulness 3:4

Q - On what basis does Paul affirm the faithfulness of the Lord? Having responded to the thought that the Jews' unbelief nullifies the faithfulness of God with his "May it never be!", Paul affirms the faithfulness of the Lord by quoting Psalm 51:4 with its assurance that the Lord is justified in His words and that He prevails when He is judged.

## III. The Righteousness of God 3:5-8

### A. Paul Examines God's Righteousness 3:5

Q - How could anyone argue that God might be unrighteous if He inflicts wrath on sinful people, especially Jewish people? They might argue that if God's righteousness is seen more clearly when he judges unrighteous people, it is unfair for Him to judge them for increasing the visibility of His righteousness. They have done Him a favor by making Him look better!

## B. Paul Affirms God's Righteousness 3:8

### 1. God as the Judge 3:6

Q - What is Paul's assumption regarding the Lord's judgment of the world? It is Paul's assumption that the Lord is shown to be righteous when He passes judgment on the world because of its sinful behavior.

### 2. Man's Sin and God's Glory 3:7

Q - On what basis could anyone argue that their sins shouldn't be judged by the Lord? Someone might argue that, because their lies stand out in bold contrast with God's truth, making Him look better as a result, they should not be judged for making Him look better.

### 3. Man's Sin and God's Judgment 3:8

Q - What did Paul think about the argument that people ought to do evil in order to accentuate God's glory? Paul insisted that anyone who slanderously argued that he was saying that they should do evil, because their evil would make God look better, deserves to be condemned for such warped reasoning.

Think About It: The Lord is perfectly just in passing judgment on the sins of all men - including Jews who sin even though the Lord has blessed them with His "oracles."

Apply It: Though it is true that the more human beings (Jews included) sin, the better the Lord is made to look by contrast, anyone who suggests that it is good to sin so the righteousness of the Lord is accentuated in the process deserves to be judged for his warped reasoning.

## “Sad Shape”

Romans 3:9-18

Q - What would you say to the person who assures you that people are basically good - just needing a better environment to bring out their goodness?

The book of Romans has little encouragement for those who believe that people are basically good. Having examined the matter with characteristic thoroughness, the Apostle Paul now sums up the sad state of the human condition - with strong support from the pages of the Old Testament.

### I. Paul’s Question About Man’s Condition 3:9

#### A. The Question Asked 3:9a

Q - Who does Paul refer to as “we” and “they” in asking his question? Paul is referring to the Jews as “we” and to the Gentiles as “they.”

#### B. The Question Answered 3:9b

Q - If both Jews and Greeks are “all under sin,” who else is left who might be in better spiritual condition (cf. I Corinthians 10:32)? Paul recognized that those who place their trust in the Lord, though still sinners, are forgiven for their sins on the basis of the sacrifice of Christ - composing a third category of humans beyond those of Jew and Gentile.

### II. Paul’s Confirmation of Man’s Condition from Scripture 3:10-18

#### A. Man’s Unrighteousness 3:10-12

cf. Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-4

Q - What does it mean when Paul quotes the Scripture to the effect that there is “none righteous?” Paul means that neither Jews nor Gentiles are right before God on the basis of their own works.

Q - How do you account for “good” people you have known in view of the psalmist’s observation that “there is none who does good” (cf. Ecclesiastes 7:20)? “Good people” might be either those who, compared to others, seem to be good, or they might be those whose lives have been elevated to better behavior by their faith in and obedience to the Lord.

Q - Is Paul’s observation that “There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God” absolute truth or is it what we might call circumstantial truth (cf. Jeremiah 9:24; Matthew 13:23 / Isaiah 55:6; Matthew 6:33)? Paul’s observation is circumstantial truth because it is true of unbelieving Jews and Gentiles, but not to those who sincerely seek the Lord and gain understanding from His word.

B. Man’s Unruly Mouth 3:13-14

cf. Psalm 5:9; 140:3 (v. 13) and 10:7 (v. 14)

Q - How does Paul’s mention of an “open grave” and the “poison of asps” square with your experience of human speech? Human speech is generally corrupt to some degree, and increasingly so with the passing of time (II Timothy 3:1-5).

Q - Whose mouth does the author of Psalm 10 tell us is “full of cursing and bitterness”? The psalmist tells us that it is the mouth of the wicked which is full of cursing and bitterness (Psalm 10:2,3,4).

C. Man's Unpeaceful Paths 3:15-17  
cf. Isaiah 59:7-8

Q - What does Isaiah's statement about man's "swift feet," so far off the "path of peace," tell us about the human condition? Isaiah's statement about man's "swift feet," so far off the path of peace," reveals that humanity generally is not walking in the ways of the Lord.

D. Man's Disrespect for God 3:18  
cf. Psalm 36:1

Q - What does the absence of the "fear of God" tell us about the condition of man? The absence of the "fear of God" tells us that mankind is generally devoid of the respect which is due to the judge of all men - lacking understanding and wisdom (Proverbs 1:7, 9:10).

Think About It: The Old Testament Scriptures thoroughly document Paul's assertion in Romans that both Jews and Gentiles are universally under sin.

Apply It: Though all human beings, both Jews and Gentiles, are sinful, there is hope for those who understand and seek and fear the Lord.

## “Made Righteous by Faith”

Romans 3:19-26

Ask almost anyone who thinks that they might be heading for heaven (however they understand it) why they think they might arrive in heaven and they will most likely tell you that they have tried to be good! Apart from Christianity and Judaism (rightly understood), the world’s religions are all based on the notion that the way to please God (however he is understood) is by being and doing good.

Q - What is wrong with the common notion that people can earn their salvation by being and doing good?

cf. Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25

### I. God’s Revelation Through the Law 3:19-20

#### A. The Law Making Men Accountable 3:19

Q - What impact does God’s Law have on those who are under it? The Law silences every person who is under it and makes them all accountable before God.

#### B. The Law Revealing Sin 3:20

Q - Why can people not be justified (made right) by the works of the Law? No one can be justified by means of the Law because its purpose is not to save, but to make people aware of their need for justification and turn in trust to the Lord due to their awareness of sin.

### II. God’s Righteousness Apart from the Law 3:21-26

#### A. The Manifestation of God’s Righteousness 3:21

Q - In what sense has the manifestation of God's righteousness been witnessed by the Law and the prophets? The Law reports the fact that Abraham "believed in the LORD, and He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15:6), and the Prophet Habakkuk (2:4) wrote that "the righteous will live by his faith."

B. The Means of God's Righteousness 3:22a

Q - How must those who achieve God's righteousness go about doing it? Those who achieve God's righteousness must go about doing it by "their faith in Jesus Christ."

C. The Need for God's Righteousness 3:22b-25

1. Man's Failing 3:22b-23

Q - Why is it that there is "no distinction" between Jew and Gentile in terms of their acceptability to the Lord on the basis of their works? There is "no distinction" because "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Q - How do all men stand in their own merits before the Lord? All men, both Jew and Gentile, "fall short" of the sinless perfection the Lord is seeking in human behavior (Matthew 5:48).

2. God's Gift of Grace 3:24-25a

Q - What gift of grace does the Lord offer in Christ Jesus? The Lord offers the gift of justification as a gift of grace in Christ Jesus.

Q - How does God go about redeeming people through Christ Jesus? The Lord payed the price to purchase from

slavery to sin and the penalty of death all who place their faith in Christ - propitiating God's wrath against sin in the process.

D. The Demonstration of God's Righteousness 3:25b-26

1. God's Forbearance with Sin 3:25b

Q - How has God's forbearance with sinful people been demonstrated? The Lord's forbearance has been demonstrated because He chose to pass over the sins people had previously committed when they trust Christ for their salvation.

2. God's Justice with Sin 3:26

Q - How has God's gracious gift to those with faith in Jesus enabled Him to be both just and justifier? When people place their faith in Christ the Lord is able to declare them right in His sight because of Christ's payment on their behalf, so He is just in justifying because the wages of sin they committed has been fully paid by the substitutionary sacrificial death of His own Son.

Think About It: God has made His righteousness available to all men through faith in Christ - something the Law was unable to accomplish.

Apply It: God's gracious offer of salvation from sin and its penalty of death is only available to those who trust in Jesus to save them on the basis of His payment of the wages of their sins.

## “How to Achieve Justification”

Romans 3:27-31

Having shown, in the early chapters of his epistle to the Romans, that all men - whether Jew or Gentile - are accountable before the Lord as sinners who have fallen short of God's intentions for them, Paul might be accused by some people of destroying the foundations of his Jewish people's faith in God and His word!

Q - If justification does not come, as many Jewish people have assumed it did, by means of the Mosaic Law, does that mean the Law was unnecessary?

Q - Is the God who justifies both sinners who are under the Law of Moses and sinners who have lived apart from the Law the same God, or might there be more than one way of salvation because there is more than one God?

Paul raises and addresses such intriguing questions as these in the concluding verses of the third chapter of Romans. Recall that the Apostle has just made the case (3:21-26) for the righteousness of God in providing justification for both Jew and Gentile, based on the redeeming work of His Son Jesus in the shedding of His life's blood - justification available to all who believe in Him.

### I. The Law of Faith 3:27-28

#### A. The Fate of Boasting 3:27a

Q - How would you account for Paul's interest in the fate of boasting? Paul has demonstrated that, because “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (3:23) neither Jews nor

Gentiles have any reason to boast of their righteousness. The Jews were blessed to receive God's Law through Moses, and the Gentiles "show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness" to the Law of God (3:15), so nobody can boast of their innocence before the Lord.

#### B. The Feat of Faith 3:27b-28

Q - In what sense is faith, which Paul contrasts with the Mosaic Law, correctly called a "law of faith"? Because faith in the Lord is the only way to be justified before the Lord, it is as much a legal requirement as the demands of any law ever were.

### II. The God of Faith 3:29-30

#### A. The Identity of God's People 3:29

Q - What might have led anyone to the conclusion that the Lord was the God of Jews only? Someone may have mistakenly concluded that the Lord was the God of only the Jews because they were uniquely His chosen people and they were the recipients of His Law.

#### B. The Salvation of God's People 3:30

Q - Why does Paul appear to entertain the question about whether God is indeed only one God? Paul appears to entertain the question about whether God is indeed the only God in existence because there appear to be two groups of people who can be justified - those who possess and are informed by the written Law given through Moses, and those who have only the law imbedded in their conscience and informed by the creation of which they are a part (1:18-20).

Q - How is the same God able to justify two peoples as

diverse as the circumcised Jew under His Law and the uncircumcised Gentile living apart from His Law? He is able to justify those in either group because justification is granted to those who trust Him for justification - not those who successfully conform to the Law (which no one can do) nor to those who conform to the witness of their conscience (which no one is able to do either).

### III. The Impact of Faith on the Law 3:31

#### A. Concern About Faith 3:31a

Q - Why does Paul raise the possibility of nullifying the Law through faith? He does so because, if no one can be justified by their complete conformity to the provisions of the Law, but they can be justified by their trust in the Lord, it might appear that the Law was never necessary.

#### B. Correction About Faith 3:31b

Q - In what sense is the Law established by the realization that justification comes about by faith and not by obedience to the Law? The Law is established by the realization that justification comes about by faith because the Law drives a person to the understanding that their obedience to the Law is not even a possibility, so they need help from the Lord if they are ever going to be declared right in His eyes.

Think About It: It is faith which is the one and only means of justification for both the Jews and the Gentiles.

Apply It: Anyone who is hoping to earn their way into the Lord's favor and into His heaven on the basis of their good works is on the dead-end road to divine judgment and eternal punishment!

## “Justification in the Old Testament”

Romans 4:1-8

Q - Where would you turn in the Scriptures to find the first indication or illustration that justification comes about on the basis of faith?

The Apostle Paul is the person who is best known to Christians for expounding the truth of justification on the basis of faith, but he is not the one to or through whom the Lord first revealed this significant truth!

### I. Abraham's Experience of Justification 4:1-3

#### A. Paul's Question Regarding Abraham's Justification 4:1

Q - When it comes to the subject of justification, how would you describe what it was that Abraham, the Jewish “forefather according to the flesh,” found? Abraham found righteous standing in his relationship with God by believing what the Lord told him would be the case.

Q - What makes Abraham a good “test case” for Paul’s argument that justification is not found by law observance?  
Abraham’s justification (i.e. his declaration of righteousness by God) was experienced before the Law was ever given!

#### B. Paul's Comment Regarding Abraham's Justification 4:2

Q - Why would Abraham have had something to boast about if he had been justified by works? If Abraham had been justified as a result of some form of works which he performed

he could have boasted about what he had done in order to be justified.

Q - Why would Abraham not have something to boast about before God if he had performed works in order to be justified? Abraham would not have something to boast about before God if he had performed works in the hope of achieving justification because he would have started out as a sinner, already condemned before the Lord, and human works cannot justify a person who is already in a spiritual “hole” to begin with.

C. Paul’s Quotation Regarding Abraham’s Justification  
4:3

Q - What did Abraham do in order to be reckoned as righteous in the eyes of the Lord? Abraham simply believed God’s word that he was going to have an heir by whom his descendants would become beyond number (like the stars) - even though his wife was barren and beyond child bearing years.

II. Paul’s Contrast of Works and Faith 4:4-5

A. The Reward for a Man’s Works 4:4

Q - What “wage” would we receive if the Lord paid us for our works? Because “all have sinned” and because “the wages of sin is death,” we would receive death (in all of its forms) if the Lord paid us for our works.

cf. Romans 3:23; 6:23

B. The Reward for a Man’s Faith 4:5

Q - What is the “wage” of those who believe in Him who

justifies the ungodly? The one who does not try to work for his justification, but trusts in God who justifies even ungodly men by their faith in Him, receives imputed righteousness as his “wage.”

### III. David's Testimony Concerning Justification 4:6-8

#### A. The Subject of David's Testimony 4:6

Q - What does Paul tell us David is writing about in the quote which follows in verses 7-8? Paul tells us that David is writing about God's blessing on the man who is credited by God with righteousness, apart from any works he can do, in Paul's quotation of Genesis 32:1-2 in verses 7-8 of Romans 4.

#### B. The Quotation of David's Testimony 4:7-8

Q - On what basis is David indicating a person can have his lawless deeds forgiven? David indicates that a person can have his lawless deeds forgiven and his sins covered by the blessing of the Lord who can choose [as a result of his faith] not to take his sin into account.

Think About It: The Old Testament bears clear testimony to the fact that justification comes by faith and not by works - as early as the writings of Moses and of David (among other places).

Apply It: The only way a human being, who is a sinner, can be declared right in the sight of the Lord is by trusting the Lord for justification, rather than trying to justify himself by inadequate works.

## “Justified Like Father Abraham”

Romans 4:9-17

Q - Of what value would a person's careful observance of the Mosaic Law be - including the practice of circumcision (which is included in the Mosaic Law)?

The opening chapters of Paul's letter to Roman Christians have demonstrated that all human beings - both Jews and Gentiles - are guilty of sin and deserving of the penalty of death as a result. But Paul has also observed that the Lord has made it possible for sinners to be declared righteous before Him - if they trust the Lord to do what He did for Abraham!

### I. The Relationship of Justification and Circumcision 4:9-12

#### A. Abraham's Experience with Circumcision 4:9-10

##### 1. Paul's Question 4:9

Q - What blessing is Paul writing about in verse 9? Paul is writing about the blessing on the man to whom the God credits righteousness apart from any works he might do (v. 6).

##### 2. Paul's Answer 4:10

Q - When did the practice of circumcision come into view in relation to Abraham's declared righteousness? Abraham was declared righteous when he believed God's promise that he would have an heir - long before the rite of circumcision was introduced as a sign of an infant's inclusion among God's people.

#### B. Abraham's Relationship with the Circumcised &

## Uncircumcised 4:11-12

### 1. His Relationship to the Uncircumcised 4:11

Q - In what sense is Abraham the father of all who believe without being circumcised? Because Abraham believed the Lord's promise of an heir long before circumcision was introduced to Israel as a sign of their inclusion in God's covenant with their nation, he stands as a fatherly example for all who believe in the Lord without submitting to circumcision - of which they may know little or nothing.

### 2. His Relationship to the Circumcised 4:12

Q - How is Abraham also the father of all the circumcised who believe? Abraham is the father of all the circumcised (a reference primarily to the Jews) because his faith in the Lord also included his introduction of circumcision into the life of the people of Israel as the Lord instructed him to do.

## II. The Relationship of Justification and the Law 4:13-15

### A. Abraham's Experience with the Law 4:13

#### 1. Abraham's Status when the Promise Was Given 4:13

Q - What was the status of the Mosaic Law when God promised to make Abraham "heir of the world"? The Mosaic Law was still over four hundred years away from its introduction to the people of Israel when Abraham was promised that all the families of the world would be blessed through him (Genesis 12:3).

#### 2. The Impact of the Law Upon Faith 4:14-15

Q - How would the Law void faith, nullify the promise, and bring about wrath? Depending on the Law as the means by which to receive salvation from sin's penalty of death would rule out the need to trust in the Lord for salvation; it would make irrelevant the report found in the revelation of the Law that Abram was justified by his faith, not his works; and it would expose those who are trusting in their observance of the Law, as the means of their salvation, to the wrath of God toward sin which only the sacrifice of His Son on the cross was able to address successfully.

#### B. Abraham's Experience with Faith 4:16-17

##### 1. Abraham as a Father of Faith 4:16

Q - In what sense is Abraham "the father of us all"? Abraham is "the father of all" in the sense that he exercised faith in the word of God in order to experience justification - as an example for everyone else who hopes to experience justification from the Lord.

##### 2. Abraham as a Father of Nations 4:17

Q - When did Abraham ever trust God to give life to the dead or to call into being that which did not exist? Abraham trusted God to give life to the dead when he believed that his wife, now "dead" with respect to child bearing because of her age, would bear a son as God promised, and he trusted God to give life to the dead when he was willing to sacrifice his son, as the Lord instructed him to do, believing that the Lord would restore him to life (Hebrews 11:19); and he trusted God to call into being that which did not exist when he was declared righteous (even though he was a sinner, as all people are) because of his trust that the Lord would do as He said He would do.

Think About It: Neither circumcision nor the Law justified Abraham - nor do they justify anyone else. Justification comes about by God's grace, as it did for Abraham, through faith.

Apply It: Abraham became a spiritual father of nations when he trusted the Lord to do what only the Lord could do - and we become the children of Abraham when we do what he did.

## “How All Can Be Saved”

Romans 4:18-25

Q - What do you suppose Abraham knew about the Savior who would one day pay the price for his salvation from sin?

Christians frequently turn to Genesis 3:15 (known as the “protevangelum”) as the Bible’s earliest prediction of the contest between the “seed of the serpent” and the “seed of the woman.” But there is precious little information there about the details of the plan of God for the salvation of sinners, on the basis of the sacrificial death of God’s Son, Jesus, for the sins of humanity. And though more is prophetically revealed throughout the Old Testament about God’s plan to provide salvation through His Son, most of it is revealed long after the time of Abraham! Whatever Abraham did or did not know, the Apostle Paul makes it clear that both Abraham and modern Christians are justified through the same process.

### I. Abraham’s Hope in the Lord 4:18-21

#### A. His Faith in the Promise 4:18

Q - What reason did Abraham have to hope that he would become a father of many nations? Abraham had reason to hope that he would become a father of many nations because that is what the Lord promised to him in the “Abrahamic Covenant” in Genesis 12:1-3.

#### B. His Hopelessness in Himself 4:19

Q - What circumstances militated against the hope Abraham had that he would become the father of many

nations? The fact that Abraham still did not have a son by his wife, Sarah, by the time he was 100 and she was 90 years old, made it seem highly unlikely that what the Lord had promised was actually going to be realized.

Q - What impact did seemingly adverse circumstances have upon the faith of Abraham? Abraham responded with belief, “in hope against hope,” when the Lord reassured him that he was going to have a son by his wife Sarah - in spite of their advanced ages and the seeming impossibility that Sarah could bear a child.

#### C. His Trust in the Lord 4:20-21

Q - What evidence does Paul cite of Abraham’s trust in the Lord (4:20)? Paul states that Abraham did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God.

Q - What evidence can you cite that Abraham was “fully assured” of the performance of God’s promise (4:21)? The revelation of Moses that Abraham “believed in the LORD, and He reckoned it to him as righteousness” (Genesis 15:6) is evidence that Abraham was “fully assured” of the performance of God’s promise.

### II. Abraham’s Reward from the Lord 4:22-25

#### A. The Justification of Abraham 4:22

Q - How did Paul know that Abraham’s faith in God’s promise of a son was reckoned to him as righteousness? Paul knew that Abraham’s faith in God’s promise of a son was reckoned to him as righteousness because that is what Genesis 15:6 reports.

### B. The Example of Abraham 4:23-24

Q - How do we benefit from the record of what happened in the life of Abraham as a result of faith? We benefit by the fact that the Lord credited Abraham with righteousness on the basis of his faith as evidence that the Lord will do the same for us when we exercise the kind of faith which Abraham exercised.

Q - What is the difference, if any, between our faith and the faith of Abraham? The only difference between our faith and that of Abraham is the fact that we have more detailed evidence from Scripture regarding the Lord's provision for our salvation in Christ than Abraham ever had.

### C. The Savior of Abraham 4:25

Q - What is the importance of the death of Christ to our salvation? The death of Christ is important because it was by His death that He was "delivered over because of our transgressions," paying the price of death on our behalf - which is God's required payment for sin (cf. I Peter 3:18).

Q - What is the importance of the resurrection of Christ to our salvation? The resurrection of Christ is important to our salvation because Jesus was "raised because of our justification" - sealing the deal by which those who trust in Christ are declared righteous by the Lord.

Think About It: Both ancient Abraham and modern Christians are saved by means of faith in the same Savior.

Apply It: Anyone who is not trusting the Lord for salvation from the death penalty for sin will not experience salvation but will experience eternal death.

## “Peace with God in a Troubled World”

Romans 5:1-5

Q - What are some of the benefits you experienced when you chose to place your faith in the Lord instead of trying to work your way into His favor?

Having shown man’s need and God’s provision of salvation from sin, Paul turns the corner, with the beginning of Romans five, into an explanation of God’s gift of justification by faith. The gift of justification assures blessings in the life of the believer both in time and in eternity - even though life in time on a sin-cursed earth can also result in various difficulties in a believer’s experience. The Apostle Paul knew very well both the blessings of salvation from sin and the challenges of faithfully serving the Lord in a hostile world!

### I. The Believer’s Justification by Faith 5:1-2

#### A. The Peace Which Comes with Justification 5:1

Q - How has Paul arrived at the assumption of verse one that justification comes about as a result of faith? Paul has demonstrated in previous chapters of Romans that Abraham was justified by faith, not works of the Law - establishing the fact that the key to justification for any person is their faith in the Lord.

Q - Can you explain how justification by faith in Christ brings about “peace with God”? When a person has been declared righteous on the basis of his faith in the Lord, and specifically his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the obstacle of sin which separates man from God has been removed, enabling him to experience peace in his relationship with God.

## B. The Grace Which Comes with Justification 5:2

Q - What is the relationship between placing one's faith in Christ and experiencing the grace of God? Because faith in Christ results in declared righteousness which none of us, as sinners, deserve on the basis of our own performance, those who have been declared righteous have experienced divine favor which they could not deserve by their own merits.

Q - How would you explain the "hope of the glory of God" which the person justified by faith can exult in? The person who has been justified by faith can now live daily in the expectation that he/she will be glorified eternally (cf. Romans 8:29-30) - cause for rejoicing even as he/she awaits its full realization experientially.

## II. The Believer's Exultation in Tribulation 5:3-5

### A. Tribulation's Result 5:3

Q - How might a believer's exultation in hope of the glory of God (v. 2) enable him to exult as well in tribulations? A believer's hope of the glory of God in his future places the tribulations which sometimes come into his life in the presence in perspective, knowing that tribulations are only a temporary inconvenience on the way to a glorious eternity (cf. Romans 8:18).

Q - How can unwanted tribulations in a believer's life result in the positive outcome of perseverance? Because tribulation is something to be endured, those who have endured it have persevered - becoming stronger as a result.

### B. Perseverance's Result 5:4a

Q - How can perseverance result in proven character?  
Someone who has persevered through an experience of tribulation has developed strength of character in the process and has shown that they can work their way through difficulty.

C. Proven Character's Result 5:4b

Q - How can proven character result in hope? Any experience which turns out successfully gives a person reason to believe that they can face additional challenges with success, giving them reason to be hopeful.

D. Hope's Result 5:5

Q - Why can Paul say that the believer's hope does not disappoint? Hopefulness is not a reason to be disappointed but, rather, to be encouraged about the path ahead in any person's life.

Q - Where did the Apostle Paul see clear evidence of the love of God in the sometimes challenging process which he was describing? Paul saw clear evidence of God's love in the fact that He has provided His Holy Spirit to direct and strengthen the believer in the challenges of life.

Q - How does God's gift of the Holy Spirit assure the believer that God's love has been poured out in his heart? Just as God's love was demonstrated in the fact that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8), so His love has been demonstrated by the fact that He has sent His Holy Spirit to dwell in every believer - with all the benefits that brings.

Think About It: Those who have been justified by faith enjoy God's peace and grace and love and hope - even if they experience tribulation along the way.

Apply It: As God's children, justified by faith in Christ, we have reason to rejoice even in difficult times because of the benefits which can come through them.

## “Help for the Helpless”

Romans 5:6-11

Q - Why is it that both the love and grace of God have been described in the hymns of the church as “amazing”?

The Apostle Paul never got over his gratitude that the Lord chose to interrupt his role as the “foremost” of sinners (I Timothy 1:15), persecuting the church, to make him what he became (I Corinthians 15:10) as a result of God’s love and grace. Romans 5:6-11 helps us see what is so “amazing” about God’s love and grace.

### I. Man’s Helplessness 5:6

#### A. The Condition of Man 5:6a

Q - What is it that makes the condition of unsaved man a “helpless” condition? The unsaved man is subject to the wages of sin, which is death, so his condition is helpless apart from God’s provision for his debt by Christ, who died for his sin - and the unsaved man is not trusting Christ for salvation.

#### B. The Provision of God 5:6b

Q - What made the time of Christ’s death the “right time”? Christ’s death occurred at the time which was appointed by the Lord for it to take place (Galatians 4:4).

### II. God’s Helpfulness 5:7-10

#### A. The Seriousness of Man’s Need 5:7

Q - What makes dying for someone else such an unlikely

occurrence - even for someone who is unusually good? The strong desire God has placed in the heart of man to keep on living makes is very unlikely that someone would knowingly choose to die for someone else - even someone unusually good.

#### B. The Demonstration of God's Love 5:8-10

##### 1. The Death of Christ for Sinners 5:8

Q - What does Paul tell us Christ's death for sinners very clearly demonstrated? Christ's death for sinners very clearly demonstrated God's genuine love for sinful human beings.

##### 2. The Deliverance of Sinners from Wrath 5:9

Q - In what sense should someone Christ has justified have no reason to be concerned about God's wrath? Someone who has been justified by faith in Christ can be assured that he will not experience God's wrath against sin in terms of eternal judgment - though even those who have been justified should live in fear of the the "wages of sin," because sinful behavior creates complications in human lives, even believers' lives.

#### C. The Summation of God's Love 5:10

##### 1. The Reconciliation It Accomplished 5:10a

Q - On what basis has the believer's reconciliation been accomplished? The believer has been reconciled with God on the basis of Christ's death as a substitutionary sacrifice for sin.

##### 2. The Salvation It Accomplished 5:10b

Q - What is there, besides the death of Christ, which will figure into the believer's salvation? The resurrection of Christ

from the dead also figures into the believer's salvation because the fact that Christ returned to life from the dead assures the believer's hope of his own resurrection in the event of his death.

### III. The Resulting Exultation 5:11

#### A. The Fact of Our Exultation 5:11

Q - What is surprising about the fact that believers can exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ? Because believers are sinners who deserve to pay the wages of sin (death) for their sins, it is a very pleasant surprise that they can exult in the fact that sin's wages have been paid, in their case, by God through the death of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### B. The Reason for Our Exultation 5:11b

Q - What is it specifically that Paul calls believers to exult about? Paul calls on believers to exult in the fact that they have been reconciled to God by the work which Jesus Christ has done on their behalf.

Think About It: God has provided help for helpless sinners through the death and resurrection of Christ - justifying and reconciling us by His death, and assuring our salvation by His life.

Apply It: How do you know for sure that you have been justified and reconciled by God's provision in Christ?

## “Solving the Problem of Sin and Death”

Romans 5:12-17

Q - If you had the job of correcting the problems brought about by sin and death on our earth, where would you begin?

The problems of sin and death began in the garden of Eden when Eve, followed by Adam, chose to ignore the Lord's instruction not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Lord's warning to Adam was clear (Genesis 2:17): “For in the day that you eat from it, you will surely die” - and, though Adam and Eve did not die immediately in a physical sense, death entered their experience, and that of all of their descendants, as a result of their sin on the very day they chose to disobey the Lord. The problems which began in the experience of humanity as a result of sin and death on our earth are serious problems, but the Lord has provided an amazing solution in the person and work of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

### I. The Entrance of Sin and Death into the World 5:12-14

#### A. The Spread of Sin and Death 5:12

Q - How is it that death “spread to all men” because of the sin of the one man, Adam, in the garden of Eden? The sin of Adam led to his death (because God said sin would result in death), so death spread to all men because all are the descendants of a sinful man - inheriting his sin nature and the physical death which results from it.

#### B. The Relation of Sin and the Law 5:13

Q - What difference does the presence of God's Law

make with reference to sin? The Law provided a standard by which to measure sinful behavior - though sinful behavior already existed before the Law was given by which sin could be measured.

#### C. The Reign of Death from Adam to Moses 5:14

Q - How do we know that, even before Moses came to reveal God's Law to man, mankind was already universally sinful? The Scriptures clearly reveal God's displeasure with sinful behavior in the lives of Adam and Eve and their children and their descendants in such events as the flood of Noah's day, the dispersion of mankind in the confusion of languages at Babel, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, etc.

### II. The Entrance of Grace and God's Gift into the World 5:15-

17

#### A. The Entrance of Grace through Christ 5:15

Q - What resulted from the sin committed by Adam in the garden of Eden? The sin committed by Adam in the garden resulted in the entrance of death into human experience with only the exception of Enoch and Elijah, who were taken by the Lord without dying.

Q - What resulted from the gift of God's grace which came about through the work of Christ? The grace of God, His undeserved favor offered as a gift to all who will receive it by faith in Christ, made salvation from sin and death available to mankind.

#### B. The Impact of Grace through Christ 5:16-17

##### 1. God's Solution to the Problem of Sin 5:16

Q - What words does Paul use to describe the effect of Adam's transgression upon all mankind? Paul writes of the judgment which arose from Adam's sin, resulting in condemnation upon all mankind.

Q - How does Paul describe the result of the free gift of God in Christ which arose in His response to the many transgressions of sinful mankind? Paul describes the free gift of God in response to mankind's many transgressions as a gift which has resulted in justification.

## 2. God's Solution to the Problem of Death 5:17

Q - What does verse 17 tell us resulted from the transgression of Adam? Verse 17 tells us that death reigned over mankind as a result of the transgression of the one man, Adam.

Q - What does verse 17 tell us results from God's gift of grace through Jesus Christ? Verse 17 tells us that those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness through the one man, Jesus Christ, will "reign in life" through Him.

Think About It: The problems caused by sin and death in our world can be corrected by receiving God's gift of grace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Apply It: How have you responded to the offer of God's gift of grace in Christ, and what has resulted from your response?

## “Abounding Grace”

Romans 5:18-21

Q - How is it that a murderer like Moses and an adulterer like David and a Christ-denier like Peter and other assorted sinners will all be with the Lord forever in the glory of heaven?

The amazing and abounding grace of God has made not only forgiveness but even righteousness available to all who trust the Lord for His provision in Christ! The Apostle Paul continues to pursue the Biblical explanation to an otherwise inexplicable miracle which the Lord has provided for the benefit of all men in Christ in Romans 5:18-21.

I. The Impact of Christ’s Righteousness on Man’s Sinfulness  
5:18-19

A. Comparing Transgression and Righteousness 5:18

1. The Result of One Transgression 5:18a

Q - What single transgression brought condemnation into the lives of all men? The transgression of Adam and Eve (especially Adam) in the garden of Eden brought condemnation into the lives of all men as Paul explained in verse 17.

2. The Result of One Righteous Act 5:18b

Q - What single act of righteousness has made justification of life available to all men? The substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, who died as “the just for the unjust” (as Peter expressed it in I Peter 3:18), made it possible for all who trust Christ for salvation from sin to be declared right in the sight of the Lord.

## B. Comparing Disobedience and Obedience 5:19

### 1. The Result of One Man's Disobedience 5:19a

Q - What was the impact of original human sin upon all of humanity? The sentence of death came upon all of humanity when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden (Romans 5:12,15), because the Lord had told them clearly (Genesis 2:17) “in the day that you eat from it [the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] you will surely die.”

### 2. The Result of One Man's Obedience 5:19b

Q - What act of obedience has made it possible for many to be made righteous? When Jesus, having humbled Himself in His incarnation, became “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8), He made it possible for the many who trust in Him to be made righteous before the Lord.

## II. The Impact of God's Grace on Sin and Death 5:20-21

### A. Comparing Law and God's Grace 5:20

#### 1. The Result of the Incoming Law 5:20a

Q - In what sense did transgression increase with the entrance of God's Law? Because the entrance of God's Law provided a clear statement of what God expected in the lives of His people, its entrance provided the standard by which to measure man's failings by the righteous standard of God's word, making the transgressions of God's people more visible than they had been before the entrance of the Law (cf. 3:20; 7:7).

## 2. The Response of God's Grace 5:20b

Q - In what sense did grace abound all the more where sin increased? Where the entrance of the Law made the presence of sin more evident in the lives of God's people, more of God's saving grace in addressing and forgiving man's sinful behavior became necessary and available.

### B. Comparing Sin and God's Grace 5:21

#### 1. The Result of Sin 5:21a

Q - What consequence came into the lives of all men through the reign of sin? Because the Scriptures reveal that "the soul who sins will die" (Ezekiel 18:4; 18:20; Romans 6:23), the "reign of sin" brought "the reign of death" into human experience, because "all have sinned."

#### 2. The Response of God's Grace 5:21b

Q - What does the reign of the grace of God through Christ's righteousness bring to all men who receive it? All men who receive the gift of God's saving grace on the basis of the substitutionary death of Christ for man's sin will experience the "reign of the grace of God through Christ's righteousness."

Think About It: The grace of God in Christ is the solution to man's sin problem.

Apply It: Receiving God's amazing and abounding grace in Christ is every person's only hope of the gift of the forgiveness of sin and of eternal life in heaven.

## “Death to Sin through Life in Christ”

Romans 6:1-7

Q - Should a person find it easier to avoid sinning after being united with Christ as a result of his salvation experience? Why or why not?

In Romans 6:1-7 the Apostle Paul explains what God has done for believers in Christ to help them deal with the problem of sin in their lives. As someone has wisely observed, “Christians are not sinless, but they should sin less!”

### I. The Believer’s Death to Sin 6:1-3

#### A. The Question of Continuing Sin 6:1

Q - How could anyone suggest that grace would increase if a believer continued in sin? Paul has just argued that, with the entrance of the Law, transgression increased (5:20), so “grace abounded all the more.” As a result, some have argued that more sin in a believer’s life calls for more grace on the part of God.

#### B. The Announcement of Death to Sin 6:2

Q - Why does Paul feel so strongly that Christians must not continue in sin? Because the believer is “in Christ,” who died to pay for sin, the believer has [positionally] died to sin.

#### C. The Means of Death to Sin 6:3

Q - Which aspect of baptism does the Apostle Paul have in mind in his argument concerning baptism’s impact in the life of a believer? If Paul were referring to water baptism, he

would be saying that water baptism places a person in Christ [the error of baptismal regeneration], so he has to be referring to baptism by the Spirit which actually places the believer in Christ (I Corinthians 12:12-13).

Q - How would you explain Paul's argument that people baptized into Christ Jesus are baptized into His death? The fact that believers have been baptized into Christ means that they have died in Christ, because we know that He died on the cross.

## II. The Believer's Resurrection to Life 6:4-5

### A. The Fact of His Death and Resurrection 6:4

Q - In what sense is the believer "buried with Him [Christ] through baptism into death"? Because believers have been baptized into Christ, who died and was buried, believers too have died and been buried with Christ.

Q - Why might Paul have made the observation that "Christ was raised from death through the glory of the Father"? It was the power of God over death which resulted in the resurrection of Christ, so God was glorified by the miracle of resurrection which He brought about by His power - the same power by which believers have also been raised from death to life in Christ.

Q - What is the relationship between the resurrection of Christ and the believer's walk in "newness of life"? Just as Christ was raised to a new experience of life - in a glorified body - by His resurrection from the dead, so the believer (who shares in the resurrection experience of Christ by his union with Christ) has been raised to a new experience in life.

## B. The Certainty of His Resurrection 6:5

Q - What made Paul so certain that believers will become united with Christ in His resurrection? The fact that believers are now “in Christ,” and (as a result) have died and been buried with Him, provides assurance that they will also be resurrected as He was resurrected.

## III. The Believer’s Freedom from Sin 6:6-7

### A. The Death of the Old Self 6:6

Q - How would you describe the “old self” which was crucified with Christ? The “old self” refers to the person who died with Christ when he was placed “in Christ,” in contrast with the “new man” who now lives anew “in Christ,” so the “old self” refers to a person’s unsaved past.

Q - What “body of sin” has been done away with in Christ? The record of sinful behavior which characterized the unsaved individual in the past has been done away with in the sense that it has now been replaced by the “new man” in Christ since the miracle of new birth occurred.

### B. The Freedom of the New Self 6:7

Q - In what sense would you say that the believer has been “freed from sin?” Just as a dead man is no longer able to be called to account for his past sins, so the person who has been made alive in Christ can no longer be called to account for the sins he committed before coming to Christ - sins which have all been forgiven.

Think About It: All who have been united to Christ have died to sin and have begun to experience a new life.

Apply It: The person who is still living a sinful lifestyle after having professed faith in Christ is probably not a true believer, because true believers' lives should reflect their identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ into which they should have been baptized by God's Spirit in receiving Christ.

## “Still Very Relevant”

Romans 6:8-11

Q - What practical difference could the historical truths of the death and resurrection of Christ possibly make in the life of a modern believer?

What happened to the Lord Jesus Christ as He approached the end of His earthly ministry and His return to heaven is now close to two thousand years in the “rear view mirror,” so what took place so long ago may not seem highly relevant, in practical terms, in the lives of His followers in our day. But it turns out that what happened then is still very relevant in the lives of current followers of the Lord Jesus. In Romans 6:8-11 the Apostle Paul explains that a Christian’s position in the crucified and resurrected Christ is still intended to be experienced in his life in some very practical ways long after their historical realization.

### I. The Believer’s Position in Christ 6:8

#### A. His Death in Christ 6:8a

Q - In what sense can it be said that a modern-day Christian has “died with Christ”? The fact that Christ died, and that the believer is now “in Christ,” means that the believer has experienced what Christ has experienced in His death.

#### B. His Life in Christ 6:8b

Q - Why does Paul treat the effect in a believer’s life of the resurrection of Christ (a fact of history past) in the future tense? While the believer’s position in Christ means that, because Christ returned to life from the dead, the believer is also

alive in Christ today, there is also a future dimension of life in Christ (I Peter 1:3-5) which believers will experience because of the resurrection of Christ.

## II. The Lord's Provision in Christ 6:9-10

### A. The Fact of Christ's Victory Over Death 6:9

Q - Why could Paul be so confident that Christ "is never to die again"? Paul knew that the same power of God which raised Jesus from the dead "and seated Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 1:20) assures His permanent victory over death.

Q - What was it that enabled death to have the mastery over Christ which it did during His earthly ministry? Only the fact that Jesus laid down His life on His own initiative (John 10:18), because of God's love for sinners (Romans 5:8; Philippians 2:8), enabled death to have "mastery" over Him.

### B. The Significance of Christ's Victory Over Death 6:10

Q - Why does Paul assure us that Christ died in the first place? Paul assures us that Christ died "to sin" - with the result that sin no longer played any part in His personal experience.

Q - How could Paul be so certain that Christ's death was "once for all"? Because His death provided the permanent solution for the problem of sin (for those who trust Him for the provision He made), His death was the final provision needed, never to be required again.

## III. The Believer's Perspective in Christ 6:11

### A. His Deadness to Sin 6:11a

Q - What basis does the believer have for considering himself dead to sin? Because the believer is “in Christ,” who died to sin, the believer has also died to sin by virtue of his position in Christ.

B. His Aliveness to God 6:11b

Q - In what sense has the believer become “alive” because of His identification with the resurrection of Christ? Just as the believer’s position “in Christ” means that he has died to sin, so his position “in Christ” means that he is alive because Christ returned to life by means of His resurrection.

Q - What should result from such a condition of “aliveness” in the believer’s experience? The believer, now dead to sin because of his position “in Christ” who died to sin, should consider (*logizomai* - reckon, count, conclude) himself to be alive with resurrection power over the problem of sin because of His position in the risen Christ.

Think About It: The believer’s identification with Christ in His death and resurrection should result in a practical difference in the way he lives today - and will live forever.

Apply It: To what extent is the life of Christ evident in our daily experience in view of our identification with the resurrection power He has provided?

## “Choose Your Master”

Romans 6:12-18

Q - Should it make any difference to a slave who the master is under whom he serves? Why or why not?

Slavery was not an uncommon phenomenon in the lives of those who were a part of the ancient Roman Empire. When armies engaged in conflict, people on the losing side of conflict were frequently taken as slaves by the winning side. So believers throughout the Roman Empire were familiar with the institution of slavery, as illustrated by Paul’s instruction to believers in Ephesus - “Slaves, be obedient to your masters” (Ephesians 6:5). In Romans 6:12-18 Paul exhorts believers in Rome to be obedient to righteousness as their master.

### I. The Challenge to Live Righteously 6:12-14

#### A. Rejecting the Reign of Sin 6:12

Q - How does verse 12 explain what it means to let sin reign in a person’s mortal body? Paul says that to let sin reign in a person’s mortal body is to live in obedience to the lusts of the body.

#### B. Embracing the Reign of Righteousness 6:13

Q - What determines whether or not unrighteousness has its way in a Christian’s life? Whether a Christian presents the members of his body as instruments of unrighteousness or not is what determines whether or not unrighteousness has its way in his life.

Q - On what basis does Paul challenge Christians to

present themselves to God in verse 13? Paul urges believers to present themselves to God as those who are alive from the dead (because they have died and been resurrected “in Christ”).

Q - What practical step does Paul encourage every Christian to take in presenting himself to God in verse 13? Paul encourages every Christian to present the members of his body as instruments of righteousness to God (cf. Romans 12:1).

#### C. Escaping the Mastery of Sin 6:14

Q - What change in the Christian’s situation has enabled him to escape the mastery of sin? The Christian’s conscious move from someone who is “under law” to someone who is “under grace” enables him to escape the mastery of sin. Being “under law” reveals his failings as a sinner, where being “under grace” is relying on God’s undeserved favor to provide salvation from his failings as a sinner.

### II. The Process of Living Righteously 6:15-18

#### A. The Option of Living in Sin 6:15

Q - What reason for sinning does Paul entertain and reject in verse 15? Paul entertains the possibility of continuing in sin because we are not under law (which condemns sin) but under grace (which forgives sin). Then he totally rejects the idea - “May it never be.”

#### B. The Option of Slavery Either to Sin or to Obedience 6:16

Q - What does Paul state every person is a slave to? Paul states that every person is a slave to anything he chooses to obey.

Q - What two slaveries and results does every Christian have to choose between? Every Christian has to choose either to sin, resulting in death, or to obey the Lord, resulting in righteousness.

C. The Decision to Obey the Teaching of the Word 6:17-18

1. The Decision Made 6:17

Q - What enabled the Roman Christians to get over their slavery to sin? Roman Christians were able to get over their slavery to sin because they chose to become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which they committed themselves.

2. The Decision's Result 6:18

Q - What resulted from the Roman Christian's deliverance from slavery to sin? When the Roman Christians became set free from their slavery to sin, they were set free to become slaves to righteousness instead.

Think About It: Those who believe in Christ need to decide whether they will submit themselves to sin and its consequences or to righteousness and its consequences.

Apply It: Will we subject ourselves to death, by submitting to sinful behavior, or will we choose righteous behavior and the blessing of life which comes about as a result?

“Choose Life!”

Romans 6:19-23

Q - What general advice would you give to someone trying to decide whether to do something wrong or reject the wrong in favor of something right?

As Moses approached the end of his days and his leadership of the people of Israel, he delivered messages which rehearsed the experiences of his people's travels through the wilderness between Egypt and Canaan. In Deuteronomy 30:19 he said: “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life, in order that you may live, you and your descendants.” The Apostle Paul had similar challenges for believers in the city of Rome. In Romans 6:19-23 he provided the saints with some good reasons for choosing to serve righteousness rather than sin.

I. The Challenge to Present One's Members to Righteousness  
6:19

A. Paul's Terminology 6:19a

Q - Why did the Apostle Paul use terms out of the slave world to explain his point? Because Paul had reason to believe that his readers were weak in their ability to grasp spiritual truths, he used terms out of the slave world (with which they were very familiar) to seek to explain the spiritual truths he was trying to explain.

B. Paul's Challenge 6:19b

1. His Reminder of the Past

Q - What happens to those who choose to present the members of their bodies to impurity and lawlessness? Those who choose to present the members of their bodies to lawlessness find themselves on a downward spiral which leads to further lawlessness - as Paul knew his readers realized was true on the basis of their past experiences. For example, tell a lie and see what direction it will take you!

## 2. His Challenge for the Future

Q - What result did Paul anticipate for those presenting their members as slaves to righteousness? Because, as they say, “practice makes perfect,” people who present the members of their bodies as slaves to righteousness are more likely to experience sanctification as they discover the benefits of being “enslaved” by righteousness and consciously choose that path.

# II. The Alternatives for Presenting One's Members 6:20-22

## A. The Option of Slavery to Sin 6:20-21

### 1. The Choice of Slavery to Sin 6:20

Q - What makes slaves of sin free in regard to righteousness? Because, as Jesus explained, “no man can serve two masters,” the person who is enslaved by sin has no interest or capacity to also be enslaved by righteousness. He is too busy doing what is sinful to have time or interest in doing what is not sinful.

### 2. The Consequences of Slavery to Sin 6:21

Q - What consequences must the person expect who becomes enslaved to sin? The person who becomes enslaved to sin will experience the consequence of death - in all of its

forms. Sin leads to physical death, but along the way it travels the path of spiritual death, emotional death, social death, and finally eternal death.

#### B. The Option of Slavery to God 6:22

##### 1. The Choice of Slavery to God 6:22a

Q - How does a person go about becoming enslaved to God? When a person is freed from slavery to sin, as a result of salvation by God's grace through faith in Christ, he can now be enslaved to God.

##### 2. The Consequences of Slavery to God 6:22b

Q - What are the benefits of becoming enslaved to God? The person who becomes enslaved to God experiences sanctification (i.e. he is set apart to do the will of God in a life characterized by holiness) and ultimately he obtains and experiences eternal life.

#### C. The Options Summarized 6:23

Q - How can a person go about escaping the "wages of sin"? A person can escape the complications of death (which is the "wages of sin") by accepting the free gift of God, by faith in the person and work of His Son Jesus, which results in eternal life.

Think About It: Every Christian ought to embrace righteousness and sanctification and life rather than sin and death.

Apply It: If you have not become a slave to righteousness as a result of your salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are enslaved by sin and heading for a very unhappy ending!

## “Under Law or In Christ?”

Romans 7:1-6

Q - How would life be different for believers if they were required to live under the Law of Moses?

For those of us who are not Jewish and have never lived under the Law revealed to Moses, it is difficult to fully comprehend what it would be like to be a Jewish person living under the Mosaic Law. But there were clearly some former Jews who were a part of the church at Rome to which the Apostle Paul wrote the epistle to the Romans. So in Romans 7:1-6 Paul provides an explanation of the difference between living under law and living in Christ for people who had experienced both.

### I. The Jurisdiction of the Law 7:1-5

#### A. The Law’s Jurisdiction Defined 7:1

Q - Why was the issue of the law a matter of interest to first century Christians in Rome? The Apostle Paul was writing to a church which included some people who had converted from Judaism to Christianity - people who were, as a result, familiar with the law.

Q - What boundaries did Paul place on the jurisdiction of law? Paul wrote that people who live under the jurisdiction of the law remain under its jurisdiction as long as they are alive.

#### B. The Law’s Jurisdiction Illustrated 7:2-3

##### 1. The Legal Bonds in Marriage 7:2

Q - In what way does law bind the partners of a marriage?

When a man and a woman are legally married they are intended to remain married as long as they both are alive - as the Lord revealed when He stated the terms of marriage to Adam in the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:24), that a man should leave his father and mother, and be “joined (*dabaq* - to cling, cleave, keep close) to his wife,” Jesus, who commented on the Lord’s intention, in Matthew 19:3-6, added “What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”

## 2. The Moral Bounds of Marriage 7:3

Q - What moral bounds under law are erased by the death of a marriage partner? A marriage partner can clearly no longer be bound by marriage laws when either the husband or the wife is no longer alive.

## II. The Believer’s Freedom from Law 7:4-6

### A. The Believer’s Relationship to Law 7:4

#### 1. His Death to Law 7:4a

Q - What is it that has caused the believer’s death to the Law? When a person becomes a believer in Christ he is baptized by God’s Spirit into the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). Because Christ died on the cross, the believer in Christ has also died with Him, so he is not under the Law but is alive in Christ.

(cf. 6:2-7)

#### 2. His Union with Christ 7:4b

Q - What important spiritual event did the believer’s death in Christ allow to take place? The believer’s union with Christ means that he has not only died with Christ but has also

been raised to new life with Christ.

Q - What spiritual result should take place because of the believer's death and new life in Christ? His death and new life in Christ makes it possible for him to bear fruit for God.

#### B. The Believer's Responsibility to Law 7:5-6

##### 1. His Former Control by Law 7:5

Q - How does Law arouse sinful passions in the lives of those in the flesh? When the Law reveals what is right and what is wrong, the sinful nature of man rebels against the restrictions which the Law reveals, frequently doing what the Law has said it shouldn't do (cf. Romans 7:7 ff.)! So posting a sign which says "wet paint, don't touch!" stirs up the desire to touch the paint to see if it is really wet!

##### 2. His Freedom in Christ from Law 7:6

Q - What change does a believer's death in Christ bring about in his life? A believer's death in Christ releases him from the restrictions of the Law, enabling him to serve in the "newness of the Spirit" instead of the "oldness of the letter."

Think About It: People in Christ have died to law to be united in newness of the Spirit to Christ, producing fruit for the Lord.

Apply It: To what extent is our union with the Spirit of Christ evident because of our freedom from the sinful passions aroused by the Law, and because of the fruit for the Lord which is evident in our lives? (Cf. Galatians 5:16).

## “Why the Law Can’t Save”

Romans 7:7-13

Q - What does Solomon tell us is the problem for those who try to work their way to heaven in the way which seems right to them (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25)?

Judging by the teachings of the world’s religions, it apparently seems right to a man that the way to get to heaven is to do good deeds - like the good deeds which are found in the Law which the Lord handed down to His people in the days of Moses. In Romans 7:7-13 the Apostle Paul assures his readers in Rome that trying to work one’s way to heaven by observing God’s Law is not as good an idea as it may at first seem to be!

### I. The Law’s Revelation of Sin 7:7-8

#### A. How the Law Reveals Sin 7:7

Q - What might have lead anyone to the conclusion Paul responds to in verse 7, that the Law might be sin? The fact that Paul has argued in verses 1-6 that the Law arouses sinful passions in a person’s life, making it desirable to be “released from the Law” (7:6), could lead someone to conclude that the Law might be sin.

Q - How does Paul explain the actual relationship between sin and the Law? Paul explains that it is by means of the Law that a person becomes aware of sin.

#### B. How Sin Responds to the Law 7:8

Q - What does sin do when it comes up against a prohibition of God’s Law, e.g. the prohibition against coveting? Sin

takes opportunity, when it comes up against a prohibition in God's Law, to resist the requirement found in the Law - so when someone learns that they are not to covet, their sinful nature rises up against the prohibition against coveting and moves the person to do the very thing they were prohibited, according to the Law, from doing.

## II. The Law's Impact on the Sinner 7:9-11

### A. How the Law Enlivens Sin 7:9

Q - How did Paul explain the result of the entrance of the Law into his own experience? Paul explained that the entrance of the Law into his experience made sin come alive in his life, resulting in his death - in the sense that his life became complicated in some sense, which is what sin always does, because "the wages of sin is death."

### B. How the Law Impacts the Sinner 7:10-11

#### 1. The Law Results in Death 7:10

Q - What would the Law produce in the life of anyone who could keep it? Anyone who could keep the Law would find that obedience to the Law produces life in his experience.

Q - What **does** the Law produce in the life of anyone who tries to keep it? The Law produces death in the experience of anyone who tries to keep it, because his sinful nature rises up in opposition to the Law, resulting in some form of death as the natural consequence of sinful behavior.

#### 2. Sin Uses the Law to Kill 7:11

Q - What does sin do when it comes up against the

commandments of God's Law? Sin takes opportunity, in response to the Law, deceiving the sinner by the impression it creates that there is some benefit in resisting the Law, and “killing” the sinner by means of the complications it produces in his experience (as illustrated by the experience of Eve in the garden of Eden).

### III. The Law's True Nature 7:12-13

#### A. Paul's Description of the Law 7:12

Q - How would Paul respond to the suggestion that the Law must be bad if it cannot save from sin? Paul rejected the suggestion that the Law (which was given by the righteous God Himself), and therefore is “holy and righteous and good,” could have been a bad thing.

#### B. Paul's Defense of the Law 7:13

Q - What is it that keeps the holy, righteous and good Law of God from bringing about the salvation of anyone who tries to find salvation through it? The sinful nature of the person who tries to find salvation through it prevents that which is holy, righteous and good from resulting in the salvation sought by the person who finds himself unable to keep the Law - so the Law causes the utterly sinful nature of sin to reveal itself.

Think About It: Though God's Law is good, sin works through the Law to produce death for those who seek to live by it.

Apply It: The way which “seems right to a man” - the way of works by always doing what is right - is a dead end path for everyone who is pursuing salvation by works rather than salvation by faith in the righteous provision of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## “Battling Sin”

Romans 7:14-25

Q - What is it that keeps even a dedicated Christian from enjoying complete victory over sin?

In Romans 8:27 the Apostle Paul will write of the fact that Christians are able to “overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.” But in Romans 7:14-25 we find the same Apostle Paul confessing that it was not easy for him to get the victory over the problem of sin in his experience - a confession which every Christian will need to make from time to time until the day when the old nature, which every person inherited from Adam, is dealt with once and for all in eternity!

### I. The Believer’s Frustration with Sin 7:14-20

#### A. His Agreement with the Law 7:14-16

Q - What contrast does Paul point out in v. 14 between the Law of God and the flesh of man? Paul points out that the Law of God is spiritual, while human beings are fleshly, sold into bondage to sin.

Q - What does Paul’s “I am” statement reveal about his spiritual status at the time of his frustration? Paul’s “I am” statement reveals that he is describing his frustration as one who had been saved - not, as some suggest, his frustration with sin as an unsaved man.

Q - What did Paul confess baffled his understanding about himself (v. 15)? Paul confessed his inability to understand why he was not able to achieve sinless perfection in view of his hatred toward sinful behavior.

Q - What encouragement did Paul find in the fact that believers often do what they actually wish **not** to do (16)? Paul was encouraged by the fact that his frustration demonstrated his respect for the law even though he was unable to fully comply with its demands.

#### B. His Domination by Sin 7:17-20

Q - When a believer does what he wants **not** to do, what does Paul conclude about the source of his behavior (17)? Paul concludes that the believer who does what he wants not to do is still afflicted by the influence of sin - because of his inherent sinful nature.

Q - To what did the Apostle Paul attribute his inability to do the good he wanted to do (18-19)? Paul attributed his inability to do the good he wanted to do to the fact that there was nothing good dwelling in his fleshly nature.

Q - Who does Paul argue must be in control when believers do what they actually intend **not** to do (v. 20)? Paul argues that sin must be in control when a believer does what he actually intended not to do.

### II. The Believer's Deliverance from Sin 7:21-25

#### A. The Conflict for the Christian 7:21-23

Q - What principle did Paul see in his inclination to do evil (v. 21)? Paul saw the principle that evil was still present in him, in view of his inability to do what he wanted to do.

Q - Where in his being did Paul find support for the Law of God (v. 22)? Paul stated that he joyfully concurred in his "inner man" with the law of God.

Q - Where in his being did Paul find another law waging war against the law of his mind (v. 23), with what result? Paul saw a different law in the “members of his body” waging war against the law of his mind and making him a prisoner of the law of sin which was in his members.

#### B. The Challenge for the Christian 7:24-25

Q - What conclusion did Paul reach about himself which was not very comforting (v. 24)? The Apostle Paul described himself as a “wretched man” who needed to be set free from the body of this death.”

Q - Where did Paul see any hope of being delivered from the downward pull of the flesh (v. 25a)? Paul saw hope of being delivered from the downward pull of the flesh in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Q - What two contenders did Paul find within himself, pulling him in opposite directions (v. 25b)? Paul found his mind serving the law of God on the one hand, while he found his flesh serving the law of sin on the other hand.

Think About It: Christians will continue to struggle with in-dwelling sin until the Lord sets them free from indwelling sin through the work of Christ.

Apply It: We as believers are capable of overwhelmingly conquering the sinful nature of our human flesh when we practically commit ourselves to Him who loved us, Jesus Christ our Lord - walking by the Spirit (as Paul expressed it in Galatians 5:16) so we don't carry out the desires of the flesh.

## “The Believer’s Choices”

Romans 8:1-11

Q - What has your experience taught you about some of the steps you can take which are most likely to give you victory over the problem of sin in your life?

While Romans 7, especially verses 7-24, presented Paul’s gloomy perspective for those who are dependent on the ability of human flesh to overcome sin’s power, Romans 8:1-11 was written to give believers in Christ reason to hope for some victory over sin, even in the present life and body of flesh, because of the work both Christ and the Holy Spirit have done on their behalf.

### I. The Believer’s Standing in Christ 8:1-4

#### A. The Fact of His Deliverance 8:1-2

Q - What is it that results in condemnation in a person’s life (v. 1)? Condemnation results in a person’s life as they become aware that they have failed to measure up to an expectation they should have met - as illustrated by the sense of shame Adam and Eve experienced when they disobeyed the Lord’s single prohibition regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden.

Q - What is it that sets a sinner free from the condemnation of “the law of sin and death” (v. 2)? The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets a sinner free from the condemnation of “the law of sin and death” - providing the “peace with God” which Paul told us comes with justification (5:1).

#### B. The Means of Deliverance 8:3

Q - What is significant about Paul's statement that God sent His own Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh"? It is significant that Jesus came to earth as a real man, but also that He came without having inherited the sin nature which the rest of humanity possesses because of their relationship with Adam in his sinful condition.

Q - What was it about God's sending of His own Son which "condemned sin in the flesh"? Jesus "condemned sin in the flesh" because He gave Himself as "an offering for sin" when He died for sinners as "the Lamb of God."

#### C. The Result of His Deliverance 8:4

Q - What good result can come about through the work the Lord has done in His people's lives, and how? The requirement of the Law can be fulfilled in all who "walk according to the Spirit" rather than according to the flesh.

### II. The Believer's Relationship with the Spirit 8:5-11

#### A. The Choice Between Flesh and Spirit 8:5-6

Q - What is it that determines whether a Christian lives according to the flesh or according to the Spirit (v. 5)? What a Christian sets his mind on - the things of the flesh or the things of the Spirit - determines how his life turns out.

Q - What are the results of the two choices a Christian can make (v. 6)? The Christian chooses between death (if he sets his mind on the things of the flesh) or life (if he sets his mind on the things of the Spirit).

#### B. The Consequences of Choosing Flesh 8:7-8

Q - How and why does the mind set on the flesh demonstrate hostility toward the Lord (v. 7)? The mind set on the flesh demonstrates hostility toward the Lord because it does not subject itself to the law of God - something a fleshly mind is not even capable of doing.

Q - What problem does verse 8 reveal for minds set on the flesh? Verse 8 reveals that “those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

### C. The Consequences of Choosing the Spirit 8:9-11

Q - What determines whether a person is “in the flesh” or “in the Spirit” (v. 9)? If the Spirit of Christ dwells in someone he is “in the Spirit,” which means that he is no longer in the flesh in the sense that he was prior to receiving the Spirit.

Q - What is the practical evidence of a spirit that is “alive” within a person (v. 10)? If a person is characterized by righteousness there is practical evidence that Christ is in him and the Spirit is “alive” in his experience.

Q - What is the best hope of a mortal body in this present life (v. 11)? The best hope for a mortal body in this life is for both God’s Son (Jesus) and God’s Spirit to dwell within him - exercising divine control over the natural man which still wishes to dominate his life.

Think About It: Those who are in Christ can choose, in spite of the downward pull of their sinful flesh, to let God’s Holy Spirit enliven their own spirit with spiritual life from God.

Apply It: To what extent are we setting our minds on God’s Spirit so that our lives, characterized by righteousness, are enjoying the life and peace God wants us to enjoy?

## “The Holy Spirit’s Importance”

Romans 8:12-17

Q - What are some of the benefits which come into the lives of people who follow the leading of God’s Spirit?

Because the Holy Spirit is a spirit being He is not physically visible to the human eye, so it is possible for someone to underestimate His importance in the lives of God’s people - as individuals and as congregations. But because He is divine and is indwelling every genuine believer, underestimating His importance would be a serious mistake! Romans 8:12-17 was written to challenge Christians regarding their relationship with the Holy Spirit.

### I. The Spirit’s Availability in the Believer’s Life 8:12-13

#### A. The Option of the Flesh 8:12-13a

Q - Why is it significant that the believer is under no obligation to the flesh (v. 12)? It is significant because the Lord does not want His people to live under obligation to their sinful fleshly nature.

Q - In what sense(s) must a person die (v. 13a) who is living according to the flesh? The person living according to the flesh will experience the form(s) of “death” most closely aligned with the fleshly indulgences they pursue.

#### B. The Option of the Spirit 8:13b

Q - What does the Spirit enable the believer to do which the unbeliever is incapable of doing? The Holy Spirit enables a believer to put to death the deeds of the body, experiencing

## Spirit-given “life” as a result.

### II. The Spirit’s Leading in the Believer’s Life 8:14-15

#### A. The Significance of Being Led by the Spirit 8:14

Q - What does Paul assure us can be said about the relationship with God of someone being led by the Holy Spirit?  
Paul assures us that anyone who is being led by the Holy Spirit is obviously, by that fact, a “son of God.”

#### B. The Alternative to Being Led by the Spirit 8:15a

Q - What spirit does Paul indicate is available to those who are not being led by the Spirit of God? Those who are not being led by the Spirit of God will be subject to “a spirit of slavery” to their fleshly nature.

#### C. The Special Relationship of Those Who Are Led by the Spirit 8:15b

Q - What is the privileged position of those who are being led by the Spirit of God? Those who are led by the Spirit of God receive a “spirit of adoption as sons” which enables them to cry out “Abba! Father!” as evidence of their close relationship with the Lord.

### III. The Spirit’s Witness in the Believer’s Life 8:16-17

#### A. The Spirit’s Witness to the Believer’s Son-ship 8:16

Q - How does God’s Spirit assure the believer that he is a child of God? The Holy Spirit testifies to the human spirit of the believer that he is a child of God - providing assurance of his salvation in Christ (cf. I John 5:10a).

## B. The Spirit's Witness to the Believer's Inheritance 8:17

Q - Whose heirs are those who are led by the Holy Spirit (v. 17a)? Those who are led by the Holy Spirit are “heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.”

Q - What difficulties can some of those who are led by the Spirit of God expect to experience as a result (v. 17b)?

Some who are led by the Spirit of God may experience suffering because of the animosity of unbelievers - just as Christ Himself did.

Q - How will believers who deal with difficulties because of their Spirit-led lives be rewarded as a result? Believers who respond properly to the animosity of unbelievers will be glorified as a result - just as the Lord Jesus was highly exalted by God the Father because of His humility in providing salvation from sin by His sacrifice on the cross.

Think About It: The Spirit's leading in a believer's life provides assurance of his relationship with the Lord and of his reward from the Lord.

Apply It: How fully are we attuned to and controlled by the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives - as evidenced by the way in which the Lord is being honored by our lives?

## “From Groan to Glory”

Romans 8:18-25

Q - What problems of life on our sin-cursed earth are you most looking forward to having behind you some day?

Someone has contrasted “The Sweet By and By,” which Christians sometimes sing about, with what they described as “The Nasty Now and Now.” The Apostle Paul wrote Romans 8:18-25 to help us get some divine perspective on the problems which have come upon our universe and its citizens as a result of the Fall in view of the glorious future God has planned for those who put their trust in Him.

### I. The Creation’s Anticipation of Glory 8:18-22

#### A. The Prospect of Future Glory 8:18-19

##### 1. Present Suffering Compared with Future Glory 8:18

Q - What are some “sufferings of this present time” which will fade into insignificance in the Christian’s glorious future? Sorrow and sickness and pain and death will all fade into insignificance in the Christian’s glorious future (Revelation 21:1-4).

##### 2. Creation’s Longing for the Revelation of the Sons of God 8:19

Q - What “revealing of the sons of God” will put an end to creation’s anxious longing? The “revealing of the sons of God” which will occur with believers’ arrival in heaven will put an end to creation’s anxious longing.

## B. The Problem on the Way to Future Glory 8:20-22

### 1. Creation's Past Subjection 8:20

Q - Who subjected creation to futility, how, and why?

Creation was subjected to futility by the Lord when He cursed creation as a result of the sin of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:14-19) - because they were told that they would surely die on the day they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which the Lord had prohibited.

### 2. Creation's Future Freedom 8:21

Q - When and how will creation be set free from its slavery to corruption? Creation will be set free from its slavery to corruption with the creation of the new heavens and new earth which will begin the eternal state.

### 3 Creation's Present Groaning 8:22

Q - What are some evidences of creation's groaning and suffering until now? The second law of thermodynamics (entropy) is leading the universe toward its gradual decline into greater disorder - so, for example, try as you might, you will not escape the effects of aging (and neither will anything else).

## II. The Christian's Anticipation of Glory 8:23-25

### A. The Christian's Present Groaning 8:23a

Q - How is the Christian's "groaning" any different than that of non-Christians? Though Christians groan with the rest of creation, Christians have received "the firstfruits of the Spirit" (a down-payment, as it were, on their eventual glorification in eternity).

## B. The Christian's Future Salvation 8:23b

Q - In what sense will the Christian's current waiting end in the "redemption of our bodies"? The Christian's current waiting will be over when he receives his glorified body at the time of the rapture, as described in I Corinthians 15:50-57.

## C. The Christian's Present Waiting 8:24-25

Q - What does the Christian's hope imply about his current condition? His hope implies that he hasn't yet fully arrived at all the Lord has in mind for His people, because he is hoping for what is yet to come.

Q - Why does the Christian's waiting for his hope require perseverance? Because waiting always requires a measure of perseverance, the Christian is required to persevere as he waits for the glory he has been promised in the eternal state as he deals with the challenges of life in an imperfect world.

Think About It: The problems of creation's past and present will seem insignificant in the glory of the believer's future.

Apply It: How well are we doing at maintaining a healthy perspective concerning our glorious future as we make our way through the challenges of life on a sin-cursed earth?

## “From Start to Finish”

Romans 8:26-30

Q - What encouragement does the Bible offer to people who think they need to earn salvation by their own efforts?

We can't pull hard enough on our bootstraps to lift ourselves off the surface of the earth - much less lifting ourselves to heaven! The Apostle Paul wrote Romans 8:26-30 in order to help us understand how fully the Lord is involved in the process of getting His people from beginning to end in the Christian experience.

### I. The Believer's Assistance in Prayer 8:26-27

#### A. The Spirit's Ministry in Prayer 8:26

Q - What thought (from verse 23) is Paul building on as he begins verse 26 with the words “in the same way”? Paul is looking back to the statement that believers are caught up in the groaning of a fallen universe even though they have “the first-fruits of the Spirit” (i.e. a “down payment” on the final stages of their salvation). As believers wait eagerly for the finalization of their adoption as God’s children (the redemption of their bodies), the Holy Spirit is already aiding them in their prayers, even praying on their behalf.

Q - What “weakness” has Paul demonstrated in Romans that people need the help of God’s Spirit in dealing with? Paul has written extensively about the weakness of the fleshly nature which believers still possess - even after having received their new nature at the time of their salvation.

Q - What does the Holy Spirit do to help the believer's

prayer life? The Holy Spirit helps believers overcome the pull of their weakened flesh, and their inability to pray as effectively as they might, by actually interceding for them with groanings too deep for words.

#### B. The Spirit's Effectiveness in Prayer 8:27

Q - Who would you say it is that “searches the hearts” and “knows what the mind of the Spirit is”? It is the Lord Himself who searches the hearts and knows what the mind of the Spirit is (cf. I Corinthians 2:11).

Q - What assures the effectiveness of the Spirit’s prayers for the saints? The Spirit’s prayers for the saints are effective because the Holy Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

### II. The Believer’s Assurance of Power 8:28-30

#### A. The Lord’s Sovereign Control 8:28

Q - On what basis was the Apostle Paul able to begin the important truth of verse 28 with the words “And we know”? The Apostle Paul could begin verse 28 with the words “And we know” because he was well aware of the fact that the Lord is looking out for the best interests of His people - as Paul is about to explain in verses 28-29.

Q - What does God’s ability to “cause all things to work together for good” tell us about Him? The Lord’s ability to cause all things to work together for good reveals that He is sovereign in His control of the affairs of the world and of His people living in the world.

Q - What qualifies a person for the assurance that all

things are working together for his good? A person can be assured that all things are working together for his good if he is one of those who love God and those who are called according to His purposes.

#### B. The Lord's Sovereign Calling 8:29-30

Q - What does the Lord's ability to predestine someone tell us about His foreknowledge (v. 29)? The Lord's ability to predestine someone in the way in which Paul says He does reveals that He knows ahead of time who is going to respond to His invitation to salvation in Christ.

Q - To what destiny has God predestined those whom He has foreknown? God has predestined those whom He has foreknown to be conformed to the image of His Son (i.e. to be Christlike in the finished stage of his eternal salvation).

Q - In what sense has the Lord caused Jesus to become "the firstborn among many brethren"? Christ's status in eternity as "the only begotten Son of God" clearly preceded the status of His many brethren (the saints) as the children of God by their adoption into the family of God.

Q - What additional ministry makes the Lord's work of predestination operational in a believer's life (v. 30)? The Lord's calling in every believer's life makes His work of predestination operational in a believer's life.

Q - What must the Lord do in order to make His calling operational in a believer's life (v. 30)? To make His calling operational in a believer's life the Lord also has to justify those whom He calls - because "many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14).

Q - In what sense has the Lord glorified people who are still on earth in an un-glorified condition? Because the Lord inhabits eternity - because He is not bound by time, as we are - He views those whom He has called and justified as already glorified from His perspective.

Think About It: The Lord has invested/is investing Himself personally and powerfully in every believer's salvation.

Apply It: Are we aware of the Holy Spirit's help in our weaknesses and in our prayer lives as we confidently trust (Philippians 1:6) in the Lord's ability to finish what He began when He foreknew and predestined and called and justified and glorified those of us who have been adopted as His children?

## “Secure in God’s Love”

Romans 8:31-29

Q - Did you come immediately to the assurance of your salvation, or did it take some time for you to be comfortable that you were secure in God’s love (assuming, of course, that you **are** secure in God’s love!)?

Romans 8:31-39 is the Apostle Paul’s comforting, classic statement on the assurance Christians can have that there is nothing which can separate them from God’s love in Christ.

### I. The Believer’s Assurance of God’s Interest 8:31-34

#### A. The Statement of God’s Interest 8:31

Q - What truths gave Paul great comfort about God’s interest in His people? The truths just listed in 8:28-30 - that God causes all things to work together for good to those who are called according to His purpose, having been foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and glorified by the Lord.

Q - Why does it not matter very much who is opposed to God’s people? Because God is for His people, it doesn’t matter much who is against them.

#### B. The Evidence of God’s Interest 8:32-34

Q - What was Paul confident God’s giving of His Son **also** assures us (v. 32)? Because God did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up to save His people, Paul was confident that He will also give them everything else they need to have.

Q - Why was Paul certain that no one can successfully bring a charge against God's elect (v. 33)? Paul was certain that no one can successfully bring a charge against God's elect because God is the one who has declared His people right in His sight by justifying them.

Q - What has Christ done which gives the believer protection against condemnation (v. 34)? The fact that Christ died for His people, was raised from the dead, is now seated at the right hand of His Father in heaven, and is interceding for His people, assures His people of protection from condemnation.

## II. The Believer's Assurance of His Security 8:35-37

### A. The Question of His Security 8:35a

Q - What are some problems which would arise if the believer could be separated from the love of Christ? The believer would lose all the benefits which come from fellowship with the Lord in the present and would be separated from the Lord in eternity if he could ever be separated from the love of Christ.

### B. Potential Obstacles to His Security 8:35b-36

Q - Why might anyone think the things Paul lists in the last part of verse 35 could separate a believer from the love of Christ? Because the things Paul lists in verse 35 are some of the worst things which can come into any person's life, it might cause a believer to imagine that the Lord had turned against him and no longer loved him (as Job's "friends" suggested was the case in the life of Job).

Q - How does Paul's quotation from Psalm 44:22 in verse

36 fit the argument of his assurance of the believer's security in Christ? Paul's quotation from Psalm 44:22 comes from a lament written by the sons of Korah at a time when the Lord had allowed difficulties to come into the lives of His people for reasons they could not understand - reminding us that God's people do sometimes experience difficulties they can't explain.

### C. The Certainty of His Security 8:37

Q - What enabled the Apostle Paul to express the confidence he did in verse 37 in the face of all of life's potential difficulties? Paul was confident that believers "overwhelmingly conquer," in spite of difficulties they sometimes experience, because of the love Christ clearly demonstrated for His people when He Himself experienced great difficulties on their behalf.

## III. The Believer's Assurance of God's Love 8:38-39

### A. Potential Obstacles to God's Love 8:38-39a

Q - What impresses you about the list of things Paul includes as potential obstacles to God's love? The things Paul lists as potential obstacles to God's love include the most challenging things which a Christian might experience during his earthly life - including even death and opposition from supernatural powers of evil (to which Paul's reference to principalities and powers apparently refer) and anything which might happen in the future.

### B. The Certainty of God's Love 8:39b

Q - What enabled Paul to be so certain about God's love for His people? The extent of God's love for His people as evidenced in the sacrifice of His Son Jesus on behalf of His people enabled Paul to be certain of God's love for His people.

Think About It: The extent of God's investment in His people assures us that nothing can separate us from His love.

Apply It: The fact that God has assured His people of eternal life in glory because of their relationship with His Son gives every believer reason to be confident that nothing they might experience in life can ever separate them from God's love in Christ.

## “Genuine Concern”

Romans 9:1-5

Q - What is the most demanding thing you can recall ever doing as an expression of your concern for the salvation of someone you would like to see come to know Christ?

It is easy to say that we are concerned for the salvation of those who are spiritually lost, but how does the genuineness of our concern show in our actions? Romans 9:1-5 expresses the amazing depth of Paul’s concern about the salvation of his people - the nation of Israel.

### I. Paul’s Unceasing Grief for Israel 9:1-2

#### A. The Sincerity in What He Writes 9:1

Q - What did Paul cite as evidence of his seriousness about the matter at hand? Paul assured his readers of his honesty in saying what he was saying about the matter at hand, adding that his conscience was clear before the Holy Spirit Himself in what he was about to write.

#### B. The Sorrow in His Heart 9:2

Q - What impresses you about Paul’s expression of concern for his people in verse 2? Paul was not only sorrowful but greatly sorrowful, with his heart weighed down with a sorrow which was unceasing.

### II. Paul’s Unlimited Concern for Israel 9:3-5

#### A. The Sincerity of His Concern 9:3a

Q - What clearly demonstrated the sincerity of Paul's concern for Israel? Paul was willing even to be accursed - separated from Christ - for the sake of others.

B. The Object of His Concern 9:3b

Q - What helps explain the unusual concern Paul had for the people of Israel? The fact that Paul was himself a member of the people of Israel helps explain his unusual concern for the people to whom he was related in the flesh.

C. The Elaboration of His Concern 9:4-5

Q - What does Paul's description of his people as "Israelites" reveal about them (5:4a)? Paul's description of his people as "Israelites" reveals that they were all descendants of Abraham through his grandson Jacob - whose name was changed to Israel by the Lord Himself (Genesis 32:28).

Q - In what sense were the people of Israel adopted as sons (9:4b)? Though the people of Israel were not physically descended from God, they were chosen by Him to be His children out of all the people who were on the earth (Deuteronomy 7:6).

Q - To what is Paul referring when he speaks of the glory belonging to Israel (9:4b)? The people of Israel were exposed to the glory of the Lord at many times and ways throughout their history - as at Sinai, throughout their wilderness wanderings (as in the pillars of cloud and fire), and in the tabernacle and the temple.

Q - What covenants might Paul have had in mind as particularly significant to Israel (9:4b)? The Abrahamic Covenant, the Palestinian Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant and the

Davidic Covenant would all be covenants of particular importance and relevance to the people of Israel.

Q - What made Israel's law worthy of mention in comparison with the legal statutes of surrounding nations? The law of Israel was given by the Lord - not a man-made law like those of surrounding nations.

Q - What made Israel's temple service worthy of note (9:4b)? Like the law, which included instructions regarding temple service, Israel's temple service was given to Israel by the Lord Himself.

Q - What promises might Paul have had in mind with reference to Israel (9:4b)? The Lord's promise to Abraham to bless him and make him a nation, bless him and make him a blessing, bless those who bless him, give him a land, and the many Messianic kingdom promises made to Israel may have been in Paul's mind.

Q - What made the fathers of Israel more significant than other fathers (9:5a)? The fathers of Israel were more significant than those of other nations because they were the founders of the nation of Israel with its unique significance in the Lord's plans for the ages.

Q - What claim did the people of Israel have upon the Christ (9:5)? Israel was the nation into which Christ was born, in fulfillment of prophecy, and Christ is (as Paul described Him) "over all, God blessed forever."

Think About It: Paul would even have been willing to give up his own salvation out of the deep concern he felt for the nation of Israel.

Apply It: Because the Lord selected the nation of Israel as His “chosen people,” they have always been very significant in world history - and they always will be even in eternity - so they should be highly respected by God’s people today.

## “The Lord’s Choice”

Romans 9:6-13

Q - What has the failure of the people of Israel to respond to the Lord in obedience and trust done to His plan for their salvation?

Many of the people of Israel have assumed, down through the millenia, that the fact that they were chosen as a people to be favored by the Lord makes every Jew a child of God and every Gentile an outsider when it comes to His favor on human beings. Romans 9:6-13 explains, however, that the Lord has not chosen all of Israel, in spite of Israel’s significant blessings, as recipients of His provision of salvation.

I. The Lord’s Sovereign Choice Among Abraham’s Descendants 9:6-9

A. His Narrowing of the Field 9:6-7

1. Among the Descendants of Israel 9:6

Q - What is Paul’s point relating to Israel in verse 6?  
Paul is making the point that a Jew’s physical descent is not a guarantee of spiritual salvation because spiritual salvation is based on a faith relationship, not a physical relationship.

2. Among the Descendants of Abraham 9:7

Q - What resulted from the Lord’s decision to number Abraham’s descendants through Isaac? The Lord’s decision to number Abraham’s descendants, for spiritual purposes, through Isaac and not through Ishmael meant that His promise of blessing to Abraham would be channeled through Abraham’s natural

al-born son, Isaac, and his descendants.

B. His Preference for the Children of the Promise 9:8

Q - How would you explain the difference between “the children of the flesh” and “the children of the promise”? The children of the flesh are physical descendants, which both Ishmael and Isaac were, to Abraham. But the children of the promise were the descendants of Abraham through Isaac, because the Lord made it clear that Abraham’s “descendants” would be identified through Isaac (Genesis 21:12; Hebrews 11:18).

C. His Word of Promise to Abraham 9:9

Q - What was significant about the Lord’s promise to Abraham regarding a son through Sarah which Paul quotes? Though Abraham was willing to entertain the possibility that Ishmael might be the son the Lord had promised to him (Genesis 17:18), the Lord insisted that the son He had in mind would be born to Abraham’s wife, Sarah.

II. The Lord’s Sovereign Choice Among Isaac’s Sons 9:10-13

A. His Options Among the Descendants of Isaac 9:10

Q - What issues regarding the Lord’s promises to Abraham were raised by the birth of twins to Isaac by Rebekah? The birth of twins to Rebekah introduced the question of which of her sons might be the one through whom the Lord’s promise to bless Abraham to make him a great nation and to bless him (Genesis 12:2) would be realized.

B. His Basis for Choosing Among the Descendants of Isaac 9:11

Q - Upon what did the Lord base His choice between the two sons of Isaac? The Lord based His choice between the two sons of Isaac upon His purpose - according to His will that Jacob become the father of His people Israel.

C. His Statement of Choice Among the Descendants of Isaac 9:12-13

1. His Preference for the Younger 9:12

Q - What is significant about the Lord's choice of the younger of Isaac's twin sons? Because it was the custom among the people of Israel for the firstborn son in the family to inherit a double portion of his father's inheritance, the Lord's choice of the younger of Isaac's twin sons was out of sync with customary practices.

2. His Love for the Younger 9:13

Q - In what sense did the Lord "love" Jacob and "hate" Esau? The Lord loved Jacob and hated Esau in the sense that He chose Jacob to father the "sons of Israel" over Esau, even though Esau was the older of Isaac and Rebekah's twin sons.

Think About It: God's plan of salvation has not failed if it doesn't include all the people of Israel. The Lord has chosen to save people not on the basis of their physical descent but of His own sovereign choice.

Apply It: It is not social custom or standing which results in the Lord's favor but His sovereign choice in response, as it turns out, to those who most fully trust Him.

## “Is God Fair?”

Romans 9:14-18

Q - How important would you say the Lord’s part is in determining whether a person becomes a recipient of His saving mercy and grace or not?

Does the Lord have to treat all sinners the same in order to be fair in what He does? The truth is, of course, that not all sinners **are** the same, so it makes no sense to insist that the Lord treat them all the same. The Apostle Paul has observed in Romans 3:10 that “there is none righteous, not even one,” and in Romans 3:23 that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” There is no one who is actually deserving of the Lord’s mercy, because “all have sinned,” and “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). So, in Romans 9:14-18, Paul goes on to assure us that the Lord has every right to show mercy to some people and to harden others in unbelief because He is the maker of them all.

### I. Paul’s Question About God’s Justice 9:14

#### A. The Question Raised 9:14a

Q - What has Paul said which might cause someone to wonder about the possibility of injustice with God? Paul has shown that the Lord chose Isaac over Ishmael, and he chose Jacob over Esau - leading some to wonder whether Ishmael and Esau were treated justly.

#### B. The Question Answered 9:14b

Q - What does Paul’s response to the question indicate? Paul’s response to the question regarding the possibility of

injustice on the part of the Lord (“May it never be”) indicates his strong feelings and his strong denial of even the possibility of injustice on the part of the Lord.

## II. Paul’s Explanation of God’s Justice 9:15-18

### A. The Quotation from Exodus 9:15

Q - What was the original setting of the statement which Moses quotes in v. 15 from Exodus 33:19? The Lord was responding to the request of Moses that he be allowed to see the Lord’s glory - when the Lord answered by granting his request and assuring him that He is gracious to whom He chooses to be gracious and that He shows compassion for the person to whom He chooses to show compassion.

### B. The Basis for God’s Choosing 9:16

Q - What is the good news to be found in this verse? The good news in verse 16 is that God is a merciful God who will display His mercy to the person to whom He chooses to display His mercy.

### C. The Illustration of Pharaoh 9:17

Q - What was the historical setting for Paul’s quotation from Exodus 9:16? Paul’s quotation from Exodus 9:16 comes from the account of the sixth plague which the Lord sent upon Egypt when boils and sores broke out on the skin of the people of the land, and the Lord told Pharaoh that He had allowed him to be raised to his position as Pharaoh in order to demonstrate His power over Pharaoh, and to have His name proclaimed throughout the earth as a result.

Q - What good news for Pharaoh was a part of the Lord’s

explanation in the original setting? The good news for Pharaoh was seen in the fact that it was the Lord who had raised him up to his position of power over the land of Egypt.

Q - In what sense was the Lord's name proclaimed throughout the whole earth as a result of Pharaoh? Word of the miraculous delivery of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt was soon spreading throughout the region, and it is still being spread to the ends of the earth wherever the word of God is being read and taught.

#### D. The Conclusion 9:18

Q - What does Paul's conclusion tell us about God's salvation plan? Paul's conclusion tells us that God's plan of salvation is being extended to those to whom He chooses to extend it, and that it is being withheld from any whom He chooses to harden to His truth.

Q - What does Paul's conclusion tell us about our own part in God's salvation plan? Paul's conclusion tells us that we who have come to salvation have come to salvation because the Lord has extended His mercy to us.

Q - Would it be fair to say that this passage contains the whole story on the issue of God's part and man's part in the matter of salvation? If not, where would you turn for "the rest of the story"? It would be fair to say that this passage does not contain the whole story of either God's part or man's part in the matter of salvation. There are many other Scripture passages which provide information on the important subject of salvation. "The rest of the story" is also addressed where we are assured that the Lord "is not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9), and the many other passages which enlarge on the love of God for the whole world

and of His provision for “all who will” to be saved, cf.  
Matthew 11:28).

Think About It: The Lord commits no injustice when He chooses to do what He wishes to do in the lives of the people He has created.

Apply It: There can be no doubt that the Lord plays a significant role in the salvation of every person who comes to faith in Christ, but there is also a significant part to be played by every person who comes to faith in Christ as well.

## “The Potter’s Prerogative”

Romans 9:19-29

Q - What claim would you say the people of Israel have upon the mercy and grace of the Lord?

As the creator of earth and all of its human occupants the Lord had every right to choose or not choose any group of people as His own “chosen people.” He Himself observed that He did not choose Israel because they were many, but because He loved them - though they were the fewest of all peoples (Deuteronomy 7:7-8). Paul demonstrates, in Romans 9:19-29, that the Lord’s sovereignty entitles Him to judge or to show mercy as He wishes.

I. The Lord’s Right to Do What He Wants with What He Made  
9:19-21

A. The Hypothetical Question 9:19

Q - How would you paraphrase Paul’s question to make his point clearer? How can God blame anyone for their choices if He is the one who is ultimately in control?

B. The Impropriety of the Questioner 9:20

Q - What is Paul’s Objection to the hypothetical questioner of verse 19? Paul’s objection to anyone who would question the choices God makes is that no one has the right to question the God who created them as He did in the first place.

C. The Authority of the Creator 9:21

Q - How does Paul’s illustration of the potter apply to the

question at hand? It should be obvious to anyone that a potter has every right to mold a lump of clay in any way he chooses to mold it - dividing it, if He wishes, to make entirely different things out of each part of the original lump of clay.

## II. The Lord's Patience and Mercy in Dealing with Mankind 9:22-29

### A. His Patience with Vessels of Wrath 9:22

Q - How does the Lord demonstrate His patience with “vessels of wrath prepared for destruction”? If the Lord were not patient with “vessels of wrath prepared for destruction” (i.e. people who are going to be judged for failing to trust Him) He could destroy such “vessels” at the first sign of unbelief in their lives.

### B. His Mercy with Vessels for Glory 9:23-29

#### 1. The Revelation of God's Mercy 9:23

Q - How does the Lord make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy? The Lord's glory is richly displayed toward “vessels of mercy” (i.e. people who are destined for eternal reward because of their faith in Christ) as His mercy is viewed in stark contrast with His patience toward vessels of wrath prepared for destruction.

#### 2. The Objects of God's Mercy 9:24

Q - Which “vessels of mercy” did Paul have in mind in writing this passage? Paul had in mind as “vessels of mercy” all who have been called by God to salvation in Christ from among both the Jews and the Gentiles.

### 3. The Scriptural Evidence of God's Mercy 9:25-29

Q - What people who were not His people will the Lord make His people according to verse 25 from Hosea 2:23? Hosea's prophesy anticipated the fact that, because the Lord chose the people of Israel as His chosen people, the Gentiles who become His people because of their faith in Christ are also made God's people as a result.

Q - How did Hosea 1:10 picture the Lord showing His mercy to those who were not His people (9:26)? Hosea 1:10 pictures the Lord showing His mercy to the apostate nation of northern Israel (cf. 1:6, 9), as well as to Gentiles (Romans 9:24), by inviting northern Israel, who were rejected for their apostasy, and Gentiles, who were not God's chosen people of Israel, to become sons of the living God.

Q - To whom did Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 10:22-23) anticipate the Lord would extend His mercy (9:27-28)? Isaiah 10:22-23 anticipated that the Lord would number only a "remnant" of the people of Israel - however numerous they might become - among the objects of His saving mercy.

Q - What did Isaiah 1:9 indicate would happen if the Lord did not extend His mercy (9:29)? Isaiah 1:9 anticipated that, if the Lord had not extended His mercy toward the "remnant" of even His "chosen people," the people of Israel, the entire nation would have been subjected to divine judgment as the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were judged at the time of Lot.

Think About It: The Lord has the authority to choose as His own people those whom He will choose - just as He said He would in the Scriptures.

Apply It: All who are going to be saved from God's judgment

upon sinners are the objects of the His mercy, because there is no one who deserves to be saved on his own merits.

## “The Pursuit of Righteousness”

Romans 9:30-33

Q - How would you advise the person who is interested in enjoying a righteous standing before the Lord?

Because the Lord chose the people of Israel as His own “chosen people,” and because He favored them in so many ways by His personal involvement in their national status and their significant blessings, we might expect that the nation of Israel would have become the world’s most significant source of spiritual life and light on planet earth. But it hasn’t turned out that way. As Paul explains, in Romans 9:30-33, it has turned out that many Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, while many of the people of Israel who did pursue it have failed to attain righteousness.

### I. The Faith of Gentiles in Attaining Righteousness 9:30

#### A. The Truth of the Gentiles’ Attainment 9:30a

Q - To what Gentiles does Paul refer who did not pursue righteousness but nevertheless attained righteousness (cf. 9:23-24)? Paul referred to Gentiles, like some in the church at Rome to which he was writing, who heard the message of the gospel and believed and embraced it, resulting in positional righteousness because of their faith in Christ.

#### B. The Means of the Gentiles’ Attainment 9:30b

Q - How would you explain the puzzling observation that Gentiles who were not pursuing righteousness managed to attain that which they were not pursuing? Many Gentiles, who may or may not have been aware of the details of God’s law,

have heard the preaching of the gospel and have believed and received the good news that Christ offers salvation from sin by their response of faith.

Q - How would you integrate the teaching in this verse with Paul's teaching in verses 6-29 about the sovereignty of God in choosing those He wishes? The Bible's emphasis on the importance of faith in achieving righteous standing before the Lord makes it clear that the Lord's sovereign choice of those He will save is strongly influenced by their response of faith to the message of His word.

## II. The Failure of Israel to Attain Righteousness 9:31-33

### A. The Announcement of Israel's Failure 9:31

Q - How would you explain Paul's assertion that the people of Israel pursued a law of righteousness? The people of Israel were very religious in their practice of many of the teachings of the law because of their belief that practicing the regulations of the law would grant them right standing before the Lord.

Q - Why was Israel's pursuit of the law of righteousness not a successful pursuit? Most of the people of Israel believed that conforming to the regulations of the law made them righteous on the basis of their own merits as law observers.

### B. The Analysis of Israel's Failure 9:32a

Q - What most important ingredient was missing from Israel's pursuit of righteousness? Israel's pursuit of righteousness was lacking faith in the Lord Himself rather than faith in their ability to conform to the requirements of the law.

Q - How might an accurate understanding of the Lord's challenge in Isaiah 51:1 have helped the people of Israel find what they were pursuing? Isaiah 51:1 called on the people of Israel to seek the Lord Himself (the Rock from which they were hewn) - not to their own performance - in their pursuit of righteous standing before the Lord.

Q - What was there about Israel's pursuit of righteousness which clearly demonstrated their failure to understand and pursue the most important ingredient in their pursuit? Israel's pursuit of righteousness by law observance resulted in a sense of self-righteousness (demonstrated in the likes of the Pharisees of Jesus' day) which emphasized the law observer, not the provision of the Lord Himself - an affront to the intention of the Lord.

### C. The Anticipation of Israel's Failure 9:32b-33

Q - What is the "stone of stumbling" and "rock of offense" to which Paul refers in this verse (an interesting combination of the thoughts of Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16)? The "stone of stumbling" and "rock of offense" to which Paul refers in this passage is the Lord Jesus.

Q - What response to the stone/rock referred to in verse 33 did Isaiah anticipate would have prevented disappointment? Isaiah anticipated that the response of faith to the stone/rock he referred to in his prophecy would have kept Israel from being disappointed (*kataischuno* - to put to shame).

Think About It: Because righteousness has to be attained by faith, some of the Gentiles have attained it while many in Israel (who pursued it through the law) have not attained it.

Apply It: Every person who does not want to find himself put

to shame in this life and (more importantly) the life to come  
needs to place his full trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to save him  
from sin - not to try without success to work his way into the  
Lord's favor by means of any number of good works.

## “The Way of Righteousness”

Romans 10:1-10

Q - What would you say to a Jew who believes that he can please the Lord and enter God’s kingdom by his righteous observance of God’s law?

Though Paul (as Saul of Tarsus) once believed that he could enter God’s kingdom by righteous observance of God’s law, he came to see things quite differently - as Romans 10:1-10 reveals. As he wrote, in Philippians 3:7, “But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.”

### I. Paul’s Prayer for Israel 10:1

Q - Do you think that the Apostle Paul expected the Lord to answer his prayer for Israel? Paul was well-aware that the people of Israel would reject God’s gift of salvation in Christ in large numbers, though there would be a significant minority who would receive Christ - and there would be a day when “all Israel will be saved” as they enter the Millennium (Romans 11:26).

### II. Paul’s Evaluation of Israel 10:2-3

#### A. The Zeal of Israel 10:2

Q - What would be a good illustration of Israel’s “zeal for God” as mentioned by Paul? Israel’s observance of the Sabbath and their reverence for the Jerusalem temple were evidence of Israel’s zeal for God. Paul himself was so zealous for God in his commitment to Judaism that he was seeking to destroy the church before coming to Christ.

## B. The Failure of Israel 10:3

Q - How has Israel sought to establish their own righteousness while lacking knowledge about God's righteousness?  
Israel sought to establish their own righteousness by their devotion to the law, which they believed was the way to salvation, while lacking an accurate understanding of the importance of faith in God Himself.

## III. Paul's Prescription for Israel 10:4-10

### A. The Place of Christ in Achieving Righteousness 10:4

Q - In what sense is Christ the "end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes"? When a person truly trusts in Christ as their Savior they are justified (declared right) in a righteousness they could never have achieved by law observance.

### B. The Problem of the Law in Achieving Righteousness 10:5

Q - What is the prospect of "living," as Moses told the people of Israel they could do (Leviticus 18:5) if they would practice ("do") the righteousness which is based on law? To the extent that anyone properly follows the principles of God's law their life will be enriched, but because no one is capable of fully practicing the law there is no chance of achieving salvation and the eternal life it gives by law observance.

### C. The Place of Faith in Achieving Righteousness 10:6-7

Q - What point was Moses making to the people of Israel in the context of Deuteronomy 30:12-13 (see verses 11-13)?  
Moses was making the point that the people of Israel were in

possession of God's law, which he received at Sinai, so no one needed to ascend to heaven or descend deep into the earth (as if it had to be mined) to receive it.

Q - How did the Apostle Paul re-interpret Deuteronomy 30:12-13 to fit his argument in verses Romans 10:6-7? The Apostle Paul added parenthetical thoughts to the words of Moses, applying the thought of bringing Christ down from heaven (by ascending into heaven) and the thought of bringing Christ up from the dead (by descending into the abyss).

Q - Why does faith-based righteousness not need to bring Christ down from heaven or up from the dead? Faith-based righteousness has no need to do what has already been done by the Lord Himself in the incarnation and resurrection of Christ.

#### D. The Place of the “Word of Faith” in Achieving Righteousness 10:8-10

Q - What was Paul's point in quoting the phrase “the word is very near you” from Deuteronomy 30:14? Just as Moses assured the people of Israel that, because God's word was in their possession, they did not need to ascend to heaven or descend into the earth to find it, so Paul assured his readers that they also did not need to work hard to achieve salvation because God's word regarding salvation was readily available to them.

Q - What might cause a Jew to confess Jesus as Lord and believe in His resurrection? If a Jew is exposed to the truth of Scripture regarding Christ and embraces it as the truth which it is he has reason to confess that Jesus is “Lord” (in both the sense that He is the master and in the sense that He is God) and to believe that God raised Him from the dead.

Q - How does the Lord reward heart belief and verbal confession regarding Christ? The Lord rewards heart belief and verbal confession regarding Christ with righteous standing before the Lord and the gift of salvation which comes with it.

Think About It: Many people of Israel are missing out on God's salvation offer by failing to believe God's word concerning Christ.

Apply It: Are you enjoying the assurance of salvation from the problem of sin by trusting God's word concerning Christ and confessing your faith in Christ before others?

## “Spreading the Good News”

Romans 10:11-15

Q - How important would you say the work of taking the message of salvation to the ends of the earth is?

The Apostle Paul has gone into significant detail in the early chapters of Romans to explain the sinful condition of mankind and the loving response of the Lord to provide salvation from sin for all who will trust in Christ - “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (as John the Baptist described Jesus in John 1:29). In Romans 9 the apostle turned his attention to the need of the Jews for salvation by means of a faith response to the Lord’s provision. In Romans 10:11-15 Paul goes on to explain why it is important to get the message of the gospel out to both Jews and Gentiles around the world.

### I. The Blessing of Belief 10:11

Q - What “disappointment” will those who believe in Jesus be spared? Those who believe in Jesus will be spared the disappointment of a meaningless experience in this life and the problem of separation from God in the eternal future.

### II. The Importance of Belief 10:12-13

#### A. Paul’s Observation 10:12

Q - What difference is there in God’s plan for the salvation of Jews as compared with His plan for the salvation of Greeks (Gentiles)? It is God’s plan for both Jews and Greeks to call on the Lord in order to experience the abundant riches He has to offer.

Q - Is the truth of verse 12 equally relevant in both the Old and New Testament settings for both Jews and Greeks?  
In every time and place it is the will of the Lord for people to call on Him - as people began to do in the line of Seth, son of Adam and Eve (Genesis 4:26), and as others like Enoch and Noah and Abraham and many others in Old Testament times clearly did.

#### B. Paul's Quotation 10:13

Q - What need to call on the name of the Lord is the focus of Paul's quotation from Joel 2:32 (see verses 30-32 for the fuller context)? Joel 2:32 focuses on the time during the tribulation when people will be delivered by calling on the name of the Lord.

Q - What does it mean and why is it important to "call on the name of the Lord"? To call on the name of the Lord is to acknowledge the truth which His name (*Yahweh*) reveals - that He IS (i.e. He really exists, and He is the one and only God), and it is important because only the real God can provide the help (whatever help it may be) which people need when they call on His name.

### III. The Opportunity to Believe 10:14-15

#### A. Paul's Questions 10:14-15a

Q - What is the likelihood that someone will call on Jesus without first coming to believe in Him? It is highly unlikely that someone will call on the Lord Jesus until they have come to believe that He IS and that He is able to respond to their need.

Q - What is the likelihood that someone will hear about

Jesus without a preacher's help (or, at least, a copy of Scripture in their own language)? Though there is much which can be known about God on the basis of natural revelation, really understanding who Jesus is and why He is important is most likely to come about through God's word and through someone's explanation of God's word.

Q - What is the likelihood that someone who has not been sent to preach will preach about Christ? Most enlightened preaching about Christ takes place because someone has been trained and sent to do the preaching.

#### B. Paul's Quotation 10:15b

Q - What "good news" was carried on the mountains by those who have "lovely feet" in the original setting of Paul's quotation from Isaiah 52:7? In the original setting of Paul's quotation from Isaiah 52:7 the "good news" which was carried on the mountains by those with "lovely feet" was the message of release from captivity (in Babylon) by the hand of the Lord.

Q - How does Paul apply the reference to the "lovely" or "beautiful" feet of Isaiah 52:7 to his message in Romans 10:15? Paul observes that, just as the Jews received good news when messengers traveled on "beautiful feet" to announce their deliverance from captivity (in Babylon), so those who travel to share the message of salvation to Jews and Gentiles who need to hear of it are messengers with "beautiful feet" because of the good news they bring in their travels.

Thin About It: The blessing of calling on Jesus for salvation is available only to those who are privileged to hear proclaimed, in some manner, the message of the gospel.

Apply It: How can we be meaningfully involved in spreading

the good news of salvation in Christ to Jews and Gentiles all around the world?

## “God Has Spoken”

Romans 10:16-21

Q - What is it that keeps most people from responding to the message of the gospel?

The Lord has gone to great lengths down through the centuries to reveal Himself and His word to the inhabitants of the earth - through personal communication and appearances, through His written word and the Living Word, and (more broadly) through the things which He has made. Paul explains, in Romans 10:16-21, that God has been more than fair in getting His message out to those who are willing to hear it.

### I. Israel’s Failure to Heed the Good News 10:16-17

#### A. Paul’s Observation 10:16a

Q - What failure, on whose part, does Paul note in the first part of verse 16? Paul observes the failure of mankind generally, though he has in mind the failure of his own people Israel specifically, to pay attention to the good news.

#### B. Paul’s Quotation 10:16b

Q - Whose failure to believe what truth did Isaiah note in Paul’s quotation from Isaiah 53:1? Isaiah observed mankind’s failure to believe his message, but he was writing to his own people Israel specifically as a Jewish prophet.

#### C. Paul’s Summation 10:17

Q - What opportunity to demonstrate faith have some in Israel passed up? The people of Israel, like mankind more

generally, have failed to place their faith in the word of Christ because of their inattention to God's word.

## II. Israel's Opportunity to Hear and Know the Good News 10:18-20

### A. The Opportunity to Hear 10:18

#### 1. Paul's Question 10:18a

Q - Why might Paul surmise that some of his people had never heard? Paul surmised that people, especially his own people of Israel, must not have heard God's word in view of their failure to respond to it.

#### 2. Paul's Quotation 10:18b

Q - What voice does Paul's quotation from Psalm 19:4 assure us that all men have had the opportunity to hear? Paul's quotation from Psalm 19:4 assures us that all men have had the opportunity to hear the voice of creation, evident to all in the "declaration" of the heavens and the atmosphere - though Paul is apparently applying the truth of Psalm 19:4 to the message of the gospel which was also going out to all the earth already in his day through the work of new testament evangelists.

### B. The Opportunity to Know 10:19

#### 1. Paul's Question 10:19a

Q - Why might Paul speculate that Israel did not know the good news (v. 16)? Paul seems to speculate that Israel did not know the good news because there were so few in Israel who were believing the message of good news.

## 2. Paul's Quotation from Moses 10:19b

Q - What does Paul's quotation from Deuteronomy 32:21 reveal about the Lord's frustration with the people of Israel?

Paul's quotation from Deuteronomy 32:21 reveals the Lord's decision to make Israel jealous as a result of the positive response to the gospel by non-Jews.

## 3. Paul's Quotation from Isaiah 10:20

Q - What does Paul's quotation from Isaiah 65:1 tell us about the opportunity to know God's message? In view of Israel's unresponsiveness, the Lord permitted Himself to be found by non-Jewish nations who were not seeking Him.

## III. Israel's Rejection of the Good News 10:21

Q - What does Paul identify (from Isaiah 65:2) as Israel's failure before God? Paul quotes Isaiah 65:2 which describes Israel as a disobedient and obstinate people.

Think About It: Many from Israel have failed to respond to God's good news because of obstinance, not because His message wasn't available or clear.

Apply It: The Lord is pleased to be found by all who are willing to respond to the good news message of salvation - whether they are Jews or Gentiles - though Jews have generally been among those who are less responsive.

## “Chosen or Not Chosen?”

Romans 11:1-10

Q - Does the common designation of Israel as God’s “chosen people” refer to all of the nation of Israel or only to some?

In Deuteronomy 7:6-8 the Lord explained His choice of the people of Israel: “For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath [Exodus 32:13] which He swore to your fathers . . .” So all of Israel are the chosen people of God, but not all have proved to be “chosen” for salvation as individuals - for the reason just given in Romans 10:31! Romans 11:1-10 contains Paul’s explanation that God has always worked on behalf of Israel to assure salvation for at least a remnant.

### I. The Lord’s Preservation in Israel’s Past 11:1-4

#### A. The Question of Divine Rejection 11:1

Q - On what basis was Paul confident that the Lord has not rejected His people Israel? Paul expressed confidence that the Lord has not rejected His people Israel because he himself was an Israelite whom the Lord had clearly not rejected.

#### B. The Assurance of Divine Preservation 11:2-4

Q - To whom does Paul refer when he writes of those

whom God “foreknew” (v. 2)? In Romans 8:29 Paul has already said that “those whom [God] foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son,” so Paul is referring to Jews who were chosen for salvation because God knew beforehand that they were going to respond to Him.

Q - What fear of Elijah does Paul’s quotation (v. 3) reveal? Paul’s quotation of Elijah’s words recalls the prophet’s fear that he might have been the only true believer in his day in view of the spiritual drift of his people Israel.

Q - What assurance did the Lord give to calm Elijah’s fear (v. 4)? The Lord assured the Prophet Elijah that he was not the only true believer in his day, because the Lord had preserved seven thousand other Jews in his day who had not bowed their knees to the false-god Baal.

## II. The Lord’s Preservation in Israel’s Present 11:5-10

### A. The Assertion of Divine Preservation 11:5-6

Q - On what basis does Paul assert that God was preserving a remnant of Israel in his day (v. 5)? Paul took encouragement that, since the Lord preserved thousands in Elijah’s day who were still committed to Him, the Lord was doing the same in his own day by preserving a remnant from among generally unbelieving Jews as His own true followers.

Q - Why does Paul make such a point of emphasizing God’s grace (v. 6)? Because Jews in Paul’s day, like those in Elijah’s day, were generally spiritually “disobedient and obstinate” (10:31), he knew that the Lord’s grace (undeserved favor) was in play in the lives of Jews who were coming to Christ.

### B. The Assertion of Divine Hardening 11:7-10

## 1. Paul's Explanation of Divine Choosing 11:7

Q - What is it that Israel was seeking but did not obtain (v. 7a)? Israel was seeking to obtain righteous standing before the Lord on the basis of their law observance (as Paul has observed in the earlier chapters of Romans).

Q - Who **did** obtain what Israel was seeking but not finding (v. 7b)? Gentiles who were coming to faith in Christ in Paul's day (as in ours) were obtaining the righteous standing with the Lord which Israel was seeking but not finding.

## 2. Paul's Illustration of Divine Hardening 11:8-10

Q - Is Paul saying that God is responsible for Israel's stupor and blindness and deafness (v. 8)? Paul is not making God responsible for Israel's spiritual stupor and blindness and deafness, but simply observing that Israel's unbelief in his day was a continuation of their response to spiritual things down through the many years of their history.

Q - What is the point of Paul's quotation from David's writings (vv. 9-10)? Paul is observing that just as Israel was generally unresponsive to the Lord in the days of Moses and of Isaiah and of Christ Himself, so Israel was spiritually unresponsive in David's time (as David's description of his spiritual enemies revealed in Psalm 69 which Paul is quoting).

Think About It: Only a remnant of the people of Israel experienced salvation in the past and are experiencing salvation in the present - and always on the basis of God's grace.

Apply It: People who come to salvation in any age do so, not because they are naturally inclined to trust in the Lord, but because the Lord has extended His undeserved favor to them.

## “Is God Finished with Israel?”

Romans 11:11-24

Q - What good could the Lord possibly bring out of the failure of the people of Israel to respond in faith to Him?

Though Israel has often failed to respond in faith to the Lord, the end of their story is yet to be told!

### I. The Result of Israel’s Transgression 11:11

Q - What does Paul assure us did not result from Israel’s stumbling? Paul assures his readers that Israel’s stumbling did not result in their falling down.

Q - What does Paul indicate has resulted from Israel’s transgression? The Apostle Paul indicated that the transgression of Israel has resulted in salvation for Gentiles - intended to make Israel jealous.

### II. The Anticipation of Israel’s Acceptance 11:12-16

#### A. Paul’s Ministry to the Gentiles 11:12-13

Q - In what sense has Israel’s transgression enriched the world and the Gentiles (v. 12)? The transgression of Israel, especially in rejecting their Messiah, resulted in His substitutionary, sacrificial death - providing salvation for everyone in the world who will trust in Him as their Savior, and abundant life for Gentiles who were once alienated from Jews and from the Lord.

Q - In what sense did Paul magnify his ministry by his message to Gentiles (v. 13)? As an apostle to the Gentiles, the

Apostle Paul had a much larger and frequently more responsive audience for his gospel message, magnifying the impact of his message as he traveled in the middle east and Europe as a gospel messenger.

#### B. Paul's Hope for the Jews 11:14-16

Q - What did Paul hope would result from his ministry to Gentiles (v. 14)? Paul hoped that his ministry to Gentiles would move some of his fellow-countrymen to jealousy and result in the salvation of some Jews - as well as Gentiles.

Q - What result did Paul anticipate from Israel's acceptance of and by the Lord (v. 15)? Seeing that Israel's rejection of the gospel was resulting in reconciliation for many in the world, Paul anticipated that Israel's acceptance of and by the Lord would result in life from the dead.

Q - How would you explain Paul's point from the word pictures of verse 16? Paul was arguing that, just as a good piece of dough will result in more dough (due to expansion), and just as a healthy root will grow into a healthy tree, so the salvation of some of his Jewish brothers could be expected to spread for the salvation of many more.

### III. The Lord's Acceptance of the Gentiles 11:17-21

#### A. Paul's Warning Against Arrogance 11:17-18

Q - How did Paul picture the privilege Gentiles have experienced in verse 17? Paul pictured the privilege of Gentiles who were being saved as wild olive branches being grafted into the root of a Jewish olive tree from which Jewish branches had been broken off.

Q - What did Paul warn Gentiles against (v. 18) in view of their privileges? Paul warned Gentile believers against becoming arrogant over having been grafted into the healthy root of an olive tree, realizing that their health as grafted branches was dependent on the health of the root into which they were grafted.

#### B. Paul's Warning to Gentile Believers 11:19-21

Q - Why was Israel “broken off” and the Gentiles “grafted in” on God’s olive tree (v. 19)? Jewish branches were “broken off” from the root which they had sprung up from because of their unbelief, and Gentile believers were grafted in because of their faith in the Lord.

Q - What do Gentile peoples need to be on guard against, and why (vv. 20-21)? If Gentiles grafted into the Jewish olive tree strayed away into unbelief, they could easily be broken off just as unbelieving Jews had been.

#### IV. The Enumeration of God’s Options 11:22-24

Q - Who became recipients of God’s kindness and severity (v. 22)? Gentile believers became recipients of God’s kindness in coming to salvation, while Jews who did not have faith in God became recipients of His severity when they were broken off from the family of faith.

Q - Under what conditions would the Lord graft Israel back into His olive tree (v. 23)? The Lord could graft Israel back into His olive tree if they turned to the Lord in faith.

Q - Why would it make good sense for the Lord to graft Israel back into His olive tree? It would make good sense for the Lord to graft Israel back into His olive tree because they

were the ones who originally grew from His olive tree as His  
“chosen people.”

Think About It: The Lord can easily restore Israel to favor after using their failures to bring Gentiles to salvation.

Apply It: Having come to salvation in Christ as Gentiles it is important for Gentile believers to do what they can to spread the gospel message to the Jewish people because of the Lord's plan to take the good news to “the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

## “Hope for the Hardened”

Romans 11:25-32

Q - What hope is there for the tiny and often-troubled nation of Israel in a world of anti-semitism?

Though many nations have gone through very difficult times down through the millennia of human history, few have traveled a more troubling path than the people of Israel have! Israel's past has been bumpy, with still more to come. But there is reason for hope. Romans 11:25-32 contains Paul's insight into God's plans for the future of Israel.

### I. The Partial Hardening of Israel 11:25

#### A. Paul's Reason for Sharing the Mystery 11:25a

Q - What benefit is intended for Gentile Christians by Paul's revelation of God's dealings with Israel? The coming to salvation of the full number of Gentiles who will be saved is taking place because of the hardness (callousness) which the people of Israel have shown toward the gospel message.

#### B. Paul's Explanation of the Mystery 11:25b

Q - Why does Paul call the hardening of Israel a “partial” hardening? As Paul's own salvation experience demonstrated, though most Jews were pursuing salvation on their own terms (works of “righteousness”), some Jews were coming to salvation by faith in Christ as evidence that not all the people of Israel were hardened.

Q What is preventing Israel's “partial” hardening from ending? The fact that not all of the Gentiles who are destined

to find salvation have found it yet is preventing the partial hardening of Israel from coming to an end.

## II. The Prospect of Salvation for Israel 11:26-27

### A. The New Testament Announcement of Israel's Salvation 11:26a

Q - What did Paul anticipate will one day happen to "all Israel"? Paul anticipated that a day is going to come when "all Israel will be saved." Though some commentators say that "all" does not mean all, the beginning of the millennial kingdom will include only Jews and Gentiles who have been saved, so all Jews who enter the kingdom will be saved (Mt. 25:46).

### B. The Old Testament Prediction of Israel's Salvation 11:26b-27

Q - What did the Prophet Isaiah (59:20) predict God's deliverer would remove from Israel (see also Jeremiah 31:34)? Isaiah 59:20 anticipates that transgression will be removed from Israel when their Deliverer/Redeemer arrives in Zion - when the Lord forgives their iniquities and remembers their sin no more (Jeremiah 31:34).

## III. The Plan of God for Israel 11:28-32

### A. Israel's Place in God's Plan 11:28-29

Q - In what sense are the people of Israel "enemies" from the standpoint of the gospel (v. 28)? Israel's general hostility in this age toward the gospel makes them its enemies, at a time when many Gentiles are responding in faith to the gospel which Jewish people are rejecting.

Q - From what perspective are the people of Israel “beloved” (v. 28b)? The people of Israel are “beloved” because of the Lord’s decision to make them His “chosen people” in the early days of their history.

Q - How can we be certain about the future salvation of Israel (v. 29)? We can be certain about the future salvation of Israel because of the Lord’s covenant promises made to them as His “chosen people” - as just mentioned in the Isaiah 59:20-21 quotation in 11:26-27. The Lord keeps His promises!

#### B. Disobedience and Mercy in God’s Plan 11:30-32

Q - How has Israel’s disobedience resulted in mercy for Gentiles (v. 30)? Israel’s disobedience/disbelief with respect to the gospel resulted in the Lord’s offer of the salvation Israel rejected to Gentiles who were willing to receive it.

Q - How will God’s mercy to Gentiles result in mercy toward the Jews (v. 31)? Just as God’s mercy was seen when He extended His offer of salvation to the Gentiles at a time when most Jews were rejecting His offer, so the mercy which was extended by the Lord to Gentiles will also be extended to the Jews after the full number of Gentiles to be saved have been saved.

Q - How can man’s disobedience be of any use to the Lord (v. 32)? Because Gentiles were initially disobedient to the Lord when the Lord was extending His mercy to the Jews (His “chosen people”), so Jewish disobedience to the gospel call led the Lord to call Gentiles to the gospel as His “chosen people” (I Peter 2:9-10). When the Lord again focuses His gospel message on the Jews at the end of the age, it will become evident that His mercy has been the reason that anyone has come to salvation.

Think About It: The Lord has plans to exercise His mercy on disobedient Israel, just as He has exercised His mercy on disobedient Gentiles, when all of Israel turns to His salvation.

Apply It: Because no human being, whether Jew or Gentile, deserves to be saved from the sin-problem which is common to all, it is evident that the Lord is a God of mercy when He saves all who come to faith in Him.

## “Worthy of Thanksgiving and Praise”

Romans 11:33-36

Q - What are some of the works of God for which you feel He is most worthy to be praised and thanked?

Paul’s epistle to the Romans provides the Bible’s most robust explanation of the Lord’s plan of salvation for all who will put their trust in Him. In chapters 9-11 Paul argued that, because the people of Israel have resisted the gospel message, Gentiles are the primary beneficiaries of salvation at the present time. But he was also aware that God still has great plans for the people of Israel in the years ahead. Romans 11:33-36 contains Paul’s outburst of praise for the God who has provided salvation for sinful mankind on the basis of faith in Jesus.

### I. Paul’s Observations About God

#### A. The Depths of God

Q - What is some evidence you would cite of the depth of the riches of God’s wisdom? The skill with which the Lord created the universe, the solar system, the earth, and all the amazing creatures on the earth is powerful evidence of the riches of God’s wisdom (cf. Proverbs 8:22-31).

Q - What is some evidence you would cite of the depth of the riches of God’s knowledge? That the Lord who made and sustains the vast universe is not only aware of mankind, but of all of the details in the lives of each individual among mankind, is powerful evidence of the riches of God’s knowledge (cf. Psalm 8:3-4; 139:1-6, etc.).

#### B. The Breadth of God

Q - What example comes to your mind of the unsearchable judgments of God? The Lord has been aware of every wayward thought and action of His creatures since the time of Satan's rebellion in early history, and He has judged and is judging and will judge every sin when all is said and done (cf. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; II Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:10-15).

Q - What example comes to your mind of the unfathomable ways of God? Job 9:5-10 speaks of the unfathomable great things the Lord does in the created universe; and Ephesians 3:4-10 speaks of the unfathomable riches of Christ (in verse 8) with reference to Paul's understanding of the mystery of the salvation made available to the Gentiles.

## II. Paul's Investigation Concerning God 11:34-35

The questions of Romans 11:34-35 are like some of the questions found in the writings of Isaiah (40:13ff.) and of Job (41:1-11 ff.). What similarities existed in the lives and experiences of Job and Isaiah and Paul that they should be entertaining such questions? Job and Isaiah and Paul were each faced with the amazing nature and performance of the Lord in all that He does.

Q - What is the obvious answer expected by Paul to each of the questions in verses 34 and 35? The obvious answer to each question is "no one."

### A. Who Has Known God's Mind? 11:34

I Corinthians 2:11 asks "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God."

### B. Who Has Been God's Counselor? 11:34

Isaiah 40:13 asks:

"Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD,  
Or as His counselor has informed Him?  
With whom did He consult and who gave Him  
understanding,  
And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught  
Him knowledge  
and informed Him in the way of understanding?"

### C. Who Has Become God's Creditor? 11:35

Job 41:11 quotes the Lord as saying

"Who has given to Me that I should repay Him?  
Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine."

And Psalm 24:1 says that

"The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains,  
The world, and those who dwell in it."

## III. Paul's Conclusions Concerning God 11:36

### A. God Is Central to All That Is

Q - In what sense would you say that all things are:

“from” God?

All things are “from God” in the sense that He is the  
creator of everything which exists.

“through” God?

All things are “through God” in the sense that all  
things are dependent for every ability they possess on the  
power and ability which He provides.

“to” God?

All things are “to God” in the sense that He is the reason for our being - the One to who we owe our love and allegiance: “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your might”  
(Deuteronomy 6:5).

#### B. God Is Deserving of Eternal Glory

Q - What can a Christian do about the fact that the Lord deserves “glory forever?” The Christian can seek to glorify the Lord in every thought and word and action in the present - in anticipation of the increased ability which will be given every believer to glorify Him forever in the eternity to come.

Think About It: God’s greatness, especially in working out a plan to provide for salvation from sin, calls for His people’s praise both now and forever!

Apply It: What are some of the ways in which we are seeking to glorify the Lord in our lives in view of all that He is, and all that He has done, and all that He is doing, and all that He is going to do for us?

## “Responding to God’s Mercy”

Romans 12:1-2

Q - What are some appropriate ways to express your appreciation to the Lord for His goodness in your life?

Romans 12:1-2 presents the first of a number of ways in which a Christian can express sincere appreciation to the Lord for the gift of the salvation by faith which Paul has described in the earlier chapters of his letter to the Romans.

### I. The Challenge of Bodily Presentation 12:1

#### A. The Basis of Paul’s Challenge

Q - What does Paul’s “therefore” take us back to in the earlier part of the book of Romans? The gift of salvation has been the primary theme of the first eleven chapters of Romans, so Paul is urging his readers to do what he is challenging them to do in view of God’s saving work in their lives.

Q - What “mercies of God” might Paul have in his mind as a basis for the challenge of this verse? Paul has made it clear that there is no one who actually deserves to be saved, because “all have sinned” and “the wages of sin is death” - so the basis for his challenge is God’s willingness to set aside the death (in all of its meanings) which His people actually deserve, to display His grace - an act of amazing mercy on His part.

#### B. The Content of Paul’s Challenge

Q - To whom does Paul address the challenge of this verse? Paul addresses the challenge of this verse to the

“brethren” in the church at Rome - so his challenge applies to every believer.

Q - What three terms in this verse describe the bodily sacrifice which the Lord deserves from His people?

1. Living sacrifice - in contrast with the sacrifices of Israel which were put to death to atone for their sins, the Lord wants His people to sacrifice their bodies to Him while they are alive!

2. Holy sacrifice - Old Testament sacrifices were to conform to the standards specified in the Law. Animal sacrifices, for example, were to be unblemished animals. In the same manner, believers whose bodies are not set apart to the Lord on His terms are not acceptable to the Lord.

3. Acceptable sacrifice - the first two words describe the conditions which make a sacrifice acceptable to the Lord. He is looking for the sacrificial offering of the bodies of His people which are alive and holy.

#### C. The Description of Paul’s Challenge

Q - What does Paul say the believer who responds to his challenge will have performed? Paul states that responding to his challenge is a believer’s “spiritual service of worship” (KJV “reasonable service”). *logiken* (reasonable, rational, spiritual) *ten latreian* (divine service, worship).

### II. The Challenge of Mental Transformation 12:2

#### A. The Content of Paul’s Challenge

##### 1. How **Not** to be Conformed

Q - To what does Paul indicate his readers should not be conformed? Paul states that his readers should not be conformed to this world (*aion* - a space of time; an age; present age). It isn't the “planet” Paul has in mind, but the “world system,” dominated as it is by the “god of this world,” Satan.

## 2. How **To** Be Transformed

Q - What transformation does Paul suggest is appropriate? The transformation Paul recommends is the “renewing of your mind” (cf. Titus 3:5). Psalm 1:1-3 provides a helpful commentary on the thoughts expressed in Paul’s challenge.

### B. The Reason for Paul’s Challenge

Q - What does Paul suggest that the believer’s transformation will prove? Paul suggests that the believer’s transformed mind will prove what the will of God is for his life. As a believer offers his body to the Lord for His use in accomplishing His purposes the believer will discover what the Lord wants him to do by opening opportunities for service which are compatible with his gifting - naturally and spiritually.

Q - What three words does Paul use to describe God’s will?

1. Good - *agathos*, good in a physical and moral sense, of that which is morally good, beneficial, acceptable to God.
2. Acceptable - *euarestos*, well pleasing, acceptable.
3. Perfect - *teleios*, having reached its end, complete, mature, perfect.

Think About It: God deserves the service of our dedicated bod-

ies and transformed minds - and what is best for Him is also best for US!

Apply It: How are our bodies (set apart for the service of the Lord) and our minds (transformed by the work of His Spirit and His word) being offered in sacrificial service to the Lord?

## “Healthy Body Life”

Romans 12:3-8

Q - If you had to give up one of the members of your body and could choose which one to give up, which would it be?

Romans 12:3-8 contains Paul’s challenge to Roman Christians to view themselves in a balanced way, as members of the body of Christ which (like the physical body) is composed of many members - making good use of the spiritual gifts the Lord has given to each believer for service to the body.

I. The Self-Esteem of the Believer 12:3-5

A. Seeing Self Correctly 12:3

Q - What common danger does Paul’s challenge in verse 3 seek to curtail? Paul seeks to curtail the common danger of pride - thinking more highly of oneself than any person ought to think.

Q - What is the importance of “sound judgment” to the challenge Paul states in verse 3? Sound judgment enables a person to honestly assess his strengths and his weaknesses and take them into full consideration in what he thinks about himself.

Q - What does a person’s “measure of faith” have to do with Paul’s challenge? A person’s ability to fully trust the Lord enables him to assess himself with greater accuracy.

B. Seeing Self as Part of the Whole 12:4-5

## 1. Every Member Is Different 12:4

Q - How does the physical body serve to illustrate the function of the members of the body of Christ? Just as the human body is made up of a large variety of members, each one ideally doing what it was designed to do, so the body of Christ is composed of many members which enable it to function at maximum capacity when every member serves the body as it should.

## 2. Every Member Is Important 12:5

Q - How are other members affected by the dysfunction or absence of any member of the body - whether referring to the physical body or to the spiritual body of Christ? When one or more body members fail to do what they were designed to do the rest of the body has to compensate somehow for the member which is not present or not doing what it should.

# II. The Spiritual Gifts of the Believer 12:6-8

## A. The Variety of Gifts 12:6a

Q - What is it that determines which gift each person receives in the body of Christ? Which gift (or gifts) each person in the body of Christ receives is determined by the "grace given to us" by the Lord whose Spirit is the giver of the gifts.

## B. The Exercise of Gifts 12:6b-8

Q - How might a prophet's "proportion of faith" effect the exercise of his gift (v. 6)? The extent to which a person is able to fully trust in the Lord will determine his ability to say what the Lord is leading him to say.

Q - What determines the value of the gift of service (v.7)?  
The value of the gift of service is determined by whether it is put to use in accomplishing what it is intended to accomplish.  
No ability to do what needs to be done will be of any use if it isn't put to use!

Q - What benefit might come, and to whom, by means of the gift of teaching (v.7)? The gift of teaching can benefit all who are informed by what is accurately taught, but no one receives greater benefit from the gift of teaching than the person who does the teaching (because of what one author has described as “the joy of discovery”).

Q - How would you distinguish the spiritual gift of exhortation from the gift of teaching (v.8)? The gift of exhortation is the ability to apply what has been taught to someone who needs to receive it by way of challenge or encouragement - as the Apostle Paul was doing when he began the twelfth chapter of Romans with the exhortation “Therefore I urge you, brethren . . .” (using the same word, *parakaleo*, as the word translated exhort in verse 8).

Q - What challenge goes with the gift of giving (v.8)?  
Paul’s challenge is that the gift of giving be exercised with liberality. Giving with restraint when liberality could be used instead makes the gift of giving less valuable for helping where help is needed.

Q - What quality enables the gift of leading to be put to its best use (v.8)? The quality of diligence (*spoude* - haste, diligence, earnestness) makes the gift of leading most valuable because the person who is able to lead but who fails to do it slows the progress which the body of Christ is able to make.

Q - Why is cheerfulness an important companion to the

gift of showing mercy (v.8)? People who are in need of mercy are not as encouraged by the help they need if it comes from someone who begrudgingly provides the help instead of doing it willingly and cheerfully.

Think About It: Every believer needs to carefully consider his place in the body of Christ and put his gift to good use.

Apply It: What do you think the Lord has gifted you to do as a part of the body of Christ, and how are you putting your gift to use for the benefit of the body?

## “Distinctly Christian Behavior”

Romans 12:9-15

Q - What would you say ought to be some of the most observable distinctives in the lives of those who have decided to follow Jesus as Lord?

Romans 12:9-21 lists a series of miscellaneous instructions for Christians who are serious about presenting their bodies as living sacrifices (12:1) and being transformed by renewed minds (12:2) and taking their proper place of responsibility as a part of the body of Christ (12:3-8). Such lists in Scripture defy outlining because they move rapidly from subject to subject, but they include important and challenging behaviors intended to set followers of Christ apart from an unbelieving world around them.

Q - How would you distinguish between hypocritical and un-hypocritical love (v. 9)? Because hypocrisy (*hypocrites*) is a word which was used in Greek culture to describe an actor - someone who put on a mask and feigned himself to be someone he was not - hypocritical love would be pretended love, while un-hypocritical love (*agape*) would be the genuine commitment of one person to the wellbeing of another.

Q - What strong term does the Apostle Paul use to characterize the Christian’s proper response (v. 9) to that which is evil? Paul uses the word “abhor” (hate) to characterize the Christian’s proper response to that which is evil.

Q - How might a Christian put to practice Paul’s challenge in responding (v. 9) to that which is good? Clinging to that which is good involves being strongly committed to things which are ennobling (*agathos*). The word Paul uses for clinging

(*kollao*) is related to the Greek word for glue.

Q - What is there about brotherly love which especially calls for devotion on the part of an obedient Christian (v. 10)? Paul's word for devoted (*philostorgos* - family affection) is the perfect companion for the word he uses for brotherly love (*philadelphos*) because of a Christian's membership in the family of God where brothers (and sisters) should be experiencing family affection for others in their spiritual family.

Q - What is involved in giving preference to one another in honor (v. 10)? An alternate translation possibility - “outdo one another in showing honor” - suggests the idea that Christians should seek to show more honor to other members in the body of Christ than the honor they are receiving from others.

cf. Philippians 2:3-4

Q - Why should lagging behind in diligence be of concern to a Christian (v. 11)? Lagging behind is the opposite of the diligence (*spoude* - zeal, diligence, earnestness) to which believers are called in their service for the Lord in the body of Christ.

Q - Why might it be important that a Christian be fervent in spirit (v. 11)? Because the Lord has expressed his distaste for believers who are “lukewarm” (Revelation 3:15-16) it is important for His people to be zealous (*zeo* - boiling, hot) in their service for the Lord.

Q - What alternatives exist in the Christian's life to “serving the Lord” (v. 11)? In addition to simply not serving the Lord, proving to be of no value in advancing His cause, there is also the alternative of serving other causes and even other so-called “gods”, when the Lord has called His people to love the Lord their God with all of their heart and soul and

might.

Q - What is the hope in which Christians should be rejoicing (v. 12)? As Paul expressed it in Romans 5:2, Christians “exult in hope of the glory of God” - (ESV Study Bible - “the promise that Christians will be glorified and perfected in the last day”).

Q - Why is it important that God’s people be persevering in tribulation (v. 12)? Tribulation is difficult to handle, but (as Paul has explained in Romans 5:3-5) tribulation can lead to beneficial ends, so it is important to persevere through it so we can experience the benefits which can arise out of it.

cf. Romans 5:3-5

Q - What is it about prayer that calls for a special measure of devotion in the Christian’s life (v. 12)? Because prayer is an important discipline in the life of any believer, and because it can bring significant benefits to those who “pray without ceasing” (as Paul challenges us to do in I Thessalonians 5:17), it is important to learn to be devoted to prayer.

Q - What challenge do the needs which arise in the lives of other Christians present (v. 13)? The needs of saints, who are our brothers and sisters in Christ, call for concern and help from others who are able to provide assistance.

cf. James 2:14-16

Q - Why might Christians in particular be called to the practice of hospitality (v. 13)? Hospitality is a way in which to express love and deepen fellowship among believers, and it helps believers who are away from their homes - often in service to the Lord (as in the case of missionaries and evangelists) - to have their needs met at minimal expense.

Q - What is counter-intuitive about the way a Christian should respond (v. 14) to those who are persecutors? Because the natural response to persecutors is to resist and to hate them, it is counter-intuitive to bless them instead of cursing them.

Q - How does the Apostle Paul say that Christians should respond to people going through either good or bad times (v. 15)? Paul said that Christians ought to be sympathetic toward other Christians - rejoicing with them when they rejoice, and weeping with them when they weep.

Think About It: The lives of Christians ought to be characterized by love and concern for one another, and by the evidence of discipline in every respect.

Apply It: To what extent does our behavior clearly distinguish us as the kind of believers the Apostle Paul (with the Lord) is challenging us to be in Romans 12:9-15 (and beyond)?

## “Living in Harmony”

Romans 12:16-21

Q - What is the greatest challenge you can ever recall (and can tell about) in loving someone who you found difficult to love?

Romans 12:16-21 continues the series of miscellaneous instructions which Paul began at verse 9 for Christians who are serious about presenting their bodies as living sacrifices (12:1) and being transformed by renewed minds (12:2) and making use of their spiritual gifts for the benefit of the body of Christ (12:3-8). Paul goes on to include more challenges which apply to relations among the saints, but he also includes more challenges which apply to relations between Christians and non Christians. Loving brothers and sisters in Christ can already be challenging, but loving those who are not Christians can be a very stiff challenge - especially when non-Christians are engaged in persecution or even terrorism toward believers. Paul’s instructions in Romans 12 present many practical challenges!

Q - What do you think the Apostle Paul meant by his challenge for Christians to be “of the same mind toward one another”? (v. 16)? It was Paul’s challenge that Christians seek to think the same way others in their fellowship are thinking - minimizing differences as much as possible.

Q - What practical step does Paul suggest to help any Christian guard against being haughty in mind (v. 16)? Paul suggests that believers can avoid being haughty in mind if they make it a practice to spend time associating with people who are lowly among them.

Q - Though the Lord wants His people to be wise, why

does He want them **not** to be wise in their own estimation (v. 16)? Those who are wise in their own estimation are setting themselves up for resistance from the Lord, because He resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble (Psalm 138:6; James 4:6; I Peter 5:5).

Q - When does Paul say it is appropriate for a Christian to pay back evil for evil (v. 17)? Paul says that it is never appropriate for a Christian to pay back evil for evil.

Q - How can a Christian keep from paying back evil for evil (v. 17 - cf. Matthew 5:43-48)? A Christian can avoid paying back evil for evil by seeking to do good to those who do evil - beginning with prayer for them, as Jesus told His followers to do, because praying for evil doers begins to soften the heart toward them.

Q - What does Paul's admonition to "respect what is right in the sight of all men" (lit. - "providing right before all men"), mean? Having just instructed Christians to avoid paying back evil for evil, Paul now admonishes Christians to do the good everyone knows is the best and right thing to do, instead of the evil which we might naturally feel inclined to do to those who do evil to us. Doing evil will further complicate things, while doing good will make things better.

Q - What might make it impossible to be at peace with all men (v. 18)? It might be impossible to be at peace with all men because there are some people who refuse to pursue peace, but are adamantly committed to pursuing conflict. For example, those who want the nation of Israel to pursue peace with radical Islamic nations fail to recognize that radical Islamic nations are fully committed to eradicating the people and the state of Israel. Both Jesus and Paul himself had to deal with enemies, but their enemies were not enemies because either Jesus or Paul had

done them wrong. They were enemies because they chose to oppose the truths which Jesus and Paul were sharing with them.

Q - How does a Christian go about leaving room for the wrath of God (v. 19)? A Christian goes about leaving room for the wrath of God by trusting God to judge and deal with the sins of men, rather than insisting on judging them and dealing with them himself.

Q - What can a believer who leaves room for the wrath of God (v. 19) expect the Lord to do in response? The believer who leaves room for the wrath of God can expect the Lord to personally pass judgment and take revenge on those who do evil.

Q - What single word in verse 19 provides encouragement for the believer to trust the Lord to pass judgment and provide vindication on behalf of those who trust the Lord to do what He has said He will do (Deuteronomy 32:35)? The word "Beloved" assures the believer that the Lord will do what He has said He will do because of His love for His people.

Q - How did the Apostle Paul (quoting Proverbs 25:21, Matthew 5:44 and Luke 6:27) challenge believers to respond to their enemies? Paul challenged believers to feed their hungry enemies and to give drinks to thirsty enemies.

Q - In what sense would a Christian who responds in kindness to an enemy "heap burning coals on [his] head"? The Christian who responds in kindness to an enemy, leaving vengeance to the Lord, is making room for the Lord to judge His unrepentant enemies as He has said He will do in such passages as Psalm 11:6 and 140:10.

Q - What is involved in overcoming evil with good (v.

21)? When a Christian yields to the temptation to do evil toward those who do evil to him he is allowing himself to be overcome by evil. If, on the other hand, he chooses to do good to the one who does evil to him, He is overcoming evil with good - overpowering evil deeds by means of good deeds, trusting God to “balance the books” in His own time and way, and perhaps even causing his surprised enemy to soften, turn from his evil ways, and become a friend to the person he once saw as an enemy.

Think About It: Christians are called to love not only other Christians but the unsaved as well - including the most difficult among the unsaved - in very practical ways.

Apply It: Are we able to trust the Lord so fully that we are obeying His commands to love one another, and even obeying His commands to love those who hate us?

## “Honoring Authorities”

Romans 13:1-7

Q - What are some of the practical benefits which come into our lives as a result of the governing authorities over us?

Though governing authorities can provide many benefits, they often create serious issues for many people in many ways by their unwise and heavy-handed policies, and there are times when even the people of God will find it necessary to disobey governing authorities. The Apostle Peter, for example, stated that he and his colleagues must “obey God rather than man” (Acts 5:29) when they were told they were not to preach the gospel anymore. As a general rule, though, the Apostle Paul challenges Christians in Romans 13:1-7 to respond obediently to governing authorities as an extension of the authority of the Lord Himself in the lives of His people - and of all people.

### I. The Challenge of Submission to Governing Authority 13:1

Q - Who does the Apostle Paul say is responsible before God to be in subjection to governing authorities? Paul says that everyone is to be in subjection to governing authorities.

Q -What does Paul identify as the Lord’s role in establishing governing authorities? Because there is no authority which does not find its ultimate source in God, Paul identifies the Lord as the one who establishes governing authorities.

### II. The Folly of Resistance to Governing Authority 13:2

Q - Why is it wrong to resist the authority of government?  
It is wrong to resist governing authorities because “whoever resists has opposed the ordinance of God.”

Q - What are some forms the condemnation might take which comes to those who oppose governing authorities? Gover-  
nmental condemnation can come in the form of warnings and  
tickets and fines and trials and imprisonment and even capital  
punishment.

### III. The Purpose of Governing Authority 13:3-4a

Q - In what ways could governing authorities cause fear for evil doers (v. 3)? Governing authorities can cause fear for  
evil doers in all of the “condemnations” which were referred to  
in verse 2.

Q - What is Paul’s advice (v. 3) for those who want to avoid trouble with governing authorities? Paul’s advice for  
those who want to avoid trouble with governing authorities is  
to do what is good instead of doing that which is evil.

### IV. The Power of Governing Authority 13:4b-5

#### A. In Bringing Wrath on Evildoers 13:4b

Q - What does Paul’s mention of the sword and the bringing of wrath imply regarding the God-given authority of human government? Paul’s mention of the sword and the bringing of  
wrath imply that the God-given authority of human government  
includes various forms of punishment, including even capital  
punishment.

#### B. In Requiring Accountability by All 13:5

Q - What reason, beyond the fear of governmental ‘wrath,’ does Paul give for being in subjection to human authorities? Beyond the fear of governmental “wrath,” Paul  
states that people should be in submission to governing author-

ties “for conscience sake.” Obedient citizens have no reason to keep looking over their shoulder out of their fear of government authorities.

#### C. In Collecting Taxes 13:6

Q - What part does the collection of taxes play in governing authority? The collection of taxes empowers governments to serve as “a minister of God to you for good” (v. 4) as the positive alternative to exercising “wrath” and using the “sword” for punishment.

#### V. The Christian Response to All Authority 13:7

Q - What is the point of the several things Paul encourages a Christian to render to those to whom it is due? Paul’s point is that there is a proper response to everyone who plays a part in our lives, and that believers should be careful to respond in the proper way to everyone to whom they respond.

Think About It: Governing authorities deserve the Christian’s respect as God’s instruments for restraining evil and encouraging good - including the collection of taxes to enable what is done.

Apply It: How careful are we, as Christians, to respond properly to the various authorities we encounter in our lives?

## “Reflecting the Lord”

Romans 13:8-14

Q - What two foremost attributes of God are we, as God's people, most often called upon to emulate in our own lives?

Godly living in the lives of God's people can have a profound impact on our planet. Believers like Noah and David and Elijah and Daniel challenged their generations, and far beyond as they followed the Lord's leading. Daniel, for example, served the Lord for decades under Babylonian and Medo-Persian emperors. His enemies were not able to find any flaws in his life or service without trapping him on the basis of his faithfulness to the Lord! There is no better way for the people of God to touch the world for its good than to pattern our lives and relationships after the Lord Himself - as Paul calls us to do in Romans 13:8-14.

### I. The Challenge to Love 13:8-10

#### A. The Challenge Stated 13:8a

Q - What one debt does the Apostle Paul encourage the people of God to assume as their own? Paul encourages the people of God to assume the debt/responsibility of love for one another (cf. John 13:34-35).

#### B. The Challenge Explained 13:8b-10

##### 1. Love Fulfills the Law 13:8b

Q - How has the person who loves his neighbor fulfilled the whole law? As Jesus Himself observed, in Matthew 22:34-40, “the whole law and the prophets” are fulfilled by obeying

the command to love the Lord wholeheartedly and the command to love your neighbor as yourself.

## 2. Love Sums Up the Law 13:9

Q - In what sense does the command to love one's neighbor as himself sum up other commandments of God's law? A believer's obedience to the command to "love your neighbor as yourself" results in compliance with each of the other commands which Paul cites from the law (and more) because love causes a person to do what is best for his neighbor.

## 3. Love Avoids Wrong 13:10

Q - What fulfillment of the law does Paul encourage in verse 10? Paul encourages love, which does no wrong to a neighbor, as the shortest route to fulfilling the law.

# II. The Challenge to Alertness 13:11

## A. The Call to Awaken 13:11

Q - On what basis does Paul argue that it is time for God's people to awaken from sleep? Paul argues that, because the believer's experience of the fullness of salvation is nearer now than when they first believed, the hour has already come when every believer should awaken from (spiritual) slumber - in anticipation of the Lord's return.

## B. The Call to Lay Aside Dark Deeds 13:12

Q - What "night" is almost gone and "day" almost here? The "night," whose darkness characterizes the current age (John 3:19; 8:12), was penetrated by the Light of the World

when Jesus came in the flesh (John 9:5), and will be fully realized when believers are introduced to “the day of eternity” (I Peter 1:5; II Peter 3:18).

Q - What might Paul have in mind by his reference to the “armor of light”? By his reference to the “armor of light” Paul is thinking of the armor which enables a Christian to stand up against the darkness which characterizes the world - “the full armor of God” which Paul commended in Ephesians 6:11-18 to enable the believer to successfully struggle “against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness.”

#### C. The Call to Behave Properly 13:13

Q - What does Paul contrast with “proper behavior” in the last part of verse 13? Paul contrasts “proper behavior” with “carousing and drunkenness,” “sexual promiscuity and sensuality,” and “strife and jealousy.”

#### D. The Call to Put on Christ 13:14

Q - What does it mean to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ”? Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ means living as Jesus lived, and living in accordance with His instructions for His people (cf. Colossians 3:12).

Think About It: The lives of obedient Christians should be characterized by love for others and by alertness to God’s call to holy living.

Apply It: To what extent are our lives patterned after the qualities and teachings of the Lord Jesus Himself?

## “Differences Over Diets and Days”

Romans 14:1-6

Q - What are some of the issues over which you have seen Christians divide because of differences among them?

Although the Apostle Paul wrote, in Ephesians 4:4-6 that “There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all,” we know that there are many differences within the body of Christ when it comes to matters of lesser importance. For example, though the majority of Christians around the world worship together on Sundays, there are others who believe that it is important to worship on Saturdays, and there are even some professing Christians who don’t make a habit of gathering with others to worship at all! The Apostle Paul challenged Christians in Rome (Romans 14:1-6) not to be divisive and judgmental over their differences - as if they, rather than Lord, were the final authorities on such subjects.

### I. The Challenge to Accept Those Weak in Faith 14:1

#### A. The Challenge Stated 14:1a

Q - How would you describe the one Paul refers to as “one who is weak in faith”? I would describe someone who is weak in faith as a believer who has not been accurately informed about the faith, and who does not understand what the Lord expects of His people, and which things in the Christian life are important and which are unimportant.

#### B. The Caution Stated 14:1b

Q - Why might anyone think he was accepting someone weak in faith while passing judgment on his opinions? It could be that the stronger believer is showing friendliness toward the weaker believer, but cannot resist the temptation to correct the weaker believer in his interactions with him (or her).

## II. The Challenge to Do All Things for the Lord 14:2-6

### A. Turning Over Diet to the Lord 14:2-3

#### 1. Differences Regarding Diet 14:2

Q - What might a person's diet have to do with the strength of his faith? Someone who has come to faith in Christ from a background where dietary restrictions were common (e.g. the dietary laws of the Jews) might be confused about the necessity to observe dietary laws (e.g. Jewish laws concerning the consumption of meats) and might be offended by the practices of believers from different backgrounds, or more seasoned believers who have turned away from dietary restrictions they once observed.

#### 2. Responding to Dietary Differences 14:3

Q - Why might some people regard others with contempt over dietary decisions? Someone who is firmly convinced that they don't need to follow dietary restrictions, which other believers feel are important, might easily exhibit animosity toward the person who still feels committed to or confused over dietary restrictions.

### B. Turning Over Judgment to the Lord 14:4

Q - What good reason does Paul give for Christians not to pass judgment on one another over their differences? Paul ob-

serves that all believers are servants of the Lord, so no believer should feel they have the right to pass judgment on another person who (like himself) is responsible to his own Master (the Lord) for his performance in the Christian life. Each believer is responsible to answer for his behavior as a Christian to the Lord who is the Master of all.

C. Turning Over Days to the Lord 14:5

Q - Why might some people regard one day above another in spiritual terms? Believers coming from backgrounds where certain days (e.g. the Sabbath in Judaism) was observed, both spiritually and culturally, would naturally be inclined to have strong feelings regarding such days after coming to faith in Christ - where the Lord has not required such observance of New Testament saints.

D. Turning Over Days and Diets to the Lord 14:6

Q - How might a person who observes days, or who eats, go about doing what they do “for the Lord”? If a person is fully convinced in his own mind” (v. 5), and is thanking the Lord as he observes the day he observes, or eats the thing he eats, he is doing it “for the Lord” because of the thankfulness He shows to the Lord as he does what he is convicted he should do.

Q - How might God be thanked either by a person’s eating and not eating? If a person is convinced that what he is eating or not eating is what the Lord wants him to eat or not to eat, and is grateful to the Lord in the process, whether he is eating or not eating is not as important as whether he is thanking the Lord or not thanking the Lord in what he does.

Think About It: The Lord has not called His people to give

account to one another with respect to their differences, but to give account to Him.

Apply It: Are we fully convinced that the things we eat or do not eat, and the days we recognize as important or do not recognize as important, are consistent with the Lord's will for us - and that the Lord deserves to be thanked in all things? And are we able to respect the right of other believers to do what they are convinced the Lord wants them to do?

“Let the Lord Be the Judge”

Romans 14:7-12

Q - What are some of the ways in which the prospect of standing before the judgment seat of Christ should change our behavior today?

Because of the unique personality and upbringing and experiences each person brings to the body of Christ, it is virtually inevitable that there will be differences among the people who are members of any church family. Where the differences among believers do not result from sinful thoughts or behavior, it is important (for the sake of the unity of the body) that believers learn to accept each other, differences and all! The Apostle Paul challenged Christians in Rome (14:7-12) to learn to submit differences to the Lord, in view of His lordship and in view of every believer's accountability before the judgment seat of Christ, rather than to pass judgment upon or look down upon one another.

I. The Responsibility of All to the Lord 14:7-9

A. The Living and Dying of the Christian 14:7-8

Q - What underlying truth is the basis for Paul's statement that “not one of us lives for himself, and not one of us dies for himself”? The underlying truth for Paul's statement is the truth that Christians all belong to the Lord.

Q - For whom does Paul say, in verse 8, the people of God all live and die rather than for themselves? Paul wrote that all believers live and die for the Lord.

Q - How does Paul's opening statement in verse 8 fit into

the argument of the larger passage, beginning with verse 1? Paul has written earlier of the need for Christians not to pass judgment upon one another because all believers are servants of the Lord, not servants of each other.

Q - Though we often speak of living for the Lord, how would you explain what Paul might have had in mind when he wrote (in verse 8) “if we die, we die for the Lord”? Because all believers belong to the Lord, they go immediately into His presence on the event of the death of their physical bodies with the result that they “die for the Lord.”

#### B. The Living and Dying of Christ 14:9

Q - In what sense did the death and resurrection of Christ make Him “Lord both of the dead and of the living”? Because the Lord Jesus experienced physical death at the cross He became identified with His followers who die as their Lord, and because He lived among men in His incarnation and He returned to life from the dead after His crucifixion, He became identified with His followers who are or will be alive as their Lord. The Greek phrase which ends verse 9 reads “that He might rule over the dead and the living.”

### II. The Accountability of All to the Lord 14:10-12

#### A. The Prospect of the Judgment Seat of Christ 14:10

Q - What do Paul’s questions in verse 10 seem to indicate about his understanding of the fellowship of the believers to whom he was writing his epistle? Paul’s questions seem to indicate that it was his understanding that there were differences among the believers at Rome (a church Paul had yet to visit) which were disturbing their fellowship (“things in common”).

Q - Why does Paul say Christians are not to judge each other or regard each other contemptuously? Paul says that Christians should not judge or view each other with contempt because the Lord is the one before whom all believers will stand when the Lord judges all people - both the ones judging and the ones being judged. We are not the judges; He is!

#### B. The Prediction of the Judgment Seat of Christ 14:11

Q - What does Paul's application of Isaiah 45:23 (which he quotes in verse 11) to the judgment seat of Christ say about Jesus? Paul's application of Isaiah 45:23 to the judgment seat of Christ makes it clear that Jesus is the LORD (yahweh), because the context in the Isaiah passage clearly applies to the LORD - before whom "every knee will bow," and "every tongue will swear allegiance" (as Paul expresses the thought again in Philippians 2:9-11).

#### C. Our Accountability at the Judgment Seat of Christ 14:12

Q - What effect should every Christian's accountability to God have upon judgmental attitudes among believers? Because each one of us will give an account of ourselves to the Lord when we stand before Him at the judgment seat of Christ, there is no reason for any of us to take it upon ourselves to pass judgment upon one another. The LORD is the judge!

Think About It: As Christians we need to deal with differences among ourselves in view of the Lordship of Christ and of our accountability to Him on the day of judgment.

Apply It: Are we willing to provide room for fellow-believers to see and do things differently than we see and do them in view of our common accountability to the Lord as judge?

## “Avoiding Offenses”

Romans 14:13-20

Q - What are some personal preferences a Christian might be called to set aside in order to build others up?

Because of the differences which are inherent in every person as a result of differing personality and upbringing and individual experiences in life, Christians don't always see eye to eye on the many issues which arise in personal relations and church life. Because of differences which apparently existed among the members of the church in Rome, the Apostle Paul challenged Christians in the church there to stop causing fellow believers to stumble in their faith by setting aside some of their own preferences in favor of building one another up.

### I. Walking with Love in Personal Choices 14:13-15

#### A. Avoiding Stumbling Blocks 14:13

Q - What judgmental activity does Paul call on Christians to stop? Paul called on Christians in Rome to stop placing obstacles or stumbling blocks (*skandalon* - a stick for bait) in the way of other Christians.

#### B. Defining Things Unclean 14:14

Q - What is it that determines whether questionable practices are unclean or not? It is whether a person considers something unclean or not which determines whether it is actually unclean for that person.

#### C. Avoiding Destructive Practices 14:15

Q - Why does it make good sense to set aside personal preferences which others find offensive? When we offend someone by eating something they find offensive we are not “walking in love” toward that person, but are “destroying with [our] food” someone for whom Christ died.

## II. Pursuing Godly Practices 14:16-19

### A. Avoiding Offensive Actions 14:16

Q - How can a Christian keep what he considers good from being spoken against by other Christians? We can refrain from doing something we see as good in order to keep someone who sees it as evil from speaking out against what we are doing.

### B. Pursuing Kingdom Priorities 14:17

Q - What kingdom values are more important than dietary questions? Righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit and more important kingdom values than matters of food and drink.

### C. Pleasing Both God and Men 14:18

Q - How does Paul suggest a believer go about pleasing both God and men? A believer can go about pleasing both God and men by refraining from doing things which other believers consider offensive.

### D. Pursuing Peace and Edification 14:19

Q - What practical test does Paul suggest a believer apply to determine the suitability of any action? Paul suggests that a believer apply the test of whether the things he/she does make

for peace and the building up of others in the body of Christ.

### III. Avoiding Destructive Behavior 14:20-23

#### A. Avoiding the Causes of Stumbling 14:20-21

Q - When is it wrong to eat or drink things we feel are alright to eat or to drink? It is wrong to eat or drink things we feel are alright to eat or drink, or to do anything else which is offensive to others, when the things we are doing are tearing down the work God is seeking to do in the lives of other believers.

#### B. Avoiding Condemnation in Personal Faith 14:22-23

Q - How can a Christian avoid condemnation and sin in what he approves? A Christian can avoid condemnation and sin in what he approves when he is convinced that what he is doing is approved by the Lord - unless what he is doing is presenting an obstacle for another believer.

Think About It: Christians are called to please God and men by setting aside some of their personal preferences in order to build others up.

Apply It: Are we careful to avoid doing things which we feel are right for us to do if what we are doing is tearing down what the Lord is seeking to do in the lives of His people?

## “Building Others Up”

Romans 15:1-6

Q - When have you been memorably assisted in your growth as a Christian by someone who was stronger in their walk with the Lord than you were at the time?

When someone places their trust in Christ as their savior they experience a new birth in spiritual terms. The Apostle Peter’s challenge for new believers in I Peter 2:2 was this: “like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.” Newborn babies, of course, will require some help getting off to a good start in their lives - whether they are physical or spiritual babies. Having challenged more mature believers not to tear other believers down by passing judgment over differences of opinion, Paul moves on in Romans 15:1-6 to call on God’s people to follow the example of Christ and the Scriptures in building one another up.

### I. The Christian’s Challenge to Please Others 15:1-2

#### A. The Call to Help the Weak 15:1

Q - How has the Apostle Paul explained the difference between stronger and weaker believers in Christ earlier in Romans (cf. 14:1-2)? Paul has explained that some Christians are stronger than others because they live under fewer restrictions in terms of such things as diets and days - enjoying greater freedom in their relationship with Christ.

Q - What does Paul identify as the likely motive when a stronger believer fails to bear the weaknesses of those without strength? Paul suggests that the believer who fails to bear the

weaknesses of others is probably motivated by selfish regard for his own preferences instead of the feelings of others.

B. The Call to Build Our Neighbor Up 15:2

Q - What should every Christian's goal be in relation to every "neighbor" in Christ? Every Christian should make it his goal to please his fellow-believer out of the desire to do what is good for him and to build him up in his Christian walk.

II. The Lord's Help in Pleasing Others 15:3-4

A. The Example of the Savior 15:3

Q - What practical steps did the Lord Jesus take in His desire to please others rather than Himself? The Lord Jesus did not make it His aim to please only Himself, but to do what was best for His people.

Q - How did David's experience, as expressed in Psalm 69:9, anticipate what Jesus would experience? David experienced reproaches which were intended for the Lord because of his own commitment to the Lord - just as Jesus experienced the reproaches of his enemies which actually resulted because of His commitment to His Father's will.

B. The Encouragement of the Scripture 15:4

Q - What was God's goal for His people in providing "whatever was written in earlier times"? It was God's goal to provide edifying instruction for His people by means of "whatever was written in earlier times."

Q - What has the Lord done, in the process of building His people up, to give them hope? The Lord has caused His

people to be strengthened as a result of the perseverance they need to put to practice in life's challenges, and as a result of the encouragement they receive from the instruction of His word.

### III. The Apostle's Desires in Pleasing Others 15:5-6

#### A. His Desire for God's People 15:5

Q - What did Paul hope the Lord would grant to the Roman Christians in terms of their dealings with one another? It was Paul's hope that the Lord would grant the Roman Christians the ability to be single-minded in their dealings with one another.

#### B. His Desire for God's Glory 15:6

Q - What does Paul mention in verses 5 and 6 which glorifies the Lord in His people's lives? Paul mentions the hope that the Lord would be glorified in His people's lives by their single-mindedness as they live in one accord with each other.

Think About It: Christians are called to build one another up for God's glory - as Christ and the Scriptures do.

Apply It: Does our ability to bear with the weaknesses of our brothers and sisters in Christ, and our ability to live in harmony with one another, bring the Lord the glory He desires and deserves from His obedient people?

## “Accepting One Another”

Romans 15:7-13

Q - Is there a time you can tell about when you have found it difficult to accept someone you were sure was a brother or sister in Christ?

When the Lord sent that Apostle Peter to the home of the Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts 10) to announce that Gentiles were no longer to be viewed by Jewish Christians as unacceptable to the Lord, the Jewish apostles in Jerusalem were initially skeptical. But Peter's explanation of the occasion won them over. In Romans 15:7-13 the Apostle Paul backs up his challenge for Christians to accept one another by reminding his readers that Christ has accepted all who are in Him - both Jew and Gentile.

### I. The Challenge for Christians to Accept Others 15:7

#### A. The Christian's Acceptance 15:7a

Q - What might keep Christians from accepting one another that Paul should feel it necessary to offer this challenge? The fact that every Christian's personality and background differs from every other believer will present obstacles to fully accepting one another.

#### B. The Lord's Acceptance 15:7b

Q - What has Christ done which moves Paul to say that He has “accepted us to the glory of God?” Christ became a man and He served and suffered for men in order to seek and to save that which was lost as powerful testimony to the fact that He has accepted us to the glory of God.

## II. The Example of Christ in Accepting Others 15:8-12

### A. His Acceptance of the Circumcision 15:8

Q - How would you explain Paul's assertion that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision? Christ became a servant to the circumcision (the Jews) when He was born as a Jew to offer God's kingdom as its King to the Jews first.

Q - What are some promises given to the fathers which Christ confirmed? Christ confirmed the Lord's promise to send His Spirit-empowered and anointed Son, born to a virgin (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14) to bring good news (gospel) to the afflicted, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners, and to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord (Isaiah 61:1-2a), etc.

### B. His Acceptance of the Gentiles 15:9

#### 1. The Statement of His Acceptance 15:9a

Q - How would you explain Paul's assertion that Christ has become a servant to the Gentiles? Christ became a servant to Gentiles by His incarnation, His compassionate public ministry, and His sacrificial death - all of which benefitted Gentiles as well as Jews.

#### 2. The Support of His Acceptance 15:9b-12

Q - How do each of Paul's Old Testament quotations support his argument?

V. 9b - II Samuel 22:50 & Psalm 18:49 anticipates the praise both David and, ultimately, the Messiah would sing to the Lord and to His name among the Gentiles

v. 10 - Deuteronomy 32:43 calls upon Gentiles to join the Lord's people (Israel) in rejoicing.

v. 11. - Psalm 117:1 calls on “all Gentiles” and “all the peoples” to praise the Lord.

v. 12 - Isaiah 11:10 anticipates the day when “the root of Jesse” will arise to rule over and give hope to the Gentiles.

III. The Challenge for Christians to Abound in Joy and Peace  
15:13

Q - What gives believers reason for hope in spite of the differences which exist among them? God's gift of hope and the Holy Spirit's power each provide reason for believers to be hopeful in spite of differences among them.

Think About It: Christians are called to accept one another after the example of Christ who has accepted both Jew and Gentile into an experience of joy and peace.

Apply It: How are we, as God's people, doing at accepting one another (sins and differences and all) as the Lord in Christ has accepted each one of us?

## “Pioneer Evangelism”

Romans 15:14-21

Q - When have you come closest to taking part in “pioneer evangelism” - presenting the gospel where it had not previously been presented?

Because, as the Apostle Paul observed in Romans 1:16, the message of the gospel “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek,” Paul found great satisfaction in the opportunity he had to take its message to Gentile peoples, especially where no one else had taken it before him - as he explains in Romans 15:14-21.

### I. Paul’s Reason for Writing 15:14-16

#### A. His Confidence in the Romans 15:14

Q - What three things did Paul express confidence about regarding the Roman believers?

1. The Roman believers were “full of goodness.”
2. The Roman believers were “filled with all knowledge.”
3. The Roman believers were “able to admonish one another.”

Paul’s commendation of the Roman believers raises the interesting question: how do **we** compare?

#### B. His Reminder to the Romans 15:15

Q - What was Paul’s purpose in writing boldly to the Christians at Rome in view of their spiritual maturity? He

wrote to remind them again on some points, because of the grace that was given to him from God (cf. 1:5; Ephesians 3:6-7).

### C. His Ministry to the Gentiles 15:16

Q - What was Paul's ultimate aim in "ministering as a priest the gospel of God" among the Gentiles? It was his aim to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles so that his offering of the Gentiles to the Lord might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

## II. Paul's Accomplishments in Ministry 15:17-21

### A. His Boasting in Christ 15:17

Q - What was the basis of Paul's boast in Christ? The basis of Paul's boast in Christ was his boast in things pertaining to God. As he observed in I Corinthians 9:16, he had no reason to boast when he preached the gospel because he was "under compulsion" from the Lord to preach the gospel.

### B. His Usefulness in Christ 15:18

Q - What did Paul rejoice in knowing that Christ was pleased to accomplish through him? Paul rejoiced in knowing that Christ had accomplished the obedience of the Gentiles in word and deed through his ministry. There were churches throughout Crete and modern Turkey and Macedonia and Greece as a result of Paul's gospel ministry to Gentiles.

### C. His Preaching of Christ 15:19

Q - What unusual enablement did the Lord bring about through Paul's ministry as he preached the gospel from Jerusa-

lem to Illyricum (cf. Acts 14:8-10; 16:16-18,25,26; 20:9-12)?  
Paul had been enabled, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to  
perform “signs and wonders” as he fully preached the gospel of  
Christ in his travels from Jerusalem as far as Illyricum (the  
region northeast of Macedonia - the upper Grecian Peninsula).  
At Lystra, for example, where Paul and Barnabas were used to  
heal a man lame from birth, Jews from Antioch and Iconium  
convinced the crowds to stone Paul (to death?), dragging him  
out of the city where he revived and went on his way to con-  
tinue spreading the gospel.

### III. Paul's Aspiration in Ministry 15:20-21

#### A. His Desire to Break New Ground Stated 15:20

Q - What was Paul's desire in his preaching of the gospel?  
It was his desire to preach the gospel where it had not been  
preached before so that he was not building on another man's  
foundation.

#### B. His Desire to Break New Ground Substantiated in Scripture 15:21

Q - How did Paul's ministry and the message of Isaiah 52:15 compare? Paul's ministry was like the message of Isaiah 52:15 because of its similarity to the ministry predicted by Isaiah of the Lord's Servant (Christ) whose ministry would reach to the Gentiles who would see things they had not heard about and would come to understand things they had not previously heard about.

Think About It: Paul rejoiced in the fact that the Lord was pleased to use him to advance the gospel where Christ was previously unknown.

Apply It: How eager are we to share the gospel message with people who are unfamiliar with it?

## “Travel Plans”

Romans 15:22-33

Q - What location stands out in your mind among the places where the Lord has given you the joy of bearing some spiritual fruit in service for Him during the travels of your life?

Romans 15:22-33 shows us that the Apostle Paul looked for opportunities to interact with God's people for mutual benefit wherever his travels took him throughout the Mediterranean world.

### I. Paul's Plans for the Future 15:22-29

#### A. His Desire to Travel to Rome 15:22-24

Q - What prevented Paul (v. 22) from going to Rome on previous occasions? Paul has just explained, in v. 20, that he wished to preach the gospel where Christ had not already been named, and the presence of the Roman church makes it evident that Christ had already been named in Rome.

Q - What now freed Paul up to pursue his longing to go to Rome (v. 23)? Paul was convinced that he had fulfilled his mission where he was (probably in Corinth), and he had wished for “many years” (1:10,13) to visit Rome where he knew he had friends he wished to see in the church to which he was writing.

Q - What occasion did Paul expect to take him through Rome (v. 24)? Paul expected to pass through Rome on his way to Spain where he could once again preach the gospel where it had not yet been proclaimed.

Q - What did Paul hope would happen while he was in

Rome (v. 24)? Paul hoped that the Roman church would help provide for his travels on to Spain, after he had enjoyed their company for a while - and he also hoped to “obtain some fruit” among them as he had among other Gentile churches (1:13).

#### B. His Decision to Travel to Jerusalem 15:25-27

Q - What were Paul’s immediate travel plans (v. 25)?  
Paul’s immediate travel plans were to travel to Jerusalem before traveling on to Spain by way of Rome.

Q - What was the purpose for Paul’s immediate travel plans (v. 26)? It was Paul’s purpose to deliver a contribution for the poor in Jerusalem which had been collected by the churches in Macedonia (Philippi?) and Achaia (Thessalonica, perhaps Berea, and Corinth?)

Q - What obligated Greek Christians to Jewish Christians in Paul’s thinking (v. 27)? Paul reasoned that because Greek Christians had derived spiritual benefit originating among the Jews (at Jerusalem originally) the Greek Christians should be willing to provide some material blessings for the Christians in Israel in their time of need.

#### C. His Destination: Spain 15:28-29

Q - What did Paul hope to accomplish before arriving in Spain (v. 28)? Paul hoped to “put his seal” on the fruit of the Gentiles in their material ministry to the impoverished Jewish believers in Jerusalem.

Q - What did Paul expect the Lord to do as he traveled through Rome (v. 29)? Paul expected the Lord to use him to bless the believers in Rome with “the blessing of the fullness of Christ” during his visit there.

## II. Paul's Plea for Prayer 15:30-33

### A. His Request of the Romans 15:30-32

#### 1. His Request Stated 15:30

Q - What is significant in your thinking about Paul's request for prayer? It seems significant that Paul was asking the Roman believers to "strive" together with him in their prayers for him.

#### 2. The Request Spelled Out 15:31-32

Q - What four things did Paul want the Romans to ask the Lord to grant him? Paul wanted the Romans to ask the Lord to grant him:

1. Rescue from those who were disobedient in Judea;
2. Service for Jerusalem which would be acceptable to the saints there;
3. Arrival at Rome in joy by the will of God; and
4. Refreshing rest in the company of the saints in Rome.

### B. His Desire for the Romans 15:33

Q - What practical difference would it make if Paul's desire for the Romans were granted? The God of peace would be with the Roman believers if his desires were granted.

Think About It: The Apostle Paul wanted to build up God's people wherever he found them in his travels for the Lord.

Apply It: What do we hope and pray the Lord will use us to bring about in the lives of believers we fellowship with on our journey through this earthly life?

## “Commendations and Greetings”

Romans 16:1-16

Q - Who are some people you can name who have made a difference for spiritual good in your life?

Romans 16:1-16 lists the names of quite a few people who obviously had the attention of not only the Apostle Paul but the Lord Himself in the fact that they are recorded forever in the pages of the Scriptures!

### I. Paul’s Commendation of Phoebe 16:1-2

Q - What was it that made Phoebe worthy of Paul’s commendation of her to the Roman believers? Paul commended Phoebe as a “servant of the church which is at Cenchrea” (a port town 6.5 miles east of Corinth). Paul’s use of the term *diakanon* (accusative feminine singular of *diakanos*) raises the possibility of “deaconesses” in the early church.

Q - What was Paul hoping the Roman believers would do for Phoebe (v. 2) on the basis of his commendation of her? Paul was encouraging the Roman believers to “receive” Phoebe, “in a manner worthy of the saints,” and that they help her in whatever need she might have - as she herself had helped others, including Paul himself.

### II. Paul’s Personal Greetings to Those He Knew in Rome 16:3-16

Q - What was it that endeared Prisca and Aquila to Paul (vv. 3-4)? Having taken Paul in to their tent making business when he arrived in Corinth (Acts 18:1-3), Prisca and Aquila later “risked their own necks” on Paul’s behalf in some incident

where their role on Paul's behalf is not identified in Scripture.

Q - What evidence does Paul cite of the ongoing faithfulness of Prisca and Aquila in service to the Lord (vv. 4-5)?  
Prisca and Aquila hosted a church in their own house in Corinth according to verse 5 as an indication of their ongoing  
faithfulness in service to the Lord.

Q - What was it that endeared Epaenetus to Paul and called for a greeting (v. 5)? Epaenetus is identified by Paul as the first convert to Christ in his ministry in Asia (i.e. the Roman province of Asia in western Turkey as we know it today).

Q - What did Mary do (v. 6) to make her worthy of Paul's mention? Mary "worked hard" on behalf of the Roman believers, making her worthy of Paul's mention.

Q - What did Paul have in common with Andronicus and Junias (v. 7; cf. 9:31)? Paul described Andronicus and Junias (possibly husband and wife) as his "kinsmen" (probably his kin in their common faith or, perhaps more likely, in their status as fellow Jews), two people who had been imprisoned like Paul was in service to the Lord - observing as well that they came to faith in Christ ahead of him and that they were considered an outstanding couple by the apostles.

Q - What do we know of Paul's relationship with Ampliatus (v. 8)? We know only that Ampliatus was well-loved by the Apostle Paul.

Q - What were Paul's descriptions (v. 9) of Urbanus and Stachys? Paul described Urbanus as one of his fellow-workers, and Stachys as another person he had come to love in Christ.

Q - Why might Apelles (v. 10) have been "the approved in

Christ”? Because Paul’s word for approved (*dokimos*) could also be translated “tested” it may be that Apelles was someone who had demonstrated his approval by the Lord on the basis of his faithfulness in service to the Lord.

Q - What might have been special about the households of Aristobulus (v. 10) and Narcissus (v. 11) that they were singled out for attention by Paul? Aristobulus and Narcissus may have been wealthy freedmen - non-believers who had slaves who were the believers whom Paul was addressing. Aristobulus may have been the man by that name who was a grandson of Herod the Great and a brother to Herod Agrippa, and Narcissus may have been a man by that name who was a wealthy freedman who served the Emperor Claudius.

Q - In what sense might Herodian (v 11) have been kin to the Apostle Paul? Herodian may have been a kinsman to Paul in the sense that he, like Andronicus and Junias mentioned earlier (16:7), was a fellow Jew (cf. 9:3).

Q - For what did Paul commend Tryphaena and Tryphosa and Persia (v. 12)? Tryphaena and Tryphosa (possibly twin sisters because of the similarity of their names) and Persia (a name suggesting that she may have been a Persian woman) “worked hard in the Lord.”

Q - How did Paul apparently view Rufus and his mother (v. 13)? Paul appears to have viewed Rufus and his mother as his “adopted family.” If Rufus is the same man named in Mark 15:21, he would have been the son of Simon of Cyrene who was pressed into service by the Romans to bear the cross of Jesus, which would make his mother the wife of Simon (a lady who endeared herself to Paul as if she were his own mother).

Q - What do we know about the people Paul mentions by

name in verses 14 and 15 which commends them? Nothing is known about any of the people the Apostle Paul names in verses 14 and 15 except the fact that Paul knew that they were a part of the Roman church and he extended his greetings to them.

Q - What outward expression gave evidence of the warmth of relations among the believers of the early church (v. 16)?  
The “holy kiss” which was a common greeting among early Christians provides evidence of the warmth of relations among the believers in Rome.

Think About It: The Apostle Paul obviously enjoyed close and caring relationships with many in the church at Rome - even though he had never been there.

Apply It: As both the Apostle Paul’s greetings, and the Lord’s inclusion by name of so many people who were in the Roman church demonstrates, there are “No Little People” in the family of God (as Francis Schaeffer expressed it in his book by that title with sixteen sermons on the subject). How sensitive are we to every person in our church family as members of the body of Christ Himself?

## “Dealing with Troublemakers”

Romans 16:17-20

Q - When have you seen the devil use people within a church to stir up dissension and hinder its ministry?

Because, as the Apostle Paul assured the believers in the Ephesian church (6:10,12) “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places,” Christians need to be “strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.” Though the believer’s struggle is not against flesh and blood, the devil often uses people who do possess flesh and blood to do his dirty work. So the Apostle Paul challenged believers, in Romans 16:17-20, to be on guard for divisive and obstructive people who might disrupt the good report he was receiving from others about their obedience to the Lord.

### I. Paul’s Warning Against Dissenters 16:17-18

#### A. His Caution to Beware 16:17

Q - What categories of troublemakers did Paul caution the Romans to keep their eye on? Paul cautioned the Romans to keep an eye on people who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching they had learned.

Q - How did Paul instruct the Romans to deal with those they found to be causing trouble in their church? Paul instructed the Roman believers to turn away from people who were causing dissensions and hindrances among them.

#### B. His Explanation of the Dangers 16:18

Q - What did Paul identify as the motivating force for those who cause trouble in the church? Paul said that those who cause trouble in the church are motivated by slavery to their own appetites.

Q - What healthy “slavery” did Paul reveal should motivate believers in the life of the church? Paul revealed that believers in the church should be motivated by their subservience as “slaves” to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Q - What did Paul identify as the “modus operandi” of those who cause trouble in the church? Paul identified smooth and flattering speech in an attempt to deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting as the “modus operandi” of people who are enslaved by their own appetites.

## II. Paul’s Commendation and Caution for the Romans 16:19

### A. His Commendation of Their Obedience 16:19a

Q - To whom are we to assume the Roman believers were obedient so that Paul was rejoicing? It is safe to assume that the Roman believers were commended for being obedient to the Lord.

### B. His Concern for Their Well-Being 16:19b

Q - What was it that Paul also hoped to see characterize the Roman believers he commended for their obedience? Paul hoped to see the Roman believers be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

## III. Paul’s Prediction of the Defeat of Satan 16:20a

Q - How soon might the believers at Rome expect the

Lord to crush Satan under their feet? It is possible that Paul had reason to believe Satan's opposition in the Roman church would soon be suppressed. The Scriptures teach (beginning in Genesis 3:15) that Satan was to be crushed under the feet of the Lord Jesus, though the final victory over Satan will be "soon" only in the sense that human lives do not last very long, because the final victory will come with the introduction of the eternal state.

#### IV. Paul's Wish for the Romans 16:20b

Q - What practical difference would it make in the matters under consideration in this passage if Paul's wish for the Roman Christians were granted? When the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ makes a significant difference in the lives of Christians who experience and embrace His undeserved favor in every way they are able to do it the differences are very practical. Embracing the grace of the Lord Jesus leads the believer to live as He instructed His people to live .

Think About It: Even godly believers, like the Christians at Rome, need to be alert against troublemakers among them until the Lord has finished dealing with the devil as the enemy of His people.

Apply It: Is our firm embrace of the grace of our Lord Jesus leading us to successfully resist the efforts of troublemakers to damage and destroy the work the Lord is seeking to see accomplished in our lives and the life of our church?

## “Concluding Greetings and Observations”

Romans 16:21-27

Q - What would you say it is that would bring the Lord the greatest amount possible of the glory He deserves?

The epistle of Paul to the Roman church is the most extensive explanation we have, from his letters in our Bibles, of the plan of salvation which the Lord has provided for the benefit of sinful people who commit themselves to Him on the basis of their faith in the person and work of His unique Son Jesus Christ. Paul’s letter concludes with some final greetings from various colleagues and the expression of Paul’s desire that the Lord, who establishes His people, should receive the eternal glory which He so clearly deserves.

### I. Paul’s Concluding Greetings 16:21-24

#### A. Greetings from Paul’s Associates 16:21-23

Q - What makes Paul’s description of Timothy (v. 21a) as his “fellow worker” a fitting description? Timothy joined Paul on his second missionary journey when Paul arrived at Lystra (Acts 16:1-2). The fact that Paul refers to him as his son (I Timothy 1:18; II Timothy 1:2; 2:1) may mean that he was introduced to Christ by Paul. He traveled extensively with Paul and was perhaps Paul’s favorite associate.

Q - In what sense might Lucius, Jason and Sosipater (v21b) have been “kinsmen” to Paul? Lucius, Jason and Sosipater were probably “kinsmen” to Paul in the sense that they were not only brothers in Christ but fellow-Jewish believers.

Cf. Acts 13:1; 17:5-9; 20:4

Q - Since the Apostle Paul is commonly credited with the writing of the epistle to the Romans, how should the claim of Tertius (v. 22) as the writer be understood? Tertius was probably Paul's "secretary" (or amanuensis), taking notes or dictation and writing out what he heard from Paul - perhaps in view of an eye problem on Paul's part (II Corinthians 12:7; Galatians 6:11).

Q - What marked out Gaius as worthy of Paul's mention to the believers at Rome (23a)? Gaius, another of Paul's traveling companions who was baptized by Paul, was hosting Paul as well as a church in his house at Corinth. As we learned earlier (16:4-5), Aquila and Prisca were also hosting a church in their home in the Corinth area.

Cf. I Corinthians 1:14

Q - What might have made Erastus and Quartus (23b) worthy of note to the believers at Rome? Though nothing is known about Quartus (except that his name means "fourth," so he may have been the fourth son or child born to his parents), Erastus was a public official as the treasurer of the city of Corinth. Archaeologists have found at Corinth a reused block of stone in a paved square with the inscription "Erastus, commissioner of public works, bore the expense of this pavement." Assuming his identity with the Erastus of verse 23, his name would be the earliest reference to a Christian by name outside the New Testament" (according to the NIV Study Bible).

#### B. Greetings from Paul 16:24

Q - What would the similarity of this verse to verse 20b, and the fact that verse 24 is missing in some Greek texts, make you think might have happened with the text? Though some suggest that the text of verse 20 was copied at verse 24, the fact that the wording is not an exact reproduction makes it more

likely that both verses were in Paul's original letter and ought to be in our Bibles as well.

## II. Paul's Concluding Doxology 16:25-27

### A. The Lord's Work of Establishing His People 16:25-26

#### 1. Using the Gospel 16:25

Q - How does the Lord use the gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ (once a "mystery") to establish His people? The message of the gospel and the preaching focused on Christ are among the most important truths to be passed on to new believers to firmly establish them in their Christian experience.

#### 2. Using Old Testament Prophecy 16:26

Q - How did the Scriptures of the Old Testament prophets figure into God's work of establishing His people? The prophetic content of the Old Testament is some of the best evidence we have that the Scriptures are the word of God - the only person who knows what is going to happen before it actually does happen.

### B. The Lord's Worthiness of Glory 16:27

Q - On what grounds did Paul hope the Lord would be "glorified forever?" Paul hoped, on the basis of the prophetic revelation of the Scriptures, with their inclusion of the message of the gospel and their record of the person and ministry of Christ, that the Lord who alone is truly wise would receive the glory He deserves both now and forever.

Think About It: The Lord, the only wise God, who used the Gospel and the Old Testament Scriptures to establish His people

through Jesus Christ, deserves to be glorified forever

Apply It: How are we contributing to the glory of the Lord by our commitment to establishing other believers in the message of the gospel and the person and work of Christ?