

# ROMANS

## **1:1-4**      *What does it mean that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead?*

The word *declared* in V4 also means defined, or demonstrated. Although Jesus was the Son of God before His resurrection, yet it was by His resurrection that openly declared, defined, demonstrated it. Many Christians believe that Jesus was begotten as God's Son by His resurrection, but that is not correct (CP Isa 9:6-7; Jn 1:1-2, 14; He 1:1-6). Jesus was begotten as God's Son at His incarnation – when He took on human form (CP Ac 13:33). When Paul quoted Psa 2:7 here, he was simply illustrating for the Jews that by Jesus' resurrection God was formally showing Jesus to be His Son, which is also what Ro 1:4 teaches (CP Psa 2:7). Jesus was demonstrated to be the Son of God in the sphere of the resurrection power of God which raised Him from the dead (see also comments on Lu 1:35(B) and Ac 13:33).

## **1:4**      *What does the Spirit of holiness refer to here?*

There are some in the church who hold this to be a reference to the Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead to demonstrate that He was truly the Son of God (CP Ac 2:22-36; 3:14-15, 26; 4:10; 5:30-32; 17:31). Others believe that it is a reference to the Spirit of Christ as the seat of the divine nature belonging to His person. They believe that as God is Spirit, the divine nature of Jesus is Spirit, and its characteristic quality is holiness (CP Psa 16:10; Lu 4:34; Ac 2:27; 3:14; 2Cor 5:21; He 4:15; 1Pe 1:16; 2:22; 1Jn 3:5). Those who espouse this view believe that the power to raise Jesus from the dead operated "according to the Spirit of holiness", Jesus' divine nature – in contrast with "according to the flesh". *According to the flesh* refers to Jesus' humanity (CP Ro 1:3). Both these views have merit, and each has scriptures to support them. But we should not argue over which is right and which is wrong, because neither is fundamental to salvation.

## **1:7**      *(A) How are saints defined?*

Saints are repentant sinners who in answer to their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ have been sanctified, or set apart from sin to holiness by the Holy Spirit, to serve God (CP Ro 8:30; 1Cor 3:16-17; 2Cor 6:15-16; Eph 1:6; 2:4-6; 2Th 2:13-14; 2Ti 1:9). All believers are designated saints by God. The words *to be* in Ro 1:7 are not in the original text. They were added by the translators in an effort to clarify the thought for the English reader. The phrase should read, "...beloved of God, called saints". This clearly refutes the teaching by some that only those who have died in Christ can be saints (CP Ro 8:27; 1Cor 1:2; 2Cor 1:1; Eph 1:1; 4:12; Php 1:1; Col 1:1-2). These are but a few of the references in scripture to living saints.

## *(B) Who founded the church in Rome?*

Scriptures do not teach who founded the church in Rome, but it clearly was not Paul or Peter, contrary to

what many may think. Paul wrote this epistle before he was taken to Rome under guard. He obviously was free when he wrote it because he described his travel plans in the letter (CP 1:9-13 with 15:15-29). Paul wrote the letter to the Romans from Corinth, where he was staying with Gaius, one of his first converts in Corinth (CP 16:23 with 1Cor 1:14). It is highly probable, but not certain, that the church in Rome was founded by local converts to whom Paul had preached the gospel during his apostolic mission journeys, as he knew many of the Christians in Rome personally (CP Ro 16:1-16). We also learn from this that Peter did not start the church in Rome either, because Paul never greeted him here, nor mentions him anywhere else in the letter as being in Rome either at the time of writing or beforehand. It is also possible that some of the Jews from Rome who were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost went back and started the church, because it was already well established and consisted of both Jews and gentiles when Paul wrote this letter (CP 1:8, 13-15; 2:17-18; 4:1, 12; 11:20-21; 15:15-16).

## **1:13**      *What was the fruit Paul referred to here?*

This is answered for us in the next verse (CP V14). The word *debtor* here means "one held by some obligation, bound by some duty". It refers to a personal, moral obligation. Paul felt himself obligated to save souls to such a degree that not to preach the gospel would bring disaster upon him (CP 1Cor 9:16). The most compelling thing in Paul's life – as it should be with every Christian – was to win souls to Christ. Souls won to Christ was the fruit Paul desired. It was immaterial to him whether they were Jews or gentiles, society's elite, or its outcasts. Paul considered all men, without distinction of nation or culture his creditors, and we should too (CP Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15; Jn 15:16).

## **1:16-17**      *What do we learn from what Paul says here?*

Paul declares here that the gospel of Christ is the power of God to save every one who believes. There is no plainer truth than this in scripture, which clearly refutes the teaching by some in the church that God has already determined who will, and who will not be saved. Ro 1:16-17 means exactly what it says: every person who believes in the gospel of Christ is saved by the power of God. The power of God to save every one who believes, is His righteousness revealed in the gospel on the ground of faith in Christ as the absolute condition of salvation (CP Mk 16:16; Jn 3:14-18, 36; 1Jn 5:1). Faith alone is the source of new life in Christ, and it is by this faith that God's righteousness – His grace and mercy – is received by the repentant sinner (CP Ro 3:21-26; Eph 2:4-8; Php 3:8-9). *From faith to faith* in Ro 1:17 means that Christians grow from one level of maturity in Christ to another the longer they walk in His righteousness and continue in His word. This righteousness is unattainable by any merit of man's own, or on any other condition than that of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith to believe in Christ is wrought in men's hearts by the hearing of the gospel and the operation

of the Holy Spirit to convict sinners of their need of a Saviour (CP Jn 16:7-11; Ro 10:17; 16:25-26; 1Cor 12:3; Eph 1:3; 1Pe 1:23-25). There is nothing implied in any of those scriptures that only certain people are chosen for salvation and others are not, as some in the church teach. Every one who believes in the gospel is saved. When Paul said in Ro 1:16 that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ he meant that he never feared the prospect of it ever failing those who believed in it (CP Ro 9:33; 10:11; 2Ti 1:12; He 7:22-25). God will never let down or put to shame those who place their confidence in the gospel for their salvation. See also comments on Mt 11:28-30, 13:10-11, 20:16; Jn 3:14-15, 3:36, 6:37, 12:37-40, Ac 2:37-38, 13:48, 28:23-29; Ro 3:24-26(A), 8:28-30, 9:7, 9:10-13, 9:14-18, 9:19-21, 10:14-17, 11:2, 11:4, 11:7-10, Eph 1:3-6, 1:11-14, 2:8-10, 1Th 1:4; 2Ti 1:8-9; 1Pe 1:2; 1Jn 1:10.

**1:18**            *How is the wrath of God revealed from heaven here?*

Most Christians consider the wrath of God in scripture as something unrepentant sinners will only be confronted with on Judgement Day. However, God's wrath is not only the divine response to man's unfaithfulness in the future judgement; it is a present and continuous reality which is best understood against the background of what Paul goes on to say in V19-32 (CP V19-32). God's wrath is revealed from heaven here against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of those who have rejected his truth in V18-20. God has given them over to their ungodly lusts and has made them subject to all the consequences of their sins as divine chastisement, in this life. This is the law of sowing and reaping, which applies to everyone - believers and unbelievers alike (CP Ga 6:7-8). Look what happened to King David (CP Psa 38). David had committed adultery with Bathsheba, and even though he had confessed and repented of it and had been forgiven by God, he was still subject to the consequences of his sin. David was stricken with venereal disease, and in Psa 38 he acknowledges that it was a result of his sin (CP Ro 1:21-22). Here we see that the thoughts and the directions of those who reject God's truth are worthless. They are destitute of real wisdom and their already foolish hearts are darkened even further. This is what Solomon experienced when he rejected the truth of God (CP Ecc 1:2). All that Solomon tried was futile, unsuccessful in giving him complete satisfaction, and this is the pattern of his life right throughout Ecclesiastes, after he rejected God's truth. He also exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for a corruptible image (CP Ro 1:23 with 1Ki 11:4-10).

When men choose to reject the Creator and worship the creation, God delivers them into the control of the sinful things they preferred to Him (CP Ro 1:24-25 with Psa 81:11-12). This does not mean that God causes men to sin, but that because lust dwells in their hearts, when men persist in pursuing those lusts, God's grace, which restrains men from sinning gives place to wrath, and He then abandons them to their passions (CP Ro 5:20 - 6:2 with 1:26-28). The word

*recompense* in Ro 1:27 refers to the natural result of their sin which pays them back for what they have done. So it could be said that the herpes and aids viruses and other sexually transmitted diseases are a recompense for the rampant sexual promiscuity and blatant homosexual practices which men and women engage in today. In V28 God gave those who rejected His truth over to a "reprobate mind". A reprobate mind is one void of judgement, in which the divine distinctions between right and wrong are confused and lost, so that men become filled with all the unrighteousness of V29-32 (CP V29-32). The wrath God visits on sinful humanity consists of simply letting humanity have its own way. God's wrath in the context of Ro 1:18 is not directed against persons, but against their godlessness and wickedness (CP Mt 3:7; He 2:1-4; 3:10-12; 4:2-3). In closing here it should be noted that notwithstanding that God's wrath is being revealed from heaven against all the unrighteousness and wickedness of those who have rejected His truth now in this life, God is ever willing to receive and restore those who practice these evils to fellowship with Him, if they will but repent of their ways and ask for His forgiveness (CP Lu 15:11-32 with 1Jn 1:9). See also comments on Ro 1:24-28, 1:29-31, 1Cor 6:9-10; Ga 5:19-21.

**1:19-21**        *Is this teaching that all human beings have a basic knowledge of God?*

Yes, although the revelation of God through the gospel of Christ is not in view here, scriptures clearly teach that all men have a basic knowledge of God. He has made Himself known to all humanity by His creation. Heaven and earth both declare His glory. The sun, the moon, the stars all shout out praise to the God who made them; the animals, the birds of the air, the fish in the sea, even the earth itself; the rain and the snow, the bees that gather nectar to make wax and honey and pollinate trees to bear fruit all teach us of their Maker (CP Job 12:7-11; Psa 8:1-4; 19:1-6; 75:1; 148:1-10; Ac 14:17). All of creation manifests God's glory and makes Him known to men, but sadly most men repress this knowledge of God. Kenneth Wuest in his **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament** sums it up like this, "*Through the light of the created universe, unsaved man recognizes the fact that there is a supreme being who created it, who has eternal power and divine attributes, a being to whom worship and obedience are due. This is the truth which unsaved man is repressing and herein lies the just condemnation of the entire human race, since it has not lived up to the light which it has. That is why man has no excuse or defence for his actions.*" (CP Ro 1:20).

Scriptures also teach that the knowledge of God is written in every man's heart, to which their conscience bears witness (CP 2:14-15). This teaches that the conscience bears witness to men's obedience to God's truth, or condemns them for disobedience. It proves that God has not left anyone without light sufficient to justify or condemn them in the judgement (CP V15-16). Finally, the knowledge of God has also been handed down by humans from one generation to another (CP Psa 145:3-7; Ac 17:22-27).

Ro 10:18). God never tries to prove that He exists, but He says that whoever denies His existence is a fool (CP Ps 14:1). See also comments on Ac 4:10-12(B).

**1:24-28**      *Are Paul's pronouncements here on homosexuality still morally valid?*

Yes, despite the fact that in recent years homosexuality has been legalised between consenting adults in most western countries, it is still an immoral life-style as far as God is concerned. God never changes (CP Mal 3:6). What God pronounced immoral in Bible times is still immoral today and the clear evidence of this is the fact that those who engage in homosexual practices today still receive the "recompense of their error" as did those who practised it in Bible times (CP Ro 1:27). *Recompense* here refers to the natural result of their sin which pays them back for what they have done. Thus it could be said that "aids", a lethal disease that mainly affects homosexuals, is the recompense of their error as herpes and other sexually transmitted diseases were a recompense of the error of the so-called sexual revolution and the rampant sexual promiscuity it birthed.

The world may accept homosexuality as an alternative life-style but God will not (CP 1Cor 6:9-10; Ga 5:19-21; 6:7-8; Col 3:3-6; 1Ti 1:8-10). *Uncleanliness* in Ga 5:20 and Col 3:5 refers to any practice the opposite to that which is pure. This includes homosexuality, which in turn includes lesbianism (CP Ro 1:26). Homosexuality also includes sodomy, paedophilia and pederasty (a pederast is one who commits sodomy with a boy). Under the law in the Old Testament homosexuality, or sodomy as it was called then, was such an abomination to God that those who engaged in it were put to death (CP Lev 18:22, 26-30; 20:13; De 23:17). God was so totally against homosexuality in the Old Testament that He ordered entire nations and cities to be destroyed because of the blatant homosexual behaviour of the populace (CP Ge 13:13; 18:16-21; 19:1-13, 24-25). God does not want to destroy homosexuals under the gospel of grace in the New Testament though - He wants to save them through the redemption that is in Christ. But they must want to change. They must see homosexuality for what it is - a sin against God; the wilful rejection of His truth - and not the result of a biological condition that cannot be helped, which is the lie into which they changed the truth of God (CP Ro 1:24-25). See also comments on Ro 1:18, 1:29-31; 1Cor 6:9-10; Ga 5:19-21.

**1:29-31**      *How are these sins defined?*

*Unrighteousness* means impropriety, iniquity, wickedness, wrongdoing, injustice (CP Lu 13:23-27; Ac 1:18; Ro 3:5; 6:13; 2Ti 2:19; He 8:12; 2Pe 2:9-15; 1Jn 5:17). *Fornication* refers to any form of sexual immorality. It includes adultery, incest, homosexuality, prostitution etc (CP Mt 5:32 also 19:9; 1Cor 5:1; 6:13, 18; 7:2; 2Cor 12:21; Ga 5:19; Eph 5:3; Col 3:5; 1Th 4:3-6; Rev 9:21). *Wickedness* is used here in a moral sense. It means

evil disposition, malice, active malevolence toward others; attributing to others and their actions the worst imaginable motives (CP Mt 22:15-21; Lu 11:39; Ac 3:26; 1Cor 5:8; Eph 6:12; 3Jn 10). *Covetousness* means intense lust for gain, avarice, the incessant desire for more (CP Lu 12:15; 1Cor 5:10; 2Cor 9:5; Eph 4:19; 5:3-5; Col 3:5; 1Th 2:5; 2Pe 2:3, 14). *Maliciousness* means wickedness as an evil habit of the mind; illwill, desire to injure; vicious disposition and desires; being inherently evil (CP 1Cor 5:8; 14:20; Eph 4:31; Col 3:8; Tit 3:3; Jas 1:21; 1Pe 2:1, 16). *Full of envy* means pain felt and malignity conceived at the sight of excellence or happiness, jealousy (CP Mt 27:15-18, 20-23; Mk 15:9-14; Php 1:15-16; 1Ti 6:3-4; Tit 3:3; 1Pe 2:1). *Murder* means premeditated and unlawful killing of another; slaughter, slaying or killing by any means. Murder also includes in its meaning hatred of another (CP Mt 15:19; Mk 15:7; Ac 9:1; He 11:37; 1Jn 3:15). *Debate* means to cause strife and discord, contention, wrangling. In Ro 1:19 it means metaphorically love of strife (CP Ro 13:13; 1Cor 1:11; 3:3; 2Cor 12:20; 1Ti 6:4; Tit 3:9). It should be noted that debate is not the same as disputing for truth (CP Ac 9:29; 15:2, 7; 17:17; 19:8-9).

*Deceit* refers to lying, falsity, guile, craft, subtlety (CP Mt 26:4; Mk 14:1; Jn 1:47; Ac 13:8-10; 2Cor 12:14-18; 1Th 2:3-4; 1Pe 2:1, 21-22; 3:10; Rev 14:3-5). *Malignity* means an evil disposition that ascribes to the best deeds, the worst motives. It puts the worst construction on everything, giving a malicious interpretation to the actions of others. It is used only in Ro 1:29. *Whisperers* refers to those who slander others secretly; detractors and gossips who destroy men's reputations in secret (CP 1Cor 10:9-10; 2Cor 12:20). *Backbiters* are those who speak evil of others; false accusers, slanderers of absent men (CP Jas 4:11; 1Pe 2:1). *Haters of God* are those who despise and are scornful of God. *Despiteful* means to act with insolence and mistreat others for the pleasure of it (CP 1Ti 1:13). *Proud* means arrogant, haughty, to glory in self. It is also associated with the rejection of God (CP Lu 1:51; 1Ti 6:3-4; 2Ti 3:2; Jas 4:6; 1Pe 5:5). *Boasters* means self-assuming, vain, braggarts. They want to appear as someone higher or more important than what they are.

*Inventors of evil things* is self-explanatory, referring to those alienated from God who devise mischief and new forms of wickedness. *Disobedient to parents* means irreverent, rebellious to parental authority; indifferent to rule and order (CP Ac 26:19; 2Ti 3:2; Tit 1:16; 3:3). *Without understanding* means undiscerning, without insight (CP Mt 15:15-20). But it also means to be ignorant and destitute of the capacity for spiritual things (CP Ps 14:1; Ro 1:21, 31). *Covenant breakers* refers to those who do not keep their promises. They are perfidious, disloyal, treacherous and untrustworthy (CP Jer 3:7-11). *Without natural affection* means they yield only to their baser instincts, acting in total disregard of natural ties and the obligations that go with them (CP Ro 1:24-28; 2Pe 2:12-22). *Implacable* means unforgiving, irreconcilable, refusing to lay aside enmity or to listen to terms of reconciliation (CP 2Ti 3:3).

*Unmerciful* means cruel, merciless, without pity or compassion (CP Jas 2:13).

Although the sins of Ro 1:28-31 are ascribed to those who blatantly rebel against God, Paul's last word in V32 sounds a warning to Christians who take enjoyment from these acts of immorality by watching them on television, movies, and video, and reading books that portray them (CP V32). The portrayal of immorality dominates the entertainment media today, and a great many Christians tacitly approve of it by watching it. Even though they may not practice these sins themselves, Christians who derive pleasure from watching other people take part, bring themselves under the same judgment of God (CP 2Th 2:11-12). See also comments on Ro 1:18, 1:24-29, 1Cor 6:9-10, Ga 5:19-21.

**2:1-4**      *How are we to understand this passage of scripture?*

In V1 Paul accuses the self-righteous moralists – Jews and Gentiles alike – for justifying themselves while condemning others for the sins enumerated in chapter 1. They were guilty of the same sins (CP 1:29-31). The self-righteous moralists condemned themselves by virtue of the fact that they were able to judge right from wrong in others. They condemned others' sins but excused their own, so Paul then proceeded to teach about the judgment of God (CP 2:2-16).

God's judgment is according to truth and those who condemn others while doing the same thing themselves, will not escape this judgment. However, God delays His judgment in order to give sinners time to repent (CP 2:4 with 2Pe 3:9). In His goodness God holds back His judgment, giving sinners time to repent, although they are worthy of immediate death. In spite of their provocations, God is longsuffering toward them. This demonstrates His grace by which men are saved (CP Ro 3:21-26; Eph 2:8-10).

There is also a lesson for the contemporary church here: the church should not direct secular society to follow biblical teaching while at the same time it is blind to the worldliness and sin in its own membership (CP Lu 6:41-42).

**2:5**      *What is the "Day of Wrath" Paul refers to here?*

The day of wrath Paul refers to here is the final judgement - the Great White Throne Judgement, which will take place after the thousand years reign of Christ. Scripture calls it the second death (CP Rev 20:6, 12-15). After describing the sinfulness of ungodly pagans in Ro 1:18-32, Paul turns his attention in Ro 2 to those who censoriously criticize and judge others for sinning. Primarily he is addressing the Jews, but secondarily he is addressing everyone who judges others while at the same time they are themselves in sin. In condemning others they condemn themselves and store up God's wrath against them in the Day of Judgement (CP V1-4 with 16-29).

**2:6**      *Does this not teach that salvation is not by faith only but by works also?*

No! Although *deeds* means *works*, this is not teaching salvation by works. The key to understanding this verse is found in V7-10 (CP V7-10). This simply teaches that in the future judgement God will punish evil and reward good (CP Isa 3:10-11; Jer 17:10; Jn 5:28-29; 2Cor 5:10; Ga 6:7-9; Rev 22:11-12).

**2:11-13**      *What do we learn from what Paul says here?*

We learn in V11-12 that God does not show favouritism – the law is an impartial standard of judgement. It is not the knowledge of the law that counts, but obedience to it. This is for our admonition also. V13 teaches that it is folly for anyone who professes to be a Christian but is not totally consecrated to the service of God and completely yielded to the authority of Jesus, to think that they are saved (CP De 27:26; 1Sam 15:22-23; Mt 7:21-27; 12:30, 46-50; Jas 1:22-25).

**2:14-16**      *See comments on Ro 1:19-21.*

**2:17-24**      *How are we to understand what Paul is saying here?*

Here Paul is showing the Jews the error of their way. The things in which they boasted had never changed their lives – there was no moral transformation. Their empty formalism caused the Gentiles to blaspheme God (CP Isa 52:5; Eze 36:20-23). The Gentiles judged God by the Jews who professed to be His followers. The same happens today too. Unbelievers judge Christ by how much they see of Him in Christians (CP Ro 2:25-29).

**3:3-4**      *What does Paul mean by what he says here?*

What Paul means in effect here is that if God's promises are not being fulfilled in our lives, then it is not God's fault. We had best examine ourselves to ensure that we are in the place where God would have us to be to appropriate the promises (CP 2Cor 13:5). God entrusted His word to the Jews (CP Ro 3:1-2). But they did not exercise faith to believe it and so could not appropriate any of the promises (CP He 4:2-6). We are admonished in scripture not to let the same thing happen to us (CP He 3:7-12, 19; 4:1, 11). Without faith it is impossible to please God (CP He 11:6). God will always be found to be true to His word; though we may not believe, God is faithful, and His word will never fail (CP Nu 23:19; De 7:9; Josh 21:45; 23:14; 1Ki 8:56; Psa 31:19; 89:34; Isa 55:10-11; 1Cor 1:9; 2Cor 1:19-20; 2Ti 2:13; Tit 1:2; He 10:23). No one can ever say that God's word does not work, but God has obligated Himself only to fulfill His promises in those who without wavering exercise faith to believe He will perform His word (CP Mt 7:7-8; 21:21-22; Mk 11:22-24; Jas 1:5-8) The phrase, "as it is written: that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged," is a paraphrase of King David's

confession in Psa 51 (CP Psa 51:4). In the context of Ro 3:4 Paul uses it simply to affirm that God's word will always prove to be true no matter who questions it.

**3:5**            *What does Paul mean here by saying, "I speak as a man?"*

Paul means that he was advancing a purely human viewpoint, which questioned the fairness of God for punishing sinners whose sins magnified his righteousness. Paul presents the viewpoint as futile human reasoning on the basis that if sin was necessary to magnify his righteousness, then God could never condemn sinners (CP V6-8).

**3:9**            *What does it mean that "all are under sin?"*

It means that every human being possesses a fallen, sinful nature; the sin nature of Adam, originating with Adam's fall from grace for disobeying God and eating the forbidden fruit (CP Ge 2:17; Ro 5:12). This is not implying that Christians remain bound in sin or that they sin wilfully, but that all people in their natural state are sinners (CP 3:10-17, 23). It is because they have no fear of God (CP V18 with Pr 3:7; 8:13; 9:10; 16:6; Ac 5:11). Christians can and do spontaneously sin, but they no longer habitually sin, which is what is meant in Ro 3:9 (CP 1Jn 3:5-10; 5:4, 18).

**3:19-23**       *What do we learn from what Paul says here?*

We learn from this that all that the law says is for the benefit of those who are subject to the law so that no one may have anything to say in self-defence. The law is meant to silence everyone and to bring all humanity under God's judgement (CP V19). This is because no one can be justified in God's sight by keeping the law. All the law can do is make men aware of their sinfulness – it has no power to save them (CP V20). However, independent of the law, God had a plan of salvation which was revealed in all the rites and ceremonies of the law, and predicted by the Old Testament prophets (CP V21). God's plan involved His Son Jesus: the entire sacrificial system of the Old Testament pointed to the future sacrificial death of Jesus to appease and avert God's wrath and justice against sinners, so that all who believed on Jesus could be forgiven their sins and reconciled to God (CP He 9:11-15, 28; 10:5-10).

God does not distinguish between any member of the human race - all have sinned and fallen short of His ideal, and all can be saved by faith in Jesus if they so choose (CP Ro 3:22-23). See also comments on Ro 1:16-17 and Eph 2:8-10.

**3:24-26**       *(A) What great foundational truth of the Christian faith is Paul expounding here?*

This is the doctrine of justification by faith, which Paul first alluded to in Ac 13, and then in Ro 1 (CP Ac 13:38-39; Ro 1:16-17). This teaches that the only way anyone can be justified in God's sight is by

trusting in Jesus and the redemption He has purchased for them with His blood. Jesus' atoning death makes it possible for everyone who believes on Him to be justified by faith. The word *propitiation* in V25 emphasizes the appeasement and averting of God's wrath and justice against sinners because Christ Himself was the price God required to pay for the removal of their sins. God's justice was satisfied and His righteousness vindicated only by Christ's sacrificial death and the shedding of His blood (CP 4:25; 5:1-2, 6-11; 10:4-13 with Ac 10:43; 1Cor 1:30; 2Cor 5:21; Ga 3:19-29; Eph 1:6-7; 2:1-9). We should note here that Christ's sacrificial death was sufficient for the sins of all mankind, but efficient only for those who believe on Him (CP Mt 11:28-30; Mk 16:15-16; Jn 3:16-18, 36; 7:37-38; Rev 22:17). It should also be noted here that repentant sinners do not have to attain to a certain level of holiness before being justified or declared righteous in God's sight. The work of the Holy Spirit in conforming them to the image of God begins after they are justified, not before (CP Ro 12:1-2; 2Cor 3:18; 4:14-16; Eph 4:20-23; Col 3:9-10; Tit 3:5-7). See also comments on Ro 1:16-17 and Eph 2:8-10.

*(B) Whose sins are referred to in V25 as the sins that are past?*

(CP V25). These are the sins of all those who lived in Old Testament times before the atoning death of Christ. God merely suspended judgement for their sins until the price for them was actually paid by Jesus (CP Ac 17:30-31; He 9:15; 1Jn 2:2). As New Testament believers look back on the cross for their redemption, so the Old Testament saints looked forward to the cross for their redemption. Everyone who took part in the sacrificial system under the old covenant was vindicated by the sacrificial death of Jesus under the new covenant (CP He 9:16-28). Even Abel made a sacrificial offering to God which pointed to the future redeemer (CP Gen 4:1-4).

**3:27**            *Whose boasting is Paul referring to here?*

The reference here is to the boasting of the Jews concerning their perceived standing with God by virtue of their ceremonial observances of the law. But Paul excludes their boasting in light of the fact that God's righteousness is only by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ, not by observing the Old Testament law (CP V28-30 with 4:25; 5:1-2, 6-11; 10:4-13; Ac 10:43; 1Cor 1:30; 2Cor 5:21; Ga 3:19-29; Eph 1:6-7; 2:1-9).

**4:1-5**            *Was Abraham who lived hundreds of years before the law also saved by Jesus' death?*

Yes! The basis of salvation, whether of an Old Testament saint or a New Testament believer, under the law or outside of the law, is and always has been, the death of Christ as the atoning sacrifice for sin. God credited Abraham's faith in Him to perform His word as righteousness on the basis of Christ's future sacrifice of Himself for Abraham's sin. It was the death of Christ as full payment for all men's sins that

made it possible for God to justify sinners and vindicate his righteousness, regardless of the biblical era (CP Mt 1:21; 26:27-28 (also Mk 14:23-24); Lu 1:68-79; Jn 1:29; Ro 3:23-25; 5:12-19; 2Cor 5:17-19, 21; Ga 3:22; He 9:15; 1Jn 2:2). Even Abel made a sacrificial offering to God which pointed to the future redeemer (CP Gen 4:1-4).

**4:3**            *What was it that was counted unto Abraham for righteousness?*

Abraham simply believed in God, personally and completely, and it was this faith that was credited to Him for righteousness (CP V5 and 9 with Ga 3:5-6). Abraham was not declared righteous for anything he did, but because of his absolute faith in God. Abraham believed all that God said, and he did all that God told him to do (CP Gen 12:1-5; 15:1-6). Abraham did not know where God was taking him when he told him to leave his home, his kindred, and his country in Gen 12:1-5, he just obeyed in faith (CP He 11:8-10). By faith Abraham knew that he was only a pilgrim on earth and that he was only sojourning in Caanan, the earthly promised land. He knew that Caanan was not the end of his pilgrimage; that it merely pointed to "a better country, that is, an heavenly" where God had prepared a city for all those who would be justified by faith in Jesus (CP V14-16; 13:14 with Ga 3:8). The city of God is New Jerusalem, where all the saints of God, Old Testament and New Testament alike, will go to live with Jesus for all eternity (CP Rev 3:12; 21:2-3, 9-10, 22-27). There are many more scriptures testifying to Abraham's faith in the Bible but those included here will suffice for the purpose of this exercise. Let us go back now for another look at Gen 12:1-5 (CP Gen 12:1-5; He 11:8-10).

Contemporary Christians should take careful note of how Abraham responded to God by faith here, because like Abraham, every believer in Christ is also called by God to leave their home, their kindred and their country, in the sense of being separated from worldly things, to follow Jesus (CP Mt 10:37-39; 16:24-25; Mk 8:34-38; Lu 14:25-27, 33).

**4:9-10**        *If justification is by faith alone why did God command Abraham to be circumcised?*

Abraham was justified by faith at least 14 years before God commanded him to be circumcised (CP Gen 17:1-19, 24-27). Abraham was 99 years old here, and Ishmael, his son from Hagar, his wife Sarah's handmaid, was 13 years old, which means that he was conceived approximately 14 years earlier (CP 16:1-4). We see here that Abraham had been in Caanan 10 years when he and Hagar conceived Ishmael, and it was during this time that Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness (CP 15:1-6). Abraham's circumcision was a sign of his righteousness, not a cause of it. It was an outward demonstration of the righteousness God had credited to him by faith while uncircumcised (CP Ro 4:11-12). It should be noted here that circumcision is not a prerequisite for New Testament Christians (see comments on Ac 15:1-29).

**4:13**            *What does it mean that Abraham should be the heir of the world?*

This refers to God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants (CP Gen 12:1-3; 18:17-18; 21:12; 22:15-18; Ro 4:16-18; Ga 3:8). *Seed* in Gen 21:12 refers specifically to Jesus, which Paul quotes in Ga 3:16 (CP Ga 3:16). Because of Jesus, Abraham, his descendants, and all who are justified by faith with him, will inherit the earth (CP Ro 4:11-12 with Psa 37:11; Mt 5:5; 25:34; Rev 5:10; 22:4-5).

**4:18-22**        *Did Abraham's faith ever waver?*

Yes, scriptures record that Abraham's faith did waver twice, but God did not reject him because of it (CP Gen 16:1-2; 20:11-18). Contemporary Christians who have also had faith lapses can take heart here from the fact that in spite of his lapses of faith, God still counted Abraham's faith unto him for righteousness (CP Ga 3:6).

**4:23-25**        *What do we learn from what Paul says here?*

We learn from this that God's promise to Abraham has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Every repentant sinner becomes a child of God and heir of the promise through faith in Jesus (CP V11-13 with Ga 3:26-29). Christ's resurrection ensures our justification. If he had not been resurrected we would still be under condemnation for sin (CP Jn 14:19 with 1Cor 15:12-17).

**5:1**            *What is meant by "we have peace with God"?*

This means that believers are no longer under the threat of God's wrath as sinners are, but are at peace with God. Both *justification*, as the act of saving, and *peace*, as the condition of being saved, come through Jesus Christ (CP V2, 9-11; 2Cor 5:18-21; Col 1:19-22). *The hope of the glory of God* in Ro 5:2 refers to the believer's hope of participating in the glory of heaven. *Wrath* in 5:9 refers to both the Great Tribulation – which is God's wrath poured out upon sinners, and the lake of fire – or hell – into which all sinners will be cast at the Great White Throne Judgement (CP 1Th 1:10 with Rev 2:11; 20:11-15). *Atonement* in Ro 5:11 (KJV) means *reconciliation*. God has reconciled believers to Himself through Christ's shed blood. It was only the sacrificial death of Christ and the shedding of His blood that appeased and averted God's wrath and justice against sinners, so that all who believe on Jesus can be justified by faith (see also comments on Ro 3:19-23, 3:24-26 and 4:1-5).

**5:3-5**            *What do we learn from what Paul says here?*

Firstly, in the context of Ro 5:3-5 *tribulations* refers to persecutions, afflictions, oppressions and hardships, etc. These are promised to every believer in Christ. Believers are warned from the commencement of their Christian walk that they must

go through many tribulations in the process of conforming to the image of Christ (CP Jn 15:18-20; Ac 14:21-22; 2Ti 3:12). Secondly, we learn that tribulations are needful for believers to develop strength of character and steadfastness in faith (CP Jas 1:2-4; 1Pe 1:3-9; 4:12-14). True faith will withstand the testing process of tribulations because of the believer's hope in the gospel of Christ to save them (CP Ro 1:16). Ro 5:5 teaches that this hope is grounded in God's super-abundant love which has been poured in, and still floods the hearts of believers, by the Holy Spirit. This love is the motivating force in believers. Here is the literal English rendering of V3-5 from the Greek text according to **Kenneth Wuest's Word Studies in the Greek New Testament**:

*"And not only this, but we also are exulting in our tribulations, knowing that this tribulation produces endurance, and this endurance approvedness, and this approvedness, hope, and this hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts and still floods them through the agency of the Holy Spirit who was given to us."*

#### **5:9-10**      **What wrath did Christ save us from?**

The wrath Paul refers to here is the divine judgment to be inflicted upon all the ungodly in the earth during the great tribulation which prefaces the second coming of Christ (CP Mt 24:29-31; Lu 21:23; Rev 6:12-17; 11:18; 19:11-15 with Eph 2:3; 5:6; 1Th 1:10; 5:1-9).

#### **5:12-14**      **How was sin and death transmitted to the human race by Adam?**

Humans are born with the propensity to sin because we all descend from Adam and have inherited his sin nature (CP V19 with Jer 17:9 and Ac 17:26). Scriptures teach that sin is present in every human being from the moment of conception (CP Psa 51:5 with Ro 3:9-10, 23 and 8:8-9). Because of sin, physical death came upon mankind, and now all mankind is subject to death (CP Gen 2:16-17; 3:17-19; Ro 5:17-18; Jas 1:14-15). God never intended humans to die but to be immortal. He set the tree of life in the Garden of Eden for Adam and Eve to eat from in order that they could live forever, but they forfeited their right to it when they sinned, and so death came upon the whole human race (CP Gen 2:8-9, 15-17; 3:17-24). In Ro 5:12-14 Paul shows that because death was the penalty for sin, and people died during the period between Adam and Moses before the law was given, it was obvious that sin was always present in humans irrespective of the law; and even if they did not directly disobey God like Adam did, the fact they died is evidence that they sinned.

Paul's statement in V13 that sin is not imputed when there is no law, simply means that the law did not apply to those who lived before the law was given. Paul then goes on to say that Adam was a figure or type of the One who was to come, meaning Christ. Adam was the Old Testament figure of Christ in the

sense that he was the first man or head of the old creation, as Christ is the first man or head of the new creation (CP Gen 2:7 with 1Cor 15:45-49).

#### **5:15**      **What exactly does Paul mean by what he says here?**

Here Paul contrasts Adam's sin which brought condemnation and death to the whole human race with Christ's gift of life through God's grace which freely takes away all sins and restores life. Christ's power to save is greater than Adam's sin is to destroy. His gift of life is immeasurably greater than the consequences of Adam's sin (CP V16-19). Those who avail themselves of Christ's gift of life reign in life; sin no longer has dominion over them (CP 6:14). God's grace is more powerful than sin – it not only forgives sin, it also overcomes the desire to sin. Where sin abounds grace abounds even more to empower believers to resist sin (CP 5:20-21 with 1Jn 3:6-10; 5:4, 18). The word *abound* is used twice in Ro 5:20 and derives from two different Greek root words. The first time it is used, "*The law entered that the offence might **abound***", teaches that not only did the law reveal sin, but it also caused it to happen. Whereas the second time it is used, "*...but where sin **abounded** grace did much more **abound***", teaches that grace is exceedingly more powerful than sin. It provides forgiveness of sin and as we learned in 1Jn 3:6-10 and 5:4, 18 it also empowers believers to resist it (CP Ro 6:1-2).

#### **6:1**      **What is the point of Paul's question here?**

This question is purely rhetorical – asked only for dramatic effect, not to seek an answer. Paul immediately counters it with a categorical rejection in the very next verse (CP V2). Paul had just finished telling the Roman Christians in Ch 5 that where sin exists, God's grace is exceedingly more powerful to provide forgiveness of sin (CP 5:20-21). Having proclaimed this Paul had to then pre-empt any erroneous idea that believers can continue in sin and yet still retain their salvation because of the abundance of such grace. Being "dead to sin" (V2) does not mean that the old sin nature is completely extinct in Christians. It is still there as scriptures clearly attest (CP 1Jn 1:6-10). Being dead to sin means that sin no longer has any hold over Christians (CP Ro 6:14). God breaks sin's power over believers when they are converted to Christ and they no longer have to obey the behests of sin (CP 2Cor 5:14-15, 17; 1Jn 3:6-10; 5:4, 18). Those who are in Christ have died to sin. They are made partakers of the divine nature, causing them to hate sin and love holiness (CP Ro 6:17-18, 22; 8:3-4; 2Cor 3:18; Ga 2:16-20; Eph 4:17-24; Col 2:8-13; 1Pe 1:3-5; 2Pe 1:3-4). This produces in believers the desire to do God's will (CP Ro 12:1-2, 21; 1Cor 3:9; 6:19-20; Php 2:12-13; Col 3:1-10, 12-17). If this desire is not manifest in a believer then that believer must seriously question whether he or she is born again and saved (CP 2Cor 13:5; 1Jn 2:3-6).

Paul stresses the fact throughout Ro 6 that a true believer is identified by his death to sin. There is no

provision in God's redemptive plan for believers to continue in sin (CP V2, 6-7, 11-13). Believers must never yield their members to the "it is alright, we can do it now and repent later" mentality of some professing Christians. This could easily become a pathway to hell because every time they do that it becomes easier to do, and soon becomes a way of life (CP He 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 2Pe 2:20-22). Whoever sees in grace a pretext to sin is showing contempt for Christ (CP 2Sam 12:7-9).

### 6:3-5 *What baptism is Paul referring to here?*

It is widely taught in the contemporary church that this passage of scripture illustrates the spiritual significance of water baptism; that going down into the water symbolizes dying to sin, and coming up out of the water symbolizes being raised again in a new power to live a righteous life before God in Christ. But that is not correct. The real significance of water baptism is taught elsewhere in scripture which we will look at shortly, and it has nothing whatever to do with what Paul is teaching here. The baptism referred to here is spiritual: the baptism of believers into Jesus as members of his church at their conversion to Christ, by the Holy Spirit (CP 1Cor 12:12-14). Here the church is called "Christ" and is compared to a human body with its many members. This shows us how the church is constituted: the Holy Spirit unites believers with Jesus as members of His body, the church, when they put their faith in Jesus for their salvation. This is what being baptized into Christ means (CP Ro 12:5; 1Cor 6:17; 10:17; 12:12-14; Ga 3:26-27; Col 1:12-14). It is when believers surrender their lives to Christ that they identify with His death, burial and resurrection. This is when they are born again spiritually and the power of sin over their lives is broken. It is not when they go through the waters of baptism as so many suppose (CP Ro 6:14 with 2Cor 5:14-15, 17; Col 2:8-13; 1Jn 3:6-10; 5:4, 18).

This is the "newness of life" Paul refers to in Ro 6:4. It speaks of the new life imparted by the Holy Spirit at their new birth, which is a motivating energy providing both the desire and the power for believers to live a godly life in Christ (CP 6:17 with 2Cor 3:18; Ga 2:16-19; Eph 2:1-8; Php 2:12-13; 1Pe 1:3-5; 2Pe 1:1-4). Newness of life does not refer to **what** kind of a life believers are to live before the world as their Christian witness, but **how** to live that life in the resurrection power of Jesus, and this is the theme of Paul's teaching throughout Ro 6 and many other scriptures (CP 6:4-5 with Ga 2:20; Eph 4:17-24; Col 3:1-11). V5 in Ro 6 is not referring to the future physical resurrection of believers (although that is guaranteed), but to their spiritual resurrection when they placed their faith in Christ for their salvation (CP V6-7, 11-13). There is one more scripture pertaining to the spiritual baptism of believers into Christ as members of His church which we should look at here before moving on (CP Eph 4:1-6). This is another scripture many Christians believe refers to water baptism also, but it does not. Paul illustrates here the seven-fold spiritual unity of God and man: one body - the church; one Holy Spirit; one hope of our calling;

one Lord; one faith; one baptism and one God. In V1-3 Paul exhorts believers to be unified in the Spirit, because as he points out in V4-6, there is only one body in Christ and we were all baptized into that one body, which is the church. Clearly, none of the scriptures we have examined so far in this study have anything to do with water baptism.

Let us now look at the real significance of water baptism according to scripture (CP 1Pe 3:18-21). This fully explains the significance of water baptism and it clearly is not a symbol of the spiritual reality of Ro 6:3-5 as many are taught in the contemporary church. Water baptism takes place after one is baptized into Christ. It is the visible and tangible testimony of the repentant sinners' new-found faith in the resurrected Christ and the salvation benefits we are given as a result of that faith. But it cannot, and does not save us, as the baptism of Ro 6:3-5 does, and Peter is very careful to spell this out for us in his letter (CP 1Pe 3:21). This clearly refutes also the teaching that God buries the believers' old sin nature in the waters of baptism.

The following is a translation and paraphrase of the Greek text of Ro 6:1-5 from Kenneth Wuest's **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament Vol 3 Great Truths to Live by Ch 3**, which clearly underlines the subject matter of Paul's teaching in this passage and the theme of his teaching in Ro 6:

*"What therefore shall we say? Shall we who profess to be Christians, continue to sustain habitually the same relationship to the evil nature which we did before we were saved, in order that this aforementioned grace might abound? Let not such a thing take place. How is it possible for such as we, who were once for all separated from the indwelling sinful nature, any longer to live in its grip? Or, are you ignorant that we who were introduced into vital union with Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit, into a participation in His death were introduced? Therefore we were entombed with Him through this aforementioned introduction into His death, in order that, just as there was raised up Christ out from among the dead through the glory of the Father, thus also we in the energy of a new life imparted might order our behaviour. For in view of the fact that we have become those united with Him with respect to the likeness of His death, certainly also we shall be those united with Him in the likeness of His resurrection."*

When repentant sinners are baptized into Christ the power of sin over their lives is broken and they need never yield to its power again. This is the theme of Paul's teaching throughout Ro 6 as he exhorts Christians not to go back into sin but to live completely new resurrected lives in Christ. Through

Christ God's resurrection power flows in us, and thus we are able to live holy, righteous lives (CP 8:1-4).

**6:6-11**      *What does Paul mean by what he says here?*

Having just finished explaining in V1-5 how believers' identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection broke the power of sin over their lives and imparted the divine nature to them, Paul now exhorts believers to live out their new life in Christ and not to let their old sinful nature reassert itself. "Our old man" in V6 refers to the unregenerate person we were, completely dominated by our old sinful nature, before we were saved (CP 17-18; 7:14-25; 8:8-10; 1Cor 6:9-11; 12:2; Col 3:5-10; Tit 3:3-7; He 10:22, 38-39). But when we identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection our old unregenerate self was crucified with Him in a spiritual sense, resulting in our being liberated from the power of sin (CP Ro 6:6 with Ga 2:19-20; 5:24-25; 6:14-16). The word *destroyed* in Ro 6:6 does not mean made extinct but rendered inoperative, inactive, ineffective. When we identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection our old sinful nature was made inoperative, inactive, ineffective. It no longer has dominion over us (CP Ro 6:14; 7:4-6; 8:1-2; Ga 5:18). The old sinful nature still exists in Christians (CP 1Jn 1:6-10). But we are freed from its power and henceforth must not allow it to reassert itself in the life we now live in Christ (CP Mt 11:12).

This expresses the earnestness every believer must have in getting rid of sin and walking in obedience to God's word. It typifies the force required to take hold of the kingdom, and is presented as the life task of every New Testament Christian (CP Ro 8:1-13; Eph 4:17-32; Col 3:1-10). If we have truly died with Christ then our old sinful nature cannot reassert itself in our life (CP Ga 5:16-26; Col 3:8-10). V17 in Ga 5 is one of the most misunderstood scriptures in Christendom. It has been taught as referring to constant warfare between the flesh and the spirit, making one a victim of the flesh and helpless to live right, but that is not what Paul is teaching at all. Of course it does describe the condition of anyone who is walking in the flesh, but it does not refer to the normal life of a Christian in grace, living and walking in the Spirit, which is evident from V16, 18, 22-25 and numerous other scriptures (CP Ga 5:16, 18, 22-25 with Isa 40:29-31; 2Cor 4:16; Eph 4:21-24).

The central truth of Ro 6 is that sin no longer has a hold on Christians – God has delivered them from its power. But many Christians are failing in their endeavours to live out a victorious holy life over sin that would glorify God because they either do not know, or do not understand this truth. The key to a victorious holy life in Christ for Christians struggling with sin is to recognize as Ro 6 teaches, that sinning is a choice Christians make themselves. It is not something they have no control over. Christians can, and must say no to sin (CP Mk 7:20-23). Those who accept Christ are made a new creation that belongs to a totally new world of God in which the Holy Spirit rules (CP Ro 8:14-16; 2Cor 5:17; Ga 5:18; Eph 2:10).

The emphasis of Paul's teaching in Ro 6 is on man's obedience to God and God's way of delivering man from sin. It is a teaching on how Christians are to live - not what kind of a life to live, but by which method to live it. In Ro 6:11 we learn that although Christ was sinless, He suffered and died for sin. In His death He died to its influence, and in His resurrection He triumphed over its power. Christians are united with Christ in His death and resurrection and likewise are freed from sin's power. So, as Christ died **for** sin once for all and dies no more, Christians should die **to** sin once for all and live evermore unto God. The cross and the resurrection of Jesus have broken the power of sin over Christians and now they can choose not to sin (CP Ro 6:19-22; 12:1-2; 2Cor 7:1; He 10:10-14; 1Pe 2:24). The word *reckon* in Ro 6:11 (KJV) means to embrace by faith what God has revealed to be true (see also comments on Ro 7:7-12).

**6:12-14**      *What do we learn from what Paul says here?*

Here sin is depicted as a ruler able to dominate and control a person's life, but it can only rule when it is obeyed. It has been destroyed – Christ has broken its power. But it is up to believers to continually resist its efforts to regain control over them. They can do this by denying the lusts of the flesh (CP Ro 8:12-13; Jas 4:1-10; 1Jn 2:15-17); refusing to place any members of their body at the disposal of sin (CP Mt 5:29-30; Mk 9:43-44; Ro 12:12-13; Col 3:5-6); presenting their whole personalities as slaves to God and righteousness (CP Ro 6:13, 19 with 12:1-2; 1Th 4:3-5; 1Jn 2:15). It is the believer's responsibility to obey these teachings – God has provided the empowering through Christ (CP Php 4:13). The same faculties that yield to sin and commit unholy acts can yield to God and commit holy acts (CP Ro 6:17-18, 22; 1Cor 7:22; Ga 5:1; 2Ti 1:13; 1Pe 2:15-16; 1Jn 1:7; 2:29). When believers resist sin's demands, no matter how strong the temptation is, no sin is possible. No force at all can change our will if it is yielded to God (CP 2Cor 10:3-5; Eph 4:27; 6:11; Jas 4:7-10; 1Pe 5:6-9). In Ro 6:14 Paul stresses that we are not under the law that demands obedience but gives no power to obey. We are under grace which has empowered us, and indeed guarantees us the ultimate triumph (CP Jn 15:5; Ro 5:20-21; 8:35-39; 2Cor 9:8; Ga 5:16-18; Php 4:13; 1Jn 4:4).

We should note here that there is no sin in being tempted. The sin is in yielding to temptation (CP Jas 1:13-16). This teaches us that temptation is the arousal of man's own evil thoughts and desires which leads him to becoming trapped in sin when he succumbs to them (CP 2Sam 11:1-27). Notice the sequence of events that led to David's sin here - it is the same as Jas 1:13-16 teaches: David became trapped in sin by succumbing to his own evil thoughts and desires. He was drawn away of his own lust and enticed, which led to adultery, murder, and then a cover-up. In our exposition of V1 of Ro 6 we said that whoever sees in grace a pretext for sinning is simply showing contempt for Christ, because that is how God sees it (CP 2Sam 12:9). David was guilty of "despising the commandment of the Lord". By doing what he did David treated God with contempt,

the same as New Testament Christians who sin treat Jesus with contempt. This does not apply only to adultery but to all forms of sin, although believers who have committed adultery are disqualified from any leadership position in the church (CP 1Ti 3:1-2, 10; 6:14; Tit 1:5-7). The word *blameless* in those scriptures means one who has nothing which an adversary could seize upon with which to base a charge. It does not mean that one has to be perfect, but one against whom no evil charge could be proved.

Believers must manifest the highest example of perseverance in godliness, faithfulness and purity in the face of temptation, and loyalty and love toward Christ and the gospel (CP Php 3:17-18; 1Ti 4:12, 15; Tit 2:7-8). If we yield to sin it is because we have failed to resist our own sinful desires. God has adequately provided us with grace to overcome temptations and resist sinning, and we can overcome if we are resolute in our desire to obey God and depend on His faithfulness and enabling power through Christ (CP Ro 11:20-21; 1Cor 10:12-13; Jas 4:6-10; 1Pe 5:6-10; Rev 3:1-3, 17-18). The way of escape from temptation which Paul refers to in 1Cor 10:13, is not a way out of temptation, but the way to overcome it, as Jesus did for our example (CP Mt 4:1-11). Knowing God's word and speaking it out over our circumstances is the key to overcoming temptation without succumbing to sin. God will honour that word (CP Psa 138:2; Jer 1:12; Jn 17:15-17; Eph 6:12-13; 2Th 3:3; He 4:12). God's power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (CP 2Cor 3:18; 7:1; 1Pe 1:3-9; 2Pe 1:1-4); the grace of God (CP Ro 5:15; Eph 2:8-10; 2Ti 1:8-10; Tit 2:11-14); the blood of Jesus (CP Ro 3:24-26; 5:9; Eph 1:3-7; 2:13; Col 1:19-20; 1Pe 2:24; 1Jn 1:7; Rev 1:5; 5:9-10); the word of God (CP Eph 6:17; 2Ti 3:16-17; He 4:12); the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit (CP 2Cor 10:3-5; Eph 6:10-13; 1Ti 1:18; Tit 3:5-6; 1Pe 1:5), and the heavenly intercession of Jesus (CP Ro 8:34; 1Ti 2:5; He 7:22-25; 9:24; 1Jn 2:1; Jude 24). These all bring sufficient power for believers to overcome sin and the spiritual forces of wickedness.

In the light of what we have learned so far we might ask at this point why is there any need for Paul to keep exhorting us not to yield again to sin if its power over us is broken. The answer is that even though our will is now yielded to the things of God, it still has a certain bent at times to the doing of evil, which is the result of the inclination it had toward evil before grace did its work. The habits formed by years of sin must be overcome, and the only way to do this is to form new habits of the will by keeping the choices we make in line with God's word. The divine nature imparted to us will keep our choices in line with God's word as we yield to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, but we must ever be alert lest those habits formed by years of making the wrong choices lead us again to render obedience to our old master, the devil. As we establish new habits of choice, gradually our new wills are bent more and more in the direction of good, and it becomes increasingly easier to do right, and increasingly harder to do

wrong (CP Ro 6:11-17; 7:4-6; Ga 5:16-18; Eph 2:1-7; Col 2:6-13; 3:1-11).

**6:15**                    *What is the purpose of this question. Is it not simply a repeat of V1?*

This is the second rhetorical question Paul asks in Ro 6. The first in V1 was answered in V2-14. This is answered in V16-23. The question of sin here is quite different to the question of sin in V1 (CP V1). Here *sin* is from the Greek word **Harmartia** which describes proneness to sin, or sinful desire or propensity. It refers to our old sinful nature - our *old man* (CP V6 with Jn 1:29; 8:34; Ro 5:12-13; 6:14 (everywhere sin is mentioned in Ro 6 it refers to our old sinful nature, except in V15); He 3:13; 11:25; 1Jn 3:4-5). In Ro 6:15 *sin* is from the Greek word **Hamatano**, which means to miss a mark on the way; to sin occasionally; to sin a sin. It refers to occasional, infrequent acts of sin (CP Mt 18:21; 27:4; Jn 5:14; Ro 3:23; 5:12 (sinned); 1Ti 5:20; He 10:26; 1Jn 2:1). The question that Paul has to answer in Ro 6:15 is that since the doctrine of grace he expounded in V2-14 teaches the impossibility of a life of **habitual** sin on the part of a Christian, is there any allowance made for an **occasional** act of sin? Again, Paul pre-empted any erroneous idea that it was possible, and immediately categorically rejected it - *God forbid* means *perish the thought*. Paul then goes on to teach how Christians do not make provision for even occasional acts of sin, because they have transferred their allegiance from one master to another since grace has wrought its inward change in their hearts (CP V17-18, 22 with 1Cor 6:11; Col 1:21-22 and 3:9-10).

**6:16**                    *What profound teaching is underlined by what Paul says here?*

The whole of what the Bible teaches is encapsulated in this verse; that obedience to God means everlasting life, and disobedience means death. This is the gospel of salvation in one verse (CP Jn 3:17-20, 36; Ro 2:7-11). The eternal destiny of every living soul is determined by whom they choose to obey. Paul affirms in Ro 6:16 that even though Christians are under grace it is still their responsibility to resist sin and obey God (CP V11-13; 8:12-14; Eph 5:3-10; Col 3:1-13). We can yield to sin and go to hell, or we can obey God unto everlasting life with Jesus. We cannot serve sin and Satan and expect to rule and reign with Christ in eternity. No man can be a servant of sin and Satan, and a servant of righteousness and Christ at the same time (CP Pr 5:22-23; Mt 6:22-24; Jn 8:31-35; Ga 1:10; Jas 4:4; 1Jn 2:15).

Jesus makes it quite clear in scripture that if Christians are not totally consecrated to the service of God and completely yielded to the authority of Jesus they are none of His (CP Lu 11:23-26). This clearly teaches that the Christian walk is not a neutral zone. We are fighting either on the side of Christ and righteousness, or we are on the side of the devil and the ungodly. V24-26 teach that unless after our conversion to Christ we quickly fill the void in our lives left by sin with the righteousness of God, our old sinful nature will reassert itself and we will be

actually worse off than we were before we got saved (CP Jn 5:14; He 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 2Pe 2:20-22). The only safety from sin and Satan is to be totally consecrated to the service of God and completely yielded to the authority of Jesus. Anything less will cost us our place in the kingdom (CP Mt 7:21-27; Ro 2:13; Jas 1:22-25). Believers who are not actively involved in opposition to Satan and the evil of this world, have in reality set themselves against Jesus. That is what Jesus means in Lu 11:23 when He declares that "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." Jesus here is clearly condemning any attempt at compromise with unrighteousness, or only partial obedience to Him. It is all or nothing as far as Christ is concerned (CP De 6:13-15; Josh 24:19-20; Nah 1:2).

**6:17-20**      *What do we learn from what Paul says here?*

In V17-18 Paul is contrasting Christians' old relationship to sin and their new relationship to God. He is reminding us that we were once servants of sin but have been set free from its power because we obeyed the gospel truths he is expounding here. We were changed and converted by them and the change has wrought in us obedience to God that originates in the depths of our heart. We are now wholeheartedly in accord with God because of our union with Jesus (CP V22; 8:1-16; 1Cor 6:9-11; 2Cor 5:17; Col 1:21-22; 3:8-10). In Ro 6:19-20 Paul exhorts us to continue yielding our bodily members to righteousness and holiness even as we previously yielded them to sin and uncleanness. The same parts of our body once used for impurity are now to be used for holiness. Now that we have been baptized into Christ we must follow after holiness or forfeit our place in His future eternal kingdom (CP 2Cor 7:1; Col 3:1-7; He 12:12-16). Paul impresses upon us in Ro 6:19 the weakness in our natural self, but if it was not possible to overcome that weakness in the power of the resurrected Christ then his exhortation to do so would be meaningless. In V20 Paul restates the fact that one cannot be a sinner and a saint at the same time.

**6:21-23**      *What does this passage summarise?*

The passage summarises the transition from sin to salvation. It sums up our Christian walk entirely: the fruit we produce proves our spiritual state and determines our eternal destiny. So we need to always be clear in our minds about the power of the resurrected Christ within us that enables us to live a victorious, holy life in Christ that glorifies God (CP 7:5-6; 1Jn 2:13-17; Rev 22:11-12). If it were not possible to overcome evil John would have no occasion to write 1Jn 2:13-17, and neither would Rev 22:11-12 have been recorded for us, but as we have seen throughout this study, Ro 6 teaches us how we are empowered by God to overcome sin through our identification with Christ's death, burial and resurrection, and we either acknowledge our responsibility to God and act on His enabling power through Christ in us to live a victorious, holy life, or we will fail of His grace (CP Ga 2:20-21; He 12:12-

15). Many believers who are drawn away and enticed to sin by their own lusts blame the devil, but God does not. He holds us all personally responsible for everything we do (CP Pr 4:23; Ecc 9:3; Jer 4:1-4; 17:9; 25:5-6; Eze 18:30-32; 33:12-13; Joel 2:12-13; Mk 7:21-23; Lu 6:45; Jas 1:13-16). These scriptures all make it perfectly clear that sin originates with us. We are solely responsible for it thus it is imperative to know the truths of Ro 6 and allow them to direct our Christian walk.

**7:4**              *Is this a proof text that the church is the bride of Christ as some claim?*

No! Paul illustrates here the Christian's liberation from the Old Testament law with the analogy of marriage, showing how the death of one partner frees the other from a life-long obligation. He compares it to Christians who having died with Christ on the cross (spiritually, by their conversion to Christ), are freed from the constraints of the law that bound them to sin, as the woman was freed from the constraints of the law that bound her to her husband while he lived (CP V1-6). This is still a continuation of the subject of chapter 6 and simply shows how by their identification with Christ in his sacrificial death, Christians have been delivered from sin's power to follow Christ – to be one with Him (CP 6:6-10; 2Cor 5:14-15; Ga 2:20; Col 3:1-3). Ro 7:2-3 is not teaching that only the death of a spouse frees a Christian to remarry; it is not teaching about divorce and remarriage at all, as some think. Both Jesus and Paul deal with those issues elsewhere in scripture – see comments on Mt 5:31-32.

**7:7-23**        *Does what Paul describes here portray the normal Christian life as so many in the church believe?*

A great many Christians believe that what Paul describes here was an ongoing experience for him over which he had no control, even after he came to Christ, and because their experience is the same as Paul describes here, they see it as the normal Christian life. But Paul is not teaching that at all (CP Ga 5:17). As we saw in our study on Ro 6:6-11 this is the most misunderstood scripture in Christendom. It is often compared with Ro 7 and taught as referring to constant warfare between the flesh and the spirit, making one a victim of the flesh and helpless to live right, but as we also learned in 6:6-11 that is not correct as V16, 18, 22-25 clearly testify (CP Ga 5:16, 18, 22-25). Of course V17 does describe anyone who is walking in the flesh, the same as Ro 7 does, but like Ro 7 also, it does not refer to the normal life of a Christian under grace walking in the Spirit (CP Ro 8:1-6). This is the normal Christian life. In Ro 7:14 Paul describes himself as "carnal, sold under sin", and in V23 as being taken captive by sin, clearly referring to his former sinful nature, not his new nature in Christ (CP 2Cor 5:17 with Ga 2:18-20). These scriptures prove that Paul was not carnal, sold under sin after he came to Christ. He lived a victorious, holy life in Christ, and throughout scripture he exhorts Christians to do the same (CP Ro 6:1-2, 12-13, 19; 8:12-14; 1Cor 4:16; 11:1; Ga 5:16, 18, 22-25;

6:7-8; Eph 4:21-24; 6:11-18; Php 3:17-18; Col 2:6-7; 3:1-11; He 12:1).

What Paul was describing in Ro 7:7-23 was his **pre-conversion** experience of sin's power **under the law**, not his post-conversion experience under grace. He was demonstrating the insufficiency of the law to redeem man apart from grace, not the insufficiency of the gospel of grace (CP V24-25). This is not teaching as so many believe, that even after he was saved, while serving God with his mind, Paul still succumbed to sin. Paul is simply summing up here the central truth of Ro 6: that God through Christ has set believers free from the law of sin and death. How could Paul instruct other Christians against yielding to sin if he could not overcome it himself. All Paul's teaching about God's grace in Christ being more powerful than sin in Ro 5 and 6 is meaningless if he could not overcome sin in Ro 7 while under grace himself (CP 5:15-17, 20-21 and 6:12-14 with 2Cor 10:3-5). In Ro 6:14 Paul stresses that Christians are not under the law that demands obedience but gives no power to obey; we are under grace which has given us the power, and indeed guarantees us the ultimate triumph (CP 6:14 with Jn 15:5; Ro 5:20-21; 8:35-39; 2Cor 9:8; Ga 5:16-18; Php 4:13; 1Jn 4:4). This is not to say that the believer's old sinful nature is extinct and no longer able to reassert itself. It is not extinct and it will try to reassert itself, but believers no longer have to obey its behests because sin's power over them has been broken. It was broken when they converted to Christianity and were baptized into Christ and into his body, the church (CP Ro 6:3-7, 14; 7:4-6; 8:1-4; 2Cor 5:14-15, 17; Eph 4:17-24; Col 2:8-13; 1Jn 3:6-9; 5:4, 18).

It is plainly evident from a study of scripture that what Paul describes in Ro 7 does not portray the normal Christian life but his unregenerate self before he was saved. Christians are no longer captives to sin's power over them. They can, and must, say no to sin, and if they are resolute in their efforts to resist sin's power, no sin is possible. No force at all can change our will if it is yielded to God (CP Ro 6:17-18, 22; 2Cor 10:3-5; Jas 4:6-10; 1Pe 5:6-9; 1Jn 3:6-9; 5:4, 18). See also comments on Ro 5:15; 6:1; 6:3-5; 6:6-11; 6:12-14; 6:15; 6:16; 6:17-20; 6:21-23 and Gal 5:17.

**8:1-2**            *What exactly does Paul mean by what he says here?*

This is Paul's testimony to the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit in believers to overcome sin. It is a continuation of his teaching in Ro 6 and 7 of how God through Christ has broken sin's power over believers and they no longer have to yield themselves to their old sinful nature. This is the normal Christian life under the full provision of the gospel, and is further proof that what Paul described in Ro 7 was not his post-conversion experience of sin's power under grace as many in the church believe, but his pre-conversion experience under the law (CP Ro 7:7-25). *Condemnation* in Ro 8:1 refers to the future punishment of unbelievers (CP Rev 20:11-15). Believers are not under condemnation because they no longer seek to gratify fleshly desires like they did

before they were saved, as Paul described in Ro 7. Believers are now led by the Spirit and do the things that please God. This does not mean that they do not sin. Christians can, and do spontaneously sin, but they no longer habitually sin (CP Ro 6:1-7, 12-18; 7:4-6; Ga 5:16-18; Eph 2:1-7; Col 2:6-13; 3:1-11; 1Jn 3:6-9; 5:4, 18).

This is not teaching that *once saved* means *always saved*, as many contemporary Christians believe. Notwithstanding they are under grace, Christians must always confess and repent of sins they have committed (CP 1Jn 1:6-10; 2:1-6). If a believer goes back into sin and is not able to be converted again, then their end will be worse even than that of unbelievers (CP Lu 12:47-48; He 6:4-8; 10:26-31; 2Pe 2:20-22). The "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" in Ro 8:2 refers to the liberating force of the Holy Spirit setting believers free from the law of sin and death - empowering believers to say no to sin (CP 2Cor 3:17; 10:3-5; Eph 6:10-18). The *law* of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is not a written law, but a regulative principle emanating from the Holy Spirit which energises or activates believers to desire, and to do, God's will (CP Ro 6:17-18; 7:4-6; 12:1-2, 21; 1Cor 3:9; 6:19-20; Php 2:12-13; Col 3:1-10, 12-17). The "law of sin and death" is the controlling power of sin which places a person under bondage to sin and subject to the penalty of eternal damnation (CP Ro 7:14, 23 with 6:16).

**8:3-4**            *Does V3 teach that Jesus had a human sinful nature?*

No! Although Jesus took on human form at His incarnation He did not have the sinful nature of humans. His human nature was sinless - without the propensity to sin (CP Jn 8:46; 14:30; 2Cor 5:21; He 7:26; 1Pe 1:18-19; 2:21-22; 3:18; 1Jn 3:5). Some teach from 2Cor 5:21 that Jesus became a sinner on the cross. But that is not correct. Jesus took the condemnation for sin upon Himself on the cross but not as a sinner, but a sin offering - for the sins of all mankind (CP Isa 53:5-12; Jn 1:29; Ga 4:4-5; Php 2:7-8; He 9:26-28; 10:6-10; 1Jn 2:2). As a human being Jesus was tempted by sin, but He was not subject to its power as was every other human being after Adam (CP Ro 5:17-19; He 2:18; 4:15). The core teaching of Ro 8:3-4 is that having destroyed sin's power over Christians by giving Christ as a sinless sacrifice for their sins, God has made it possible for Christians to obey His laws, if they follow after the Holy Spirit and no longer yield to their old sinful nature (CP Ro 6:3-7, 14; 7:4-6; 8:3-10; 2Cor 5:14-15, 17; Ga 5:16; Eph 4:17-24; 2Pe 1:1-4; 1Jn 3:6-9; 5:4, 18).

**8:11**            *What does the phrase "quicken your mortal bodies" (KJV) mean here?*

The word *quicken* in this context means give life to. Paul has in view here the future resurrection of believers, as is evidenced by the context, and the word *also*. This is what scriptures call the first resurrection. Since the same Spirit of God who raised up Jesus from the dead indwells believers, He will also raise up dead believers at the first resurrection (CP Jn 5:25, 28-29; 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:20-

23; 50-58; 1Th 4:13-18; Tit 2:11-14; Rev 20:4-6). Paul goes on to say, "therefore" – because of the surety of the first resurrection - believers can no longer yield themselves to their old sinful nature. If they do they will forfeit their place in the future eternal kingdom (CP Ro 8:12-13; Ga 5:16-21; Col 3:1-11).

**8:17**            *What is the suffering with Christ that Paul refers to here?*

These are the sufferings all Christians are called on to endure for Christ's sake (CP Mt 10:38; Mk 10:29-30; Jn 16:33; Ac 14:21-22; Ro 12:12; Php 1:29; 2Ti 2:11-12; 3:12; He 13:12-13; 1Pe 4:1). Sharing as heirs with Christ also means sharing His sufferings (CP Jn 15:18-25). Suffering for Christ results from our relationship with Him (CP Php 3:7-11). As we learned in our study on Ro 5:3-5 suffering for Christ is needful for Christians to develop strength of character and steadfastness in faith (CP Ro 5:3-5 with 1Cor 11:31-32; 2Cor 4:17-18; He 12:3-11; Jas 1:2-4; 1Pe 1:3-9; 4:12-14). Christians must be prepared to die for their faith if need be. But whatever form their suffering takes, whether it is mockery, ridicule or physical persecution, it is absolutely nothing when contrasted with the future glory Christ will share with us (CP Ro 8:18 with Mt 5:10-12). See also comment on Romans 5:3-5.

**8:19-21**        *What is Paul teaching here?*

The whole creation - all nature - comprising both the animate and the inanimate world, is waiting for the glorification of the saints so it too may also be delivered from the curse under which it now exists because of Adam's sin (CP Gen 3:17-18). The saints will be glorified when they go to Heaven to be with Jesus at the first resurrection (CP 1Cor 15:42-44; Col 3:4). The curse will be lifted and all things will be restored to what God intended them to be before Adam fell when Christ sets up His millennial kingdom on earth. There will be no more sin and sickness (CP Isa 33:20, 24; 35:3-6; 53:5; 1Cor 15:56-57; 1Pe 2:24). World wide peace will prevail in the kingdom (CP Isa 2:1-4 (Mic 4:1-3); 9:6-7; 11:10; 19:23; 26:12; 32:18; 54:14; 57:19; 60:18; 66:12; Zech 14:9-11). There will be no more poverty; material blessings will fill the earth; prosperity will be for all (CP Isa 60:5-17; 62:8-9; 65:21-23; Mic 4:4; Zech 3:10). The earth will be restored to normal fertility and productivity; there will be no more famines in the land; fruitful seasons will be without interruptions; waste places will be restored to usefulness, deserts will blossom again (CP Isa 4:1-2; 30:23-25; 32:15; 35:1-2, 7; 41:17-19; 43:19-20; 49:9-10; 51:3; 55:12-13; 61:4-5; Eze 34:24, 29, 36:8-12, 29-30, 33-38; 47:1-12; Joel 2:18-19, 21-27; 3:18; Amos 9:11-15; Zech 8:12; 14:8; Rev 7:16-17). Wild animals will be tame; children will play with once poisonous snakes (CP Isa 11:6-9; 65:25; Eze 34:25, 28). Sorrow and mourning will not exist (CP Isa 25:8; 35:10; 60:20; 65:18-19; Rev 7:17; 21:4). The righteous will no longer die (CP Isa 65:20-22; 1Cor 15:52-56).

(We learn from Isa 60:20 that death will continue in the millennium, but only for those who commit sins

worthy of death. No longer will babies die when only a few days old, and no longer will one hundred year old men be considered old – only sinners will die that young. Human life will be prolonged so that men will live as long as trees, and for the entire one thousand years if they do not commit a sin carrying the death penalty (CP Isa 11:2-5). V4 here refers to those humans in the millenium who Jesus judges worthy of death. The humans who do not rebel with Satan at the end of the thousand years, and have accepted Jesus as their saviour, will continue to live eternally with Jesus after the millennium (CP Mt 25:46; 1Cor 15:23-28; Eph 1:10; 2:7; Rev 20:7-15; 21:4) No-one will ever die after the millenium.

Even though creation was not responsible for Adam's sin God extended the curse to cover it as well as humanity upon the basis that it would also be delivered from the curse when the saints are glorified. Being made subject to vanity means that creation was made vain, empty, futile, fruitless – not able to fulfil its purpose. That is why there are such great seasonal extremes, famines, typhoons, tidal waves, floods, pestilence, earthquakes, etc, that cause so much devastation in the earth. It is also why animals, reptiles, and sea creatures, etc, attack and kill humans as well as each other (see also comments on Ac 3:19-21, Rev 20:4-6).

**8:23**            *See comments on 2Cor 5:5*

**8:26-27**        *What do we learn from what Paul says here?*

This is a continuation of Paul's teaching from V17 (CP V17-25). We learn from V23 here, that Christians themselves are also groaning within themselves awaiting the redemption of their bodies (CP 2Cor 5:1-4). The Holy Spirit we have been given is the pledge of Christ's coming to redeem us, and we patiently wait for Him (CP 2Cor 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph 1:12-14; 4:30). In the midst of these circumstances we are at a loss to know what to pray for at times, and as we pray in tongues the Holy Spirit takes hold with us and helps us to pray as we should. He does not take over and pray for us as some teach – it is a joint effort on both our parts. The word *helpeth* in Ro 8:26 means to take hold together with. God who searches our hearts, knows what the mind of the Spirit is, and the Spirit makes intercession for us according to God's will (CP Psa 139:1-2 with 1Cor 2:11).

**8:28-30**        *What exactly does this passage teach?*

This is one of the most debated passages of scripture in Christendom. V28 is generally used to teach that God works through every circumstance of life for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. And this is a valid teaching in line with other scripture (CP De 8:15-16; Ro 5:3-5; 2Cor 4:17-18; He 12:3-11; Jas 1:2-4; 1Pe 1:3-9; 4:12-14). However, in the context of Ro 8, V28-30 refers to the church – *them that love God...them who are called according to His purpose* – being predestined by God to be called and ultimately glorified with Jesus in

eternity (CP Ro 8:16-18; 1Cor 1:21; Ga 4:4-7; Eph 1:3-14; 2:4-7; 3:1-12; Col 1:12-22; 2Ti 1:8-10; 4:8; Tit 2:11-14; 3:3-7; He 2:9-10; 5:9; 1Pe 2:6-10; 1Jn 5:11-12). This is the *good* that all things work together for in God's eternal purpose to those who love Him – God has predestined them for future glory with His Son, Jesus. *According to His purpose* refers to God's eternal purpose in Jesus as the Saviour through whom His plan of redemption would be accomplished (CP Isa 2:2-4; 4:2-6; 9:6-7; 53:11). God has predetermined that all who accept Jesus as their Saviour will be saved. The conjunction *for* in Ro 8:29 underlines the assurance of V28 that God's eternal purpose will be worked out in those who love Him: He will conform them to the image of Jesus (CP Php 2:12-13; 2Th 2:13-14; 2Ti 1:12; 1Jn 3:1-3).

Many in the church believe that Ro 8:29-30 refers to God sovereignly choosing certain ones from among mankind to be saved (and thus rejecting the others). But this is not correct as scriptures clearly teach. God has universally called everyone to salvation and has undertaken to save all who of their own free will, under conviction by the Holy Spirit, respond affirmatively to His call (CP De 30:15-18; Isa 1:16-20; 8:13-15; 45:22; 55:1-7; Joel 2:32; Mt 11:28-30; Jn 3:16-18, 36; 6:27, 35, 40, 47, 51-54; 7:37-38; 8:12; 10:9; Ac 2:21; Ro 10:9-13; Rev 21:6; 22:17). *Whom He did foreknow* simply means that God foreknew who would accept Jesus as their Saviour and He predestined them to future glory with Jesus. It does not mean as some teach, that God predestined them to salvation. Predestination in scripture does not refer to salvation at all, but to the future of those who are already saved, which is the church (CP Eph 3:1-19). When repentant sinners, under conviction by the Holy Spirit, accept Jesus as their Saviour they are called by God into the Church. Then they are justified, and at the future resurrection of the just, they will be glorified. That is the divine order: first foreknowledge, second predestination, third calling, fourth justification, fifth glorification.

In closing this study we could say that calling and predestination are analogous of a great ship on its way to heaven. The ship (the church) is chosen by God to be His very own vessel. Christ is the captain and the pilot of this ship. All who desire to be a part of this elect ship and its captain can do so through a living faith in Christ, by which they come on board the ship. As long as one is on the ship in company with its captain he is among the elect. If he chooses to abandon the ship and captain he ceases to be one of the elect. Calling is always only in union with the captain and His ship. Predestination tells us about the ship's destination and what God has prepared for those remaining on it. God invites everyone to come aboard the elect ship through faith in Christ. That is the sum total of foreknowledge, calling and predestination (Analogy by courtesy of Full Life Study Bible – p1846/7). See also comments on Mt 11:28-30, 13:10-11, 20:16; Jn 3:14-15, 3:36, 6:37, 12:37-40, Ac 2:37-38, 13:48, 28:23-29; Ro 1:16-17, 3:24-26(A), 9:7, 9:10-13, 9:14-18, 9:19-21, 10:14-17, 11:2, 11:4, 11:7-10; Eph 1:3-6, 1:11-14, 2:8-10; 1Th 1:4; 2Ti 1:8-9; 1Pe 1:2; 1Jn 1:10.

**8:33** *Who is the “elect” referred to here and how many “elects” of God are there in scripture?*

The *elect* referred to here are Christians. There are four *elects* of God recorded in scripture: first and foremost is Jesus (CP Isa 42:1; 1Pe 2:6). Second are Christians. All Christians – Jews and Gentiles alike, are God's elect (CP Lu 18:7; Ro 11:5, 7, 28; Col 3:12; 1Th 1:4; 1Pe 1:1-2; 5:13; 2Pe 1:10; 2Jn 1,13). Third is Israel (CP Isa 45:4; 65:9, 22; Mt 24:21-22,31; Mk 13:19-22,27). Fourth are Angels (CP 1Ti 5:21). Angels are called *elect* here as those chosen out by God of especially high rank as His messengers to human beings, or who minister to the special needs of believers (Cp Psa 103:20-21; Lu 1:11-20, 26-38; Ac 12:21-23; 27:23; 1Cor 11:10; He 1:13-14; 13:2).

**8:35** *Whose love is Paul referring to here – our love for Christ or His love for us?*

Most Christians believe that it is Christ's love for us that Paul is referring to here, but there are some in the church who believe it is our love for Christ. They hold that the evils listed in V35 might affect men, but not Christ, and if we do not permit them to affect our love for Christ, then we are safe from all danger of backsliding. This view has merit but it is out of context with what Paul is teaching in V31-39, and is therefore not correct (CP V31-39). When we study Paul's teaching in its entirety here it is plainly evident that it is Christ's love for us Paul is referring to in V35, not our love for Him. Paul shows in V31-33 that God's love for us is such that none can accuse or harm us - God's love is demonstrated through Christ's atoning death (CP V32 with Jn 3:16; 15:13; Ro 5:8-11; 1Jn 4:9-10). In Ro 8:34 Paul gives us the assurance that Christ will be judge over all the earth, but He will not condemn us, and even now makes intercession for us with God (CP V34 with 1Ti 2:5; He 7:25; 9:24; 1Jn 2:1). In Ro 8:35-36 Paul declares the permanence of God's love. The adversities we have to contend with in our Christian walk do not mean that God has forsaken us or stopped loving us, as many think. In fact, the opposite is true. God loves us more in our suffering for Christ's sake (CP V35-36 with Mt 5:10-12; Lu 6:22-24; 2Cor 1:3-5; 4:7-14, 17; Jas 5:10-11; 1Pe 2:19-21; 3:14-17; 4:12-19).

Ro 8:37 teaches that it is God's love for us that enables us to overcome all the trials of life (CP V37 with Jn 10:28-29; 16:33; 1Cor 15:57; Ga 2:20; Php 2:12-13; 2Th 2:16-17; 3:3-5; 2Ti 1:12; Jas 1:12; 1Jn 5:4, 18; Jude 24; Rev 1:5-6; 3:9-10). The word *himself* in 1Jn 5:18 (KJV), is an incorrect translation. The Greek root word should have been rendered *him* as in all the modern versions of the Bible. Thus the correct translation is "...but He that is begotten of God keepeth *him*, and that wicked one toucheth *him* not". *He that is begotten of God* is Jesus. Finally, in Ro 8:38-39 Paul expresses his belief that nothing in creation whatever, now or in the future, can ever come between us and God's love for us manifested in Christ (CP V38-39). Christ's atoning death is the assurance that God is for us in all things necessary for

our future glorification with Jesus (CP Ro 5:8-11; Ga 4:4-7; Eph 1:3-14; 2:4-7; 3:1-12; Col 1:12-22; Tit 2:11-14; He 12:9-10). The angels referred to in Ro 8:38 along with principalities, are fallen angels, because principalities are satanic forces (CP Eph 2:2: 6:11-12; Col 2:15). In closing, we should note that Paul is not justifying God's love in the face of evil in Ro 8:31-39, but celebrating the power of His love over evil.

**9:1-3**            *What do we learn from this passage of scripture?*

Paul expresses his heaviness of heart and continual sorrow for the Jewish nation being cut off from God here (CP 10:1-3; 11:1-5). The very fact that Paul prays for the Jews to be saved reflects God's will for all mankind throughout scripture, and further refutes the teaching in the church that every human being's eternal destination, whether it be heaven or hell, is determined by God before they are born (CP Jer 13:17; Eze 18:30-32, 33:11; Mt 11:28-30; Ro 2:4; 2Pe 3:9). See also comments on Mt 13:10-11, 20:16; Lu 14:16-24; Jn 6:37; 12:37-40; Ac 13:48; 28:23-29; Ro 9:14-18.

**9:5**            *What profound biblical truth is Paul affirming here?*

This is yet another proof of the deity of Jesus - that Jesus is God. Sadly though, few Bible scholars comment on this fact, although it is so important to highlight every scripture proving Christ's deity in the face of so much false teaching against it in the professing church. Also, most paraphrased versions of the Bible incorrectly interpret this verse as a doxology - a formula of praise to God - not a reference to the deity of Jesus. Yet the literal English rendering of V5 from the **Textus Receptus**, the original Greek manuscript from which the authorised King James Version of the Bible is translated, according to the **Hendricksen Hebrew Greek, English, Interlinear Bible** is:

*Whose are the Fathers; and of whom is Christ according to the flesh, He being God over all, blessed forever, Amen.*

Jesus was not eternally the Son of God, as so many Christians believe - He is an equal member of the Godhead from all eternity (CP Nu 21:4-9 with 1Cor 10:9 (according to Paul here, God, who sent the fiery serpents in Nu:21:4-9, was Christ) Psa 45:6-7; Isa 6:1-5 with Jn 12:37-41 (according to John, the Lord Isaiah saw sitting upon the throne was Jesus), Mic 5:2; Jn 1:1-2; 3:13; 8:56-58; 17:5; Ac 20:28; Php 2:5-8; Col 2:8-10; 1Ti 3:16; Tit 2:13; He 1:8-12; 2Pe 1:1-2; 1Jn 1:1-2; 3:16; Rev 1:8, 11, 17-18; 2:8; 3:14; 21:6; 22:13). Jesus became the Son of God at His incarnation - when He took on human form (CP Gen 49:10; Nu 24:17; Psa 2:7; Isa 7:14; 9:6-7; Mt 1:18-25; Lu 1:26-35; 2:11; Jn 1:14; Ga 4:4; Php 2:5-8; He 1:5-6; 5:5). See also comments on Lu 1:35B; Jn 12:41; Ac 20:28; 1Ti 3:16; 2Pe 2:1-2.

**9:7**            *How is the phrase, "But in Isaac shall thy seed be called", to be understood?*

In saying this Paul was repeating God's words to Abraham in Gen 17, that His plan of salvation would only be fulfilled through Isaac, not Ishmael, Abraham's son to Hagar (CP Gen 17:18-22). Ishmael was a child of Abraham's flesh, whereas Isaac was the child of God's promise to Abraham, through whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed (CP 16:1-16). Only Isaac's descendants were the true descendants of Abraham, and it is only in the line of Isaac that Abraham should have the future generations that would properly bear his name and inherit the promises made to him by God (CP Ro 9:8-9 with 4:3-5, 10-25 and Ga 3:6-14, 29). It needs to be stated here that Ishmael's descendants were not rejected by God for any failings by Ishmael. Nor was Isaac chosen for any virtue. Both choices and their consequences lay in the sovereign will of God who had purposed that Messiah - Jesus - would come from Isaac's line. *Seed* in Ro 9:7 refers to Jesus (CP Gen 3:15; 22:18; Ga 3:16). See also comments on Mt 11:28-30, 13:10-11, 20:16; Jn 3:15-16, 3:36, 6:37, 12:37-40, Ac 2:37-38, 13:48, 28:23-29, Ro 3:24-26(A), 8:28-30, 9:10-13, 9:14-18, 9:19-21, 10:14-17, 11:2 11:4, Eph 1:3-6, 1:11-14, 2:8-10, 1Th 1:4; 2Ti 1:8-9; 1Pe 1:2, 1Jn 1:10.

**9:10-13**        *Does this not prove that God arbitrarily chooses whom He will save and whom He will not?*

No, the same teaching as in V7-9 concerning Isaac and Ishmael applies here. What God predetermined concerning Jacob and Esau had nothing whatever to do with salvation (CP also Gen 25:19-28; Mal 1:1-3). God chose Jacob over Esau in order for His eternal purpose to be fulfilled in the earth. That is what the phrase, "That the purpose of God according to election might stand" in Ro 9:11, means (CP V11). God purposed that Messiah - Jesus - would come from the nation of Israel to fulfil His redemptive plan (CP Gen 49:10; Mic 5:2; Mt 2:3-6; Lu 2:11). Israel was one of two nations in Rebecca's womb, and was represented by Jacob (CP Gen 32:22-30). Edom was the other nation, and was represented by Esau (CP Gen 36:1, 9, 40-43). God's rejection of Esau had nothing to do with Esau's eternal destiny. Esau chose his own destiny just as we all choose ours (CP De 30:15-20; Jn 3:16-18, 36; Ro 1:16).

The story of Jacob and Esau has nothing whatever to do with the personal salvation of individuals, as so many in the contemporary church believe. Paul told it simply to illustrate the fact that God chooses to save by grace and not by works, and that the purpose of God according to election will be on His terms alone. Works will have no part in it. (CP Ro 3:27-30; 4:1-5; 5:8-11, 17-21; 11:6; 2Cor 5:14-21; Eph 2:4-22; 1Pe 2:24). Ro 9:13 is quoted from Mal 1:1-3 (CP Mal 1:1-3). This does not mean however that God literally hated Esau and loved Jacob. *Hated*, as used here, is an idiom of preference, not a term expressing literal hatred toward someone. Jesus used it the same way in the New Testament (CP Lu 14:25-

27 with Mt 10:37-38). God's prediction to Rebekah that Esau, the elder, would serve Jacob, the younger, was fulfilled in Edom's defeat by King David, who made the Edomites serve Israel (CP Ro 9:12 with 2Sam 8:14; Psa 60:7-12). See also comments on Mt 11:28-30, 13:10-11, 20:16; Jn 3:15-16, 3:36, 6:37, 12:37-40, Ac 2:37-38, 13:48, 28:23-29, Ro 3:24-26(A), 8:28-30, 9:7, 9:14-18, 9:19-21, 10:14-17, 11:2, 11:4, Eph 1:3-6, 1:11-14, 2:8-10, 1Th 1:4; 2Ti 1:8-9; 1Pe 1:2, 1Jn 1:10.

**9:14-18**      *What exactly is the meaning of all that Paul says here?*

Again, this does not mean as some in the church teach that salvation is prepared for those only on whom God is pleased to bestow His mercy, and that ruin and death await all whom He has not chosen. (This is one of the central doctrines of Calvinism and is called "Unconditional Election".) Paul does not have the personal salvation of individuals at all in mind here. His consideration in Ch 9-11 is the question of Israel's relationship to God (CP 9:1-5; 10:1-3; 11:1-5). While Paul affirms in Ch 9 that God as a sovereign creator is free to order all things as He pleases, he is not teaching, as we saw in our previous study on V10-13, that God is arbitrary or capricious in His dealings with men. The cause of Israel being rejected by God was not due to the fact of God's sovereignty without respect to anything in men, but to Israel's unbelief and disobedience (CP Jn 1:11; 3:19; 5:39-40; Ac 13:44-46; 28:23-28; Ro 9:30-33; 10:17-21; 11:13-24; 2Cor 3:12-16).

In Ro 9:16 Paul is simply saying that salvation is not a matter of human desire or effort - working to be found worthy of it is futile. God justifies persons by grace through faith while they are still sinners (CP V16 with Ro 5:8-11). If God were to be merciful only to those who earn these benefits no one would ever receive anything (CP Eph 2:8-9). The terminology of Ro 9:17-18 derives from the hardening of Pharaoh's heart in Exodus (CP V17-18 with Ex 4:21; 7:3, 13-14; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8). We see in all these scriptures that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is attributed to God. However, elsewhere in Exodus it is attributed to Pharaoh himself (CP Ex 7:22-23; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 34-35; 13:15). When God said He would harden Pharaoh's heart that does not mean that He caused Pharaoh's heart to harden, but rather, He permitted it. Many times in scripture God is said to do the things He permits to be done (CP Isa 6:9-10 with Mt 13:10-15; Mk 4:11-12; Lu 8:9-10; Jn 12:37-40; Rom 11:7-8). These scriptures have all been used to teach that God made it impossible for the Jews to believe because He had already determined not to save them, but that is not correct. As we saw earlier, scriptures clearly teach that the Jews rejected the gospel of their own volition and it is for this reason alone that God rejected them. And the same thing applied to Pharaoh.

Pharaoh's stubborn resistance to God was the same as the Jews was to Jesus, yet a divine purpose was fulfilled in his life through God's sovereign power. God used Pharaoh's hardness in order to demonstrate

His power for all humanity to see, which is what Ro 9:17 teaches (CP V17). Through Pharaoh's hardness, God's power and name is proclaimed throughout the earth whenever the book of Exodus is read. God has to use severe measures to serve gracious ends in scripture (CP Ro 11:32; Ga 3:22). This is the best example in the Bible: God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all (see also comments on Mt 11:28-30, 13:10-11, 20:16; Jn 3:15-16, 3:36, 6:37, 12:37-40, Ac 2:37-38, 13:48, 28:23-29, Ro 3:24-26(A), 8:28-30, 9:7, 9:10-13, 9:19-21, 10:14-17, 11:2, 11:4, Eph 1:3-6, 1:11-14, 2:8-10, 1Th 1:4; 2Ti 1:8-9; 1Pe 1:2, 1Jn 1:10.).

**9:19-21**      *What do we learn from what Paul says here?*

Once again this has nothing to do with the personal salvation of individuals as some in the church would have us believe. V19 echoes Ro 3:7 and is another of Paul's rhetorical questions that demands no answer (CP V19 with Ro 3:5-8). Paul presents the viewpoint in Ro 3:5-8 as futile human reasoning that if sin was necessary to magnify His righteousness then God could never condemn sinners. Ro 9:19 is also futile human reasoning on the basis that if God causes it all to happen the way He wants it to happen, then how can He judge sinners. Many people use this argument as a justification for not responding affirmatively to the gospel. In V20 Paul rebuked the reckless impiety of those who would argue with God for their own ulterior motives (CP V20 with Isa 29:15-16). In V21 Paul compares a potter who makes pots for various purposes, and determines their use, to God's sovereign use of people like Pharaoh for the purposes of demonstrating His power against evil (CP Ro 9:17). *A vessel unto honour* and *a vessel unto dishonour* in V21 in no way relates to salvation, nor to importance or morality, but to function. The vessels referred to here are inanimate (CP V21 with 2Ti 2:20).

**9:22-24**      *Who do the vessels of wrath and the vessels of mercy refer to here?*

The word *vessels* here means objects. The term *fitted to destruction* means ready, or ripe for destruction, denoting that the objects of destruction had brought it upon themselves. Pharaoh, who stubbornly and repeatedly resisted God, was a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction. God eventually destroyed him (CP Ro 9:14-18 with Ex 7:22-23; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 34-35; 14:5-10, 13-16, 21-28). Jews were also vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. They too stubbornly resisted God, first killing His prophets, and then His Son Jesus, making themselves the objects of God's wrath (CP Ro 9:22 with Mt 23:37-38; Ac 7:51-53; Ro 2:5-9; 1Th 2:14-16). Anyone who stubbornly and repeatedly resists God and rejects Jesus are vessels fitted to destruction. The *vessels of mercy* are believers – not only gentiles, but Jews too, because the New Testament church is comprised of both Jews and gentiles (CP Ro 9:23-26 with Eph 2:11-22 and Ga 3:28). It was the church, comprising all who believe on Jesus that God had "afore prepared unto glory" (CP Gen 3:15; Amos 9:11-12; Ac 15:13-18;

Ro 16:25-26; Eph 1:3-7; 2:4-18; 3:9-11; Col 1:15-18; 2Ti 1:9; 1Pe 1:2-5).

None of this is teaching that God will utterly destroy Israel - scriptures abound with God's promises of its eventual restoration - but at present it is "hardened", as Pharaoh was. It has hardened itself against the gospel of Christ. But the hardening is only temporary in order to permit gentiles access to the gospel (CP Ac 13:44-47; 28:23-28; Ro 9:22-33; 10:17-21; 11:25-29). As we saw in Ro 9:24 the church is comprised of both Jews and gentiles so whoever comes to God through Christ, whether they be Jews or gentiles, will be spared from the wrath to come (CP Ro 1:16-18; 2:10-11).

**9:25-29**      *What is the meaning of what Paul says here?*

In V25 Paul is referring to both Jews and gentiles - not just gentiles only - for this is Hosea's prophecy of the New Testament church (CP V25 with Hos 2:23 and 1Pe 2:7-10). In V26 Paul quoted Hosea again to reinforce his teaching in Romans that between the rejection of the Jews and their subsequent restoration to fellowship with God, the church would be God's witness in the world (CP V26 with Hos 1:10 and Mt 21:42-44; Ro 9:22-23; 10:17-21; 11:7-11). Paul goes on to say in Ro 9:27-29 quoting Isaiah this time, however, that not all the Jews will be restored to fellowship with God - only a remnant, which God in His mercy will restore to fellowship with Himself at the second advent of Jesus (CP V27-29 with Isa 10:20-22; 11:10-14 and Ro 11:12, 23, 26-29). *Consumption* in Isa 10:23 (KJV), means to end, to cease. It refers to the end of this age, at Jesus' second advent, when the remnant of the Jews will be eternally restored to fellowship with God under Messiah (CP Isa 11:10-12, 16; 27:12-13, 29:22-24; Jer 23:3; 31:7, 31-34; Eze 6:8-10; 37:12-14; Joel 2:32; Mic 2:12; 4:6-8; 5:3-8; Zeph 2:7-9; 3:13; Zech 8:6-12; Rev 12:7, 17). Ro 9:29 teaches that had God not saved a remnant of the Jews, the entire apostate nation would have been wiped out like Sodom and Gomorrah (CP V29 with Isa 1:9 and Gen 19:24-25).

**9:30-33**      *What do we learn from Paul's summing up here of Israel's rejection by God?*

This is the conclusion to Paul's teaching on election in Ch 9 in which he explains why Israel was set aside by God, and gentiles obtained the "righteousness which is of faith". This was not arbitrarily or capriciously decreed by God but was a result of the Jew's own making (CP 31-32 with 10:1-4 and Ac 13:44-47). In the Greek construction of Ro 10:3 the phrase *being ignorant of*, actually means that the Jew's lack of knowledge was due to wilful disobedience (CP Isa 65:1-2; Ro 10:21). The Jews wilfully ignored God's righteousness manifest in Christ and tried to establish their own righteousness by works of the law. Yet right throughout scripture God had made it clear that His righteousness could only be obtained by faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross. The Levitical blood sacrifices, the law, and the Old Testament prophets all pointed

to the supreme sacrifice, Jesus, who could deliver them from the sin the law revealed (CP Ro 3:19-26; Ga 3:19-26; He 9:6-10; 10:1-10).

In Ro 3:21 we learn that the righteousness of God is apart from the law, and yet it is testified to by the law and the prophets. By exposing sin, the law pointed the Jews to their need of a Saviour who has been foretold by the law and the prophets; but the law is not the Saviour - Jesus is (CP Isa 7:14; 9:6-7; Mic 5:1-3; Zech 12:8 - 13:1; Mt 2:5-6; Ro 11:26). Jesus is both the completion, and the fulfilment of the law. The law was only there to lead people to Jesus that they might be justified by faith (CP Ro 10:4; Ga 3:23-26; Eph 2:14-18; Col 2:14-17; He 8:1-6; 10:1). God's righteousness can only be obtained through faith in Christ (CP Ro 1:16-17; 3:20-26; 4:4-8; 5:1-2, 8-11, 15-21; 10:4; 1Cor 1:30; 2Cor 5:18-21; Php 3:9). Many of the Jews believed in Jesus but most did not and Jesus became an offence, a stumbling stone, to them. God predicted this through Isaiah, the Old Testament prophet (CP Ro 9:33 with Isa 8:13-15; 53:3; Jn 1:11; 1Cor 1:18-25). While Christ was a rock of offence and a stumbling stone to the Jews, He was a cornerstone of faith for the gentiles (CP Isa 28:16 with Ac 4:10-12; 13:44-49; 1Pe 2:6-8).

**10:1-3**      *See comments on Ro 9:30-33.*

**10:4**      *What does it mean that Christ is the end of the law?*

It does not mean that Christ is the end of the law in an absolute sense. He did not abolish the will of God as expressed in the law (CP Mt 5:17-18; Lu 16:17). Rather, Christ's coming signalled the end of the law with regard to the attaining of righteousness, because Christ Himself was the way of righteousness (CP Ro 1:16-17; 3:21-22; 9:30; Php 3:8-9). When God revealed His righteousness in Christ He put an end to the law as a way of salvation. It is in this sense that Christ is the end of the law. He is the end of the law for everyone who believes (CP 2Cor 3:13-16; He 8:13). Also, as we learned in our study on Ro 9:30-33, the law was there only to lead people to Christ that they may be justified by faith (CP Ro 3:21-28; Ga 2:16; 3:23-26; Eph 2:14-18; He 10:1).

**10:6-11**      *How are we to understand what Paul is saying here?*

In the previous verses, Ro 9:30-10:5, we saw that the Jews tried to establish their own righteousness by works of the law instead of by faith in the finished work of Christ, like the gentiles (CP 9:30-10:5). In 10:6-11 Paul goes on to say that God's righteousness cannot be reduced to a matter of human effort. It cannot be obtained by anyone ascending to heaven to bring Jesus down to earth - He already came down. Nor can it be obtained by anyone descending into the "deep", to bring Him up from the dead - He is already risen. Christ has already done all that is necessary for salvation; there is no need to go on impossible journeys to find Him. Faith does not demand human effort; all anyone ever has to do to be made righteous with God is to accept Christ's finished work for their redemption by faith (CP Ro 1:16-17; 3:20-26; 4:4-8;

5:1-2, 8-11, 15-21; 10:4; 1Cor 1:30; 2Cor 5:18-20; Php 3:9).

The "word of faith" in Ro 10:8 is the message of faith that Paul preached (CP V8-10). We learn here that the lordship and resurrection of Christ are the essence of salvation and they achieve their full purpose only through confession and belief. *Confess* here means to say the same thing as God's word, the Bible, says. By confessing it, we are proclaiming our faith in its truth, we are not merely paying lip service to God's word. In His word God proclaims that Jesus is lord, and when we confess that also, we are assenting to its truth. The name *lord* in this context means *Jehovah*, or God. Thus, to confess Jesus as lord includes a heart-belief in His deity, incarnation, sacrificial atonement, and bodily resurrection. All of this teaches simply that the righteousness of faith consists of belief and confession. It does not teach, as a great many Christians in the contemporary church believe, that when repentant sinners respond affirmatively to the gospel, they have to make a **public** confession of faith to be saved. They are no less saved if their confession is private. God knows the intent of their hearts, and He will save whoever invokes His name for salvation, whether it be in public, or private (CP V12-13). In Ro 10:3-10 Paul is simply contrasting how easy it is to be saved with how hard the Jews made it by trying to do it by the works of the law (CP 9:30 - 10:10). Belief means active trust in God's goodness to us in Jesus, and confession is the witness to that belief. Belief and confession makes no allowance for human efforts to establish one's own righteousness. That is where the Jews missed it (CP V3 with Mk 7:1-13).

This is not to say though, as we saw previously in our study on Ro 9:25-29, that the Jewish nation as a whole will be excluded from God's kingdom for all eternity. A remnant will be saved who turn to Jesus at His second coming (CP V27-29 with Isa 10:20-22; 11:10-16 and Ro 11:12, 23, 26-29).

#### **10:9**            *Why is the resurrection of Christ so important to Christians?*

The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead is not just a tenet of the Christian faith; it is the primary and essential truth of the whole gospel of salvation. Without that truth, the gospel of salvation has no purpose. The resurrection is the foundational principle of the new birth (CP Ro 6:1-13; Col 2:8-13; 3:1-3). Faith in the resurrection is the very essence of Christian belief, and as Ro 10:9 clearly teaches, is a condition of salvation. It is the resurrection, not the cross, which is the focal point of the New Testament. As crucial as the cross was in God's eternal purpose, and without detracting from the significance of Christ's pain and suffering on the cross as the central fact of christianity, because the cross was the price Jesus paid for our redemption, it was the empty tomb and the risen Christ that made resurrection life possible for believers as Ro 6:1-13; Col 2:8-13 and 3:1-3 clearly teach. Ro 6 and Col 2 are not referring to water baptism as a great many Christians believe, but to believers being baptized into Christ at their new birth, and then living completely renewed lives

in the resurrection power of Christ thereafter. This is made clear in Col 3:1-3.

The resurrection transforms Christ's death on the cross into the gospel of life (CP Ro 4:23-25; 5:17-21; 1Cor 15:3-4, 17; 2Cor 5:14-15; Eph 1:19-23; He 9:13-15; 1Pe 1:3-5). On the cross Jesus was no threat to His enemies but in the tomb He was (CP Mt 27:39-44; Mk 15:29-32; Lu 23:33-36). Christ's enemies were not concerned that He would get down from the cross, but they were concerned He would rise up from the grave because His resurrection had been prophesied in the Old Testament, and He had foretold it many times Himself (CP Psa 16:10; 49:15; 68:18; Isa 26:19 with Mt 12:38-41; 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:18-19; 27:62-66; Mk 8:27-31 (also Lu 9:18-22); Mk 10:32-34).

Jesus can never die again, and neither will those who are redeemed unto everlasting life with Him (CP Jn 3:16, 36; 5:24; 11:25-26; 1Th 5:9-11; 1Jn 5:11-12). Jesus won the victory over sin and death for believers through the resurrection (CP Jn 14:19; Ro 5:10; 1Cor 15:20-23, 54-57). And since Jesus is raised from the dead, believers have the assurance that the next step in God's redemptive plan is their resurrection into Christ's glory. This is the certainty we have because Christ has been raised from the dead, and He said, "because I live, ye shall live also (Jn 14:19). It is to this end we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (CP Eph 1:9-14). Believers do not live anticipating physical death as unbelievers do, but in anticipation of Christ coming again to take us back to heaven with Him, and whether we be living or dead at that time we shall rise together with Him in glory. This is assured because He has already risen and ascended to heaven. It guarantees not only the future resurrection of the righteous dead, but also the "rapture", or bodily translation, of the saints still living at that time (CP Jn 5:25-29; 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:42-43, 51-58; Col 3:1-4; 1Th 4:13-18; 1Jn 3:2-3; Rev 20:6). That is why the resurrection is so important to believers (see also comments on Jn 5:28-29, 14:1-3, 1Cor 15:51-54, 1Th 4:13-18, He 9:13-15).

#### **10:12-13**        *What do we learn from what Paul says here?*

This is one of numerous scriptures in the Bible that clearly refutes the teaching in the church that before anyone was even born God has already determined whether or not they will be saved. It is plainly evident here that God will save *everyone* who invokes His name for salvation, regardless of who they are, or how vile a sinner they may have been. All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory, so it is also a lesson against bigotry in the church. No one can hold themselves to be above others. God is no respecter of persons (CP Ac 10:34-35; Ro 2:10-11; Ga 3:28; Col 3:25; Jas 2:1-9; 1Pe 1:17). God does not take into account race, colour or creed. No one can earn salvation - which is what the Jews tried to do - they must accept it as a gift from God, who offers it freely to all mankind through Jesus Christ (CP Jn 3:16-18; Ro 3:10, 20-26; 5:1-2, 6-12, 18-19; Ga 3:22). The Jews thought they were the only ones worth saving, but when they rejected Christ and tried

to make themselves righteous by the works of the law, God set them aside and turned to the gentiles (CP Ac 13:44-47; Ro 9:30-33; 10:1-4). But this does not mean, as we saw in our study on Ro 9:25-29, that God has completely rejected the Jews - there will be a remnant saved at Christ's second coming (CP Isa 10:20-22 and 11:10-16 with Ro 9:27-29 and 11:1-2, 12, 23, 26-29).

**10:14-17** *Does this mean that everyone has to hear the gospel to be saved?*

Yes! V14-15 and 17 are very clear on this point - it is the gospel alone that saves. Of course this does not mean that God cannot still sovereignly move upon sinners to bring them to Christ if He so chooses. But as far as Christians are concerned, they must preach the gospel in order for sinners to hear and believe it for their salvation (CP Mt 24:14; 28:18-20; Mk 13:10; 16:15; Lu 24:46-48; Ac 1:8; 10:42). These scriptures all confirm what Ro 10:14-15 and 17 teach: sinners must hear the gospel to be saved. Christians must be very clear on this point, because there is a teaching that has persisted in the contemporary church called "lifestyle evangelism", which advocates that sinners can be won to Christ simply by letting them observe the exemplary lifestyle of Christians. But that is not correct as scriptures clearly prove (CP Psa 22:22; 40:9-10; 119:13; Eze 33:10-12; Jn 5:24; Ac 1:6-8; Ro 1:16-17; 1Cor 1:17-21; 4:15; 1Ti 4:16; Tit 1:1-3; Jas 1:18; 1Pe 1:23-25). These scriptures are not exhaustive, but representative of the many that clearly refute lifestyle evangelism. Every one of them teaches that the gospel has to be proclaimed for sinners to receive it and be saved. Nowhere in the Bible are we taught that sinners can be saved by observing the lifestyle of Christians, no matter how exemplary their lifestyle is. No one lived a more exemplary lifestyle than Jesus, yet no one got saved as a result of it. They got saved because Jesus confronted them with the gospel, and it is the same throughout scripture (CP Jn 17:14, 20; Ac 4:1-4, 29-33; 8:26-38; 10:36-37; 12:24; 13:2-5, 26, 38-39, 42-44, 48-49; 17:1-4; 28:23-24). Lifestyle evangelism places no urgency on winning souls to Christ, which Jesus and Paul both emphasized (CP Jn 4:34; 2Ti 4:1-2). Lifestyle evangelism teaches another way of evangelizing that is totally unscriptural. It could be weeks or even months before sinners can be confronted with the gospel, yet in the meantime they could die and be lost forever. If that were to happen their blood will be on the hands of the Christians involved. But if the Christians had already confronted the sinners with the gospel and they rejected it, God will not hold the Christians to account (CP Eze 3:17-21 (also 33:7-9)). It is plain from scripture that lifestyle evangelism is not a valid teaching for New Testament Christians.

Another fallacious teaching which many Christians cling to, and which scriptures also refute, is the belief that one must wait on the leading of the Holy Spirit to confront a sinner with the gospel. As we learned in 2Ti 4:1-2 Christians are commanded to proclaim the gospel, whether or not they consider it an opportune time and whether or not they feel like it, so we do not have to wait on the Holy Spirit's leading to share the

gospel of salvation with a lost sinner. All we have to do is obey Christ's command to preach the gospel, and the Holy spirit will work through it to convict of sin and engender faith in those we preach to who are disposed toward eternal life, to believe the gospel for their salvation (CP Ro 10:17 and Jn 16:7-11 with 1Cor 1:21 and Ac 13:44-47). The Holy Spirit does sometimes prompt Christians to witness to a particular person, but that is the exception rather than the rule (CP Ac 8:26-39). Ro 10:14-17 also refutes the belief held by some Christians that sinners can be "prayed into the kingdom". While it is incumbent upon the church to pray for them, prayer alone will not get sinners saved. As has been proved throughout this study, hearing the gospel is necessary in order for them to believe it for their salvation.

**10:18-21** *Had the gospel already gone out into all the earth at the time Paul wrote this?*

Yes! *World* in V18 means the known world of that time, which was the extent of the Roman Empire. Paul applied Psa 19:4, which refers to the revelation of God's glory and His handiwork throughout the earth, to the evangelizing of the Jews (CP V18 with Psa 19:1-4 and Ro 1:18-20). The point Paul was making in Ro 10:18-21 is that the Jews had all heard the gospel, but had rejected it. That is why in Ro 1:20 Paul said they were without excuse. Right throughout their history the Jews obstinately refused to obey God, and Paul goes back into their past to quote Moses and Isaiah who had both predicted that what was happening to them now would happen, because of their disobedience and stubbornness (CP Ro 10:19-20 with De 32:15-26 and Isa 65:1-7). God did not want to punish the Jews and pleaded with them throughout scripture to change their ways, but they would not listen and eventually God had to temporarily put them aside, and take the gospel to the gentiles, who were "no people" in the Jew's eyes. God did this to provoke the Jews to jealousy, that in due course they would come to accept the gospel (CP Ro 10:21 with Isa 65:2 and Hos 11:1-7). *Gainsaying* in Ro 10:21 (KJV) means the Jews declared themselves against God and refused to have anything to do with Him (see also comments on Ac 13:48; Ro 1:19-21; 9:30-33; 10:12-13).

**11:1-10** *Will God restore Israel as a nation or will a remnant only be incorporated into the New Testament church?*

Some Bible scholars believe that Ro 11 does not deal with the restoration of Israel as a nation, but only with a remnant being incorporated into the New Testament church. But that is not correct. While Jews indeed have been incorporated into the New Testament church, God still will restore Israel as a nation, no longer in unbelief, but as a Christian believing nation, at Christ's second coming, which Ro 11 clearly teaches in conformity with all other scriptures (CP V12, 23, 26-29 with 1Sam 12:22; Psa 147:7; 94:14; Isa 10:20-22; 11:10-13; 27:12-13; 59:20-21; 66:8-14; Jer 23:3-6; 31:31-34; Eze 37:12-14; Joel 2:32; Mic 2:12; 4:6-8; 5:7-8; Zech 8:6-12; 12:8 -13:1;

Mt 24:30-31). The word fullness in Ro 11:12 refers to that which is complete, the completeness of national Israel in its return to God at the second advent, and its salvation through Christ (CP Isa 10:20-22). V23 and 27 in Ro 11 talks of Israel as a nation under grace becoming again the channel of blessing God meant it to be in the world (CP V23 and 27 with Isa 49:6; 56:6-8; Mic 5:7-8). "All Israel" in Ro 11:26 does not mean that every Jew who ever lived will be saved. It refers to each member of the nation of Israel living at the time of Christ's second coming. God called Israel His elect in the beginning, and He still wants the nation saved. *Calling* in V29 refers to God calling Israel to be a part of His eternal kingdom. God has never repented or regretted this calling. He has merely set Israel aside temporarily and will restore it at the second coming of Jesus (CP Mt 24:30-31). Let us now read Ro 11:12, 23, 26-29 once more (CP 11:12, 23, 26-29).

**11:2**            *What does the word "foreknew" mean here?*

It means simply that God knew Israel as the nation He chose in order for His purposes in the earth to be fulfilled in Jesus (CP 9:4-5 with Gen 49:10; Mic 5:2; Mt 2:3-6; Lu 2:11). God also chose national Israel to be His witness in the earth (CP Ex 19:5-6; De 7:6; 26:18-19; Isa 62:11-12; Ro 3:1-2). Israel was also chosen by God to be the first nation to receive His offer of salvation (CP Mt 10:1, 5-6; Jn 1:11; 5:39-40; Ro 1:16). When Israel rejected salvation, God temporarily set the nation aside and took the gospel to the gentiles (CP Ac 13:44-47; Ro 9:30-33; 10:1-4 with Mic 5:3). See also comments on Ro 9:7 and 9:10-13.

**11:4**            *Is the figure seven thousand here literal or symbolic?*

(CP also 1Ki 19:14, 18). Whether the figure seven thousand in these scriptures is literal or symbolic is irrelevant. It is more important to know that even today God has a faithful remnant of Jews serving Him the same as He had in both Paul and Elijah's day (CP Ro 11:5). *According to the election of grace* means that there will always be some that believe who are saved by grace as the remnant of Israel is here. They are saved only by God's grace through faith in Christ. All human works are excluded (CP V6 with 9:11, 30-33; Eph 1:4-7, 2:8-9.) See also comment on Mt 11:28-30, 13:10-11, 20:16; Jn 3:15-16, 3:36, 6:37, 12:37-40, Ac 2:37-38, 13:48, 28:23-29, Ro 3:24-26(A), 8:28-30, 9:7, 9:10-13, 9:14-18, 9:19-21, 10:14-17, 11:2; Eph 1:3-6, 1:11-14, 2:8-10, 1Th 1:4; 2Ti 1:8-9; 1Pe 1:2, 1Jn 1:10.

**11:7-10**        *How are we to understand what Paul says here?*

This is the crux of Paul's discussion in V1-6 (CP V1-6). National Israel, who pursued after righteousness by the works of the law, has not attained it (CP 9:30-33). Only individual Jews, called "the election" here, who have accepted Christ as their Saviour have attained it (CP 9:6). The rest of Israel were blinded to the gospel through rebellion and unbelief (CP Isa

29:9-13; Psa 69:22-23). Paul quotes Isaiah in Ro 11:8 to signify Israel's utter insensibility to God's word, and its failure to recognize Jesus as Messiah, and in V9-10 he quoted King David's curse upon those who crucified Jesus, as Christ's reproach to Israel for their blindness and obstinacy in the face of God's grace. Nothing that happened to Israel was God's fault. Israel brought it upon itself the same as Pharaoh did, as we saw in our study on Ro 9:14-18 (CP Jn 1:11; 5:39-40; Ac 13:44-47; 28:23-28; Ro 9:30-33; 10:17-21; 11:13-24; 2Cor 3:12-16). See also comments on Mt 11:28-30, 13:10-11, 20:16; Jn 3:15-16, 3:36, 6:37, 12:37-40, Ac 2:37-38, 13:48, 28:23-29, Ro 3:24-26(A), 8:28-30, 9:7, 9:10-13, 9:14-18, 9:19-21, 10:14-17, 11:2, 11:4, Eph 1:3-6, 1:11-14, 2:8-10, 1Th 1:4; 2Ti 1:8-9; 1Pe 1:2, 1Jn 1:10.

**11:13**            *Are Apostles still in the church today?*

*Apostles*, from the Greek word **Apostoloi**, means ones sent, messengers. In the New Testament church apostles are placed first in the divine order of ministry gifts Christ gave to the church to prepare and equip it for God's service (CP Eph 4:11; 1Cor 12:28). Yet there is much teaching in the contemporary church that apostles and prophets ceased with the first century church, but that is not what scriptures teach (CP Mt 24:14; Jn 17:18-21; Eph 3:1-12; 4:7-16; 5:25-27). It is plainly evident from these scriptures that Christ has ordained the ministry gifts He gave to the church to remain there while ever the church exists. They are all essential to God's purpose for the church - "for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry" (CP Eph 4:11-12). *Perfecting* means "to make fully ready", which defines the completed process outlined in V13-16 (CP Eph 4:13-16). This confirms that all the ministry gifts Christ gave to the church will remain there until God's purpose for the church is accomplished, which can only ever be when it has fulfilled its mission on earth and is taken up to heaven by Jesus (CP Eph 2:19-20). This further emphasises the continuing importance of apostles and prophets in God's purpose for the church and underlines the reason why they are placed first and second in the divine order of ministry gifts for the church. God includes them with Jesus as the foundation of the church. *Foundation* in this context is used metaphorically of the ministry of the gospel and the doctrines of faith - the church is built upon the teachings of the apostles and prophets. It is their responsibility to bring clarification and illumination concerning God's word to those they are establishing in the faith.

In the primary sense Eph 2:20 applies to the original twelve apostles Christ called before Pentecost and in the secondary sense to all those God has called since Pentecost (CP Ac 2:42; Eph 3:1-12). Apostles have two main tasks to perform in the ministry: to bring into being properly ordered churches and to set, and maintain in order, and continue to build churches that already exist. Apostles not only pioneer new works, but continue building on foundations others have laid (CP Ac 8:14-17, 25; 1Cor 3:10). Apostles can function in either an itinerant ministry or be domiciled in a local church. There is nothing in

scripture to indicate that the apostle James, the Lord's brother ever left the church at Jerusalem and the same thing happens in the contemporary church. There are many men who either pioneer a church or continue building on foundations others have laid and stay there. Sadly however, in the contemporary church these men are not designated apostles as they should be but "pastors", although nowhere in scripture is the term "pastor" ever used to define rank, authority or title of anyone – man or woman – in the New Testament church. There are men designated apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers in scripture but there is no man (or woman) designated a pastor. There are at least 28 men named as apostles in scripture. Apart from the thirteen – including Matthias – before Pentecost, at least fifteen others have been designated apostles since then: Paul and Barnabas (CP Ac 13:1-5, 50 - 14:4, 14; 15:22-25, 35-39); Silas and Timothy (CP 1Th 1:1; 2:6); Apollos (CP 1Cor 4:6-9); Titus (CP 2Cor 8:23); James, Joses, Simon and Jude, the brothers of Jesus (CP Mt 13:55; 1Cor 9:5); Andronicus and Junias (CP Ro 16:7); Epaphroditus (CP Php 2:25), and there were at least two others with Titus (CP 2Cor 8:23).

Most Christians believe that the ministry gift of apostle in the contemporary church has been fulfilled in the ministry of the missionary, and there are doubtless many missionaries who do function as apostles and should be recognised as such. The ministries of apostles and missionaries are similar - they both evangelise, plant churches, instruct, correct, and establish them in the faith, but whereas every apostle is a missionary, not every missionary is an apostle. Furthermore every apostle is a qualified elder in the New Testament church, but not every missionary is.

It is ludicrous to suggest that apostles and prophets were only needed for the first century church and not since, when the church Jesus Christ is building is not yet complete, nor will it be until its mission in the earth is fulfilled and Christ takes it up to heaven with him. Until then all the ministry gifts Christ gave to the church to prepare and equip it for God's service will remain there while ever the church exists.

Now let us look at some of the characteristics of false apostles before moving on. Scriptures warn against them and we need to be able to correctly discern them. It is very easy to be deceived by them because they are so charismatic (CP 2Cor 11:4-12-15) see also comments on Acts 11:27, 13:1-4, 20:17, Eph 4:11-12, 1Tim 3:1-7 and 1Pet 5:1-3. False apostles are counterfeits of the devil the same as all other false teachers, and the only sure way to guard against being taken in by them is to test their teaching according to God's word (CP Ac 17:10-11; 2Pe 1:16-19). In 2Pe 1:16-19 Peter teaches us that scripture is the only proof text we have with which to measure any teaching in the church against, and even though we may also be eyewitness to a truly great spiritual experience as Peter himself was at the transfiguration of Jesus, if any teaching does not have its authority in scripture, then we must disregard it completely, the same as the church at Ephesus did (CP Rev 2:1-7). Christians are commanded to test

every teaching that comes into the church (CP Ac 17:10-11; 1Th 5:21; 2Pe 1:16-19; 1Jn 4:1). See also comments on Acts 11:27, 13:1-4, 20:17, Eph 11-12, 1Tim 3:1-7 and 1Pet 5:1-3.

#### **11:16**            *Who does "the firstfruit" refer to here?*

Some Bible scholars believe that *the firstfruit* and *the root* referred to here represent the Jews who have already accepted Christ as their Saviour, and that *the lump* and *the branches* apply to the rest of Israel who are yet to accept Him (CP V11-16). Other commentators believe that while the lump and the branches refers to as yet unsaved Israel, the firstfruit and the root refers to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the fathers of the Jewish nation, and this is the correct view in light of what Paul says in V28 (CP V25-28). It was because of God's covenant promises to Abraham and the others that He has only temporarily set Israel aside and not rejected it completely (CP 11:1-2, 12, 23, 26-29). V29 here alone is sufficient proof that God has not totally given up on Israel. He has not revoked His calling of Israel to be a part of His eternal kingdom, and will restore it to fellowship with Himself, under Christ as Messiah, at Christ's second coming (CP 1Sam 12:22; Psa 14:7; 94:14; Isa 10:20-27; 11:11-16; 27:12-13; 29:22-24; 57:20-21; Jer 23:3-8; 31:7, 31-34; Eze 6:8-10; 37:11-14; Joel 2:32; Mic 2:12-13; 4:6-8, 5:3-8; Zeph 2:7-9; 3:11-13; Zech 8:6-12; 12:8 - 13:1; Mt 24:30-31). See also comments on Ac 13:48, Ro 9:14-18; 9:30-33, 11:1-10 and 11:2.

#### **11:17-24**        *How are we to understand what Paul says here?*

Paul uses the analogy here of the branches of a wild olive tree being engrafted to a cultured olive tree which has had some of its branches broken off, to illustrate how apostate Israel has been temporarily set aside by God, and the gospel given to the gentiles. The gentiles are represented by the branches of the wild olive tree that have been grafted to the cultured olive tree (CP Eph 3:3-6 with 1Cor 12:12-13 and Ga 3:28-29). Apostate Israel is represented by the branches of the cultured olive tree that have been broken off (CP Jer 11:16-17). In Ro 11:18-22 Paul warns the Gentiles against believing they are superior to the Jews because the gospel has been taken from the Jews and given to them.

This is a solemn warning for gentiles against being contemptuous of Jews. The gentiles were not preferred over the Jews, but were given the gospel because they received it by faith. Israel lost it because of unbelief (CP Ac 13:44-47; Ro 9:30-33; 10:1-4). But the fact that the Jews no longer have the gospel does not entitle the gentiles to brag about it, because the life-source of the gentiles is rooted in the covenant blessings God bestowed upon Abraham and his descendants (CP Ro 11:13-14; 26-29; Ga 3:13-29). It is the gentiles who share in the blessings of the Jews, not the Jews who share in the blessings of the gentiles (CP Isa 2:3; Lu 2:30-32; 24:47; Jn 4:21-22; Ro 3:1-2; 9:4-5). This teaching is also set forth

for us under the figure of "the root of the fatness of the olive tree" in Ro 11:17 (CP V17-18).

Every Christian, Jews and gentiles alike, draw their life from the common root, which represents the Jews, and it is only in the realm of grace that this grafting process could succeed, because as V24 teaches, it is contrary to nature to graft wild olive tree branches into a cultured olive tree, causing the branches to flourish and bring forth fruit unto everlasting life. Only God could do it, and gentiles must never credit themselves with doing it, otherwise God will take the gospel from them and restore it to the Jews (CP V23-25).

The "fullness of the gentiles" in V25 does not mean that every gentile will be saved, but that in due course God's purpose will have been fulfilled in the gentiles and He will then restore Israel as a nation to fellowship with Himself under Christ as Messiah, at Christ's second coming (CP 11:1-2, 12, 23, 26-29 with 1Sam 12:22; Psa 14:7; 94:14; Isa 10:20-27; 11:11-16; 27:12-13; 29:22-24; 59:20-21; Jer 23:3-8; 31:7, 31-34; Eze 6:8-10; 37:11-14; Joel 2:32; Mic 2:12-13; 4:6-8; 5:3-8; Zeph 2:7-9; 3:11-13; Zech 8:6-12; 12:8 - 13:1; Mt 24:30-31). Paul's assertion in Ro 11:26 that all Israel will be saved also does not mean that every Jew who ever lived will be saved. Only those living at that time who accept Christ as their Saviour will be saved. In the analogy of the olive tree in Ro 11 Paul brings to a close the theme of grace and faith which he has been teaching throughout Romans from chapter 1 (see also comments on Ro 11:1-10).

**11:29**      *Does this mean that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance for all Christians?*

No! The gifts and calling of God are without repentance only in relation to Israel as the nation sovereignly chosen by God in order for His purposes in the earth to be fulfilled in Jesus (CP 9:4-5 with Gen 49:10; Mic 5:2; Mt 2:3-6; Lu 2:11). There are many in the contemporary church however who believe that Ro 11:29 applies to all Christians, but that is not correct as scriptures clearly prove (CP Judg 16:20; 1Sam 16:14; 18:12; 28:15-16; Hos 9:12). King David also knew that it was possible to have God's gifts and calling revoked, for he prayed to God not to remove the Holy Spirit from him (CP Psa 51:10-12). Ro 11:29 must be kept in the context in which it was spoken, and the context clearly refers to Israel and God's purposes for her, not the gifts of the Spirit and the calling of God upon Christians in the New Testament church (CP Ro 11:1-2, 12, 23, 26-29 with Isa 59:20-21; Jer 31:31-40; 32:37-42; 33:19-26; Eze 36:22-30; 37:15-28; He 8:8-12). Throughout Romans chapters 9-11 Paul is discussing Israel's relationship with God and his assertion in 11:29 is merely the reason he gives to demonstrate the veracity of V28 (CP V28-29). This teaches simply that Israel's rejection of the gospel and antagonism toward God did not cause God to totally reject Israel. He has merely set Israel aside temporarily and given the gospel to the gentiles until His purpose has been fulfilled in the gentiles (CP Ac 13:44-47 with Ro

11:25). See also comments on Ac 13:48, Ro 9:25-29, 9:30-33, 11:1-10.

**11:32**      *What does it mean that God has concluded them all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all?*

We learn from this that human disobedience in whatever form does not jeopardize sovereign grace (CP V25-32). God wants to save as many sinners as he can. The word *concluded* in V32 (KJV), means to shut up on all sides, to enclose, to shut up completely. The underlying thought is that God has shut up the entire human race, Jews and Gentiles alike, within the state of their own unbelief and disobedience, so that He might have mercy upon them all, (CP Ro 3:9-12, 19-20, 23; 5:6-8; 2Cor 5:14; Ga 3:22; 1Jn 5:14). This does not imply as some believe, that everyone who ever lived will be saved, but simply that salvation is offered to all (CP Mt 11:28-30, Jn 3:16-18; 7:37-38; Rev 22:17). Nor does it mean that God ordains sin for the sake of, or with a view to redemption, but that He subordinates sin to His redemptive purpose (CP Ro 1:16-17; 3:21-26; 5:1-2, 8-11, 15-21; 9:27-29; 10:4; 11:1-5, 12, 23, 26-29; 2Cor 5:18-21; Gal 3:22-26; Eph 2:11-18).

**11:33-36**      *What do we learn from what Paul says here?*

This is called a *Doxology* in the contemporary church – a formula of praise to God in prayer. After outlining God's redemptive plan for both Jews and Gentiles in Ch 9-11, Paul now extols the depth of the richness of God's wisdom and knowledge, and the unsearchability of His ways in devising such a plan. Only the God of all creation, through whom all things came into being, could do it (CP Isa 40:13-14). God's ways are beyond human understanding (CP Job 26:1-14).

This now concludes Paul's focus in chapters 9-11 on the righteousness of God applied specifically to Israel's enduring place in God's eternal purpose. Chapter 9 pertains to God's covenant with Israel, and vindicates God in the face of Israel's stubborn resistance to His plan of redemption. The main thrust of chapter 9 is to teach the doctrine of justification by faith. In chapter 10 Israel's guilt and responsibility for excluding itself temporarily from salvation is established beyond doubt. In chapter 11 Paul teaches that Israel's rejection of the gospel advanced God's plan to include the gentiles in His plan of redemption, which in turn will lead to Israel's salvation.

**12:1**      *What does Paul mean that we are to present our bodies a living sacrifice unto God?*

This is arguably the most outstanding passage of scripture in the New Testament exhorting believers to set themselves apart wholly unto God, and to be totally consecrated to His service. The word *therefore* reaches back to the previous chapters in which the mercies of God were explained – the justification, sanctification, and future glorification of believers. Paul uses these mercies as the basis for

exhorting believers to henceforth live holy and righteous lives unto God. To “present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,” means that our physical bodies, put at the disposal of God, are to be holy, both in the sense of being set apart for God’s use, and of being free from sinful practices. (CP Ro 6:8-13, 19, 22; 2Cor 5:14-16; 6:16-17:1; Ga 2:20; 5:16; Eph 4:20-24; Php 3:13-14).

“This is our reasonable service” means that in light of God’s mercies, it logically follows – *reasonable* is derived from the Greek word for logic, **Logikos** - that we owe God our highest form of service. We are no longer to be conformed to a world system without God, but transformed by a renewed mind committed to the ideals of the kingdom of God. Our thoughts, affections, purposes, and desires must be centred on heavenly and eternal things, not the things of this evil, temporal, and transient age. (CP Ro 12:2 with Mt 6:19-21, 24; Ro 13:14; Ga 1:3-5; Col 3:1-6; Jas 1:27; 4:4; 1Jn 2:15-17).

### 12:2 What is God’s will?

God’s will is His word, the Bible. The Bible is the revealed will of God. It contains everything we need to know for Christian living. The more we study the Bible the more we know God’s will. But knowing God’s will is not enough; It has to be lived out in our everyday lives. That is what it means to “prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” We prove it by practising it in our every-day lives (CP Psa 40:8; 119:1-6, 105-112, 129-130; Mt 7:21; Lu 6:47-49; Jas 1:21-25).

The phrase *that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God* does not teach as many in the church believe, that there are three levels of God’s will. *Good, acceptable, and perfect* are merely adjectives that describe the same will of God. In the original Greek it simply reads, “The will of God, the good and well-pleasing, and the complete will.” *Prove* means test, approve. We are proving that God’s will is good, acceptable and perfect when we do it. (CP Psa 25:8-10; Pr 3:32; Dan 12:10; Jn 7:17; Eph 1:9-14; Php 2:12-13; 1 Th 4:3-7).

The Holy Spirit will take away the desire for anything that is contrary to God’s will for us as we surrender ourselves to the lordship of Jesus and the authority of His word. (CP Jn 16:7-15; Ro 8:1-16; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 5:14-17; Eph 4:20-24; 1 Pe 1:2; 1 Jn 2:20,27). The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit is a continuous work throughout the entirety of our Christian walk (CP Ro 1:16-17; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:13-16; Eph 5:25-27; Col 3:9-10; Tit 2:11-14; 3:5).

### 12:3 What exactly is Paul telling us here?

The first consequence of being transformed by the renewing of our minds is a new self-understanding. Christians are not to have exaggerated opinions of who they are in Christ (CP V16). Everyone in the body of Christ has a ministry gift or function and none is more important than another. Ministries differ according to God’s grace, but all complement each other and are important to God. (CP V4-8 with

1Cor 12:4-18, 27-30; and Eph 4:7-16). The proportion of faith in Ro12:6 refers to the measure of faith in V3 (CP V3 with V6). Christians are to appraise and measure their ministry gifting in the body in accordance with the measure of faith God has given to each of us, and we are to operate within that sphere of faith – the bounds of that ministry - not beyond it (CP 2 Cor 10:12-18). It should be noted here that it is unscriptural and unwise to assume that because someone exercises a spectacular gift that person is more spiritual than one with a less spectacular gift. Neither does possessing that gift mean that God approves all the possessor does or teaches (CP De 1:17; 16:19; 2 Chr 19:7; Ro 2:10-11; 1 Cor 12:20-25; Jas 2:9).

### 12:5 What does Paul mean that “We being many are one body in Christ”?

Paul uses the human body with its many members as an analogy to illustrate his point that the church is comprised of many Christians (CP 1Cor 10:16-17; 12:12-14; Eph 1:22-23; 2:13-16; Col 1:18,24). The various members of the human body perform different functions, but all contribute to the unity of the body, so it is with the members of the body of Christ (CP 1Cor 12:18-27). In using the analogy of the human body, Paul is not arguing for a pattern of uniformity and sameness in the body of Christ, but for a unity of faith and diversity of functions (CP V4-18, 28-31).

12:9-10 See comments on Jn 13:34-35.

12:16 See comments on Ro 12:3.

### 12:18 How is this statement to be understood?

Christians must do all they can to promote peace and tolerance in the world (CP Mt 5:38-42; Mk 9:50; Lu 6:27-29; Ro 14:19; 1Cor 6:7; 2Cor 13:11; 1Th 5:13-15; He 12:14; 1Pe 3:9). However, the fact that Paul added the phrase, ‘if it were possible,’ means that it does not always rest with Christians to live peaceably with all men. It is also conditional upon others’ attitudes and responses. As well, Christians cannot promote peace at any price – God’s word cannot be compromised for the sake of peace (CP Ac 4:13-20; 5:26-29).

### 12:20 What does “for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head”, mean?

Christians must never exact vengeance upon anyone who has wronged them. Instead they must give it over to God who will avenge them in due course (CP V17-19). Christians are to treat those who wrong them with loving kindness, which equates to Paul’s injunction to give them food and drink if they are hungry (CP V20-21). Repaying injury with kindness will bring a burning sense of shame and guilt upon them. This is what Paul means when he said “for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head” (CP V14 with Ex 23:4-5; Pr 24:17-18; 25:21-22; Mt 5:44; Lu 6:27-30).

**13:1-2** *Is this teaching that Christians have to obey every law of the state without question?*

Yes, but only when laws of the state do not contravene God's law. Paul is not teaching here that Christians have to blindly obey civil authorities without regard to moral responsibility or God's law, but that ideal government poses no threat to those who obey the law. Peter teaches the same thing (CP V1-7; 1Pe 2:13-17; 4:12-19). God determined the concept of human government in the first place. This is not to say that God personally appoints every member of the government individually, but that he ordained the existence of government for the benefit of mankind. Of course there will be bad governments and bad rulers – the New Testament church was birthed under a tyrannical governmental system – but generally, government's exist for the benefit of the people, and except where they conflict with god's law, their laws must be obeyed by God's children. But when they conflict with God's law Christians must not compromise God's word and obey them. There are numerous scriptures to support this teaching (CP Ex 1:15-17; Psa 75:6-7; Dan 3:12-18; 6:6-10; Mt 2:1-5, 7-9, 12, 15-16; Ac 4:13-20; 5:28-29, 40-42; He 11:23).

Many Christians in the contemporary church believe that civil authorities must be obeyed without question, regardless of whether or not their laws conflict with God's law, yet as those scriptures clearly teach, that is not correct. The believers subject of those scriptures all knew that it was more important to obey God rather than man (CP Mk 8:34-38 with Dan 3:19-30; 6:11-28; He 11:32-40). Ro 13:1-7 teaches simply that (in the ideal governmental system) civil authorities are not a terror to good people, but to those who do wrong, and therefore Christians must always uphold their laws, having regard to the fact that it was God who instituted human government in the first place for the benefit of all humans (CP V4).

We learn from this that God sanctions capital punishment. The sword is an instrument of death. It symbolized the right of (ideal) governments to inflict capital punishment – *to execute wrath* – upon wrongdoers, with God's approval. God himself commanded murderers to be executed in the Old Testament (CP Gen 9:6; Nu 35:31, 33; Ac 25:11; Rev 13:10). Ro 13:6-7 teaches that because civil authorities, like priests, discharge a divinely ordained service, they must need to live off that service, and believers must therefore pay their taxes (CP V6-7).

**13:8** *Does this prohibit Christians buying anything on credit or borrowing money?*

No, money as such is not in view here. What Paul is saying continues on from his injunction to Christians in V1-7 to discharge all their obligations to civil authorities (CP V1-7). Christians are to owe no man anything in the sense that they are to have no outstanding debts. All their debts must be kept up to date. The only outstanding debt Christians should owe is their debt of love to their fellow man. This is

the only debt which they can never discharge (CP V8-10 with 1Cor 13:1-7 and Ga 5:13-14). *Neighbour* in Ro 13 and Ga 5 means any other member of the human race, not only fellow Christians, but unbelievers also; even those who hate us (CP Mt 5:43-44; Lu 6:27-35; Jn 13:34-35; Ro 12:9-10, 14, 20-21; Eph 5:1-2; Php 1:9; Col 3:14; 1Th 4:9; 1Ti 2:15; He 6:10; 1Pe 1:22; 4:8; 1Jn 2:9-10; 3:23; 4:7-12, 20-21). Christian love seeks the welfare of all and works no ill to any. It is self-sacrificial, not self-seeking.

The Christian who loves his fellow man like this has fulfilled God's law in every respect. The commandments not to commit adultery, not to murder, not to steal, not to bear false witness, not to covet, and any other commandment, are all summed up in the commandment to love our neighbour as ourself (CP Ex20:13-17; Lev19:18; De 5:17-22). See also comments on Jn 13:34-35; 1Cor 12:31; Ga 5:1-8, 5:13; 1Th 3:12; 1Jn 3:7, 3:15, 3:16-18, 3:19-22, 4:7-21; Rev 4:7-13.

**13:11-14** *How are we to understand what Paul says here?*

In view of the imminence of Christ's return Paul is impressing upon Christians here the importance of loving our fellow man (CP V8-10). Paul is not referring to Christ's second coming in V11-14 as a great many Christians believe, but to the time when He comes again to take all the saints of God – both living and dead – back to heaven with Him at the first resurrection (CP Jn 5:25, 28-29; 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:51-58; Php 3:20-21; Col 3:1-4; 1Th 4:13-18; 5:23; 2Th 3:4-5; Tit 2:11-14; Jas 5:7-9; 1Jn 2:28; Jude 24). *Knowing the time* in Ro13:12 is a figure of speech Paul used to remind Christians of how imminent Christ's return is. (If Paul considered it close in his day, how much closer is it today). The word *sleep* in V11 is used metaphorically of a slumbering state of the soul; of its spiritual conformity to the world. (CP Mk 13:33-37; 1Cor 15:34; Eph 5:13-15; 1Th 5:6-8). Paul warns Christians to awaken out of this sleep, to stop sinning and live as children of the light (CP 1Pet 2:9; 2Pet 1: 5-11)

*Armour* in Ro 13:12 is used metaphorically of the spiritual weapons available to Christians to enable them to withstand the works of darkness (CP Ro 13:12 with 2Cor 10:3-5; Eph 6:11-18). In Ro 13:13 Paul names some sins Christians are to stop engaging in (CP V 13). *Rioting* and *drunkenness* refer to drunken orgies (CP 1Pe 4:3). *Chambering* is sexual immorality, and *wantonness* is unbridled lust, debauchery. *Strife* and *envy* mean dissension and jealousy. They go hand in hand (CP Ac 13:44-45; 1Cor 3:3; Jas 3:14-16). To *walk honestly* means that Christians must not secretly plan to fulfill sinful desires while outwardly professing Christ (CP Ro 13:14 with Ro 6:11-13; Ga 5:16-24; Eph 4:20-32; Col 3:1-11; 1Pe 2:11). This is what it means to *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*. If we have *put on Christ*, we will never plan to fulfil sinful desires

**14:1-9** *What do we learn from what Paul says here?*

The point Paul makes here is that Christians are not to impose their personal convictions concerning non-essential scruples upon each other. The strong are not to be contemptuous of the weak for their lack of freedom, and the weak are not to condemn the strong for what they believe is a misuse of freedom. Whoever judges another puts themselves above God and is in grave danger of forfeiting their salvation (CP Isa 33:22; Mt 7:1-5; Jas 4:11-12). Only Jesus has the authority to judge, and each of us is personally responsible to Him for what we allow ourselves to do aside from what is forbidden to all. We must all follow the dictates of our own conscience in matters not specifically commanded or forbidden in scripture (CP Ro 2:14-16; 1Cor 4:3-5; 2Cor 1:12; 1Jn 3:20-21). No one will fall who conscientiously follows Christ in accordance with the light they have received. God is able to make them stand.

In Ro 14:13-21 Paul especially admonishes strong Christians not to become embroiled in arguments with weak Christians over their personal convictions, but to stop doing anything that could cause them to stumble and fall away. This applies not only to food and drink, but anything at all that could be a stumbling block to them (CP V13-21; 1Cor 8:4-13; 9:19-23; 10:19-33; Ga 5:13). These scriptures all teach that mature Christians demonstrate their love for those weaker in the faith by not participating in the things their faith allows, but which the weaker Christians faith does not, and which would cause them to sin if they participated (CP Ro 14:23).

None of this is to be construed as moral indifference however. Christians are obliged to guard the moral purity and doctrinal integrity of the church (CP Mt 18:15-17; 1Cor 5:1-8; Col 1:28; Tit 2:11-15; 3:10-11; 2Jn 7-11).

#### **14:10-12      *What is the Judgement Seat of Christ?***

(CP also 2Cor 5:10). The judgement seat of Christ is not to be confused with the great white throne judgement (CP Rev 20:11-15). The great white throne judgement is for all those going to hell. The judgement seat of Christ is for all those who go to heaven. It is a judgement, not to determine our eternal destination, but our position in heaven. The judgement seat of Christ is where Christ will judge every one of our earthly works, and how those works stand or fall will determine our place in the future eternal kingdom (CP 1Cor 3:11-15). Every one of the earthly works we build upon the foundation of Christ will be evaluated, but only the works symbolized by gold, silver, and precious stones will be able to withstand the heat of the refining fire. All lesser works represented by wood, hay, and stubble will burn up. Christians will not lose their salvation when this happens, but there will be a loss of heavenly rewards (CP Rev 22:7, 11-12). V7 and 12 here refer to believers and the first resurrection – when Jesus comes to take all the saints of God back to heaven with Him at the end of the church age – and highlights the impending doom that awaits the

unbelievers and reprobates of V11 (CP 1Th 4:13-18 with 2Th 2:10-12).

Although the judgement seat of Christ does not involve punishment, it should not be regarded lightly or carelessly (CP Php 2:12; 1Pe 1:17). God is no respecter of persons – no one will be favoured above another – every Christian's earthly works will be examined and openly revealed in their true reality at the judgement seat of Christ. *Works* not only refers to stewardship of the gifts, talents, opportunities and responsibilities granted to us during the course of our Christian life, but to our conduct toward others, and our love for one another (CP Lu 14:12-14; Ro 12:9-21; Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:16-4:1; He 6:10-12).

Everything we have ever done as Christians, whether good or bad, will be revealed at the judgement seat of Christ – our every thought, our every word, our every deed, our secret acts, our character, our motives, our attitudes, our work, and our ministry (CP Ecc 12:14; Mt 12:36-37; Mk 4:22; Ro 2:5-11; 1Cor 4:5). In effect Christians will have to give an account of the degree of their faithfulness to God according to the grace, opportunity, and understanding made available to them (CP Mt 25:14-23; Lu 19:12-19; 1Cor 4:2-5). Our bad deeds, when repented of and confessed during our earthly life, are forgiven in relation to eternal punishment, but they will still be taken into account when being judged for recompense by Christ (CP 1Jn1:9 with Col 3:25). We cannot do anything about past offences, but we can make every endeavour not to repeat them in the future (CP 2Cor 5:9; 1Jn 2:28; 3:2-3; 2Jn 8).

#### **14:22-23      *What is the actual meaning of what Paul says here?***

What Paul in effect is saying here is that whatever we believe about the things discussed in Ch 14 up to this point should be kept between ourselves and God. It is not teaching as some claim that faith is private (CP V13-21). Paul is simply appealing to strong Christians not to force their faith level upon weaker Christians. Strong Christians can adapt their faith to accommodate the weak, but the weak cannot adapt their faith to accommodate the strong without harming their faith. V23 bears this out. It teaches that those weak in the faith who have doubts about what they eat are condemned if they eat because their eating is not from faith. *Whatever is not of faith* refers to thoughts and actions that our conscience condemns. Any thought or action that does not originate and proceed from faith is sin. Those weak in the faith should never act contrary to their conscience, because to violate their conscience is not acting in faith, but is sin (CP V23 with Tit 1:15 and 1Jn 3:16-21). One must know beyond all doubt that what he participates in is perfectly in accord with God's word before he does it. If he does not have this conviction and goes ahead and does it, it is sin.

The statement that whatever is not of faith is sin is controlled by the issues of eating, drinking, and the observance of days here. Saving faith versus unbelief in the context of comparing unbelievers with believers is not in view. However, in the broad sense,

whatever is not of saving faith is also sin (CP Ro 1:18-19 with He 11:6). See also comments on Ro 14:1-9.

**15:1-3**      *What are the “infirmities of the weak” referred to here?*

The *infirmities of the weak* are the non-essential scruples and doubtful practices of weak Christians outlined in Ch 14 (CP 14:1-5). Strong and enlightened Christians must bear with the failings of weaker and less enlightened Christians until they too become strong in faith and knowledge. In V2 Chapter 15, Paul enjoins the strong to sacrificially order their lives to help the weak and build up their faith (CP Ac 20:35; 1Cor 8:9-13; 9:19-22; 10:23-24, 32-33; 2Cor 13:9; 1Th 5:14). Christ is the model of conduct in relationships between weak and strong Christians and the example for all Christians to follow (CP Php 2:5-8 with Ps 69:9). Christ did not live to please Himself but for the interests of others, and Christians must do likewise (CP Php 2:3-4; 1Pe 2:19-23). *Reproaches* refer to slander, false accusations and insults. Men hate God and they manifested that same hate toward Jesus.

**15:4**      *What are the things that were written before for our learning?*

Paul is referring to the Old Testament scriptures here. Even though we live under the new covenant, Old Testament scriptures still stand for our example (CP 1Cor 10:1-11; 2Ti 3:16-17). We learn from 1Cor 10:1-11 that the Old Testament encourages New Testament believers to endure tribulations and persevere in faith in view of Christ’s second coming. That is the *hope* Paul referred to in Ro 15:4. Without the clear and certain promises of scripture – in both Testaments – believers have no basis for hope (CP Ps 119:81; Jer 14:8-9; Ro 8:24-25; 15:8-13 Eph 2:12-13; Tit 2:11-15).

**15:5**      *Does this mean that Christians must be in complete agreement on all points of doctrine?*

No, Paul is not teaching here that Christians must be in complete agreement on all points of doctrine. In this context, to be likeminded toward one another means that both strong and weak Christians, despite their differing views on the non-essential issues of Ro 14, are to pursue loving, spiritual harmony in regard to matters on which scripture is silent. Then every Christian can glorify God with one voice (CP Ro 14:19-15:7). Christians are to receive one another into the church as Christ received them – both Jews and gentiles – to God’s glory (CP 15:8-12). These Old Testament prophecies all prove that both Jews and gentiles were to become one in the worship of God through Christ, being equal in His mercies and grace, the same as both strong and weak Christians. Ps 18:49 is quoted in V9; De 32:43 in V10; Ps 117:1 in V11 and Isa 11:10 in V12 (CP Ps 18:49; De 32:43; Ps 117:1; Isa 11:10 with 1Cor 12:13; Ga 3:28; Col 3:11). See also comments on 1Cor 1:10.

**15:15**      *(A) Where was Paul when he wrote this epistle?*

Paul wrote this epistle from Corinth, before he went to Jerusalem with the relief money for the Jerusalem church, at the close of his third apostolic mission journey recorded in Ac 18:23 - 21:17 (CP Ac 18:23; 21:17; Ro 15:25-28). Paul was staying in the house of Gaius, one of his first converts in Corinth (CP Ro 16:23 with 1Cor 1:14). See also comments on Ac 18:23 and Ro 1:7(B).

*(B) Why is the epistle to the Romans so important for Christians to understand?*

The epistle to the Romans is so important for Christians to understand because it contains the most reasoned, consistent, and systematic presentation of the gospel in the whole of scripture. A good understanding of Romans ensures one a better understanding of the rest of scripture as far as doctrine is concerned. This is not to say that the book of Romans is more important than any other book of the Bible, but because it is primarily a work of doctrine, it is the very foundation of church teaching. Its teachings are applicable to all Christians for all times. Most Bible scholars agree that the book of Romans is the foundation of all New Testament teaching.

**15:30-32**      *What happened to Paul in Jerusalem?*

Paul was nearly beaten to death by an angry mob in Jerusalem after he took the relief money from Macedonia and Achaia to the Jerusalem church (CP V25-28 with Ac 19:21-22; 20:16, 22-25; 21:10-15, 27-30). The Roman soldiers rescued Paul from the mob but then held him prisoner for two years in Jerusalem before taking him to Rome to stand trial before Caesar (CP Ac 21:32-36; 22:14 – 28:16). See also comments on Ac 28:30-31 (A) and (C).

**16:1-2**      *Is this teaching that Phebe was a “deacon(ess)” in the church at Cenchrea, as a great many Christians believe?*

No, although **Diakonos**, the Greek word for servant, is also used for *deacon*. Phebe could not be a deacon (ess) – a woman deacon – in the church at Cenchrea though because scripture stipulates that only men can be deacons in the New Testament church (CP 1Ti 3:1-13). We see here that, like bishops (or elders), to whom God has entrusted the oversight of the New Testament church, deacons must also be male “...the husband of one wife” – if married. There is no provision for women to be deacons in the New Testament church. Those who argue for women deacons claim that the Greek word **Gune**, translated *wives* in V11 and *wife* in V12, also means *woman*, which is correct, but whether it refers to a woman generally, or a wife specifically depends upon the context in which it is used. Here it is clearly used in the context of a husband and wife relationship (CP V12). It is not describing women deacons, but the

wives of men deacons, if they are married, the same as the preceding passage refers to male bishops (or elders), and their wives, if married (CP 1Ti 3:1-7).

We get a better insight into Phebe's ministry in the church at Cenckrea from a study of the word "succorer" in Ro 16:2 (KJV), which defines her as caring for the affairs of others – who helps and aids them from her resources (CP Ro 16:2). *Succorer* is from the Greek word **Prostatis**, which is the feminine form of *patron*, or *protector*. It was used by the Greeks to describe those who care for and entertain strangers in their home. Phebe was evidently a woman of means who ministered to the needs of others in the church at Cenckrea and looked after Paul and his companions on his apostolic mission journeys there. (For a detailed study on the office of deacon in the New Testament church see comments on 1 Ti 3:8-13).

**16:16**            *What exactly is a "holy" kiss?*

A holy kiss is a kiss free from anything inconsistent with a Christian's calling as a saint of God. It is a token of Christian brotherhood, signifying the spiritual kinship Christians have with one another (CP Ac 20:36-38 with 1Cor 16:20 (also 2Cor 13:12;

1Th 5:26); 1Pe 5:14). *A kiss of love* in 1Pe 5:14 is a token of the love and friendship that exists between Christians (CP Ro 12:10; 1Jn 3:14; 4:7; 5:1).

**16:25-26**        *What was the mystery kept secret since the world began but is now made manifest?*

The mystery which was hidden since the world began has *now* been revealed through Jesus Christ as foretold by the prophets in the Old Testament, is God's plan of salvation for all nations (CP Mt 13:44). The hidden treasure here is the church, and the man who purchased the field in order to possess the treasure is Jesus. The field represents the world of sinners – the whole of human society; both Jews and gentiles – for whom Christ died (CP Jn 1:29; 4:42; 6:33, 51; 11:51-52; 12:47; 1Jn 2:2; 4:14). The church was decreed in God's eternal purpose before the beginning of time, but it was not revealed even to the angels in heaven until Jesus revealed it to His disciples in Mt 16 (CP Mt 16:13-18). This is the first mention of the church in scripture (CP 1Cor 2:7-8; Eph 1:3-5, 9-14; 3:1-11; Col 1:23-28; 2Ti 1:1, 8-10; Tit 1:1-3; 1Pe 1:3-12, 18-20). See also comments on Mt 13:44, 13:45-46.