

CAREFUL STUDIES

IN

ROMANS

By Forrest L. Keener

REVISED FOR
THIRD PRINTING 1995
PUBLISHED BY WATCHMAN PRESS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LESSON NO.	TITLE
1	The Gospel Of God
2	God's Reaction To Sin
3	All Sinners Are Basically Alike
4	The Law Justifies No One
5	The Differences And Likenesses In Jew And Gentile
6	The Purpose Of The Law
7	Justification By Faith Alone
8	Justification Apart From Law And Ordinances
9	The Believer's Position And Condition
10	A Matter Of Life And Death
11	Baptism And Christian Purity
12	Living The New Life
13	The Christian Is Dead To The Law
14	Two Men In One Body
15	No Condemnation
16	Creation's Bondage and Deliverance
17	The Eternal Purpose Of God
18	Israel And The Gospel
19	The Sovereign Grace Of God
20	Zealous, Religious And Lost
21	The Righteousness Of Faith
22	The Election Of Grace
23	Israel Shall Be Restored Nationally
24	Your Reasonable Service
25	Christian Attitude And Behavior
26	Christian Subjection To Authority
27	Love For Your Neighbor
28	Christian Love And Doubtful Practices
29	Judge Yourself And Leave Others To God
30	Living For Others
31	Salutations From Paul To The Romans

INTRODUCTION

Few of the books of the Bible have a wider scope than the book of Romans. The Apostle Paul starts out, after identifying himself, by dealing with the grim, shameful, fallen condition of man. He goes on to show most carefully that man is not just a helpless victim of his depravity, but a rebellious and pleasure seeking participant in it. Not only so, but he states beyond question the universality of this depraved condition. He shows us the foolishness and futility of seeking justification by the Law, then unfolds the beautiful plan of divine redemption through Christ Jesus. He passes objectively through the doctrines of eternal purpose, fore-ordination, predestination, calling, justification and final glorification. He shows the eternal and unquestionable security of the believer and gives us a glimpse of God's operation in making us His children through faith. He shows God's judgment upon the house of Israel, His mercy upon the Gentiles and His future purpose for His covenant people. Upon the foundation of this divine mercy, He lays our obligation to voluntary service. He then goes on to show some very practical standards for that service and deals briefly, as in the Church Epistles, with our personal conduct toward our Church and toward each other. So broad is the subject range here, that much time should be spent in careful study of this book.

I do not claim that I have, in so small a booklet, dealt even slightly with every truth contained in the book of Romans. I do not claim that I have given verse by verse commentary. I do hope that I have given a basic and comprehensive, although not exhaustive, outline of the major subject matter of the book. I have not purposely avoided any subject nor put more emphasis on any subject, than the book seems to put upon it, but have tried to deal unapologetically with exactly the subjects with which Paul deals.

PLEASE BE ADVISED: This booklet is so composed that it will be impossible to benefit very greatly from it unless the reading of each statement is accompanied by reading from your Bible the verses to which that statement refers. Please study this booklet with your Bible at hand. Read each verse and each reference carefully and, if need be, repeatedly from your Bible.

It is my hope that the few comments and references contained in this booklet may help you to better understand and more fully enjoy the book of Romans. May God bless it to this end.

THE GOSPEL OF GOD - Lesson 1

Romans 1:1-17 Memory verse: Romans 1:16

INTRODUCTION

The book of Romans is one of the most inclusive and comprehensive books in the entire Bible. It starts with the fallen, depraved state of man and goes all the way through the redemptive plan and acts of God. The basic theme and message of Romans is the Gospel (good news) of God. We will consider four very important things found in these seventeen verses that establish this truth.

I. THE PURPOSE IS THE GOSPEL - (Rom. 1:1)

A. The Gospel is the purpose of God in all the Scriptures, (Rom. 1:2-4) not to show man how to live but how to have life. Even the knowledge of failure, which the law imparts, is a prerequisite to the Gospel. Any preacher who fails in this area fails as a Gospel preacher.

B. The Gospel was the purpose for Paul's life and calling. (Rom. 1:1, Acts 9:15, I Cor. 9:16) He never entangled himself in mere social reform.

C. The spread of the Gospel, is the purpose of God's churches. (Mark 16:15, Matt. 28:19-20) We are to follow that pattern of preaching the Gospel, even when all neglect it. All other effort, good as it may be, is totally inferior to this.

II. THE PROMISE OF THE GOSPEL - (Rom. 1:2)

Throughout the Old Testament there was the promise that one day the world would ring with the "Good News" that God had come into the world to dwell among men and save His people.

A. Genesis 3:15 tells of Jesus Christ's future victory over Satan and his work.

B. Isaiah 7:14 tells of His virgin birth. (God with us)

C. Job 19:23-27 tells of His second coming and our resurrection. All good news? Yes, indeed! But more than that, it is particularly good news of Christ's substitutionary death for our sins. The true Gospel is always everywhere, no less than this.

III. THE PROOF OF THE GOSPEL'S VALIDITY - (Rom. 1:4)

He was **God incarnate** and thus had the power to save when He would. This identity is proven by:

A. His virgin birth. (Compare Isa. 7:14 to Matt. 1:18-25) This proves that He is very God with us, not a mere natural man.

B. His sinless life. (Luke 23:4, 41) This shows His power over sin.

C. His miracles. (Matt. 8:27, Matt. 9:24-25) This shows His deity and separation from sinners.

D. His teaching of this ability. (Jn. 17:1-2)

E. His resurrection. (Acts 1:3, Acts 2:22-24) This shows His victory over sin and death, which is to be extended to us in final salvation.

IV. THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL - (Rom. 1:16)

Of no other message can it be said, "It is the power of God unto salvation." Let all who are charged with the message remember that no substitute, interesting as it may be, has this power.

A. Power to reveal the faith of God to a dead sinner, thus generating faith toward God in his heart. (Rom. 1:17)

B. Power to convict and convert a sinful heart. (Acts 2:36-37) Hard hearts are broken with the Gospel hammer.

C. Power to change a life. (Compare Acts 9:1 to Acts 9:20. - Notice Acts 9:5-6.) Pitifully broken lives are remade by the effect of the Gospel, like the potter's broken vessel, made into another vessel.

D. Power to save a soul. (Rom. 1:16, Acts 16:30-31) The authority of God Himself, lies with the Gospel. When the Holy Spirit has wrought faith in the heart, the Gospel becomes the unwavering and unalterable commitment of Almighty God to the believer. By the authority of the Gospel, I can say, "Christ is mine, life is mine, heaven is mine." There is no other tidings which God has chosen to so empower.

GOD'S REACTION TO SIN - Lesson 2

Romans 1:18-32 Memory verse: Romans 1:18

INTRODUCTION

There is universally a gross misconception of God's attitude toward sin. Some think His love means slackness and His forgiveness means ignoring sin. As we study the Bible on this subject, we will learn that God neither does, nor ever would, overlook sin for His very character forbids it. God never acts nor has any impulse or desire to act contrary to His holy character.

I. UNGODLINESS COMES THROUGH REBELLION NOT IGNORANCE - (Rom. 1:18-20)

A great misconception is that man sins ignorantly and innocently. The fact is, he sins knowingly and willingly, then flees from God in unconfessed guilt and love for sin. It is quite true that there are many ignorant heathen, but their ignorance is the result of, and not the cause of sin.

- A.** Man sins in the light. (Rom. 1:32, Gen. 3:12, I Tim. 2:4) Limited as his light may be, it makes him responsible, and he rebels. He simply chooses to please himself, rather than to submit to God.
- B.** Because of sin, man retreats to darkness. (Jn. 3:19-21, Rom. 1:21a) He loves darkness, because it tends to hide his guilt from others, even from himself, but never from God.
- C.** Man by nature, dwells in this state and thus all who have not believed unto salvation are condemned already.

II. GOD IMPOSES IGNORANCE FOR REBELLION (Rom. 1:21-24, 26-28)

- A.** God closes rebellious eyes. (Matt. 13:14, Isa. 6:9-10) Where darkness is preferred, God frequently grants it.
- B.** God confounds rebellious minds. (Rom. 1:21a-22, 28) It is from rebellious hearts, that atheistic minds come. This happens when a man reasons into his mind the sentiments and desires of his depraved heart (affections).
- C.** The Bible clearly teaches that this hardening and blinding is done by God (permissively). (Rom. 9:18, Jn. 12:40) It is done by man actively and determinately. (Matt. 13:14-15) It is done by preaching instrumentally and permissively. (Isa. 6:10) It is done by Satan instrumentally and causatively. (II Cor. 4:3-4)

III. EVIDENCES OF MAN'S TOTAL DEPRAVITY

The following are not original causes of man's depravity, but rather the effect and manifestations of it.

- A.** Image worship. (Rom. 1:23) (Also seen in world) A rebellious man prefers to worship an image, for it (to him) represents favor or protection without authority. He creates it to serve him, for even the lowest logic perceives that the creator is the sovereign.
- B.** Homosexuality. (Rom. 1:26-27) There is no greater mark of the increasing darkness of a rebellious society than the present day increase in homosexuality. The modern acceptance of it shows the ultimate of contempt for the authority of the creator and His divine order which He has revealed.
- C.** General ungodliness. (Rom. 1:29-30) Ungodliness today is the rule rather than the exception and it is increasing every day. This is because spiritual darkness is an ever increasing power. The state of sin when revealed, demands either repentance or deeper refuge in darkness.

IV. GOD'S REACTION TO THIS CONDITION

It should be noted that God's reaction to sin is not relevant to man's response but only to God's righteousness. God's justice is equally as important as His grace and God always deals with sin justly.

- A.** God reveals His wrath in warning. (Rom. 1:18, Rom. 6:23) The nature of man is to rebel even against this and argue with God about it. Let man remember that his opinions of God's actions are foolish and worthless. God is the judge and counsels with none of His creatures.
- B.** Man rebels rather than yielding, (Rom. 1:28a, 30) "Haters of God." Consider how that under the tribulation plagues of the book of Revelation, the people "repented not" but rather blasphemed. The ultimatum for the sinner is always and everywhere, "Repent or perish!"

C. The judgment of God is sure (both present and future). (Luke 13:1-5) None of man's objections or denials in any way alter this. God always judges sin; mine and yours must be judged, either at Calvary in the person of Jesus Christ, or at the Great White Throne, in the Lake of Fire.

ALL SINNERS ARE BASICALLY ALIKE - Lesson 3

Romans 2:1-16 Memory verse: Romans 1:12

INTRODUCTION

Paul deals here with a category of people who magnify the sins and sinfulness of others, as if that would (by comparison) help them. Others' sins do not, by comparison, make us righteous. The comparisons we make, however, prove the guiltiness of our own conscience. I do not suggest that all men have gone to the same degree of degeneration, but that they all partake of the same fallen, ungodly nature.

I. JUDGMENT UPON SIN INCLUDES ALL - (Rom. 2:1-3)

A. To condemn sin in others is to condemn yourself, for **all** are guilty. (Rom. 2:1, Rom. 3:9-11, Rom. 3:23) Of course, to refrain from the criticism of others does not vindicate you; you are still guilty. As the offspring of Adam, you are dead in trespasses and sins.

B. God does righteously judge sin and only He can. (Rom. 2:2) Only God knows motive, intent, pressure, ignorance, etc., but be sure God knows and He will in no wise acquit the wicked.

C. Our judgment of others (no matter how just) does not excuse our guilt. (Rom. 2:3) That still will be dealt with by God.

II. TO JUDGE (BY COMPARISON) ANOTHER IS TO CRITICIZE GOD'S SOVEREIGN GRACE

A. To look at other Christians' sins instead of your own, is to despise (reject) God's goodness toward them, in forgiving their sins.

B. The goodness of God's forgiveness to others should lead you to repent of your sins, rather than rebellion and jealousy. Do not claim a right to equal grace, simply yield to a sovereign God. (Rom. 2:4)

C. To judge rather than repent is to treasure up for yourself God's wrath. (Rom. 2:5-6) You are not only retaining it, but collecting and intensifying it.

D. If you were innocent (and you are not - Rom. 3:23), God would so reward you. (Rom. 2:7-10) God's judgment is always according to perfect knowledge and perfect righteousness. It is for this very reason that no sinner shall ever escape.

Your guilt (Rom. 3:23) demands that you must be born again (Jn. 3:3) or perish. (Rom. 6:23)

III. THE GREATER THE LIGHT, THE GREATER THE JUDGMENT - (Rom. 2:12-13)

Darkness never excuses, "they are inexcusable." (Rom. 2:1) Light, however, does intensify guilt. The fact that the guilty prefer darkness (Jn. 3:19-20) teaches us that light makes them consciously aware of their sin, for why else would they flee to darkness?

A. Even those who know not the law are punished for sin. (Rom. 2:12) They are aware of the essence of the law of God, in their conscience. (Rom. 2:14)

B. Those who have knowledge of the law are even more responsible. (Rom. 2:12) Not only their conscience condemns them and tells them to turn in repentance, but also their intellect warns them. They are not mentally blind, and thus have no cloak for their sin. (Jn. 9:41)

C. To hear and know and quote the law is of no value if you violate it, and you do. (Rom. 2:13) The fact is that this knowledge of the law makes you infinitely more worthy of death. Consider the fate of one who knows Christ's words and does them not. (Matt. 7:24-27)

IV. ALL MEN KNOW RIGHT FROM WRONG (Rom. 2:14-16)

A. Even men who never read God's word realize violations when they break the law. (Rom. 2:14) Although they may not be able to explain it, they can feel it.

B. This shows that God's law is written in the hearts of men. (Rom. 2:15) The man who steals from or murders another, knows it is wrong though he has never heard any part of God's law.

C. This is not to say they obey, but that their conscience accuses them when they violate it. (Rom. 2:15-16)

D. The only exception to the above is an infant or a native imbecile.

E. There are only two things that can motivate obedience.

1. Selfishness: either positive or negative. Looking for reward or hoping to avoid retribution. This is, of course, only surface not real obedience.
2. The new birth: one thus desires to obey out of love for his redeemer.

THE LAW JUSTIFIES NO ONE - Lesson 4

Romans 2:17-29 Memory verse: Rom. 2:23

INTRODUCTION

This portion of Scripture is particularly designed to show the foolishness of all who try to claim that they are different, better, "not as other men," such as claim to keep the commandments of God, either to gain or to retain their salvation. Both imaginations are equally foolish and totally ungodly.

I. THE FALSE OPINION OF THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS RELIGIONIST - (Rom. 2:17-20)

- A. He rests in the law, and claims by it to have a relationship to God. (Rom. 2:17) He is never in fact trusting Christ, but himself. Such an opinion is unbelief of the worst kind.
- B. He knows the law, thus knowing God's will, he approves (by precept) things that are right. He quotes it and holds it up as a standard of righteousness.
- C. He counts himself a guide, a wise teacher, an advisor to the simple. (Rom. 2:19-20) He cannot only sound wise, but he can sound righteous.

II. EXAMINE AND BEHOLD YOUR GUILT - (Rom. 2:21-23)

- A. Those truths they teach, can they not learn them? (Rom. 2:21) Are they not condemned in heart by their strong teachings, which condemn others?
- B. The very things these religious self-justifiers condemn, are the things of which they are guilty. (Rom. 2:21-23)
- C. They piously pick upon the faults of others, overlooking their own iniquities. Let them hear the counsel of God in James 2:10. It is normal for this theoretic head-knowledge to find no personal application.
- D. You who have made your boast of righteousness in the law, can you not see you have dishonored God by breaking it? (Rom. 2:23) No, the fact is that such as this prefer not to see.

III. RELIGIOUS REPUTATION IS WORTHLESS IF YOU SIN

- A. To have reputation and claim light, makes you a stumbling block when you stagger. (Rom. 2:24, Matt. 6:22-23) This fact should enforce an air of quietness and humility about every one of us.
- B. To all who break the law, (and all do - Rom. 3:23) that which they keep is also broken. (Rom. 2:25, James 2:10) This does not mean that if you hate, you may as well kill also. It simply illuminates your sinfulness in doing either.
- C. Thus since you are a transgressor, make no boast of righteousness. Abandon your reputation and trust Christ.

IV. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS NOT BY DEEDS

If righteousness were (by our deeds) as some suppose, the non-religious man who never knew God or Christ would have as good a chance as we, for his deeds could conceivably justify him, if our's could justify us. (Rom. 2:26-29)

- A. Consider that most "you gotta live it" religionists cannot quote more than half of the ten commandments, yet they expect to remain saved through obedience.
- B. They try to justify this margin, by saying, "Well, you are only responsible to walk in what light you have."
- C. If their logic is accurate, we are a curse to the heathen when we take them the light of the Gospel.
- D. Your responsibility lies not in the knowledge you have, but in all the knowledge to which you, either directly or indirectly, have or have had access.

THE DIFFERENCES AND LIKENESSES IN JEW AND GENTILE - Lesson 5

Romans 3:1-18 Memory verse: Romans 3:9

INTRODUCTION

Paul has just shown how that none are justified by deeds and if they were, the Gentile or non-religious heathen would have an equal chance with the pious and the devoutly religious man. Thus he poses the question, "What good is there in being a Jew, or in being raised a religious man?" Had God shown no particular grace to the Jew? Is there no blessing in being born to Christian parents, or in youthful religious training? Certainly there is much in every way, but if so, how?

I. THE ADVANTAGE OF THE JEW

- A.** Background gives opportunity, not righteousness. (Rom. 3:1-2) Salvation is by grace through faith. (Eph. 2:8-9) Faith is by hearing the Gospel. (Rom. 10:17) So there is definitely an advantage.
- B.** The Jews were given the revelation of God. This is great advantage (light to see by). Even the law, which they so misused, was God's potential "school master" to bring them to Christ. It was for this purpose He gave it.
- C.** The light, however, is only life when we let it guide to **the life**, Jesus Christ. (Jn. 5:39-40) When we reject it, it adds to our condemnation.
- D.** Knowledge only makes us more guilty if it is not mixed with repentance and faith. (Jn. 3:19) Man is never condemned for darkness, but for **love of darkness**. Never consider him to be condemned only at the point of rejection, he is "condemned already," his unbelief and love of darkness only manifest the condition he is in.

II. GOD'S PROMISE TO THE JEW - (Rom. 3:3-8)

This deals with God's promise to Abraham. (Gen. 17:15-19) But some believed not. Does this change God's promise to Abraham's seed or Abraham's advantage? Of course not! God's word is absolute and totally accurate. His knowledge is without limit, so all His promises are relevant to future **fact. Every promise to Abraham shall be** carried out to the fullest degree. (Gal. 3:17-18) The promise here was to Christ (Gal. 3:16) and to those in Him.

- A.** Unbelief and self-righteousness (which are the same) constituted the occasion of Israel's condemnation. (Rom. 9:31-33) They self-righteously trusted in themselves, which was an automatic rejection of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners. It revealed their evil heart of unbelief.
- B.** This unbelief does not make God unfaithful in His promise. (Rom. 3:3-4) The fact is that God's promises were never directed to unbelievers anyway.
- C.** He will perform it to Abraham's seed, not national Israel, but spiritual Israel. (Luke 3:7-9, Jn. 8:39-40, Gal. 3:8-9) Believers, the spiritual seed of Abraham, are the ones to whom the promise is made.

III. BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES ARE SINNERS - (Rom. 3:9-18)

In the previous chapter, Paul has dealt with the hypothesis, "if any keep the law they would be (Jew or Gentile) thus justified." Now he comes to the fact that none have kept it. The person who has heard it and claims self-righteousness, is of all men farthest from the kingdom.

- A.** All are under sin. (Rom. 3:9) Not only guilty and condemned, but dead. They are not the same in degree of spiritual decomposition, but in the principle of spiritual death.
- B.** None are righteous (they must have Christ's righteousness). (Rom. 3:10, Rom. 10:4) To claim legal righteousness, is to have your own hope turn upon you and condemn you. You are like the natural Israel for whom Paul interceded. (Rom. 10:1) They were lost because they sought to establish their own righteousness. (Rom. 10:3)
- C.** None do the best they can (even if that would help). (Rom. 3:11-18) Frequently, we hear men say, "Well, you have to do the best you can," or "You have to walk in all the light you can find," or "You have to keep the ten commandments," etc. My stock answer to all these theses is a question. **Do you?** None do, and if they did, it would yet be equivalent to doing their worst.

THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW - Lesson 6

Romans 3:19-31 Memory verse: Romans 3:19

INTRODUCTION

One great mistake of men through the ages has been to misunderstand the law. It is not to show man righteousness that he may keep the law, but that he may see plainly that he has not kept it. The man who fails to feel deeply sinful when he looks into the law is reprobate. Unless his proud heart is converted, he is eternally lost.

I. WHAT DOES THE LAW DO? - (Rom. 3:19-20)

A. The law does not justify anyone, (Rom. 3:20, Gal. 3:11, 16) nor does it prove anyone's justification; it rather educates man as to his sinfulness and the great charge the courts of God hold against him. It is a schoolmaster who shows man his total hopelessness in self.

B. The law does not condemn the Christian. (Rom. 3:19, Gal. 3:24-25, I Cor. 6:12, Rom. 6:14) The Christian has been slain by the law and is thus dead to the law and alive through Jesus Christ. He was raised up in Christ, when Christ was resurrected.

C. The law shows all unregenerated people to be guilty, lost and condemned. (Rom. 3:19, Gal. 3:10) Woe unto you, if you have not learned this. Remember, he that keeps the whole law and yet offends in one point is guilty of all (James 2:10)

II. TO WHOM DOES THE LAW SPEAK? - (Rom. 3:19)

A. The world - **All the world**, only the world and not the redeemed. (Rom. 3:19) There is no one short of the New Birth, who is not thus condemned.

B. Natural man has always been under the law and always will be. (Rom. 3:19, Gal. 3:24, Matt. 5:17-18) Let no man try to claim dispensational immunity, for there is no such thing. There is only regenerative immunity. The man who sees law and grace only in a dispensational sense, has not learned the basic principle of divine revelation.

III. WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION, HOW DOES IT WORK? - (Rom. 3:21-31)

A. Justification is having righteousness (being saved, being made just or righteous). (Rom. 3:21-22) More accurately, it is being pronounced guiltless by God, the righteous Judge. It describes the **legal** standing of the **born again** person.

B. This is not the righteousness of man (Rom. 10:3-4) but God's righteousness. (Rom. 3:22) Man cannot attain it, he must receive it undeservingly. Justification is not a work done in the believer, but a work done on the cross for him.

C. God's righteousness is Jesus Christ. (I Cor. 1:30, Rom. 3:22, Rom. 10:4) This was given to us on the cross of Calvary. If we are to have divine righteousness, it must be imputed, it can never be attained.

D. It is only received by faith, never by works or doing our best. (Rom. 3:24, 28, Gal. 3:11) To try to do something for it, is to reject it. (Rom. 10:3)

E. Thus God is just, (judging all sin) yet the justifier of sinners who believe, forgiving their sins. (Rom. 3:25-26) This can be done honestly for He punished our sin in the person of Jesus Christ. (Isa. 53:6) The believer died, was buried and arose in Christ.

F. No saved (justified) man can boast of his righteousness, but **must** glorify God for it. (Rom. 10:3-4, Rom. 3:27-28) He has done nothing for it, nothing to get it, and can do nothing to keep it. It is a gift, not an acquisition.

G. Both Jews and Gentiles must be justified by grace through faith. (Rom. 3:29-31) Man must have Jesus Christ as Romans 10:4 states or nothing else can help. If he has the Lord as his personal redeemer, nothing else is needed.

H. Justification can rightly be seen three ways:

1. Meritoriously - By Jesus' blood. (Rom. 3:24-25, Rom. 5:9)
2. Experimentally - By faith. (Rom. 5:1)

3. Evidently - By works. (James 2:22-24)

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE - Lesson 7

Romans 4:1-8 Memory verse: Romans 4:3

INTRODUCTION

The question introducing chapter four is, "What has Abraham found, or received, and how did he receive it?" (Rom. 4:1) The answer given is, "He found righteousness (justification, salvation) and he found it by faith alone without works, ordinances or the law." The doctrine of justification by faith is seldom denied directly, but is frequently denied indirectly by claiming that it must be supplemented by something else. Paul sets forth these verses in such a way that the question is forever settled for all who will accept the authority of God's word.

I. JUSTIFICATION IS BY FAITH

A. If his righteousness was what he did, he could boast or glory. (Rom. 4:2) This includes any supposed acts before, in the process of, or after salvation. Man must not claim or perform any act as part of his salvation.

B. His righteousness came not from what he did but by what he believed. (Rom. 4:3, Eph. 2:8) Even that faith is placed in a man's heart by the spiritual work of regeneration. Thus it is not a mere human virtue, it is a divine grace.

C. Faith is counted for righteousness. (Rom. 4:3,5,23-24) Not because a man performs a righteous act by believing, but this is the means God has ordained for appropriating divine favor. The object of saving faith is Jesus Christ, thus the glory is all to Him.

II. WORKS AND GRACE CANNOT BE MIXED

Satan's greatest doctrinal stronghold is to promote a mixture. He will thus immediately lead our weak flesh to accentuate the human element.

A. If one worked for salvation, he could not receive anything through grace, (Rom. 4:4) for he would at least in some degree deserve what he received. Thus it would become wages and not a gift.

B. Good works are not condemned, but have no part in man's salvation. (Rom. 4:5-6) They should always be a product of man's salvation, but they must never be considered the cause of it. (Eph. 2:9-10) It is true that man is justified by works, (James 2:22-24)

but this is in the eyes of man, (James 2:18) and never in the eyes of God. (Rom. 4:2)

C. Grace is unmerited favor. If a man did **anything** to become a recipient of it, he would be meriting it and the principles of grace would no longer exist. (Rom. 4:4) We receive grace through faith and the Bible teaches that we believe through grace, (Acts 18:27) so we must conclude that God's grace is very literally all in all. Yea, we have received grace for grace. (Jn. 1:16)

III. SALVATION BY GRACE CANNOT BE LOST (Rom. 4:7-8)

The great mistake of teaching that one may lose his salvation is to try mixing grace and works. Arminians believe in some sort of balance or combination of grace and works for salvation, but Scripture teaches that any such mixture is a total rejection of grace. (Rom. 11:6)

A. Grace that saves also keeps. (Rom. 4:8, Rom. 8:31, 32, 38, 39) We do not keep ourselves, we are kept. Self-discipline is the result of this, not the cause.

B. If by positive or negative action we kept ourselves, at least this part of salvation would be of works. It is by grace **and not of works**. (Eph. 2:8-9) Any good work is obedience to the law. Paul continually points out that these two systems cannot be exalted in the same household. (Read Gal. 4:19-31)

C. Salvation is to the "new creature" (II Cor. 5:17) not the old man (body). This new creature does not (cannot) sin. (I Jn. 3:9) And God does not impute sin to him. (Rom. 4:8) Thus he could not be lost. Not only so, but the doctrine of falling from grace totally denies the doctrine of eternal, divine purpose.

Illustration: Let the one who disagrees with this doctrine, imagine himself in eternity, looking back across his life. At this point, everything that contributed to or assured his presence in heaven, is in the past. He must be

able to say it is of grace not of works. If you imagine yourself beholding one point, one link in the chain, that you, rather than God are responsible for; what you have is not saving faith, but a religious creed or platform. May God help you to cast away your idolatry of self-confidence, turn from your terrible sin of self-righteousness and trust the all-complete work of Christ on the cross.

JUSTIFICATION APART FROM LAW AND ORDINANCES

Lesson 8

Romans 4:9-25 Memory verse: Romans 4:13

INTRODUCTION

Another great error within Christendom is the idea that salvation "by grace" is only given to those who obey certain ordinances and/or continue (at least as best they can) in the laws of God. This lesson shall be to show that this doctrine is totally untrue and incompatible with the doctrine of grace. These mistaken teachers rightly direct you to much Scripture which charges us to obey God's laws and ordinances. They wrongly conclude that salvation comes through obedience. They fail to see that salvation has both cause and effect and that the two must always be rightly identified.

I. JUSTIFICATION IS APART FROM ORDINANCES

As Paul begins to deal with ordinances, remember that in a very broad sense, (that is, in Bible type) what circumcision was in the Old Testament, baptism is in the New. Certainly, there are many differences but there are many doctrinal parallels, and the application here lends itself to baptism as well as to circumcision.

A. The blessing of salvation is not limited to participators in ordinances. (Baptism and the Lord's Table - Rom. 4:9, 10, 12) These ordinances are to be obeyed, but they follow; they do not precede salvation. (Rom. 4:11) They are to be the effect, not the cause of divine grace.

B. Ordinances **are good works**. They are God's will, but not for salvation. (Rom. 4:11) When they are done for salvation, they become a selfish act, not an act of love-motivated obedience, they, therefore, cease to be truly good works.

C. One should follow the Lord in baptism and receive the Lord's Supper after salvation. (Rom. 4:11) We could have no occasion to be confident about the salvation of one who willingly and knowingly refused these ordinances. Refusal of them is a denial of our Lord, but participation in them for justification is a denial of the efficacy of His blood.

II. JUSTIFICATION IS BEFORE, NOT AFTER ORDINANCES

A common way to keep the error of baptismal regeneration alive, is to say, "Salvation is a gift only when or after one is baptized." Whatever else we say, baptism is a "good work" properly ordained of God so, we are saved by it or unto (to do) that good work? Let Scripture answer. (Eph. 2:8-10)

A. Justification (salvation) comes before baptism. (Rom. 4:10, Eph. 2:8-10, Acts 8:36-37) To invert the order, is to change the doctrine of salvation by grace to a combination of grace and works, thus totally denying grace. (Rom. 11:5-6)

B. Baptism testifies of faith which one has before baptism. (Rom. 4:11) If grace comes through faith, all else must flow out of that faith and thus cannot precede it. This is true of every human act that salvation involves. Grace is the cause, all good works are the effect.

C. Faith motivates baptism and the Lord's Table. (Rom. 4:11) Both testify of a faith we already have. If you would deny this, try to, in your mind, get baptism to be the cause of faith or to have meaning without it.

D. Baptism is a proper evidence of, and not a prerequisite to faith. (Rom. 4:11, Acts 16:30-31, Acts 8:36-37) If the horse walks behind the cart, there is no way you can say he is pulling it. The whole idea is absurd, is it not?

III. JUSTIFICATION IS APART FROM KEEPING THE LAW

A. God promised salvation by faith not by obedience. (Rom. 4:13) Obedience is divine, not carnal, and thus must be produced by salvation, not vice versa.

B. If keeping the commandments were a requirement, faith would be worthless. (Rom. 4:14) One with such an opinion trusts in himself, not in Christ. If you are trying to keep the law for your salvation, you are lost.

C. The promise was made to Abraham before the law ever existed. (Gal. 3:17) This was done before Isaac, Israel, his sons, grandsons, or Moses were ever born. This promise was not contingent upon laws or ordinances, but strictly in Christ. (Gal. 3:15-18)

D. If God later made the law (of commandments) a requirement, He would be going back on His promise.

(Gal. 3:16-17) The law was made for an entirely different purpose, which we shall deal with later.

E. As God made Abraham an unconditional promise to be received by faith alone, so it is to us. (Rom. 4:23-25, Gal. 3:18) He reveals Christ to us by the Gospel. Herein lies both our salvation and the faith by which we receive it.

In what are you trusting, your deeds, your obedience, your baptism or the redemptive blood of Jesus Christ? Do not say some of both, for atonement cannot be blended with anything. Christ is all in all to you or nothing at all to you. To reject this concept is to reject Christ.

* * * * *

THE BELIEVER'S POSITION AND CONDITION - Lesson 9

Romans 5:1-11 Memory verse: Romans 5:8

INTRODUCTION

Paul starts chapter five by speaking of the wonderful blessings and privileges we have in Christ. One of the best ways to appreciate this, is for a believer to remember **what he was**, the pit from which he was lifted, the spiritual death from which he was resurrected. He can then more fully appreciate **what he is** as a blood-bought child of God and **what he has** as a joint heir of Jesus Christ. Surely, being gripped with the greatness of salvation is the surest motivation to real service.

I. WHAT WE WERE

- A.** We were sinners (not good men). (Rom. 5:7-8, Eph. 2:1-3) Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. (Luke 19:10)
- B.** We were ungodly (not struggling in a blind search for righteousness). (Rom. 5:6, Rom. 1:32, Rom. 1:28, Rom. 1:21) We were rather persisting in a hell-bound rebellion against our Creator and rightful King.
- C.** We were without strength, unable to reform or help ourselves. (Rom. 5:6, Rom. 1:22) What good would it have been for someone to tell us what the law required, for we were without strength to repent or believe. We were in bondage to our own ungodly nature. (Jn. 6:44)
- D.** We were enemies of God. (Rom. 4:10) Man often makes the mistake of thinking of depraved man as a victim of sin and he is, but, he is a willing victim and a rebel. His very nature is at war with God. (Jn. 8:42-45)

II. WHAT WE ARE

- A.** We are justified, (made righteous) our sins are gone, washed away, not ignored. (Rom. 5:1) We are given a writing of vindication in God's court that declares us innocent in God's eyes by virtue of Christ's death.
- B.** We are reconciled to God. (Rom. 5:10) Where we were alienated, now we are brought nigh (made friends of God). All God required of us in the law, He gave us in Christ. Our sins were imputed to Christ and His righteousness to us, thus making a reconciliation (atonement). This means we are reconciled (at one with God).
- C.** We are sons of God. (I Jn. 3:1-2, Gal. 4:6) Compare the hope of the repentant prodigal, (Luke 15:19) to what he received. (Luke 15:22-24) God will do exceedingly more than we think or ask.
- D.** We are heirs of the promise of Abraham and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. (Gal. 3:29, Gal. 4:7) This means that we must be placed as adult sons, to receive and enjoy our God-ordained part of Christ's glory and riches. Our reception is equally as sure as Christ's, our joint heir.

III. WHAT WE HAVE

- A.** We have peace with God by the **cross**. (Rom. 5:1, Eph. 2:13-14) It was there on Calvary that all our sins were atoned for and swept from the records of God; as we are called into Christ, what peace this brings to our hearts.
- B.** We have access to God and His grace for living. (Rom. 5:2, Heb. 4:14-16) Whereas the Old Testament saints could never enter the presence of God, we come boldly before the throne of grace by the blood of Christ.
- C.** We have comfort in tribulation. (Rom. 5:3-5, Rom. 8:23) Our comfort is in knowing that nothing can possibly befall us that will not be for our good and God's glory. God's decree and design is that all these things work to conform us to the image of Christ. (Rom. 8:29)
- D.** We have atonement (payment, washing) for our sins. (Rom. 5:11) This means that all our sin, past, present and future is swept away by the death of Christ, the atoning virtue of His blood. We have, at this very moment, reconciliation to God.
- E.** We have joy, not in circumstances, but in God and the hope of His glory. (Rom. 5:2, 11)
The joy of the believer must flow out of the condition of his heart and the state of his faith and not the circumstances that surround him. We may have battles but the victory is promised us. We may have heartache but He has promised to, one day, wipe all tears from our eyes. We may have temptation but greater is He that is in us that he that is in the world. We may feel the ache of poverty but we have the future riches of

God in Christ Jesus. We may feel friendless but we have a friend who sticketh closer than a brother. We may feel the sting of death but He who loves us is the resurrection and the life. Rejoice evermore! When our experience of the day may seem devastating, let us pause to review our position in Christ.

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH - Lesson 10

Romans 5:12-21 Memory verse: Romans 5:12

INTRODUCTION

Salvation is not a matter of good or bad, religion or heathenism, working or shirking but simply a matter of life and death or perhaps more accurately death and life. For all who are saved have been slain by sin (Eph. 2:1) and made alive in Christ Jesus. Good works are always the product of life, they are never, never the cause of it.

I. ALL NATURAL MEN ARE DEAD MEN

A. By Adam, sin entered and we inherited it. (Rom. 5:12, 14) The human race is contaminated; not only so, the whole race is justly condemned.

B. Not only by nature are we sinners, but by practice also. (Rom. 5:12) It is not as if we were helpless victims; we are eager participants. Sin is not merely a description of our acts and attitudes, it describes our very state of being.

C. Because we are sinners, we are spiritually dead. (Gen. 2:17, I Cor. 15:21-22, Rom. 5:12, Rom. 6:23, Eph. 2:1) The sinner cannot be thought of as one who needs commitment, redirection, reformation, etc. He is dead, condemned and executed. He does not need instruction so much as he needs life so he can perceive instruction.

II. THE LAW ONLY REVEALS SIN

A. The law does not make sinners, it only reveals them. (Rom. 3:20, Rom. 7:12-13, Rom. 5:13) A man would be just as great a sinner without the law; he just would not have as real a knowledge of his sin. His conscience feels sin, but only by the Law can his mind perceive the depth and detail of it.

B. Sin would bring death even if there were no law. (Rom. 6:23, Rom. 5:14) To ignore the law for peace of mind is like hiding your head under a shadow as protection from a tornado.

C. The law reveals our sin and shows us to be dead **that we might receive life in Christ Jesus.** (Gal. 3:24) To try then, to keep the law that has already slain us, is to ignore both past condemnation and the hope of salvation. Those who sin without the law, perish without the law.

III. CHRIST OVERCOMES SINS AND DEATH FOR US (Rom. 5:15-21)

A. Christ's death reverses the chain of death started by Adam. (Rom. 5:15) Sin was victorious over Adam but Christ was victorious over sin; tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

B. As Adam's sin doomed mankind, so Christ's righteousness saves them. (Rom. 5:18) On the cross, He not only gave His life for us, He literally gave it to us. Not only are we saved by His vicarious death, we are saved by His resurrection life. (Rom. 5:10, Heb. 7:25)

C. Christ's life and death is "not as" (or equal to) but more than sufficient to quicken that which Adam slew. (Rom. 5:15-17) We are not placed back in the Garden of Eden where Adam was and fell but in the presence and keeping of God where we cannot fall. Much more being (presently) reconciled by His death, we shall be (future without end) saved by His life of intercession for us. (Rom. 5:10)

D. Our life is not by our obedience but by Christ's obedience. (Rom. 5:19) Our obedience is both too late and too imperfect to help us. Christ's obedience is all sufficient in both cases. Christ is all I need.

E. Grace is **greater** than all our sin, not a supplement to our best. (Rom. 5:20) Never think of grace as a supplement to anything, or a thing that needs any supplement, for such a thing is not grace at all.

F. Believers have life through righteousness (not ours but Christ's). (Rom. 5:20, Rom. 10:3-4, Rom. 9:31-32) If you have His righteousness, you need not more. If you have less than this, all you have is far too little.

The facts leading up to and explaining eternal life are basically this: Adam sinned and died spiritually, according to God's warning. All his offspring inherit his guilt, his death sentence and his sinful nature. On Mt. Sinai, God gave the law, (the ten commandments) showing man how far short of God's requirements we all live. He then gave His only begotten Son on Calvary, to afford to man all of Mt. Sinai's requirements. He by the Word and Spirit, works in man's heart, repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ. We are called

out of the darkness of sin into the marvelous light of God's grace.

BAPTISM AND CHRISTIAN PURITY - Lesson 11

Romans 6:1-10 Memory verse: Romans 6:6

INTRODUCTION

The fifth chapter of Romans is closed by declaring that God's grace is far greater than **all** our sin. (Rom. 5:20) Where sin reigned and brought death, now grace shall reign (through **Christ's** righteousness) and bring life. Satan is the master of deception. He not only spreads falsehood everywhere, but he is able to cause the depraved mind to reason falsehood, and consider it logic. For this reason, every "logical conclusion" we come to, should be held up to scriptural inspection. No greater field of such deceived reasoning exists than that of Antinomianism. This teaching is: that if salvation is by grace without law and if grace is always greater than sin, then the more the sin, the greater the required grace. Thus they conclude, we indirectly glorify God by sinning.

The question asked here then is this: "Shall we continue to love and serve sin that greater grace may be required to save us?" God forbid!

I. THE CHRISTIAN IS DEAD TO SIN - (Rom. 6:2)

- A.** When in sin, we were dead. (Eph. 2:1, Rom. 7:10-11) We were spiritually executed under the righteous sentence of God's law, in the person of Christ.
- B.** Our new life is in and unto Christ. (I Cor. 15:22, Rom. 5:17, Rom. 6:21-22) This is a new birth, a new life, new affections, new relationships. We are dead unto sin and alive unto Christ.
- C.** If sin brought death and Christ brought life, how shall we, since sin has slain us and Christ has made us alive, continue to serve sin. (Eph. 2:1, Gal. 5:24-25) If indeed we do have new life with new affections, how shall we glory in and desire those old deeds of death? It is impossible!

II. YOUR BAPTISM DECLARED CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION FOR YOU

- A.** You were buried, symbolizing His death and burial for you. (Rom. 6:3, I Cor. 15:1-4) This must be a statement of faith you had, yet being unbaptized. This testifies that in burial He bore away your sin.
- B.** You were "raised up" declaring His resurrection. (Rom. 6:4-5) The resurrection is an essential part of the Christian faith. Let no man who doubts or denies the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ call himself a Christian. Without the resurrection ministry of Christ, which is intercession, there would be no effectiveness in His priesthood. (Rom. 8:34)
- C.** Since baptism is a symbolic statement of our faith; the symbol (baptism) must by immersion picture the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, which is the Gospel (I Cor. 15:4) and our faith. Sprinkling, pouring, etc., could never picture a death, burial and resurrection. They are heretical practices brought about to accommodate the heresy of baptismal regeneration.

II. OUR BAPTISM DECLARES OUR DEATH AND NEW LIFE

- A.** Before salvation, we are dead. (Eph. 2:1, Rom. 6:4) This confession of guilt and death is declared in baptism. It is also declared by baptism, that we died in Christ when He died.
- B.** As Christ was resurrected to new life; we are given new life. (Eph. 2:1, I Cor. 15:22) This profession of our faith in Him is declared by baptism. When He was raised up, we were raised up in Him.
- C.** So we see that baptism is a declaration of that which Christ has already done for us, back in point number one. It is not a gaining for ourselves that favor, not the point at which that favor is received. It is a testimony of what has already been done.

IV. IN BAPTISM WE PLEDGE TO LIVE THE NEW LIFE GIVEN US BY CHRIST - (Rom. 6:4-10)

- A.** The old **man of sin** was crucified with Him. (Rom.6:6) In the person of Christ **all** believers died (in effect) on Calvary's cross.
- B.** It was destroyed, that it should not serve sin. (Rom. 6:6-7) Both Old Testament circumcision and New Testament baptism testify to this. Baptism says there has been a circumcision in the heart.
- C.** As He was raised to God's glory, (after dying for man's sin) we should be raised to walk in newness of life

unto God's glory. (Rom. 6:4)

D. If sin slew us once and Christ gave us new life, what sense does it make to use that new life serving the same sin which previously slew us? This is not only illogical, but for the person who is genuinely born again to live out his life in the willful and eager pursuit of sin is an impossibility. The statement of this lesson is not that we do not sin, but that we do not pursue and serve sin. If to sin is your desire, to perish is your destiny.

* * * * *

LIVING THE NEW LIFE - Lesson 12

Romans 6:11-23 Memory verse: Romans 6:14

INTRODUCTION

Previous lessons have taught us that, without room for controversy, we are saved by grace alone. We are not reformed sinners or applicants for eternal life (on probation). **We are new creatures.** This lesson says to us, "If ye are indeed new creatures, **live like it.**" Do not let the sinful nature of your flesh dominate your life. Let the inward nature of the new creature rule, and labor to subdue the flesh for God's glory. How is this done? By crucifying the flesh and nourishing the inward man, through the reign of grace in our lives.

I. CHRISTIANS ARE DEAD TO SIN - (Rom. 6:11)

Christ being raised up from the dead, dieth no more. That is **all passed** for Him. He is alive **from** death and dead **to** it, so as to speak. He can ignore it, it is **past history**. (Rom. 6:9-10) The key to understanding verse 11 is the word **likewise**, coupled with verses 9 and 10.

A. Reckon (**consider, count, impute**) yourselves **also** dead unto sin. (Rom. 6:11) Think of that old life as past history. That was terminated on the cross too.

1. The penalty has been lifted. Pardon has been purchased. You have been freed.

2. You are alive from the dead. (Eph. 2:1) You were dead in trespasses and sins, but you are quickened, made alive.

3. This horror is past for you. You need not fear death, for Christ has walked the dark vale for you.

B. Do not let sin rule you. Sin is no longer your master. (Rom. 6:12) You have a nature that favors sin, but you also have a nature that hates it and sin no longer holds you as its victim.

C. Your members should be yielded to God and thus withheld from service to sin. (Rom. 6:13, Rom. 12:1-2) You were once a slave to sin both involuntarily and voluntarily. Now you are freed. Sin cannot force you. Will you enlist yourself to voluntarily serve sin? Does it not make more sense to rather say, 'Lord, what wilt **thou** have me to do?' Let not sin reign in your mortal body.

II. CHRISTIANS ARE FREED FROM SIN - (Rom. 6:14)

Sin is the **natural** man's master. Man is sin's slave. He is a transgressor, a debtor to the Law and thus sold into bondage. His mind, his heart, his body, his will, etc., are all in bondage to his sinful nature.

A. We are redeemed, (set free) the ransom is paid. Christ has paid for us the uttermost farthing.

B. We are now no longer transgressors, for we are not under the Law. We no longer belong to Satan and sin. We are no longer his children.

C. We have life through grace and our status before God is grace not law. We can now fully respond to that age-old challenge of God, "Choose ye this day whom ye shall serve." Whereas before we voluntarily and invariably chose sin, let us now long with all our heart to serve Him who set us free.

III. SERVICE TO THE REDEEMER - (Rom. 6:18-19)

A. Servants serve their masters. (Rom. 6:16) But we are made more than servants, we are sons.

B. When you were in bondage, you were naturally slaves to sin. (Rom. 6:20) You were like the prodigal son, joined to a citizen of "that country."

C. Now that, and if, you are liberated, serve (voluntarily) Him who made you free and alive. (Rom. 6:19-20) Christ has served your time that you may go out free, but do you not want to take the ear-mark? Though you have the robe and the shoes and the ring of the forgiven prodigal, do you not still want to serve your father?

IV. THE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUS SERVICE

A. Sin pays no wages but death. (Rom. 6:21, 23) It promises happiness and wealth, but never pays off, except in delusive dreams that turn to sorrowful disappointment.

B. Righteousness, on the other hand, has a great recompense of reward. (Gal. 5:22, Rom. 6:19) And at the end of this righteous service, is everlasting life. (Not a reward, but a gift.) We must expect the reward of godly service, by faith, for they are basically invisible, but it is this very nature of service that pleases God. (Heb. 11:1-

6) Let us trust Him who is the rewarder of those who seek Him and serve Him with a pure heart.

THE CHRISTIAN IS DEAD TO THE LAW - Lesson 13

Romans 7:1-13 Memory verse: Romans 7:6

INTRODUCTION

Wherever the work of preaching the Gospel is being done, Satan is busy with his opposition. His denials of God's Word are usually subtle and indirect. He much prefers to get a "teacher" who claims to believe the Word, to "explain" a Scripture. When such a one is finished, he has denied the doctrines of the Bible without ever really making a verbal denial. This was the case with the church at Rome.

The Roman Christians were being troubled by Judaizers who claimed to accept Jesus as the Christ, yet demanded bondage to the Law. They taught, as do the Arminian faiths of today, that final justification comes through a combination of faith (in Christ) and works (of righteousness). This lesson shall show that when our relationship to Christ is established, **all** dominion of the Law is severed. This truth does not criticize God's holy Law, but rather identifies its purpose.

I. THE FREEDOM OF WIDOWHOOD - (Rom. 7:1-4)

Often Bible truths are best taught by illustration. Paul's first illustration here of the believers relationship to the Law, is that of marriage and widowhood.

A. The natural man is married to the Law and obligated to it. (Rom. 7:4, Gal. 3:10) This is the case in this dispensation, as well as the days of Moses. Thus, it perfectly describes the believers relationship to the Law.

B. The Christian (crucified with Christ) has had this marriage ended by death and is freed from the Law and married to Christ. (Rom. 7:4) The Law now has no more dominion over us than a dead husband has over his widow. This is not relevant to the character of the Law, but to our relationship to it.

C. To be obligated to the Law is (like a double marriage) to be unfaithful to Christ. (Rom. 7:3-4) Let us not divide our fidelity to Christ with **any** other relationship, law, ordinance or religion.

II. THE FREEDOM OF DEATH

The second illustration of freedom from Law here is that of death. The Law, to which every natural man (a sinner and a criminal) is obligated, has slain him. He dangles at the end of the executioners rope, dead in trespasses. (Eph. 2:1) Law has done its proper work. It now has nothing to say to the sinner, it has spoken its final word.

This man cannot be reformed, redirected, or committed. He cannot decide, commit himself, or turn over a new leaf. He is dead!

A. He is spiritually resurrected from death. (Eph. 2:1, Rom. 7:6) He does not do this for himself, it is done for him, unto him, and in him, by God's grace.

B. As Christ dieth no more, **those He quickens** are never again given to Law, (the executioner). (Rom. 6:8-11) They must in **no** wise ever perish. (Jn. 6:37-39) Their life is His life and their inheritance is His inheritance.

C. Christians are made sons of God under grace, not sons of Adam under the Law. (Gal. 4:5-7) Legalizers should stay in this Scripture until they understand it. Their position is no longer in the garden where Satan lurks, but in heaven where Christ is enthroned.

III. SIN IS THE KILLER (LAW ITS RIGHTEOUS ACCUSER) - (Rom. 7:7-14)

A. The Law is not sin, to be slandered, criticized, rejected, or even superseded. (Rom. 7:7, 12) Some people say, "We are not under Law" as if God had given them license for rebellion. This is a wrong attitude.

B. The Law always has and will speak in righteousness and mercy to all who are under the Law (namely every natural man). (Rom. 7:7, Rom. 3:19) The Law speaks in righteousness because of its perfect precepts; it speaks in mercy because, by warning men, it points them to Christ.

C. Read carefully Romans 7:9. Without the Law, the sinner thinks himself alive. When the just and holy Law, by God's Spirit, shows him his sinfulness, guilt grips his heart and he sees himself as he is, guilty and dead. Then Jesus comes in and he cries, "God be merciful to me a sinner." (Gal. 3:24) He is made a new creature, "A son of God," the Law speaks only to the sons of Adam.

The Law is an exacting schoolmaster, laying down perfect precepts of "Thou shalt and thou shalt not." This is

not given to prevent sin, it is too late for that, we are already guilty. Moreover, it is not given to stop sin, for the flesh is neither willing to do this, nor is it capable of it. The Law is given to expose sin, that we might see our undone condition and our deep need for Jesus Christ. The Law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

TWO MEN IN ONE BODY - Lesson 14

Romans 7:15-25 Memory verse: Romans 7:18

INTRODUCTION

A common occasion for stumbling is to imagine that salvation means for the natural man to "reform," etc. Propagators of this error expect from this man, sinless perfection or eradication of the flesh, or to do the best he can, or some similar, silly, human formula. They are all equally hypothetical and worthless. We must see that salvation is the creation of a "new man" not the resolution, religion, or discipline of the old. It is 100 percent of Christ. It is the most natural thing in the world for a man to think after the manner of the error mentioned above. It is, in fact, supernatural revelation that makes him think otherwise and only that.

I. THE NATURAL MAN AND THE INWARD MAN

The understanding of these two natures solves many theological problems.

- A.** There is a natural man referred to as body, flesh, members, etc. (Rom. 7:18, Rom. 7:23-24) It is his nature to sin, hate God's precepts, rebel, etc. His very nature renders him both unable and unwilling to please God.
- B.** There is an inward man born of God. (I Jn. 3:9, II Cor. 5:17) It is his nature to love God, the brethren, the Word, purity, good works, etc. He delights in the law of God. (Rom. 7:22)
- C.** These two dwell together. (Rom. 7:15-18) They live in constant war with each other. We do not understand it all, but we know God has a purpose in doing it this way.

II. THE NATURE OF THE BODY IS SIN - (Rom. 7:17-20)

Man does not need to be taught to sin, it comes naturally. He constantly and naturally progresses in it.

- A.** Salvation creates a new creature, but does not change the nature of the old. (Rom. 7:22-23) It is this old nature that leads us to do those "things which we allow not." All saved people experience this frustration.
- B.** The old man still fights to go on in sin and to use the body to that end. (Rom. 7:21-25) He is tempted by Satan and motivated by selfishness.
This is why saved people find themselves struggling in temptation to gossip, adultery, lying, stealing, boasting, exaggerating and such like.

III. THE NEW CREATURE DOES NOT SIN

The righteousness that the soul cries for and that the ignorant (Rom. 10:3) strive for, God has given us freely in Christ. It is not our righteousness, by God's assisting grace, as some think; but it is Christ's righteousness given to us by God's free grace. This righteousness is positional, we only experience its peace through faith.

- A.** The new man's nature is to please God. (Rom. 7:22) He wants to, strives to, and does. It is not the quality of his good works that pleases God, but the motive of love behind them.
- B.** He cannot sin. (I Jn. 3:9) The divine nature in this creature is not capable of sin. This Scripture does not say he cannot practice sin, but that Christ's seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin.
- C.** He is not guilty of the natural man's sin. (Rom. 7:17-20) The inward man does not consent to it, and does not participate in it. He may be, by the flesh, essentially denied a voice, but his heart is always saying, "Awake to righteousness and sin not."
- D.** God never imputes sin unto him. (Rom. 4:5-8) The reason is simply that **all** his sin has been imputed to Christ.

IV. THE TWO DWELL IN CONTINUAL STRIFE

- A.** The natural man in this life never gives in. (Rom. 7:25, I Jn. 3:8) He may grow weak as the spiritual man grows stronger, but he never changes. He is only conquered by death. (Rom. 7:24-25)
- B.** The spiritual man, on the other hand, is kept by God and cannot be slain by sin. (Rom. 7:24-25a, Rom. 4:8, I Jn. 3:9, I Jn. 5:18)
He too, may be made weak by starvation, persecution, pollution of mind and body, etc.; but he never changes. He is that divine creation of God that comes to life at the new birth. He is "Christ in you the hope of glory." He can no more die than God can die. If we would be happy, we must strive to crucify the flesh and exalt the new

creature.

NO CONDEMNATION - Lesson 15

Romans 8:1-17 Memory verse: Romans 8:1

INTRODUCTION

"There is therefore **NOW** no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. 8:1) A quick interpretation of this Scripture, by natural man, will satisfy him that he becomes or stays free from condemnation by his conduct. This is typical of Satan's control over natural minds. The term "Walking after the flesh" means to seek, by the flesh, to keep the Law, or to be made perfect by the flesh. (Gal. 3:3) But the natural mind will think of this as the spiritual walk. To walk after the spirit means to have your life and your walk, as a result of the Spirit's work, The New Birth. To this category of people, there is no condemnation, now or ever.

I. THE GLORIOUS STATE - (Rom. 8:1-4)

A. It is a present condition (**NOW** no condemnation). (Rom. 8:1) It is more than a future hope or possibility; it is a present reality.

B. We have assurance of future security. "Free from the Law" (which is all that could accuse us). (Rom. 8:2) We are in the state of Paul, who said, "All things are lawful unto me." Certainly, all things are not expedient, but all things are lawful to one redeemed from the Law. (Gal. 3:10-13)

C. This could never be accomplished by obedience, for commandments speak to and depend upon flesh, and thus they are weak. (Rom. 8:3) This, of course, does not speak of weakness of the Law, but weakness of the flesh in respect to keeping the Law.

D. God wrought in us the righteousness required by the Law. Giving it to us by faith, (a free gift) in the person of Christ. (Rom. 8:3-4) It cannot be bought, traded for, or bargained for. It must be free.

E. We do not gain this by walking after the Spirit (in the flesh) as some suppose and teach, but we walk in and after the Spirit because it is only in Him that we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:28, Rom. 8:4) Walking after the Spirit is the effect of life, never the cause.

It is the indwelling Spirit that directs the believer and causes him to so walk. We do not gain freedom from condemnation from walking thus, we gain it by being in Christ, and we so walk because He is in us.

II. THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT - (Rom. 8:5-13)

A. They that are after flesh, (bodies and natural man) mind (care for) fleshly things. (Rom. 8:5, Jn. 3:6) To try to arouse them to spiritual interest is like exercising a dead man. (I Cor. 2:14)

B. The spiritual man (new creature) minds spiritual things. (Rom. 8:5, Rom. 7:22) He is concerned about them. He can be exercised and taught and edified.

C. Thus the natural man (flesh) cannot please God. (Rom. 8:7-8, Rom. 7:25) Even his righteousnesses are selfish and abominable to God. (Isa. 64:6) What he does to God-ward, he does for himself, thus it is not a godly act.

D. There is continual conflict between Spirit and flesh. (Rom. 8:6-8) The one desires to serve God, honoring His Law from the heart. The other is equally intent on serving Satan, the outworking of which is serving self.

III. WE OWE THE FLESH NOTHING - (Rom. 8:12)

A. Because all service to flesh is lost, (Rom. 8:13) whatever we invest in it, we lose. (Gal. 6:8)

B. Fleshly service or religion cannot please God. (Rom. 8:8) It is selfish and carnal; God has no regard for **any** fleshly religion.

C. Because in the flesh we shall die. (Rom. 8:13) Fleshly religion may afford some peace in life, but that is false peace and it affords no help at all in death.

IV. THE BLESSING OF THE GLORIOUS STATE

A. We are sons of God. (Rom. 8:14, Jn. 1:12) What a joyous privilege and state, for lowly man. "Now" are we the sons of God.

B. We have received the spirit of adoption (as sons) not of bondage (as servants under the Law). (Rom. 8:15)

We can thus look forward in faith to that time when we shall be placed in glory as adult sons.

C. We have an inward witness of our sonship. (Rom. 8:16, Eph. 1:13-14) This is the involuntary impulse to call on God. It is indeed in times of acute distress, a compulsion to call on God.

D. We have an eternal inheritance. (Rom. 8:17, Eph. 1:11) This is an inheritance of which Satan cannot rob us. It is as sure and steadfast as the position of Jesus Christ. "I am free from condemnation. Jesus' blood avails for me. I am dwelling now in Canaan, for the Son hath made me free."

CREATION'S BONDAGE AND DELIVERANCE - Lesson 16

Romans 8:18-27 Memory verse: Romans 8:18

INTRODUCTION

Paul here cites the sin, sickness, sorrow, pain and suffering in which the creation now exists. This affects plant life, animal life, natural man and the Christian in this world. But, he assures us the suffering is not worthy to be compared to the glory which is to be revealed in the redeemed. When we are burdened too deeply for mirth or song, let us lift up our heads in praise for what is to come. The creation shall be delivered and shall ultimately sing "Worthy is the Lamb."

I. THE WHOLE CREATION LABORS UNDER THE BURDEN OF SIN

This does not mean that they resist it but that they suffer the natural consequence of it. The world is in love with sin, but it is nevertheless, constantly persecuting and wounding them.

A. Adam was given dominion over all the creation. (Gen. 1:26) He named the animals and they feared him, respected him and obeyed him. This dominion was to forever be in perfect subjection to God.

B. When he sinned, he brought **all creation** under the curse. (Gen. 3:17-19) This includes human, plant and animal life. Since he was the federal head of the human race, they all fell in him.

C. At present, all the world suffers under the judgment of sin. (Rom. 8:22-23) Sin is to be blamed for sickness in humans, animals and plants.

D. But when Adam subjected his dominion unto the curse, sorrow and death; he did so in faith, (for Eve's sake) trusting in and looking unto God's mercy; (Rom. 8:20, Gen. 3:20-21) loving Eve enough to give up his dominion for her and to trust God for redemption. Never applaud Adam for this choice, for it was God against whom Adam chose.

E. The faith of Adam expressed in Genesis 3:20 shall be realized. (Rom. 8:21) The mercy of God shall deliver the whole of creation.

Adam here refers to Eve as the mother of all living, and so named her. The fact is that they were both at this time under sentence of death. Adam is apparently looking by faith to Christ the redeemer, the seed of the woman, who shall gain victory over the serpent. (Gen. 3:15) It is of this Saviour that the coats of skin speak.

II. DELIVERANCE OF THE BELIEVER'S BODY IS FUTURE - (Rom. 8:23-25)

Those who claim sinless perfection or even the possibility of it, fail to see that natural man (including our bodies) is part of the "whole creation" which groaneth under the curse of sin until the time of our deliverance. (I Thes. 4:15-17, I Cor. 15:47-53) Paul fully realized this. (Rom. 7:24)

A. The Christian is constrained to live in a body of sinful flesh. (Rom. 7:18-25) We feel keenly, the sinfulness that Paul expressed in Romans 7:24. To deny this is to fool yourself about yourself.

B. This body of ours is as much under the curse as the ground (Gen. 3:17-19) or the serpent. (Gen. 3:14) Do we not groan and travail in sin, sickness and failure? What honest soul can say, "I do not"?

C. All this deliverance was purchased on Calvary but is not to be realized (except by faith) until the second coming and the resurrection. (Rom. 8:19, Rom. 7:24-25, I Cor. 15:22-23, II Cor. 5:1-4, Rom. 8:23-25) Then shall we experience adoption, that is, the redemption of the body. (Rom. 8:23)

III. WE HAVE THE EARNEST AND COMFORT OF THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT WHILE WE WAIT

The term earnest means in effect, a deposit to assure a complete transaction. God's Spirit within gives us this.

A. The indwelling Spirit is our assurance of future redemption. (II Cor. 5:4-5, Eph. 1:13-14) Not only so, but He is our present comforter.

B. He (the Holy Spirit) understands our infirm state and ministers to our needs when we do not even know what we need, or should pray for. (Rom. 8:26) What mercy! for God to so deal with wayward children.

C. He makes intercession for us, prays for and obtains our needs, not according to our clouded opinion, but according to the will of God. (Rom. 8:27)

We could never be capable of praying for all our needs, we could not even perceive the extent of our need for forgiveness; but God's Spirit within us does. Is it not marvelous how that every part of our past, present and

future experience in salvation is merely the effect of the glorious working of God in us.

THE ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GOD - Lesson 17

Romans 8:28-39 Memory verse: Romans 8:28

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps no Bible verse is so shallowly taught or totally untaught as Romans 8:28. We can see into the depths of these following verses about as clearly as a baby sees the inner design of a fine automobile. I am filled with wonder each time I read them. I am also reminded afresh of the simplicity of the human mind. Nevertheless, I deplore the spirit of all who would neglect or ignore this great invitation of the Holy Spirit to stand for a moment where angels not only fear, but are forbidden to tread. There are many things about God's eternal purpose that we cannot understand, but there are some things that are wonderfully explained. To shrink away from them is to hate divine sovereignty and thus God's kingdom, for the sake of human sovereignty.

I. ALL THINGS WORK FOR THE CALLED OF GOD

To interpret this verse even slightly, we must see that it is based upon God's calling of us, and not our love for Him. Our love for Him is a result of, and not an occasion for His call. (1 Jn. 4:9-10) Our love is only a response to the revelation of His love. God's call is the cause, our love is the effect.

A. Every sorrow and hardship works for us. (Rom. 8:28) We cannot know how in many cases, but we know why. It is to conform us to the image of God's Son.

B. The suffering of the whole creation continues in our behalf. (Rom. 8:18, 19, 28) The tribulation that vexes the world, works patience in us. If such a concept grieves you, read Romans 9:22-23.

C. Sin, killing, dying, suffering and damnation of the lost world, shall all magnify and glorify the redemption of the chosen. (Rom. 8:28, Rom. 9:20-24) I do not know how to accept such truths as this except in Jesus' words, "Even so Father, for it seemed good in thy sight." (Luke 10:21)

We see in them the first fruits of the wages of sin. We see the natural consequences of sin. We realize that except for God's grace, we could be like that, and our hearts are filled with praise to Him for His mercy. Why me? To suppose that such a question has any right to be asked, is to hate the whole concept of grace.

II. OUR STANDING IS NOT OF US, BUT OF GOD

A. Our relationship with God began in sovereign election and foreknowledge. This is not mere precognition of what we would do, for it deals with who, not what. "Whom He foreknew." You cannot analyze this unless you can first analyze the knowledge of God. Since we cannot do that, we must teach the doctrine, without trying to explain it or explain it away. In the sense of cognition, God foreknew all men. He is omniscient and omnipresent. This word means an eternal, intimate love flowing from nothing but free grace.

B. He predestinated us. (Set in motion all the powers necessary to bring us to faith, justification and glorification.) This never excludes anyone. It only includes and directs according to God's blueprint. Men are all essentially excluded by their very nature. (Jn. 6:44) It takes divine grace to override this.

III. WHAT SHALL WE SAY TO THESE THINGS

We can only say "Hallelujah!" If God be so much for us, who can be against, to attack and destroy us? Even Satan has not the slightest possibility of ever destroying our soul because:

A. God has too great an investment in His chosen ones to let them be lost. (Rom. 8:32) Would God give His Son to redeem us and then let Satan steal us? No! Jesus shall see the travail of His soul (those for whom He suffered) and shall be satisfied. (Isa. 53:11)

B. No one can accuse God's elect, for He who knew all about them from cradle to grave, chose, and justified them. (Rom. 8:33-34) No sin or short coming surprises God; He foresaw it all.

C. Christ (who took away the sins of the world, nailing them to His cross of suffering) makes intercession for us to keep us safe. If His intercessory prayers are answered, we shall be vindicated before God. His work on the cross and on the throne at the right hand of God are part of the same priestly reconciliation.

D. None of life's perils or temptations (Rom. 8:35-39) shall separate us from God, but shall **all unvaryingly, unfaithfully** draw us nearer to Him and add to our riches in glory. (Rom. 8:28) God hath promised it. We **know** this **because** whom He did foreknow, them He did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son,

etc. (Rom. 8:29) You may ask, "Did He foreknow me?" If you are disposed to reject your sin and come to Jesus, you may in full confidence say, "Yes! Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine."

ISRAEL AND THE GOSPEL - Lesson 18

Romans 9:1-13 Memory verse: Romans 9:6

INTRODUCTION

Paul begins this chapter by expressing his burden for national Israel. He then goes on to teach us that the true Israel of God, are children of faith and not merely the seed of Abraham's flesh. Of course, there is also a blessing for the natural seed, (national Israel) but they are not the children of God. Paul never lost his burden for the Jewish people. Everywhere he went, he preached to the Jew first; it was only after they rejected his message that he went to the Gentiles. This was more than an ambition for success or accomplishment with Paul, it was a burning desire, a deep burden, an obsession. Oh, that every one of us might have the same concern for our loved ones.

I. PAUL'S BURDEN

How we of today need Paul's burden for lost kindred! If we could be gripped with this burden, plus the greatness of salvation as described in Romans 8:28-32; we would run through the streets crying, "Hallelujah, what a Saviour! Come all ye who will and be saved." It is true that God does all the saving, it is also true, however, that His instruments are burdened men.

A. Paul was not interested in worldly pleasure but in eternal life and loved ones. (Rom. 9:2) Satan endeavors to lead us away from this.

B. He puts his own interest and comfort last, and was willing to literally suffer for them. (Rom. 9:3) How long has it been since we suffered for someone else's eternal good?

II. GOD'S WORD WILL ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSE

We have often heard the totally ignorant say, "God has done all He can to save you." Not so. There is no such thing as "all God can." He has made the provision He chose to and bids all who refuse it, depart from Him. God's provision is perfectly sufficient for whosoever will, and I feel no need to try to justify Him before rebellious men by reasoning, "If God could, He would do more." Let men who would worship Jehovah, learn the lesson of the leper, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst..." Matt. 8:2)

A. His Word has always spoken to and been heard by the spiritual seed. (Rom. 9:6-7) His Word does not return void. Although men always resist, God finally does all His will. (Eph. 1:11)

B. God's bidding and calling has always been according to His sovereign choice. (Rom. 9:8-11) We have no right whatever to question or criticize this. We are His creatures and thus exist solely to fulfill His pleasure. (Rev. 4:11)

C. Neither Abraham nor Ishmael could bring Ishmael into Isaac's place of blessing, because God had chosen Isaac. (Gen. 17:18-21, Rom. 9:8-9) Was this unfair to Ishmael? No, just grace to Isaac. Men have never been basically volunteers for God's purpose. They are called according to it, then they volunteer.

D. God chose between Jacob and Esau before birth, that God's choice might be magnified, not what they were. (Rom. 9:11) There is nothing in Jacob to explain it. Why God "hated Esau" is no mystery, why He loved Jacob is one of profound depth.

E. We should see that God always chooses us in the same way. Not because of what we are or will be, but by His sovereign grace. (Eph. 2:8, Rom. 11:5) He gives no explanation and we have no right or reason to demand one. What God purposed is good and that He will do. Let us humbly bow down.

III. JACOB AND ESAU - LOVED AND HATED

This verse (Rom. 9:13) is one to which man has long said, "It does not say what it says, if so, God is unfair." What does it say? Let us know, however, that the God of all the earth shall do right. If it seems unfair to us, it is only because our mind is evil, yet no other passage so arouses man's hatred for the sovereign grace of God.

A. God loved Jacob, (Rom. 9:13) chose Jacob. (Rom. 9:14) God's love was not a compulsory reaction to Jacob's personality, or character, but an act of mercy. If you claim that He "foresaw" good and faith in Jacob, you hate and reject the whole object lesson of the passage.

B. God hated (the capacity of the word is "rejected") Esau. He did not make Esau wicked or rebellious. He just allowed him to do as he would, and left him that way. Is there any reason for God to do anything but hate the natural man with all his sin?

C. He did Esau no injustice, He just showed Jacob grace. We can illustrate this truth this way: You go to your rose garden and see two identical roses; you pick one, put it in a vase, water it, keep it, etc., the other you leave to wither and fade. Were you unfair? Of course not! They were yours to do with as you pleased. Let us humble our proud minds and listen carefully to God's word.

"Shall the thing formed, say unto Him that formed it, `why hast thou made me thus'?" To say that this passage is relevant only to national Israel and has nothing to do with salvation is to hate such verses as Romans 9:20-24 and refuse the application that Paul makes to his illustration.

* * * * *

THE SOVEREIGN GRACE OF GOD - Lesson 19

Romans 9:14-33 Memory verse: Romans 9:16

INTRODUCTION

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Many answer this by saying, "If God chooses sovereignly among men without any respect to their deeds, either past, present, or future, there is." Thus God must choose in some sense as a reaction, they say, to our deeds or **our faith**. Paul has just said His choice is sovereign and totally unconditional (Romans 9:11-13) He further shows by the present tense of all the verbs in verse 16, that this applied not only to Jacob, of the past, but to us of the present. Let us not stop with the natural man's argument that this would be unrighteous, but study carefully Paul's explanation in verses 13-33. Meanwhile, let us remember that we can scarcely see the shadow of God's doings. Certainly, we are not qualified to be judges. To say that God is sovereign is simply to assert His independency, and to say that He has the right and ability to use, direct, and save His creatures exactly as He wishes. To deny it is to insist that He is not God.

I. THE VESSELS OF WRATH

How seldom these verses are taught. (Rom. 9:17-22) Men think it contradicts God's love. Nonsense! It magnifies it. They object by saying, this teaches that **some** men are born to go to hell. Again, I say nonsense! All men are born to go to hell. When a man becomes a Pharaoh or a Hitler, God is only allowing him to do as he wishes. God is never the author of sin, but if He did not permit it, it obviously could not come to pass unless God relinquished control in creation, or lost it afterward.

A. Vessels of wrath fitted to destruction (not by God but by sin). (Rom. 9:22) God is not at all obligated to intervene. God owes man nothing. He has decreed to let evil men go as far as His glory can be accommodated. (Psalms 76:10)

B. God even raises up such vessels as Pharaoh (magnifies them) that the power of His wrath might be exalted, to warn and win the children of grace. (Rom. 9:17) When a backwoods hick blasphemes God and rebels and is smitten and dies, no one even knows it; but when it happens to a Pharaoh, the world hears, and God's justice is magnified. Not only so, but every thoughtful child of God is forced to realize "But for the grace of God, there go I."

C. This does not mean that God is responsible for their damnation. He simply leaves them to justice, and the just recompense of their deeds. This is referred to in theology as the permissive part of God's decree. To deny that God decrees this, denies His omniscience, or His omnipotence, or His immutability.

II. WHO HATH RESISTED HIS WILL?

This is the cry of objection to election. "If this be true, would not sinners be fulfilling God's will by sinning?" (Rom. 9:19) The answer is, of course not. Satan has inspired such twisted reasoning as this to bring mental accusation against God. Though God has willed to permit them to do these evil things, His approbation is never upon their acts.

A. All men resist God's will, from Eden until now. This is the unwavering nature of humanity. The only exception to this is when God, by His grace, worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. (Phil. 2:13)

B. His elect, He molds (even from the "same lump" that produced Cain, Esau and Pharaoh) into vessels of honor and glory. (Rom. 9:22-24) Predestinated by His molding hand, to be conformed to the image of His Son. (Rom. 8:29) The new birth is part of the work that results from this molding. Moreover, everything that leads up to and flows out of the new birth is part of it.

C. By His Spirit and Word, He liberates and changes their nature, which controls their will. Thus the man who wanted to flee from God is converted, so that he wants to come to Christ and whosoever will, may come. However, it is not the pleasure of the old man to rest in Christ, but the new man.

III. ELECTION AND ISRAEL

A common mistake is to say that election pertains only to Israel and never to individuals. That this is error, is proven by many Scriptures. Two of them found here are:

A. (Romans 9:23-24) "...vessels of mercy... afore prepared unto glory, Even us,... **not** of the Jews only, but also **of the Gentiles.**" Those words complete Paul's application of the foregoing illustration.

B. (Romans 11:5-8) As we read these verses, let us be still and know that God is God. To deny election is to claim that God saved certain individuals without purposing to save them.

Remember this, election and predestination exclude no one from God's kingdom. Sin excludes, these graces only include. But to say that God only ordained methods is a poor "cop-out" for the Arminian. For God to choose a method knowing who would be saved by that method, is precisely equal to choosing those individuals. To claim that God did not know is a subtle quality of blasphemy.

* * * * *

ZEALOUS, RELIGIOUS AND LOST - Lesson 20

Romans 10:1-7 Memory Verse: Rom. 10:4

INTRODUCTION

A common error in the world today is that if a man is sincere in any religion, he is alright. To me it is extremely strange that this standard is applied to religion and to almost nothing else. The idea seems to be that sincerity makes your opinion right for you, "if you are really sincere." Would this work in interpreting the label on a medicine bottle or reading signs? Why then, expect God to be so tolerant of careless human opinion, especially when this opinion flows out of flagrant rebellion? Paul says of these people, they are sincere and zealous, but they are lost. Let us study the occasion of this fatal mistake, and see what the horrible result of living and dying with such a mistake is.

I. IGNORANT OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

You have heard it said, 'only holy life can get you to heaven.' This is very true, but let us see what this involves; for most people who quote this philosophy have no such life at all. The righteousnesses they think they see in themselves are as filthy rags before God.

A. It is not doing your best. Your best would be garbage before God, even if anyone genuinely did their best, and they do not. (Rom. 10:3) Their best would be very far from God's requirement. Doing their worst would be about equally beneficial.

B. It was "God's righteousness" **they needed** and of which they were ignorant. (Rom. 10:3) No human endeavor can come close to this requirement. Trying to establish your own righteousness not only ignores God's righteousness, but rejects His imputation.

C. This involves **absolute** and **eternal** perfection, both positive and negative. (James 2:10, Rom. 3:23) This simply means you would have to live every moment, from the cradle to the grave, without the slightest flaw. You have not, nor has anyone.

II. MAN'S ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH HIS OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS

A. It is the righteousness of the Law that they seek: "Thou shalt and thou shalt not." (Rom. 11:31-32) Of course, as far as human deeds are concerned there is no other standard. The Law is the revealed will of God for man's conduct.

B. The statement of faith that Satan has given them is, 'you must live it.' (Rom. 11:31-32) You are the only one who can obey for you. You thus save yourself in, or by some type of obedience. The reason Satan holds this hope before man is that as long as man has any such hope, he will never come to Christ. He must abandon all hope in himself before he comes to repentance and faith.

C. Moses states the standard of this righteousness. (Rom. 10:5) In short, it is obey the Law and live by it, fail and you perish.

D. The Word of God cries out to all mankind, 'you did not make it! you are lost!' (Rom. 3:23, Rom. 3:10, James 2:10, Isa. 53:6, Ecc. 7:20, Gal. 3:10) I hope you have come to a bitter realization of this failure in your life. May you feel a keen self-hatred and self-hopelessness. Only then will you turn to Christ.

III. HE IS ALL THE LAW REQUIRES

A. "Christ is the end of the Law" (the ultimate requirement, all it demands of us). (Rom. 10:4) This does not mean cancellation of the Law, but fulfillment of it. "Ye are not under law but under grace" is not a dispensational statement. It states redemption.

B. "For righteousness to every believer." He becomes for us all the Law demands of us, when we receive Him as our Saviour. (Rom. 10:4) All that the Law on Mt. Sinai required, the Lord on Mt. Calvary provided.

C. Do not say, "Who can make it to heaven?" That is to ignore the finished work of Christ, "to bring Him down (so as to speak) from above." He has already made it. All we need is to be in Him. (Rom. 10:6)

D. Do not say, "Who shall or must go to hell?" That is to ignore the suffering of Christ. He has entered into death's prison house and paid the uttermost farthing for us. (Rom. 10:7) Thus none who repent, need ever fear the pits of hell. "*Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.*" (Rev. 22:17)

E. The occasion of Israel's lost state is also the occasion for stumbling today. (Rom. 9:31-33)
They trusted themselves, glorified themselves and refused to look beyond themselves, thus they were lost. So many today are looking to their own resources and virtues as their hope of eternal life. Thus, to them Christ is only a creed, though they call Him Lord and Saviour. Such have no hope. The nature of man is to trust himself, the **new birth** produces a true resting in Christ. May God grant you that faith.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH - Lesson 21

Romans 10:8-21 Memory verse: Rom. 8:17

INTRODUCTION

In the previous lesson we have seen man's righteousness as the failure it is and the righteousness of God offered to him in the person of Christ. The question then arises, "If absolute holiness is so available, why do not all have it? Why are all not saved?" "How is this righteousness received?" Of course, this is a supernatural transaction of God, and His secrets are not revealed unto us. However, there are definite responsibilities committed to man and revealed to man. These we are given to understand and can, by God's grace, do so. Let us study the plans and methods of God.

I. THE WORD OF FAITH - (Rom 10:8-11)

This term might well be paraphrased **The Gospel** by which faith comes. "*For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith (as the character of God) to faith*" as the gift to the believer. (Rom. 1:17)

A. What is the Gospel? It is the good news from God to man about salvation from sin as revealed in Scripture.

1. Christ died for our sins according to Scripture. (I Cor. 15:3) This supposed not only man's sin, but a repentant attitude toward it. It includes the doctrines of sin, judgment and imputed righteousness.

2. That He was buried (bodily), (I Cor. 15:4) carrying our sins away, as the scape-goat, a definite part of His priestly ministry.

3. That He arose again (bodily) for our justification, (I Cor. 15:4) being victorious over death, that this victory might be given to us. Moreover, His resurrection life is a necessity for our salvation. (Rom. 8:34, Heb. 7:25)

B. What is confession with the mouth? It certainly must be more than religious recital of a creed or prayer. It is the out-flowing of belief in the heart. (Rom. 10:10)

1. It is the product of the converted heart, where the Word and the Spirit hath wrought repentance and faith. I say, confession is the product, not the cause of regeneration. (Rom. 8:15)

2. It is the confession of that of which the heart is persuaded. It does not convert, cleanse, or persuade the heart, true confession only reveals what is in the heart.

C. Where is the source of righteousness? In Christ alone. (Rom. 10:4) God formulated the plan of salvation, it is the Man, Christ Jesus. God revealed the plan, the Man, through the Word. God divinely persuades us of this truth, by the converting power of the Spirit. If you would be saved, seek no plan of action of any sort, look to Jesus.

D. What is the channel of righteousness? **Faith**, "*...with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.*" (Rom. 10:10) Prayer is never to be considered this channel. At best, prayer must be the result, for it is a good work. Man is not saved by grace through faith through prayer any more than by grace through faith through baptism.

II. THE SCOPE OF THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

Because of misunderstanding of the truths of sovereign grace, some teach that if the doctrine of sovereign grace is true, many would be excluded from the offer of God's forgiveness. This is as much heresy as the teaching that we receive that righteousness through some virtue of our character or act of obedience. Election never excludes, it only includes, and whosoever will, may come. All interpretations of the doctrines of grace contrary to this are erroneous. We must see man's disposition in depravity before we can ever understand election.

A. God does not differentiate between Jew and Gentile. He gives both the same offer and receiveth all who come unto Him. (Rom. 10:12) Whatever may be behind their coming, the sincerity of God is behind the invitation. (Rev. 22:21)

B. Whosoever believeth with the heart and thus looks to God for mercy and forgiveness through Christ shall be saved. (Rom. 10:13, Jn. 5:24, Jn. 3:16, Rev. 22:17) This is not through prayer but by grace through faith. All external confessions or evidences must flow out of the internal change.

III. GOD'S PLAN FOR GIVING FAITH

Faith is a gift from God. (Eph. 2:8) How then does He give it, by lights? chills? or visions? No! What does the Word say?

A. Faith comes by hearing, not feeling. (Rom. 10:14,17) Though great feeling may accompany faith, feeling is not faith, and never is an accurate gauge. Faith can only come by hearing the Gospel. (Rom. 1:16-17)

B. Faith comes by hearing, but by what does the hearing come? Many hear audibly, who really do not hear. Whence then the hearing of those who do, of those whose "ears are blessed." (Matt. 13:16) Hearing (the Gospel) is by the word (Rhema) of God. This is to say that the hearing which produces faith comes not merely by stated concept (Logos) as in **Acts 12:24** and **13:5**, but by the rhema (command or word spoken from the very mouth of God). That is to say, faith comes by hearing the Gospel and that hearing of the Gospel comes by the effectual command of the Holy Ghost to the hearer's ears. (Matt. 13:15-16)

C. Preaching is the avenue God has chosen for men to hear. (Rom. 10:14-15) Let us not look for, or accept substitutes. Men do not come to know God by wisdom, but by the foolishness of preaching. (I Cor. 1:21)

D. We who believe are charged to tell the story (preach) and send preachers, (Rev. 22:17, Rom. 10:14) knowing we are forever ineffective unless the Holy Spirit goes before us.

Our message is to be pure and simple. If we mix it with human decoration, it is no longer the power of God unto salvation. Let us preach the Word.

THE ELECTION OF GRACE - Lesson 22

Romans 11:1-12 Memory verse: Rom. 11:5

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 10 is closed with the proclamation that the Gentiles are to be saved through faith in Christ, (Rom. 10:13,20) but Israel is a disobedient and gainsaying people. Paul then raises this question, "Has God forgotten, or cast away, or changed His mind about His chosen people, Israel?" Has God's Word been ineffective? Has He failed in His original purpose toward Israel?

The Bible description of God should fully answer any such inquiry. If God is sovereign, then everything that transpires within His creation must conform to His decree, either His positive decree or His permissive decree. If God is omniscient, He involuntarily has all knowledge of all things past, present and future. If He is omnipotent, He is able to control all things according to His will. Therefore, **all** of God's plans are eternal in nature and result, and all must absolutely be brought to pass. This is not to say all of God's commands, but all of His decree.

I. HATH GOD CAST AWAY "HIS PEOPLE"?

The very nature of the question makes it answer itself. God never casts away **His own**. How then has He included Gentiles while blinding Israelites; if the Israelites are, in fact, His people?

A. The answer hangs upon Romans 11:2 and the word "foreknew." The word foreknew here does not mean pre-science, but pre-loved as we feel in the heart and emotions for one we know intimately.

B. National Israel was not the foreknown or chosen of God. (Rom. 9:5-8) Though He did choose to bless and use them nationally in a physical sense, and shall further do so in the future.

C. Elijah was astonished at Israel's idolatry and interceded against them. (Rom. 11:3) He thought he was the only true worshipper left and invited God to destroy the rest.

D. God answered, "I am still in charge, I know, I understand, I have reserved." The seven thousand were reserved unto, not because of pure worship. God had kept them for Himself.

E. With the exception of sin and its results, all has gone according to God's will and regardless of that, it is all according to His decree. He is still God and has not lost control. The permissive decree of God involves those areas where He allows man's depraved nature to function within God's boundaries. The positive decree of God involves those areas wherein God foreordains and implements good to be performed. These two areas of decree cover every human act. It may be well here to emphasize the need for us to learn to discern between the divisions of God's will.

1. Will of decree. That which God has eternally purposed to bring to pass by whatever sequence of events.

2. Will of approbation. That which God approves as an act within itself. They are not always the same, for He has decreed to permit sin to bring about His final purpose. Notice Acts 2:23.

II. THE SPIRITUAL REMNANT NOW

This word remnant is very important to the doctrine at hand. It comes from the Greek word (Leimma) which is the product of the Greek word (Leipo) which means to **leave** or **pass**. Thus to spare or pass-over, as when you would cut down all the trees in a forest but pass-over these few.

A. What we actually have here is a **sparing** in judgment, just as Noah was spared "by grace." (Gen. 6:5-8) Noah's "perfection in generations" and "walking with God" was a result of God's grace, not the reason for it.

B. The seven thousand of Elijah's day were not pure by their virtue, but by God's reservation. (Rom. 11:4) Their hearts were bound to God, by grace, not nature.

C. Even so today all humanity is sinful, (Rom. 3:23) all are guilty, (Rom. 3:19) all are naturally doomed. (Rom. 5:12, Rom. 6:23) There is not anywhere, one single, natural human being exempt from this description.

D. But God has those (a remnant) whom He has chosen to spare, according to His own mercy. (Rom. 11:5) To seek a human reason for God's selection of them is to reject the very basis of grace.

E. It is not at all according to any goodness or virtue in them. (Rom. 11:6) It would, in fact, be impossible to find a man who possessed any such virtue. (Rom. 3:9-10)

III. JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL IS MERCY ON US

A. We see national Israel (because of sin) blinded by God's hand. (Rom. 11:7-10) Notice Isa. 6:9-13, Matt. 13:10-16.

B. It is not for their judgment alone but also for our salvation. God always, by judgment upon some, warns others and brings them to repentance. (Rom. 11:11)

C. God in His infinite mercy will even, one day, make this a blessing to national Israel. (Rom. 11:12) We are seeing the beginning of this fulfillment in our day. The constant increase of this nation in power and influence is phenomenal, yet it should not be at all surprising because the Bible foretells it. Final thought: To base God's election upon anything except sovereign grace is to hate God's revelation. To make man the determiner of his destiny and God subject to that decision is a common but evil heresy. Where ever you find election in Scripture, common as it is, God is the elector. To make His action contingent upon any seen or foreseen act of man is to, in effect, make man the elector.

ISRAEL SHALL BE RESTORED NATIONALLY - Lesson 23

Romans 11:13-36 Memory verse: Rom. 11:26

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson Paul tells us that the present blessing upon the Gentiles is temporary, even as the blindness (in part) upon Israel has been the occasion of our blessing and salvation; therefore, we must not boast or show disdain toward Israel. We should be humble, grateful to God and compassionate toward Israel. The day is coming when God will judge the Gentile world and restore Israel. Even today we are seeing new political and military lines drawn against this people. We cannot help but wonder on which side our own nation will stand a few short years from now. It is very important, however, for when basically all nations stand against this little nation, God will fight for them and win. Read Revelation 19.

I. ISRAEL IS A UNIVERSAL OBJECT LESSON

A. God called, and chose, and blessed Israel from the time of Jacob. (Rom. 9:4-5, Rom. 9:10-13) This included economic, political and military favor.

B. This grace shown them made them more responsible to God. All men are responsible to God, but greater light and grace and opportunity, magnify responsibility.

C. They respond by rebellion and unbelief just as all humanity does. It is man's nature to abuse God's grace, even as they hate His judgments.

D. God judged them more often and more severely than any nation on earth. This was frequently loving chastisement to draw them unto Him. It was often harsh punishment that, except for God's immutability, would have destroyed them. (Mal. 3:6)

E. God recorded all these things that all the world might see and fear. (I Cor. 10:1-12) Have you ever thought of the free instruction you get from Israel's hard experience?

F. Thus their judgment and sorrow have become our illustrated sermon, unto repentance and salvation. (Rom. 11:15, 28-30)

I am better instructed to worship in **spirit** because of those who died over the idolatry of the golden calf. I am inclined to seek greater faith that I might trust when I would naturally doubt, because of the sorrow over the doubt at Kedesh-barnea. So, many of their recorded sorrows are my written instructions. It all teaches us that under any economy or government, man will rebel to his destruction unless prevenient grace intervenes.

II. SINCE GOD HAS SO USED THEM, HE WILL BLESS AND REWARD THEM ACCORDINGLY

A. As the seed of Isaac and vessels for God's use, they have always been Holy unto the Lord. (Rom. 11:16) They are eternally set aside for a multiplicity of divine purposes. Many of these will never appear on this side of the millennium.

B. God judged their sin and let us behold, that we might fear and be saved. (Rom. 11:21-22,30) This was part of God's eternal purpose for them as well as a means by which we were to be drawn.

C. If God has so used them, He will bless them. (Rom. 11:15, 26-31) Who but God, could so bring good out of evil? He does it, not by causing evil, but by permitting, overruling, directing and using it.

III. THE GENTILE STANDING IS TEMPORARY

A. Over 1900 years ago, God judged Israel. We then became the object of His mercy. (Rom. 11:10-20) Since that time multitudes of Gentiles have become heirs of God and joint heirs of Christ Jesus. Whatever any man enjoys for very long, he begins to take for granted.

B. This blessing is temporary. Soon God will exactly reverse this order. (Rom. 11:20-21,25) Whereas He has been calling mostly Gentiles, He will call mostly Jews. I think this will be the case during the tribulation period.

IV. ONLY GOD COULD SO USE MAN'S SIN TO MAN'S BENEFIT

A. Through man's sin and God's judgment, He called Israel (as out of Egypt). (Rom. 11:32-36) Consider the sin of Joseph's brothers, and then the sin of the Pharaoh. God did not tempt either Joseph's brothers or

Pharaoh. He simply directed their sin to His eternal purpose.

B. Through Israel's sin, He has called Gentiles out of the world unto salvation. (Rom. 11:11) Even as they murdered Stephen, the **fire** of their judgment became a **light** unto the Gentiles.

C. Through the sin of the Gentile world, Israel shall be brought to repentance and faith. (Rom. 11:25) Not many days hence they shall see the heavy hand of God upon great Babylon. But they shall concurrently feel the wrath of Babylon upon them.

D. All this shows God's love and wisdom. (Rom. 11:33) It is the sad nature of man to see, in God's judgment, only vengeance upon sin. This, of course, is there to behold. It is, however, the gift of grace to see His love operative in judgment, for what is destructive judgment to natural man, is saving chastisement to God's elect. Let us be not high-minded but fear.

YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE - Lesson 24

Romans 12:1-2 Memory verse: Rom. 12:2

INTRODUCTION

In the preceding four chapters, Paul has let us see (as through a glass darkly) the depth of the riches of God's infinite grace. He has shown us how God has predestinated, called, justified, and glorified His foreknown. (Rom. 8:29-30) He has shown us how God turns all, even evil, to be to our good. He closes chapter 11 by showing us how God has temporarily cast away Israel for our sakes. It is **in view of all this** that He says, "*I beseech you therefore.*" (Rom. 12:1) Let us remember that privilege is always accompanied by responsibility, as in citizenship, marriage, child-bearing, etc. The divine privilege of heavenly citizenship bears earthly responsibilities. To shirk the responsibility is to reduce the enjoyment of the privilege.

I. THE MOTIVATION FOR OUR SERVICE

Some people are trying to work their way to heaven. Of course, this is impossible. (Rom. 4:5-6) Nowhere does Paul tell us to work for mercy, but always because of it. The fact is, that to work for it is to deny the merciful nature of God. If you are trying, you are not trusting.

A. Mercy is God not giving us the punishment we justly deserve, (Rom. 5:6-8) for all mankind justly deserves everlasting punishment. We are told that God's mercy is sovereignly bestowed, therefore, let us bow down in obedient humility because it is bestowed upon us.

B. Grace is God giving us the Divine favor we do not deserve. (Rom. 9:11, 23-24) Not only sparing us from hell, but giving us place with Him in eternal glory. God's grace cannot be explained. To explain why He bestows it upon any certain individual is to deny it.

C. Mercy ought always to be our reason for serving our Lord, any other motive is an unworthy one.

II. THE EXTENT OF SERVICE

Paul says our service should not be limited at all. The Christian with a right heart never feels that he has done enough. The very word sacrifice denotes an unqualified surrender.

A. Present your bodies. This includes our minds, our hearts, mouths, and every useable part of us. In other areas we are told to yield and surrender our bodies. Here, Paul uses the wonderful word, **present**, showing how voluntary our yielding ought to be. By God's grace, let us not just understand it, let us do it.

B. A living sacrifice, that would mean our bodies no longer belong to us. To sacrifice something is to surrender ownership of it. Let every Christian consider himself to be God's property.

C. They are as the burnt offering, used up, never reclaimable. It is in this case though, not dead and symbolic, but living, useable, rendering service. As Christ, our sacrifice, is raised up to an eternal priesthood, let us rise up to do perpetual service in the house of God.

III. THE QUALIFICATION OF THIS SERVICE

A. They must be **Holy** to be acceptable unto God. God wants clean servants whose lives glorify Him. This is not to say we merit being used, but God basically does not use whom He does not cleanse.

B. This is not extraordinary service, but considering His mercies, this is only reasonable. Can you with clear conscience offer God any less? What are you giving?

IV. THE TRANSFORMATION

A. We are told not to be worldly; we should not be "conformed," but a misfit. A mistake of much Christian endeavor today is to impress the world by doing things like they do. Even in the work of God, many seek to mimic the world by appealing through fleshly enticements.

B. We are to undergo a transformation, making us conformable to **His will**, not the world's pattern. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ."

C. This comes about through a renewing of our mind, by prayer and Bible study and obedience. These things do not contribute anything to our salvation, but they contribute a great deal to our service. Are you conformed or transformed?

V. THE REVELATION

He says if we do this, we can prove (find out for ourselves) the will of God.

A. Often people say, "I do not know what God's will is." "How do I find out?"

B. The answer is simple.

1. Present your body
2. Be transformed in your mind.
3. Be holy and obedient in your living.

C. Then the will of God for you will be revealed or proven to you, but never as long as you ask with reservation. You must be ready to do it, no matter what it is.

The light of God may not shine far down the path of life, but it will always be in front of and around the obedient servant and child of God. If it shines only on the next step, take that step and you will see the light shining yet farther.

CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR - Lesson 25

Romans 12:3-21 Memory verse: Rom. 12:21

INTRODUCTION

In verses 1 and 2, Paul has told us to present ourselves as a total sacrifice in the service of God. I dealt previously with the motivation and degree of service. Let us now consider some attitudes and actions toward self and others that are very important to Christian service. If attitude is wrong, we will not only impair service; we will wound and discourage others. A right attitude will not only increase the amount and improve the quality of our own service; it will tend to recruit others into that service. Guard your Christian attitude as carefully as you do your testimony. If it is wrong, your action will never be right.

I. OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD OURSELF - (Rom. 12:3-8)

- A.** Do not take yourself too seriously, but simply realize if you are indeed anything worthwhile, God made you that. (Rom. 12:3) Say as did Paul, "by the grace of God, I am what I am." God's work in you and through you should be taken very seriously.
- B.** God has many members in each church. Various abilities and functions (large and small) are necessary to complete the body. (Rom. 12:4) They are equally necessary to the church's functions.
- C.** We are thus dependent on each other. (Rom. 12:5) Never feel that you are independent of fellow Christians. You cannot function without them. God has so ordained it.
- D.** We should accept and exercise our individual gifts (large or small) with humility, remembering they came from God (they are gifts). (Rom. 12:6) Let us not be puffed up over any talent or personal ability. (1 Cor. 4:7)
- E.** Always remember, if we are to impart anything to others, we must wait until we have received it from God. (Rom. 12:6-8) Be sure that is its source. Often the drive to assert and prove one's self is devastating to their church.

II. OUR BEHAVIOR TOWARD OTHER CHRISTIANS

- A.** Avoid hypocritical claims of love. Let it be real. (Rom. 12:9) None of us love either God or our fellow Christian as much as we should. It is better to speak of God's love and never our own, than to over-state our love, or claim more than we have. Remember that we love God because He first loved us. Therefore, for any love we may have for Him or the brethren, we owe God the glory.
- B.** Be kind and show affection to fellow Christians. (Rom. 12:10) This is practical love and is both purer and more needful than verbally expressed love. Charity is not just a feeling, it is conduct.
- C.** Be zealous and efficient in God's business. (Rom. 12:11) Slouchiness or laziness never becomes a Christian. Christians should be the most energetic people anywhere.
- D.** Rejoice in God's promises regardless of circumstances. (Rom. 12:12) Circumstances are not the occasion of our joy. We are to joy in divine plan and promise. If faith is the evidence of things hoped for, though not seen, then we should be able to rejoice on the basis of God's promises.
- E.** Do unto others as you **would have** them do unto you. Notice Romans 12:13-16. Let us be patient and forgiving, given to hospitality and always sympathetic to emotional pressures of others.

III. BEHAVIOR TOWARD THOSE WHO MISTREAT US

One of the hardest things for a Christian is to respond in a Christian way to unchristian treatment; not only so, there is much misunderstanding as to what Christian response really is. Many think it is a passiveness toward sin, this is never the case.

- A.** Do not return evil for evil, but figure out a way to do things honorably before all men. (Rom. 12:17) Revenge is **never** a Christian right, but discipline is always a Christian responsibility.
- B.** Do all you possibly can to avoid conflict. (Rom. 12:18) Silence is golden, more often than it is yellow. There is a time to be passive. When you have been offended is usually one of those times.
- C.** Never try to get even for wrong done you, let God take care of it. (Rom. 12:19) Exercise proper responsibility in exposing and rebuking sin, then hold your peace. Not only should you then remain quiet to the offender, but, by God's grace, to everyone else.

D. Do good to those who mistreat you. In this way you will rebuke them and instead of you being overcome with their evil, evil should be defeated by your good. When an individual will not be exercised thereby, it is usually because they are reprobate before God. In such a case you can do nothing to either correct or convert. You should, by God's grace, adopt a posture of prayer and silence and leave everything else to God. He can and will use it to your good and His glory. (Rom. 8:28)

CHRISTIAN SUBJECTION TO AUTHORITY - Lesson 26

Romans 13:1-7 Memory verse: Rom. 13:1

INTRODUCTION

A good way for a Christian to destroy his testimony is to show rebellion to higher powers. We see this in the home, in the church, on the job, and in civil affairs. There are several Bible truths we need to see here. Rebellion is of Satan, whether it is rebellion against God at top governmental levels, or rebellion against parents in the home. Any time a Christian seems to find himself faced with a conflict of responsibility to divine and civil government, let him first examine himself and make sure that rebellion is not a basic element of his attitude. Acquaint yourself with the following facts:

I. ALL AUTHORITY IS ALLOWED BY GOD - (Rom. 13:1-2)

- A.** Even ungodly power can be used to God's glory. (Rom. 9:17) This does not mean we condone their wrong. It does mean we obey them as long as it is not in direct conflict to God's revealed will. Be sure you look for a way to obey, not for a conflict.
- B.** God sometimes puts His children under evil and oppressive authority to punish sin and turn them to God. (Ex. 1:7-12, Ex. 2:23-25) We should thus pray, instead of rebelling. Defend godly principles and divine law, not yourself.
- C.** All things work together. (Rom. 8:28) Did not the afflictions of Israel drive them to prayer? So shall all our afflictions.
- D.** Therefore, to resist these powers, is to resist God. (Rom. 13:2) We should speak for right, vote for godly men, then pray for them and obey the law. Most often resistance is for self-vindication or profit and not for divine principle.
- E.** Rebellion will bring the judgment of God. (Rom. 13:2) To stand against evil in an unchristian fashion, is to do right wrongly. This displeases God. Whatever you must stand against, be sure you stand in a godly fashion.

II. DOING RIGHT IS THE ANSWER TO THIS PROBLEM

It is relatively hard for even the most ungodly ruler to accuse a subject for doing good. It is true this sometimes happens, but it is less frequent than we imagine.

- A.** Even rulers who do wrong demand righteousness of their subjects. (Rom. 13:3) Have you ever noticed that crooks want honesty from their business associates? It is called honor among thieves. Pharaoh was a wicked man, but he was glad to have honest Joseph for his steward.
- B.** We should then have **proper** respect for them, being in subjection to their authority. This does not mean that we respect their evil, whether it is moral or political, but that we respect the office they hold. Thus, we deny all natural impulses to rebellion.
- C.** He (though he may be evil) is God's minister (to thee) for your own good. (Rom. 13:4a) God has a purpose of some kind in every government on earth, or He would not permit its existence. Do not demand that understanding precede obedience.
- D.** Therefore, be afraid to rebel, knowing that God has put him in a position and given him the power and right to execute wrath against any evil you may do. (Rom. 13:4b) Do good and you tend to paralyze the most evil ruler. Remember what happened when evil tried to use Daniel's prayer habits against him.
- E.** A Christian must never assume that he has the right to ignore, or to defy legal authority, just because he sees unfairness there. God will judge all things in due season.

III. OBEDIENCE FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE

- A.** Knowing this, we must go further than just the letter of human law, or just enough to escape punishment. We must obey (in spirit) to clear our conscience. A true Christian can, if he tries, identify inward rebellion and the Spirit will convict him of such an attitude, whether it is a wife rebelling against an unsaved husband, or a man against unchristian government.
- B.** Pay tribute (taxes). The fact that we are citizens of heaven, does not relieve us of the responsibility of citizenship here. Therefore, we should pay due taxes. Work for reform? Yes! Rebel? No! Our present injustice

in this area is an excellent place for exercise.

C. Tribute, custom, fear, honor: This would include patriotism (in word) and proper responsibility in military service. The idea of conscientious objection is far removed from Christianity.

It has always been a mystery to me how so-called "conscientious objectors" to taxation, military service, patriotism, etc. can, in light of the Bible example, harmonize their rebellion with this Scripture. Part of the task of being a good Christian is being a good citizen.

LOVE FOR YOUR NEIGHBOR - Lesson 27

Romans 13:8-14 Memory verse: Rom. 13:10

INTRODUCTION

What the world needs is love. Now this does not mean permissiveness. It may well include punishment and penalty for sin, for so love does. Love, however, is the very nature of God and, therefore, if it were perfectly practiced among men, it would solve all the world's problems. There would be no wars, divorces, murders, thefts, rapes or child-beatings. You would never read about church fights and church splits. There would be no hunger in the world. The Gospel would be taken to every nation upon the earth and the glory of God would be sung from every mountain top. God's love is in perfect harmony with His holiness, thus we are to love what and only what God loves.

I. OWE NO MAN ANYTHING BUT LOVE - (Rom. 13:8)

People often misinterpret this verse as forbidding a Christian to buy on credit. It, of course, is speaking of something much deeper than money. To see it as dealing with money, is not only to misunderstand Christian economics but to miss the greatest teaching of the verse.

A. Do not be a debtor (in the sense of an unforgiven trespasser) to any. If you have offended a brother and he thus has aught against you, go to him in apology and thus gain your brother.

B. Make restitution for your wrongs, execute moral responsibility to society, and neighbor, and thus free yourself as their debtor. Sometimes apology cannot do this, restitution must be made. Sometimes restitution is impossible and free forgiveness is the only hope.

C. There is one debt, however, that we shall all forever owe. That debt is love. God so loved us, that we can spend our life and fortune loving mankind and our debt of love will be yet unpaid. However, we must not abandon the debt in despair, but spend our lifetime paying on it.

D. All that God demands of us is fulfilled in the nature and act of brotherly love. (Rom. 13:8)

Brotherly love is not just an attitude or an act, though it is both of these. It is the manifestation of this attitude and the daily perpetuation of loving acts toward our fellow man.

II. LOVE AND THE LAW OF GOD - (Rom. 13:9-10)

Nowhere is the importance of brotherly love more plainly stated. It is here that we learn of love's relationship to the law. Every one of the ten commandments is directly related to a moral obligation of man, either to God, or to other men. The first table of the law is to God, the second is to man, therefore:

A. The force that makes one keep the law is love for God and neighbor. *Illustration: If you love God, you will have no other gods. If you love your neighbor, you will not bear false witness.*

B. True brotherly love fulfills the law. (Rom. 13:9) Obviously, we all fall short. Nevertheless, this is a good standard to hold before our eyes. Do not consider yourself to have a "Degree" in Christianity without it.

C. The combining of verses 8-10 would indicate that the commandments serve for protection of your neighbor. That is to say that if we truly loved our neighbor, all those commandments would be obeyed involuntarily.

III. AN OUTLINE OF THE CHRISTIAN WALK

A. Live soberly, because of the shortness of time and the nearness of Christ's return. (Rom. 13:11) Every Christian in every age has been faced with the imminence of either death, or Christ's return. So far as divine revelation is concerned, all have been faced with both.

B. Purge our lives from dark (worldly deeds) and put on the armour of light. (Rom. 13:12) We should let our lights shine. let others, by your life, see Jesus Christ function through a Christian. It is the best sermon anyone can preach from a practical standpoint.

C. Walk **honestly** as in the light of day knowing that not only God but the whole world can see our manner of life. (Rom. 13:13) Abhor and abstain from gossip, lying, jealousy and such. These "common little faults" may well be the most harmful sins in many lives.

D. The means by which we can be sure to shine, is to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ." Let **Him** be our armour and our uniform. Let others see Jesus in us. We must not give way to the lusts of the flesh, but put on Christ. (Rom. 13:14)

Our shining should not be a light from within us, powered by our own religious energy. It should be a reflection showing forth Jesus Christ when the light of God shines upon us.

CHRISTIAN LOVE AND DOUBTFUL PRACTICES

Lesson 28

Romans 14:1-9 Memory verse: Rom. 14:7

INTRODUCTION

The issue here is not about those things that are clearly stated in the Scripture as right or wrong. It is rather dealing with questionable practices, and how we should treat other Christians who may have somewhat different practices from our own. We must not think he is saying, "pay no attention to the way your fellow Christian lives." There are far too many Scriptures that would teach differently, for instance, **I Cor. 5:1-5**. He is simply saying, be charitable in questionable things. In short, he is saying, do not allow personality and personal preferences to put you in a habit of despising others, or in a position of being a stumblingblock to them.

I. RECEIVE THE (SPIRITUALLY) WEAK INTO THE CONGREGATION

Now this does not say ungodly, just weak. This does not mean the unsaved, the reprobate or heretics. Beware, for often this Scripture is misused to justify the abandoning of all scriptural requirements.

A. The term **weak** here refers to the more legalistic Christian. He is weak in the knowledge of God's free grace. (Rom. 14:2) He may well put improper emphasis on ceremony, etc. This is not including men who contend for salvation by law.

B. He would be a saved man who, for instance, was a vegetarian (eateth herbs). (Rom. 14:2) He might have other practical reservations that go beyond Scripture but which do not violate biblical principles.

C. Receive him but not to the extent of allowing dispute among fellow Christians about these minor things. (Rom. 14:1) Do not receive him and then allow him to dispute with all about his "thing." It does not mean receive him then never try to teach him the truth of grace.

D. The man who exercises grace must not belittle or mistreat the narrow-minded man and vice versa, for God hath received them both. (Rom. 14:3)

It is good that a man need not understand all the depths and heights of grace to be saved. However, it is bad if he is allowed to use his weakness to neutralize or weaken others. The doubtful disputations forbidden here are not the teaching of grace to the "weak," but rather, the teaching of legalism by the weak. If this must be suffered, he is not to be received.

II. DO NOT JUDGE FELLOW CHRISTIANS - (Rom. 14:4)

This is not a commandment against church discipline as some claim. It forbids Pharisaic opinion and self-righteous comparison.

A. Who art thou that judgest? He is not your servant anyway, but God's. (Rom. 14:4) God does not need the expression of your opinion about His servants.

B. Moreover, your judgment of him makes him no smaller or greater. It is before God that he stands or falls. God will not listen to your opinion but someone else might, so be quiet and let God do the judging.

C. Not only so, but he shall stand and not fall, for God (who hath received him - Rom. 14:2) will hold him up. (Rom. 14:4) If he is indeed God's servant, your opinion cannot help or hurt him, but you may become the means of offense.

III. GODLY MOTIVE BEHIND ABSTINENCE AND INDULGENCE - (Rom. 14:5-6)

Woe to the man who abstains or indulges for salvation; but when it is for conscience's sake, God blesses it.

A. We have here two schools of thought and both are Christian.

1. There is the indulgent who eats meat of every kind and praises God for the liberty to do so. The same principle applies to hallowed days. (Rom. 14:5-6) He glories in the freeing grace of God.

2. There is the abstainer who refuses meats and respects hallowed days believing this to be God's will. (Rom. 14:5-6) He desires to subject his body to God, a holy, living sacrifice.

B. Neither is to be hated for his practice so long as it is love that motivates both, even though, through human weakness, either may get a little off balance.

C. No true Christian practices these things for his own glory but liveth unto the Lord. (Rom. 14:7) In other

words, he does them desiring to glorify God thereby. It must never be for salvation.

D. Our whole existence is for and unto God's glory. **It is for this purpose that Christ purchased us.** (Rom. 14:8-9)

Therefore, let your life be so directed. Whether you participate in a thing, or abstain from it, be sure your motive is God's glory and not the drawing of attention to yourself. Remember that the "crucifixion" of your own flesh is a good disciplinary exercise, for it is an abomination when done for exhibition.

* * * * *

JUDGE YOURSELF AND LEAVE OTHERS TO GOD

Lesson 29

Romans 14:10-23 Memory verse: Rom. 14:12

INTRODUCTION

It would seem that the Roman Christian shared a very common fault with Christians of today. The fault was that of condemning the faults of others, while excusing their own. Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, sets forth a very good and wise principle; "Judge yourself, correct your faults, and leave others to God." There are many good arguments in favor of this practice, one of which is this: When you express judgment of others, you do not convert them to right practices, you only make them angry. When you judge yourself to yourself, you tend toward correction of that fault. Certainly, this avenue of conduct is most desirable for the following reasons:

I. OUR JUDGMENT OF OTHERS IS PREMATURE, INCOMPETENT AND UNNECESSARY

- A.** Why bother to judge in the sense of condemning a fellow Christian. (He will stand before God.) He will have complete and totally fair judgment. Thus your activity in this area is a foolish waste of time.
- B.** By the same standard, do not discount or belittle a fellow Christian (the judgment seat shall determine the true value of his service). Your discrediting is, therefore, of no value at all, but it can be very discouraging to him.
- C.** Both, they and we, says Paul, shall give account unto God. This does not mean as some say, not to condemn sin; it just means do not evaluate your fellow Christian. Participate in church discipline where and as the Bible dictates and stop with that.

II. LET US JUDGE OURSELF INSTEAD - (Rom. 14:13-18)

- A.** Ceasing to judge others, let us make sure that we are not a stumblingblock to them. (Rom. 14:13) Rather, strive to be an undemanding example. By judging ourselves, we greatly improve that example.
- B.** As concerning the eating of meat (this would apply to all other questionable practices), Paul says nothing is unclean of itself. (Rom. 14:14,20, Titus 1:15)
Many habits, practices, recreations, personal tastes, etc. are not scripturally forbidden, but the side-effects of them may make them unacceptable practices for a Christian who wants to truly glorify God in his body.
- C.** But if a man who is weak in the knowledge of liberty (Rom. 14:2) considers a thing to be unclean in his mind, it is an unclean thing both for him and you. So be spiritually sensitive to his ignorance.
- D.** If he (through ignorance) is grieved with the food you eat (and the habits you practice), it is not charitable for you to continue therein (Rom. 14:15), for you thus become a stumblingblock. Do not let him use your conformity to impose legalism on others but:
- E.** Do not, for the sake of selfish privileges, destroy his faith. Christ loved him enough to die for him, can you not sacrifice a few privileges for him? (Rom. 14:15) Seek to build his faith in Christ, not shatter his faith in Christians.
- F.** Do not let your good (your liberty), be evil spoken of, rather forfeit it where necessary, for the Kingdom of God is of more important things. (Rom. 14:16-17) In other words, do not, for the sake of worldly liberty, make yourself the subject of unnecessary criticism.
- G.** The man who will extend his service to God to include these things, not only is acceptable unto God but is approved of men. (Rom. 14:18) Thus, he is a testimony, a bright and shining light pointing men to Christ. Is this not important enough to warrant the sacrifice?

III. THE WALK OF CHARITY

- A.** Let us follow after things (practice things) that edify others and promote peaceful Christian union (Rom. 14:19), rather than to insist upon pursuing selfish personal desires.
- B.** Do not destroy or hamper the work of God for such a small thing. (Rom. 14:20) The joys and results of all personal pursuit will one day perish but the work of God is forever.
- C.** It is sinful to knowingly exercise liberty that can cause others to stumble. (Rom. 14:21) Note the strength of

this statement. It is more than a "short coming," it is a sin! (1 Cor. 8:12)

D. Exercise your liberties privately and keep them to yourself (Rom. 14:22), not as in hypocrisy, but rather in humility.

E. The person who practices these things, believing them to be wrong, brings judgment upon himself. He may not be violating a biblical principle originally, but he is living in rebellion.

LIVING FOR OTHERS - Lesson 30

Romans 15:1-33 Memory verse: Rom. 15:1

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the book of Romans, Paul has shown how God in His infinite wisdom used the fall of the Jew to admonish and call the Gentile (Rom. 11:11), and how that through the fall of the Gentile world, God shall "graft in again" Israel. (Rom. 11:25-26) The difference in the two ways of life is the occasion of the disagreement over meats, days, etc. (Rom. 14:2,5-6)

Now in chapter 15, Paul says that both Jew and Gentile should each receive the other and walk in a way that will edify the other since Christ is the Saviour and Lord of both. This does not imply compromise of our own convictions but Christian conduct toward those who disagree. Walking in humility is often considered compromise by the proud but it is not, so do not let them intimidate you.

I. BEARING THE WEAKNESSES OF OTHERS

A. We who are strong in the doctrines of grace (notice I Cor. 8:7-9 ought to bear and be patient with the weakness (infirmities) of the doctrinally weak. (Rom. 15:1) Not chiding with them but in love endeavoring to correct their error, patiently teaching them both by precept and by demonstration.

B. Do not be so selfish as to exercise all your rightful liberties regardless of what it may do to the weak brother. (Rom. 15:2, Rev. 8:11-12) His Christian growth is more important than your personal privilege.

C. Remember the example of our Lord, who though He has God, condescended to the likeness of sinful flesh and suffered (for our sake) all the humiliation a sinful, God-reproaching world could heap upon Him. (Rom. 15:3) Though He was rich, owning all the universe, He became poor, having not enough food and nowhere to lay His head. Though He was all-glorious with the Father in the beginning, He became a man of no reputation for us. (Isa. 53:2) Let us seek to live by this example. Thus deny our own positional privileges for the sake of others.

II. ALL THINGS ARE FOR THE MUTUAL BENEFIT OF ALL BELIEVERS, JEW AND GENTILE ALIKE

A. All things previously written to the Jews (even those things which made them narrow in their thinking), were written for our benefit also. (I Cor. 10:6, Rom. 15:4) Though they may not directly restrain us, they are profitable teaching.

B. Because of this, Paul asks that we be given grace to accept each other. Each seeing the purpose the other serves in his salvation. Think of what we can learn from the sorrows of such as Achan and Ananias and Sapphira.

C. So, we are to receive and love each other, not on the basis of natural agreement, but because of a mutual Saviour. (Rom. 15:6-7) This same rule should be the tie that binds church members in Christian friendship.

III. PAUL'S PURPOSE IN LIFE AND WILL FOR THE ROMAN CHRISTIANS

A. Paul had great confidence in the Christians at Rome. (Rom. 15:14) He believed they were spiritual and able to exhort one another. How we should seek, by word and deed, to encourage each other! There is constantly a need among us for mutual encouragement.

B. Still he feels the need to remind them of his ministry which was to be the apostle to the Gentiles, lest they forget and become haughty against the truth. Paul was saying, "I have the God-given authority to speak, so you listen."

C. His ministry was that of proclaiming the Gospel where it **had not been preached**. (Rom. 15:20) He was a fisher of men, not a robber of aquariums.

D. Though he had longed for years to see them, he waited until he had preached the Gospel in all Syria, Macedonia and Achaia. (Rom. 15:23) Frequently a pastor might long to visit socially with church members but his responsibility is to preach the Gospel. Often he is not allowed to see all the results he wishes, but it is God who gives the increase.

E. Paul asks prayer that he might finish his work and be a blessing also to them. (Rom. 15:30-33) None of us

has ever, or ever shall, reach a plane of Christian maturity where we do not need the prayers and help of fellow Christians, nor where we are not obligated to be in prayer for them.

SALUTATIONS FROM PAUL TO THE ROMANS - Lesson 31

Romans 16:1-27 Memory verse: Rom. 16:17

INTRODUCTION

The sixteenth chapter is basically a paragraph of salutations to friends of Paul. We might thus expect that there would be nothing in it for us. However, there are several principles and truths set forth from which we can profit. The chapter reveals practices of the early churches which we should follow and problems from which we ought to learn. It portrays exemplary lives which we ought to follow. It also reveals to us that, even that church had trouble with heretics and instructs us as to how they should be dealt with.

I. COMMENDATION OF A FELLOW SAINT (PHEBE)

A. These saints did not receive just anyone who presented themselves into their fellowship. We, today, ought to be more inquisitive of applicants for membership. It would do much to retard the effect of those who go from one church to another making havoc of the work of God.

B. Paul included for Phebe a "letter" of recommendation to the Church at Rome. It was not a giving of permission to receive her, but a description of her character and service.

C. That recommendation was based upon past service and performance. If your "letter" was really granted according to performance as it was then, where would your membership be? Could you even get a "letter"?

II. THE DEDICATION OF ANCIENT CHRISTIANS

A. Aquila and Priscilla made Paul's acquaintance at Corinth. (Acts 18:1-3) You will remember how they gave him fellowship, shelter and employment.

B. Paul states that their dedication was such that they actually hazarded their own lives for him. (Rom. 16:4) This, of course, was because of their love for the Gospel. It seems they fitted their secular life into their church life, not vice versa as is done today.

C. Their dedication brought about not only the saving of Paul's life but the establishing and/or edifying of **all** Gentile churches. (Rom. 16:4)

D. Christians often may not know until eternity, the price or reward of making a single right decision. Therefore, let us do good wherever we are afforded opportunity. We never know what fruit may be indirectly borne by the smallest Christian service.

III. WARNING AGAINST HERETICS - (Rom. 16:17-18)

Just like churches today, the church at Rome was attacked by heretics.

A. Paul was not as liberal as some today erroneously claim we should be. He said, "Mark them." (Rom. 16:17) Many preachers today utterly refuse to practice this. What sorrow could be prevented in churches if we practiced this solemn responsibility.

B. Not only did he warn against doctrinal offenders but he also said look out for trouble-makers who "cause divisions." (Rom. 16:17) They also are to be **marked**. These are frequently more dangerous than heretics and are almost always more vicious in their character.

C. He tells us that their motive is not God's glory but their profit ("Their own belly - Rom. 16:18). They will thus lie, slander and gossip, hoping to elevate themselves by lowering others. This is always an imaginary elevation but it satisfies the very ignorant.

D. He did not say, give them the right to their opinion, debate with them, or any such thing, but simply **avoid them**. (Rom. 16:17) Do not fellowship with them, do not listen to them and do not talk to them. This is the most effective block against their evil efforts.

E. Paul did not ask that they become masters of strife, defending truth. He simply says be wise in truth, "that which is good" and "avoid that which is evil." Be simple about it. (Rom. 16:19) How many Christians who think they can "handle a bad mouth" find themselves grievously wounded by it. Garbage which you allow to "go in one ear and out the other" never quite misses your brain and heart.

IV. THE PROMISE OF VICTORY - (Rom. 16:20)

A. God shall bruise Satan under your feet. (Rom. 16:20) It may seem at times that we are destined to great abuse from Satan but this is very temporary.

B. Whether by death or Christ's return, we have the victory. We now can only enjoy victory by faith. Sometimes it seems we cannot enjoy it at all. One day, however, when God has "put all things under His feet," we shall reign with Him and see all Satan's hosts defeated to the glory of God.

ORDER AND USE THESE BOOKLETS

**BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH
Watchman Press
1902 NW Columbia
Lawton, OK 73507-5609**

Volume orders are discounted considerably.