SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 1

Not Ashamed of the Gospel — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God has a gospel, and it is about His Son — promised, born, raised, and preached to every nation as the power to save everyone who believes. That good news is needed because the whole world knew God and pushed Him away, and God has given it over to what it chose.

00 The Text

ROMANS 1 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, △ set apart for the gospel of God,

2 which He ☆ promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures,

3 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,

4 who was △ declared the Son of God with power △ by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,

5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about ▤ the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake,

6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;

7 to all who are beloved of God in Rome, ☆ called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your ⟲ faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.

9 For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the ⟲ gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you,

10 always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.

11 For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;

12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's ⟲ faith, both yours and mine.

13 I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.

14 ▤ I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.

15 So, for my part, ▤ I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

16 For ▤ I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is △ the power of God for salvation ☆ to everyone who believes, ◷ to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

17 For in it △ the righteousness of God is revealed from ⟳ faith to ⟳ faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man ☆ SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

18 For ⚠ the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who ⚠ suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, △ His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are ⚠ without excuse.

21 For even though they knew God, ⚠ they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 ⚠ Professing to be wise, they became fools,

23 and ⟳ exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

24 Therefore God ⟳ gave them over ⚠ in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

25 For they ⟳ exchanged ⚠ the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than △ the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

26 For this reason God ⟳ gave them over to ⚠ degrading passions; for their women ⟳ exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,

27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God ⟳ gave them over to ⚠ a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips,

30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;

32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also ⚠ give hearty approval to those who practice them.

Marked in the text

- **v1** "set apart for the gospel of God" — God — His character & actions
- **v2** "promised beforehand through His prophets" — Promise / blessing
- **v4** "declared the Son of God with power" — God — His character & actions
- **v4** "by the resurrection from the dead" — God — His character & actions
- **v5** "the obedience of faith" — Command / instruction
- **v7** "called as saints" — Promise / blessing
- **v14** "I am under obligation" — Command / instruction
- **v15** "I am eager to preach the gospel" — Command / instruction
- **v16** "I am not ashamed of the gospel" — Command / instruction
- **v16** "the power of God for salvation" — God — His character & actions
- **v16** "to everyone who believes" — Promise / blessing
- **v16** "to the Jew first and also to the Greek" — Time / place / contrast
- **v17** "the righteousness of God is revealed" — God — His character & actions
- **v17** "SHALL LIVE BY FAITH" — Promise / blessing
- **v18** "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven" — Sin / warning
- **v18** "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" — Sin / warning
- **v20** "His eternal power and divine nature" — God — His character & actions
- **v20** "without excuse" — Sin / warning
- **v21** "they did not honor Him as God or give thanks" — Sin / warning
- **v22** "Professing to be wise, they became fools" — Sin / warning
- **v24** "in the lusts of their hearts to impurity" — Sin / warning
- **v25** "the truth of God for a lie" — Sin / warning
- **v25** "the Creator, who is blessed forever" — God — His character & actions
- **v26** "degrading passions" — Sin / warning
- **v28** "a depraved mind" — Sin / warning

- **v32** “give hearty approval to those who practice them” — Sin / warning
- **v1** “gospel” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v5** “faith” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v23** “exchanged” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v24** “gave them over” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

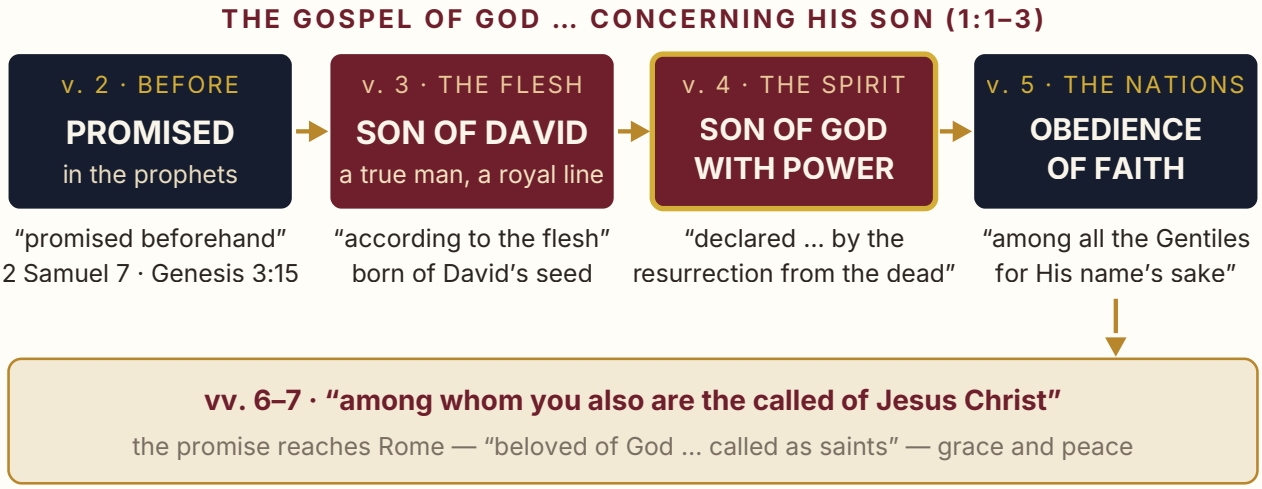
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 1:1

"Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, △set apart for the gospel of God,"

FIGURE · THE SHAPE OF THE GOSPEL · 1:1–7



Read the greeting left to right: promised in the prophets, born David's son, declared God's Son with power by the resurrection, and sent to the nations for the obedience of faith — which is how the gospel reached Rome, and us.

Setting. Paul writes from Corinth (about AD 57) to believers in Rome he has never met. He has longed for years to come (v13) and plans to pass through on his way to Spain (15:24). Chapter 1 is his self-introduction, his gospel in summary, his reason for writing, and the opening of his case that the whole world needs that gospel.

Structure:

- vv1–7 — **the greeting:** Paul, a bond-servant, called, set apart for the gospel of God (v1) — promised in the prophets (v2), concerning God's Son: descendant of David according to the flesh (v3), declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection (v4) — through whom grace and apostleship came, for the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles (v5). The Romans are "the called," "beloved of God," "called as saints" (vv6–7). Grace and peace.
- vv8–15 — **Paul and Rome:** thanks for their famous faith (v8); unceasing prayer to come (vv9–10); to impart a gift and be mutually encouraged (vv11–12); often planned, prevented so far (v13); under obligation to Greeks and barbarians, wise and foolish (v14); eager to preach in Rome (v15).
- vv16–17 — **the thesis:** not ashamed — the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, Jew first and also Greek (v16); in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith — Habakkuk 2:4 (v17).

- vv18–23 — **the indictment opens:** the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against men who suppress the truth (v18); what can be known of God is evident — His eternal power and divine nature clearly seen in creation — so they are without excuse (vv19–20); they knew God but did not honor Him or give thanks; futile, darkened, fools (vv21–22); they exchanged His glory for images of man and beast (v23).
- vv24–32 — **God gave them over:** to impurity (vv24–25), to degrading passions (vv26–27), to a depraved mind (v28); the harvest — a list of twenty-one sins (vv29–31); knowing they deserve death, they do them and approve of those who do (v32).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- "God" ×22 — vv1, 4, 7 (×2), 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 19 (×2), 21 (×2), 23, 24, 25, 26, 28 (×2), 30, 32. God is the subject of the chapter in both halves — His gospel, His power, His righteousness, His wrath, His handing over.
- "faith" ×6 — vv5, 8, 12, 17 (×3, counting the Habakkuk quotation).
- "gospel" ×4 — vv1, 9, 15, 16.
- "power" ×3 — v4 (the Son declared with power), v16 (the gospel is God's power), v20 (His eternal power seen in creation).
- "called" ×3 — vv1, 6, 7.
- "Son" ×3 — vv3, 4, 9.
- "revealed" ×2 — v17 (righteousness), v18 (wrath).
- "unrighteousness" ×3 — v18 (×2), v29; "righteousness / righteous" ×2 — v17.
- "exchanged" ×3 — vv23, 25, 26.
- "gave them over" ×3 — vv24, 26, 28.
- "truth" ×2 — vv18, 25.
- "wise" ×2 (vv14, 22) and "foolish / fools" ×3 (vv14, 21, 22).
- knowing words — "known" (v19), "knew" (v21), "acknowledge" (v28), "know" (v32): they always knew.

Contrasts: according to the flesh ⟷ according to the Spirit of holiness (vv3–4). Righteousness revealed in the gospel ⟷ wrath revealed from heaven (vv17–18). Paul gives thanks for them (v8) ⟷ the world would not give thanks (v21). Professing to be wise ⟷ became fools (v22). The incorruptible God ⟷ corruptible man, birds, animals, crawling things (v23). The truth of God ⟷ a lie; the Creator ⟷ the creature (v25). Natural ⟷ unnatural (v26). Paul "eager" to give (vv11, 15) ⟷ people eager to approve sin (v32). The "obedience of faith" (v5) ⟷ "disobedient to parents" (v30).

Text notes. KJV "Jesus Christ" (v1) and "the gospel of Christ" (v16) follow the later manuscripts; NASB95 reads "Christ Jesus" and "the gospel." KJV's vice list has twenty-three items (adding "fornication" in v29 and "implacable" in v31); NASB95 has twenty-one.

Shape of the chapter: a door, a longing, a thesis, and a descent. The first seventeen verses rise to the gospel; verses 18–32 go down a staircase — suppress, refuse to thank, exchange, given over — three times over, each step lower.

Chapter theme (my words): The gospel of God is about His Son and is God's power to save everyone who believes; it reveals a righteousness from God received by faith. And it is needed, because the whole world knew God, refused to thank Him, traded Him for idols, and has been handed over to what it chose.

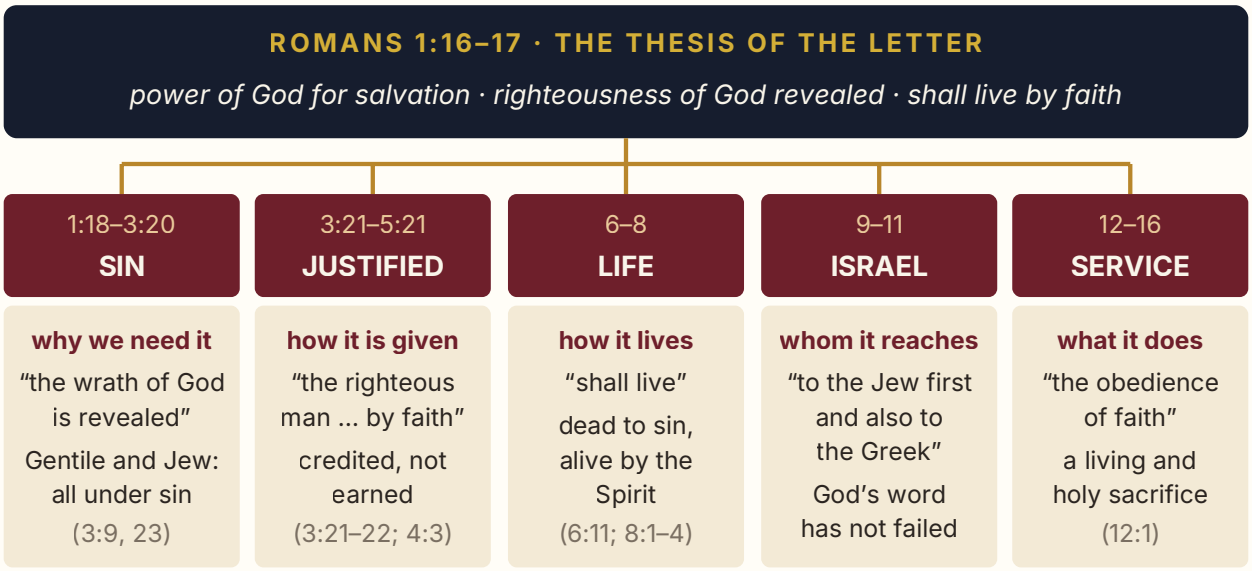
02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 1:17

"For in it △the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man ☆SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.'"

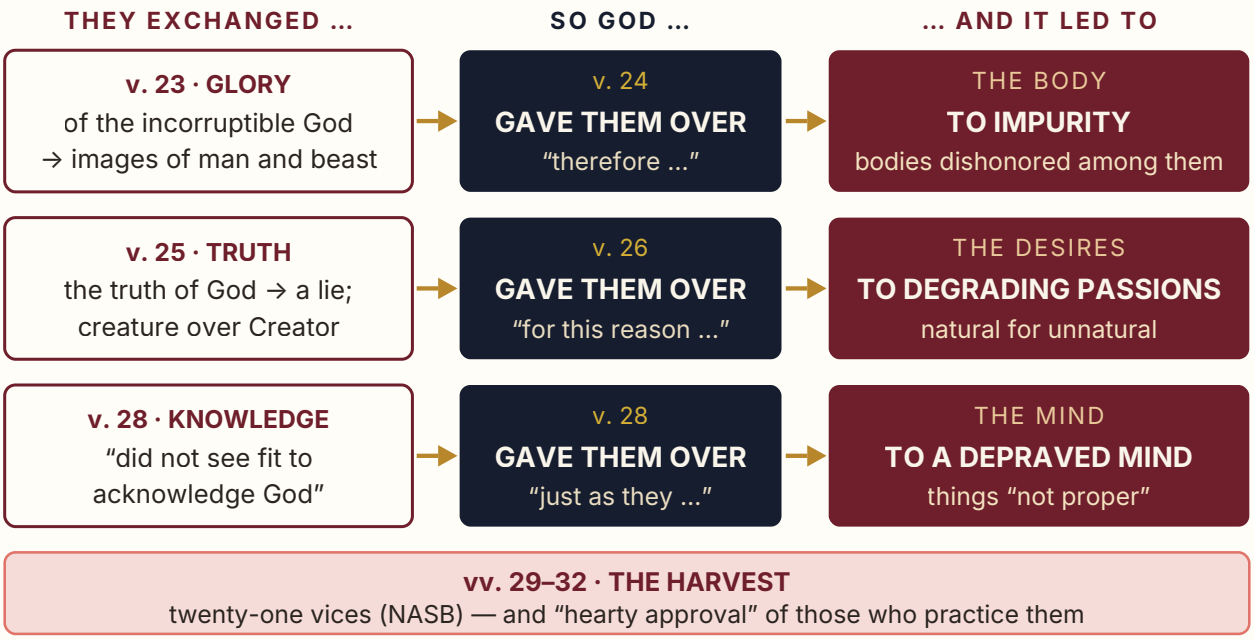
FIGURE · ROMANS 1:16–17 AS A MAP OF THE LETTER



"obedience of faith" opens the letter (1:5) and closes it (16:26)

The thesis unfolds into the whole letter: why everyone needs God's righteousness, how it is given by faith, how the righteous live, what it means for Israel, and what the obedience of faith looks like.

FIGURE · EXCHANGED, SO GIVEN OVER · 1:23–32



Same verb, παραδίδωμι: the Father "delivered Him over for us all" (8:32) — the Son given over for the given-over.

Each row reads left to right: what people exchanged, God's answer ("gave them over"), and where it led — the body, the desires, the mind — until the harvest of verses 29–32. The same verb is used of the Father giving up His Son.

Who is the gospel about? (vv1–4). The gospel is "of God" — He owns it (Sproul: the genitive of possession; "The gospel does not originate with Paul; it originates with God") — and it is "concerning His Son." Two lines describe Him: according to the flesh, a true man of David's royal line (2 Sam 7:12–13); according to the Spirit of holiness, "declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection." Guzik, with Clarke: "declared" means put beyond doubt. The Greek *horizō* is to mark a boundary: the resurrection did not make Jesus God's Son, it marked Him out publicly — and Acts 17:31 uses the same verb of the Man God "has appointed." Henry and Spurgeon both read the two natures here: "He was a man, therefore he died: but he rose again, for he was more than man" (Spurgeon).

What does it mean that Paul is a "bond-servant"? Sproul insists on "slave": a *doulos* was bought and owned, and Paul knew no gap between Jesus as Savior and Jesus as Lord. Guzik, with Morris, softens the picture without losing it — "complete and utter devotion." Henry calls him a steward in the house. All three agree: Paul's identity begins with whose he is.

"The obedience of faith" (v5). Is faith the obedience, or does obedience come from faith? Henry holds both — the mind submitting to God's revelation, the will to His commands. Paul ends Romans with the same phrase (16:26), so the letter is bracketed by it. Faith is not a feeling about God; it is surrender to Him.

Paul's debt (vv8–15). Guzik: Paul did not found this church; it likely grew from Pentecost converts (Acts 2:10). Paul's "obligation" is not something he borrowed but something Christ laid on him (Henry: "His receivings made him a debtor"); Sproul says the same debt reaches everyone a Christian meets. Spurgeon preached a whole sermon on "I am ready" — Paul the Ready — ready to preach, suffer and die, but never to preach another gospel.

What is "the righteousness of God" (v17)? All four teachers read it as the righteousness God *gives* — Guzik: "the God-kind of righteousness that is given to the sinner who puts their trust in Jesus Christ"; Sproul: Luther's "alien righteousness," not the righteousness by which God is righteous. Luther hated the phrase while he thought it meant God's punishing justice, and the Reformation began when he saw it as a gift. (Some modern scholars stress God's own saving faithfulness here; Romans 3:26 shows both are true — God is just and the justifier.) Abraham is the pattern: "Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Gen 15:6).

"From faith to faith." Guzik: "by faith from beginning to end." Henry: "all along from faith to faith." Habakkuk 2:4 was spoken while Babylon was coming; the righteous man would live by trusting God's word in the dark. Sproul: to live by faith is not merely to believe God exists but to trust what He says. Paul drops Habakkuk's "his" and quotes it again in Galatians 3:11.

Why does wrath come right after good news (v18)? The "For" ties them. Sproul calls 1:18–3:20 preparatory — the gospel is good news only to people who know they are guilty. Guzik with Murray: wrath is "the holy revulsion of God's being" against what contradicts His holiness; Sproul: "He is not merely irritated." Righteousness and wrath are both "revealed," present tense — both are happening now.

Can creation save anyone? (vv19–20). All four say creation is enough to condemn, not enough to save. The knowledge is real — Henry: "The workman is known by his work"; Spurgeon hears "a gospel of the sea, and of the heavens, of the stars, and of the sun" — and it leaves people "without excuse" (*anapologētos*, no defense). Sproul pushes hardest: there are no innocent people, the agnostic has no safe harbor — "Your problem is not an intellectual problem" — but he distinguishes this knowledge from the saving knowledge only the Spirit gives. The problem is not that people do not know; it is that they "suppress the truth" (*katechō*, hold it down). Henry: the heart is "the dungeon in which many a good truth is detained and buried."

The first sin is ingratitude (v21). Spurgeon's sermon on vv20–21 — *Inexcusable Irreverence and Ingratitude* — says they never denied God existed; they gave Him no reverence and no thanks. Guzik: knowledge without holy practice is useless. Then the slide: futile reasoning, a darkened heart, foolishness dressed as wisdom — "The way to be a fool is to pretend to be wise" (Spurgeon).

The exchanges (vv23, 25, 26). Glory for an image, truth for "the lie," the natural for the unnatural. Psalm 106:20 says Israel did the same at Sinai. Guzik: we keep making God in our own image, or one beneath us — and we become like what we worship. Sproul answers Freud: fallen people would never invent a *holy* God; they invent manageable ones.

What does "God gave them over" mean? (vv24, 26, 28). Sproul: judicial abandonment — God takes His restraining hand off. Henry: the withdrawing of restraining grace, so the punishment matches the sin — "Those who dishonoured God were given up to dishonour themselves." Guzik: "It is actually His wrath that allows us to go on destroying ourselves with sin." Sproul's hard line: "Most of the time, when we sin, we are working out God's punishment for our sin." Yet *paradidōmi* is also the gospel's verb — Christ "was delivered over because of our transgressions" (4:25); God "delivered Him over for us all" (8:32).

Verses 26–27. Guzik, Sproul and Henry all read "against nature" as against God's created order, not merely custom (Sproul: "against nature as God has created it"), and Sproul calls it Paul's clearest picture of a world turned upside down — while insisting that sex itself is "a beautiful thing, a divine creation." Then Paul immediately widens the list to gossip, envy, arrogance and disobedience to parents; Guzik notes the respectable sins stand beside murder. No one reads this list from above — chapter 2 turns to the reader who nods along (2:1).

Worse than doing it (v32). Henry: approving others' sin is a deeper sin, because it defends wickedness and spreads it. Sproul: we look for allies to lessen our guilt. The list ends not with the worst act but with the worst attitude — applause.

Word study (Greek):

- **bond-servant — *doulos* (G1401):** slave, one owned by a master.
- **set apart — *aphōrizō* (G873):** to mark off by a boundary; perfect participle, set apart and still so.
- **declared — *horizō* (G3724):** to mark out, define, appoint (also Acts 17:31).
- **power — *dynamis* (G1411):** ability, might — the gospel *is* God's power (v16), the Son declared *with* power (v4).
- **obedience — *hypakoē* (G5218):** obedience that begins with listening.
- **under obligation — *opheiletēs* (G3781):** debtor.
- **eager — *prothymos* (G4289):** ready, willing in spirit.
- **ashamed — *epaischynomai* (G1870):** to be ashamed of, to disown.
- **righteousness — *dikaiosynē* (G1343):** the righteousness from God received by faith.
- **revealed — *apokalyptō* (G601):** unveiled — present tense in vv17 and 18.
- **wrath — *orgē* (G3709):** God's settled, holy opposition to evil.
- **suppress — *katechō* (G2722):** to hold down, restrain.
- **without excuse — *anapologētos* (G379):** without a defense (also 2:1).
- **divine nature — *theiotēs* (G2305):** divinity, what God is (KJV "Godhead").
- **exchanged — *allassō* (G236), *metallassō* (G3337):** to trade one thing for another.
- **gave over — *paradidōmi* (G3860):** to hand over into custody; used of Christ in 4:25 and 8:32.
- **depraved — *adokimos* (G96):** failed the test, unapproved; a play on *dokimazō* (G1381), "see fit."
- **give hearty approval — *syneudokeō* (G4909):** to be pleased together with (Acts 8:1).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The first word is "slave."** No Savior who is not also Lord.
2. **The resurrection marked Him out; it did not make Him Son.** *Horizō* — the boundary line of a horizon.
3. **"Obedience of faith" frames the letter** (1:5; 16:26).
4. **Paul the Ready** — ready for anything except another gospel (Spurgeon).
5. **The gospel is power, not advice** (Morris, in Guzik).
6. **A given righteousness** — Luther's discovery, Sproul's "alien righteousness."
7. **Two revelations, one verb** — righteousness revealed (v17), wrath revealed (v18).
8. **Truth is not missing; it is held down** — Henry's "dungeon."
9. **The first sin named is ingratitude** (v21).
10. **God gives us what we insist on — and then gives His Son** (1:24; 8:32).

Cross-references: Gen 3:15; 15:6; 2 Sam 7:12–13; Ps 19:1; 81:12; 106:20; Jer 2:11; Hos 4:17; Hab 2:4; Matt 27:18; Mark 8:38; Acts 2:10; 8:1; 17:30–31; Rom 2:1; 3:21–26; 4:25; 8:32; 16:25–26; 1 Cor 1:18; Gal 3:11; Eph 4:17–19; Phil 3:9; 2 Tim 1:8; 2:8.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 1:16

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

Command to obey — the obedience of faith. Paul's gospel was meant to produce obedience, not just agreement (v5). Faith that never bends my will is not the faith Paul preached. Today I'll name one thing God has plainly told me to do that I have been "believing about" instead of doing — and do it.

Sin to confess — ingratitude and suppressed truth. The slide in this chapter starts with two quiet sins: not honoring God as God, and not giving thanks (v21). I know that slide. Every relapse I've watched in a man's life — and in mine — started with a heart that stopped thanking God and started holding down something it knew was true. I confess where I have pushed truth down because it was inconvenient.

Warning to heed — "God gave them over." The scariest sentence in the chapter is God letting people have what they insisted on. Addiction works exactly this way: I exchange the real thing for a counterfeit, and then the counterfeit owns me. The "freedom" to keep sinning is not mercy; it is judgment (Guzik). And verse 32 warns me about the applause — the circle of friends who cheer each other into sin. I don't want to be one of the cheerers, and I don't want the men I serve surrounded by them.

Promise to trust — power for everyone who believes. The gospel is not a self-improvement plan; it is "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (v16). Everyone — the man in a cell, the man with a needle, the respectable man whose sins are on the "polite" end of the list. The righteousness I need is given, not earned, and I live by it "from faith to faith." And the verb that handed the world over is the verb that handed Christ over for me (8:32).

Example to follow — Paul the Ready. Paul prayed without ceasing for people he had never met (vv9–10), counted himself in debt to every kind of person (v14), and was eager to preach (v15). I want to be "ready" like that (Spurgeon) — ready to share the gospel with the next man I meet, not ashamed of it in the yard, at the job site, or at my own table.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Paul's first word about himself is "bond-servant." If someone described me by what owns me, what would they say — and what would Paul want them to say? (1:1; 6:17–18) *A slave of Christ is the only free man.*
2. Paul said, "I am under obligation" to people he had never met. Who are my Greeks and barbarians — the people God has put me in debt to with the gospel? (1:14–15; 1 Cor 9:16) *The more grace received, the more is owed.*
3. Where am I most tempted to be ashamed of the gospel — at work, with family, inside, online? What would "not ashamed" look like there this week? (1:16; 2 Tim 1:8) *The cure for shame is confidence in what the gospel is.*
4. Paul says the deepest sin is suppressing truth I already know. What truth about God or myself have I been holding down? (1:18–21; John 3:19–21) *When you and the truth quarrel, end the fight soon.*

5. Verse 21 makes ingratitude the first step down. What happens in my heart when I stop thanking God? (1:21; 1 Thess 5:18) *Thankfulness keeps God as God.*
6. “God gave them over” — He let them have what they wanted. Have I ever gotten what I insisted on and found it was a judgment? How does 8:32 change the story? (1:24–28; 4:25; 8:32) *The Son was handed over so the handed-over could come home.*

Worship. The God who could have left the whole world in its exchange instead sent a gospel about His Son — promised for centuries, born in David’s line, raised in power — and calls people like me “beloved of God” and “saints” (v7). The Creator “who is blessed forever. Amen” (v25) is blessed by me today.

Prayer. Father, thank You — I don’t want to be a man who knows You and will not thank You. Forgive me for the truth I have held down and the counterfeits I have traded You for. Don’t give me over to what I want; give me what You gave: Your Son, handed over for me. Make me a bond-servant who is not ashamed of the gospel and ready to preach it to anyone You put in front of me. Let the righteous live by faith — starting with me, today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 2

No Partiality with God — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The man who judges sinners is a sinner on trial, and God's kindness to him is a call to repent, not a pass. God judges by truth, by deeds, without favorites, down to the secrets — so the only Jew, and the only Christian, who stands is the one whose heart God has cut and whose praise comes from God.

00 The Text

ROMANS 2 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

2 And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

3 But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?

4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

6 who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS:

7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;

8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

9 There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek,

10 but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

11 For there is no partiality with God.

12 For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;

13 for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.

14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves,

15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,

16 on the day when, according to my gospel, ⚠ God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

17 But if you bear the name "Jew" and rely upon the ⟲ Law and ⚠ boast in God,

18 and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the ⟲ Law,

19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,

20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the ⟲ Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth,

21 you, therefore, who teach another, ⚠ do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?

22 You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

23 You who boast in the ⟲ Law, through your breaking the ⟲ Law, ⚠ do you dishonor God?

24 For "⚠ THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU," just as it is written.

25 For indeed ⟲ circumcision is of value if you practice the ⟲ Law; but if you are a transgressor of the ⟲ Law, your ⟲ circumcision has become uncircumcision.

26 So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the ⟲ Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as ⟲ circumcision?

27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the ⟲ Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the ⟲ Law and ⟲ circumcision are a transgressor of the ⟲ Law?

28 For he is not a Jew who is one ◷ outwardly, nor is ⟲ circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

29 But he is a Jew who is one ◷ inwardly; and ☆ circumcision is that which is of the heart, ◷ by the Spirit, not by the letter; and ☆ his praise is not from men, but from God.

Marked in the text

- **v1** "you have no excuse" — Sin / warning
- **v1** "you condemn yourself" — Sin / warning
- **v2** "rightly falls" — God — His character & actions
- **v3** "escape the judgment of God" — Sin / warning
- **v4** "the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience" — God — His character & actions
- **v4** "leads you to repentance" — Promise / blessing
- **v5** "stubbornness and unrepentant heart" — Sin / warning
- **v5** "storing up wrath for yourself" — Sin / warning
- **v5** "the day of wrath" — Time / place / contrast
- **v6** "ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS" — God — His character & actions
- **v7** "perseverance in doing good" — Command / instruction
- **v7** "eternal life" — Promise / blessing
- **v8** "wrath and indignation" — Sin / warning
- **v9** "of the Jew first and also of the Greek" — Time / place / contrast
- **v11** "there is no partiality with God" — God — His character & actions
- **v13** "doers of the Law will be justified" — Time / place / contrast
- **v15** "the work of the Law written in their hearts" — God — His character & actions
- **v15** "conscience" — Time / place / contrast
- **v16** "God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus" — God — His character & actions
- **v17** "boast in God" — Sin / warning
- **v21** "do you not teach yourself?" — Sin / warning
- **v23** "do you dishonor God?" — Sin / warning
- **v24** "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU" — Sin / warning
- **v28** "outwardly" — Time / place / contrast
- **v29** "inwardly" — Time / place / contrast
- **v29** "circumcision is that which is of the heart" — Promise / blessing
- **v29** "by the Spirit, not by the letter" — Time / place / contrast
- **v29** "his praise is not from men, but from God" — Promise / blessing
- **v12** "Law" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v25** "circumcision" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

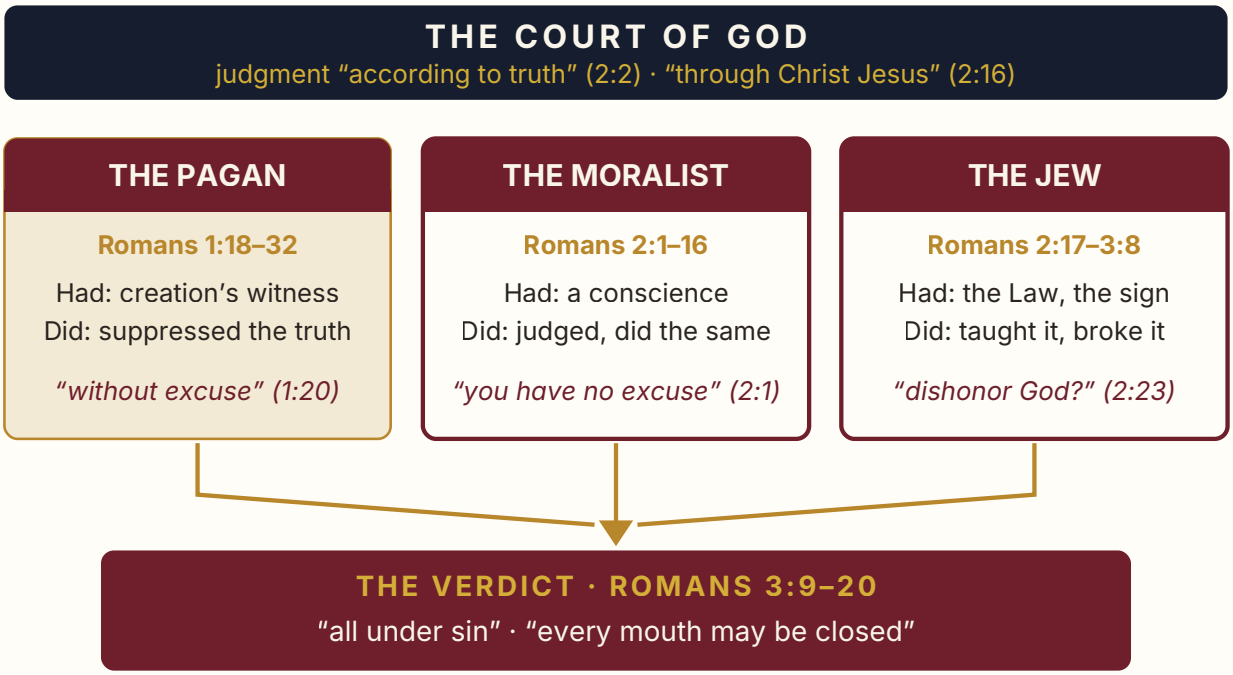
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 2:1

"Therefore ⚠ you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, ⚠ you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things."

FIGURE · THE COURTROOM OF ROMANS 1:18–3:20



Read left to right: three defendants, three different defenses — and one verdict that closes every mouth. Romans 2 is the middle box and the start of the third.

Setting. Paul has just finished the pagan's indictment (1:18–32), ending with people who "practice such things" and approve those who do them (1:32). Romans 2 opens with "Therefore" and turns to the one who agrees with that list — "everyone of you who passes judgment." By verse 17 the man in the dock has a name: "you bear the name 'Jew.'"

Structure:

- vv1–5 — **the judge who does the same:** no excuse; in judging another you condemn yourself (v1). God's judgment rightly falls on those who practice such things (v2). Do you suppose you will escape (v3)? Do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness, tolerance and patience — not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance (v4)? Stubbornness and an unrepentant heart are storing up wrath for the day of wrath (v5).

- vv6–11 — **according to deeds:** God will render to each person according to his deeds (v6). Two roads: perseverance in doing good, seeking glory, honor and immortality → eternal life (v7); selfish ambition, disobeying the truth, obeying unrighteousness → wrath and indignation (v8). Tribulation for evil, glory for good, "of the Jew first and also of the Greek" (vv9–10). "For there is no partiality with God" (v11).
- vv12–16 — **the Law, the heart and the secrets:** without the Law → perish without the Law; under the Law → judged by the Law (v12). Hearers are not just; doers will be justified (v13). Gentiles without the Law show the work of the Law written in their hearts; conscience bears witness, thoughts accuse or defend (vv14–15). All on the day God judges the secrets of men through Christ Jesus, according to Paul's gospel (v16).
- vv17–24 — **the Jew's boast:** nine claims — the name, relying on the Law, boasting in God, knowing His will, approving the essentials, guide to the blind, light in darkness, corrector of the foolish, teacher of the immature (vv17–20). Five questions: teach yourself? steal? commit adultery? rob temples? (vv21–22) — and, boasting in the Law, do you dishonor God by breaking it? (v23). Isaiah 52:5: God's name blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you (v24).
- vv25–29 — **the circumcision of the heart:** circumcision has value if you practice the Law; break it and it becomes uncircumcision (v25). The uncircumcised who keeps the Law is regarded as circumcised, and will judge the transgressor (vv26–27). Not outward, in the flesh — but inward, of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; praise not from men but from God (vv28–29).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- **Law** — 22 times: v12 (4), v13 (2), v14 (4), v15, v17, v18, v20, v23 (2), v25 (2), v26, v27 (3). Every occurrence falls in vv12–27; the first eleven verses never use it.
- **judge / judgment / judged** — 10: v1 (3), v2, v3 (2), v5, v12, v16, v27.
- **God** — 11: vv2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 13, 16, 17, 23, 24, 29.
- **circumcision** — 6 (vv25 twice, 26, 27, 28, 29), plus **uncircumcision / uncircumcised** — 4 (vv25, 26 twice, 27).
- **Jew** — 5: vv9, 10, 17, 28, 29; **Greek** — 2 (vv9, 10); **Gentiles** — 2 (vv14, 24).
- **wrath** — 3 (v5 twice, v8); **heart / hearts** — 3 (vv5, 15, 29); **teach / teacher** — 3 (v20, v21 twice).

Contrasts:

- judging others / doing the same (vv1, 3); riches of kindness / storing up wrath (vv4–5)
- seeking glory, honor, immortality / selfishly ambitious (vv7–8); eternal life, glory, peace / wrath, tribulation, distress (vv7–10)
- without the Law / under the Law (v12); hearers / doers (v13); accusing / defending (v15)
- teaching others / not teaching yourself (v21); abhorring idols / robbing temples (v22)
- circumcision / uncircumcision (vv25–27); outwardly / inwardly; flesh / heart; letter / Spirit; praise from men / from God (vv28–29)

Shape of the chapter: a narrowing spotlight. It starts on "everyone of you who passes judgment," widens to "each person" and "every soul of man," then narrows to "you … who bear the name 'Jew,'" and lands on the smallest, most hidden place of all — the heart.

Chapter theme (my words): No one gets out of God's court by being better than the next man, knowing more Bible, or carrying the right religious mark. God sees the secrets, judges without favorites, and only a heart He has changed will stand.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 2:16

"on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus."

FIGURE · HOW GOD JUDGES — ROMANS 2:1–16

1	**According to truth** The facts of the case — not our reputation, not our spin.	2:2
2	**According to deeds** What we did with what we knew — not what we knew.	2:6
3	**Without partiality** No favorites: Jew and Greek, church member and outsider alike.	2:11
4	**According to light** The written Law for those who had it; conscience for those who did not.	2:12–15
5	**The secrets, through Christ Jesus** The hidden heart, judged by the Man God appointed (Acts 17:31).	2:16

Five principles from the paragraph, top to bottom. Each one closes a door the moralist hoped was open; the last names the Judge.

Who is "O man" in verse 1? Guzik hears the moral, respectable person of any background — the kind of Roman moralist (he names Seneca) who condemned vice and kept his own. Henry allows that wide application but says Paul "intends especially the Jews," and Sproul likewise reads "O man" as Paul's kinsmen judging the Gentiles. The text supports both: the address is general in vv1–16, and by v17 it is unmistakably the Jew. For me the point is the same — the man nodding at Romans 1 is now on trial.

Does "according to his deeds" (vv6–10) teach salvation by works? No teacher here says so, but they read it differently. Guzik takes it as a real standard no one meets: "if someone genuinely did good at all times, he could merit eternal life," but "all … are, have been, or will be self-seeking." Sproul reads it as the judgment of the justified and the unjustified alike: "Our justification is by faith alone, but our rewards in heaven will be distributed according to our works." I will hold both: works can never earn, and works will always reveal.

Who are the Gentiles who "do instinctively the things of the Law" (vv14–15, 26–27)? Sproul: Paul is not saying Gentiles keep the law better; everyone is judged by the light they had, and conscience is enough to condemn. Guzik calls the law-keeping Gentile a hypothetical — "a very big 'if'" (Morris, quoting Manson). Henry takes them

as real: "Doubtless, there were many such instances," with Cornelius as his example. Many later interpreters see Gentile Christians in vv26–29, since the heart is circumcised "by the Spirit." Paul's argument in 3:9–20 settles the bottom line: no one is justified by the works of the Law.

Why "through Christ Jesus" (v16)? Guzik: judgment through the Messiah "is distinctively Christian." Spurgeon: the Redeemer is the "Umpire of our destiny," so the verdict will be "indisputable." The Judge of my secrets bore my sin — terror to the hypocrite, comfort to the penitent.

What is the true circumcision (vv28–29)? Sproul: "an outward sign of what God promises to do inwardly." Guzik: a label on a can. Henry carries it into the church: "he is a Christian that is one inwardly." Moses promised it (Deut 30:6); Paul says the Spirit does it.

Word study (Greek):

- **without excuse — *anapologētos* (G379):** no defense in court; only here and 1:20 in the New Testament. The pagan and the moralist get the same word.
- **kindness — *chrēstotēs* (G5544):** goodness that does good; with *anochē* (tolerance, G463) and *makrothymia* (patience, G3115), the "riches" of v4.
- **storing up — *thēsaurizō* (G2343):** to treasure up, amass; the banking verb turned toward wrath (v5).
- **selfishly ambitious — *eritheia* (G2052):** self-seeking, partisan rivalry; KJV "contentious" (v8).
- **partiality — *prosōpolēmpsia* (G4382):** "face-taking," accepting a person for his status; four times in the NT (v11).
- **conscience — *syneidēsis* (G4893):** "knowing-with," the inner witness; it accuses or defends (v15).
- **secrets — *kryptos* (G2927):** the hidden things judged (v16); "inwardly" in v29 is the same word.
- **embodiment — *morphōsis* (G3446):** form — real substance or empty shell; also 2 Tim 3:5 (v20).
- **rob temples — *hierosyleō* (G2416):** plunder a shrine; only here (v22).
- **circumcision — *peritomē* (G4061); letter — *gramma* (G1121); praise — *epainos* (G1868):** the sign, the written code, and the verdict from God (vv25–29).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. The judge's own verdict convicts him: same word for pagan and moralist (1:20; 2:1).
2. God's kindness is not permission; its purpose is repentance (2:4).
3. God draws before He judges — "not by driving, but by drawing" (Spurgeon).
4. "According to deeds": Guzik sees a standard no one meets; Sproul sees the rewards of the justified. Neither teaches salvation by works.
5. "Jew first" runs both ways — privilege raises accountability (1:16; 2:9–10).
6. Conscience is enough to condemn, never enough to save — "the candle of the Lord … not quite put out" (Henry).
7. The Judge of the secrets is Jesus (2:16; Acts 17:31).
8. Signs point beyond themselves: "the only baptism that matters is the baptism of the heart" (Sproul); the true Jew's praise is from God.

Cross-references: Matt 7:1–2 · Ps 62:12 · Prov 24:12 · 2 Pet 3:9 · Acts 17:31 · Eccl 12:14 · Jer 31:33 · Isa 52:5 · Deut 30:6 · Jer 4:4 · 1 Sam 16:7 · Phil 3:3 · Rom 3:9–20

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 2:29

"But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God."

FIGURE · OUTWARD AND INWARD — ROMANS 2:28–29

	OUTWARDLY (2:28)	INWARDLY (2:29)
WHERE	"outward in the flesh"	**"of the heart"**
BY WHAT	"by the letter"	**"by the Spirit"**
SEEN BY	men — a mark on the body	**God — a changed heart**
PRAISE	"from men"	**"from God"**

"Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart …" — Deuteronomy 30:6

Read across each row: the left column can be seen and counted by men; the right column only God can see — and only God can praise.

Command to obey — "Do not think lightly of His kindness." I can list the kindnesses: I'm alive, I'm married, I have work, men trust me with their stories. Romans 2:4 says every one of those is a hand on my shoulder turning me toward repentance. Today I'll name one sin I've kept because God "hasn't done anything about it," and I'll repent of it specifically, out loud, to Him.

Sin to confess — judging the man I'm like. It's easy for me to sit across the table from a man fresh out of prison or relapse and feel like the healthy one. Paul says "in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself." My pride, my temper, my secret thought life — they're "the same things" in different clothes. I confess that I've judged men to feel better about myself.

Warning to heed — teaching what I don't practice. "You who teach another, do you not teach yourself?" I teach, I write, I publish. Henry is right: "Examples will govern more than rules." The men I disciple will forget my outlines and remember my life. Where the two don't match, God's name is dishonored through me.

Promise to trust — the Spirit circumcises the heart. I can't cut my own heart. Moses said the LORD would do it (Deuteronomy 30:6); Paul says it is "by the Spirit." That is the hope for every man I serve who has tried to clean the windows and found the house still dirty. Outward reform won't hold; a new heart will.

Example to follow — living for praise from God. "His praise is not from men, but from God." I want to do the hidden things well — the prayer no one hears, the honesty no one checks, the kindness no one sees — because the Judge sees the secrets, and His "well done" is the only review that lasts.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Where do I most easily condemn in others the very thing I do myself — and what does that reveal about my heart? (2:1–3; Matthew 7:1–2) *The verdict we pass is the standard we will face.*
2. What specific kindnesses of God in my life have I treated as permission rather than as a call to repent? (2:4–5; 2 Peter 3:9) *Every token of goodness is aimed at a turned heart.*
3. If God shows no partiality, what am I still counting on — family, church, record, reputation — to tip the scale? (2:6–11) *God does not take a man by his face.*
4. What would change this week if I lived as though my secrets will be judged by Jesus Christ? (2:16; Ecclesiastes 12:14) *What a man does when he thinks he is alone is the best revelation of the man.*
5. Where am I teaching, preaching or posting something I am not practicing — and who is watching the gap? (2:21–24) *Examples govern more than rules.*
6. What outward marks of religion am I resting on, and what evidence is there that God has circumcised my heart? (2:28–29; Deuteronomy 30:6; Philippians 3:3) *A label must match the contents.*

Worship. The Judge of all the earth is the Lord Jesus — the One who sees every secret is the One who carried every sin I'd want hidden. His kindness came first, His patience is still running, and His Spirit cuts what I could never cut. I praise Him that the last word of this chapter is not wrath but praise — praise from God.

Prayer. Father, I have no excuse. I've judged others for what I do, and I've read Your patience as permission. Thank You for the riches of Your kindness that keep leading me back. Search the secrets You already see. Circumcise my heart by Your Spirit, so that what I teach I live, and Your name is honored, not blasphemed, through me. I want Your praise, not men's. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 3

Every Mouth Closed, Then — But Now — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God stays true when every man is found a liar, and His Law closes every mouth — the religious man's first. But now God gives His own righteousness as a gift, through faith in the Christ who was set out in the open as our mercy seat, so that He is just and the justifier, and no one gets to boast but in Him.

00 The Text

ROMANS 3 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?

2 Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.

3 What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?

4 May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, "THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED."

5 But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.)

6 May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?

7 But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner?

8 And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), "Let us do evil that good may come"? Their condemnation is just.

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;

10 as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;

11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;

12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."

13 "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS";

14 "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS";

15 "THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,

16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,

17 AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN."

18 "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."

19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may

be closed and all the world may become ⚠ accountable to God;

20 because by the works of the Law ⚠ no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

21 ⏲ But now ⏲ apart from the Law the ⟲ righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

22 even the ⟲ righteousness of God through ⟲ faith in Jesus Christ ☆ for all those who believe; for ⏲ there is no distinction;

23 for ⚠ all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

24 being △ justified as a gift by His grace through △ the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

25 whom God displayed publicly as △ a propitiation in His blood through ⟲ faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in △ the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be △ just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

27 ⚠ Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of ⟲ faith.

28 For we maintain that ☆ a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

29 Or is God the God of Jews only? △ Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,

30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by ⟲ faith and the uncircumcised through ⟲ faith is one.

31 Do we then nullify the Law through ⟲ faith? ⟲ May it never be! On the contrary, ⏲ we establish the Law.

Marked in the text

- **v2** “the oracles of God” — God — His character & actions
- **v3** “the faithfulness of God” — God — His character & actions
- **v4** “let God be found true” — Command / instruction
- **v4** “every man be found a liar” — Sin / warning
- **v9** “all under sin” — Sin / warning
- **v10** “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE” — Sin / warning
- **v11** “THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD” — Sin / warning
- **v13** “THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE” — Sin / warning
- **v18** “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES” — Sin / warning
- **v19** “every mouth may be closed” — Sin / warning
- **v19** “accountable to God” — Sin / warning
- **v20** “no flesh will be justified in His sight” — Sin / warning
- **v21** “But now” — Time / place / contrast
- **v21** “apart from the Law” — Time / place / contrast
- **v22** “for all those who believe” — Promise / blessing
- **v22** “there is no distinction” — Time / place / contrast
- **v23** “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” — Sin / warning
- **v24** “justified as a gift by His grace” — God — His character & actions
- **v24** “the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” — God — His character & actions
- **v25** “a propitiation in His blood” — God — His character & actions
- **v25** “the forbearance of God” — God — His character & actions
- **v26** “just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” — God — His character & actions
- **v27** “Where then is boasting” — Sin / warning
- **v28** “a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law” — Promise / blessing
- **v29** “Is He not the God of Gentiles also” — God — His character & actions
- **v31** “we establish the Law” — Time / place / contrast
- **v4** “May it never be” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v5** “righteousness of God” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v22** “faith” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

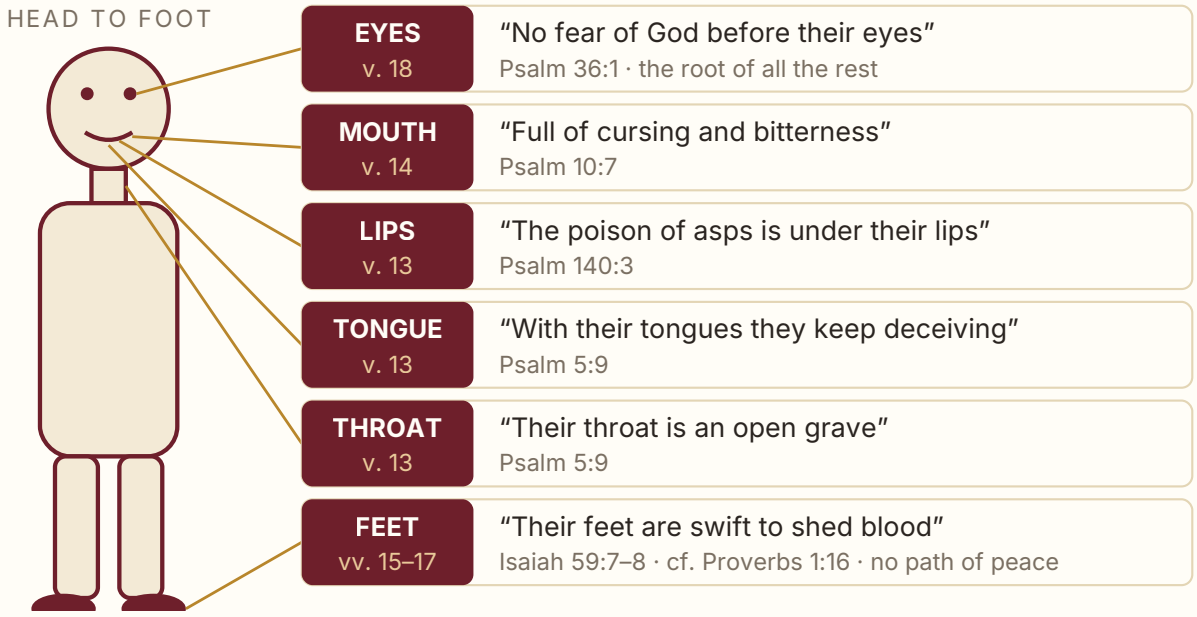
KEY VERSE · ROMANS 3:19

"Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that ⚠every mouth may be closed and all the world may become ⚠accountable to God;"

FIGURE · THE X-RAY FROM HEAD TO FOOT (3:10–18)

VV. 10–12 · WHO WE ARE — Psalm 14:1–3 · 53:1–3 · cf. Ecclesiastes 7:20

None righteous · none understands · none seeks God · all turned aside · none does good



Paul's chain of texts first names what we are (vv. 10–12), then walks down the body — eyes, mouth, lips, tongue, throat, feet — and every witness he calls is from Israel's own Psalms and prophets.

Setting. Paul has just told the Jew that real circumcision is of the heart (2:28–29). Chapter 3 picks up the obvious objection — then what good was it to be a Jew? — and answers it in debate style before drawing the whole indictment of 1:18–3:20 to a close. Then, at v21, the letter turns.

Structure:

- vv1–8 — **four objections answered:** (1) What advantage has the Jew? Great — they were entrusted with the oracles of God (vv1–2). (2) Does their unbelief nullify God's faithfulness? May it never be — let God be found true though every man a liar (vv3–4, quoting Ps 51:4). (3) If our unrighteousness shows off God's righteousness, is God unjust to inflict wrath? May it never be — how else would He judge the world (vv5–6)? (4) If my lie makes

His truth abound, why am I judged — why not "do evil that good may come"? Slander; their condemnation is just (vv7–8).

- vv9–18 — **the verdict and the witnesses:** Jews and Greeks are all under sin (v9). The catena: what we are (vv10–12 — none righteous, none understands, none seeks, all turned aside, none does good), what we say (vv13–14 — throat, tongue, lips, mouth), what we do (vv15–17 — feet, paths), and why (v18 — no fear of God before their eyes).
- vv19–20 — **the courtroom falls silent:** the Law speaks to those under it so every mouth is closed and all the world is accountable to God; no flesh is justified by works of the Law; through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.
- vv21–26 — **"But now":** a righteousness of God apart from the Law, witnessed by the Law and Prophets (v21); through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe, no distinction (v22); all have sinned (v23); justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus (v24); God displayed Him publicly as a propitiation in His blood (v25); so that He is just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (v26).
- vv27–31 — **what follows:** boasting excluded by a law of faith (v27); justified by faith apart from works of the Law (v28); one God of Jews and Gentiles (vv29–30); the Law not nullified but established (v31).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- **God** ×19 — in 15 of the 31 verses; three times in v29 alone.
- **Law / law** ×11 — vv19 (2), 20 (2), 21 (2), 27 (2), 28, 31 (2). Every one of them falls after v18: the Law is silent while the witnesses speak, then it does all the talking.
- **faith** ×8 — vv22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30 (2), 31. Not once before v22.
- **justified / justify / justifier** ×6 — vv4, 20, 24, 26, 28, 30.
- **righteousness** ×5 — vv5, 21, 22, 25, 26 (plus "unrighteousness" in v5 and "righteous" in v10).
- **"there is none"** ×4 — vv10, 11 (2), 12; with "not even one" ×2 (vv10, 12).
- **all**, of people ×5 — v9 "all under sin," v12 "all have turned aside," v19 "all the world," v22 "all those who believe," v23 "all have sinned."
- **"May it never be"** ×3 — vv4, 6, 31.
- **demonstrate / demonstration** ×3 — vv5, 25, 26.
- **works** ×3 — vv20, 27, 28.

Contrasts: God true ⟷ every man a liar (v4). Our unrighteousness ⟷ the righteousness of God (v5). "None righteous" (v10) ⟷ "the righteousness of God … for all those who believe" (vv21–22). "All have sinned" (v23) ⟷ "being justified as a gift" (v24) — the same "all." Works ⟷ faith (vv27–28). Nullify ⟷ establish (vv3, 31). Every mouth closed (v19) ⟷ boasting excluded (v27) — the mouth shut in guilt stays shut to pride. God "passed over" sins (v25) ⟷ God "demonstrated" His righteousness (vv25–26).

Shape of the chapter: a dialogue (1–8), a chain of witnesses (9–18), a silent courtroom (19–20), two words — "But now" (21) — and the verdict of grace (21–26), then three short questions with three short answers (27–31).

Chapter theme (my words): Everyone is guilty, and the Law can only prove it. But God, who never lies and never winks at sin, has given His own righteousness to everyone who believes in Jesus — paid for at the cross, so that He is just and the One who justifies.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 3:25

"whom God displayed publicly as △a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in △the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;"

FIGURE · THREE PICTURES OF ONE SALVATION (3:24–25)

JUSTIFIED v. 24	REDEMPTION v. 24	PROPITIATION v. 25
		
The courtroom	THE CHAIN BROKEN ***The slave market***	***The mercy seat***
dikaioō · G1344	apolytrōsis · G629	hilastērion · G2435
The Judge declares the guilty righteous	A ransom paid, the captive set free	Wrath satisfied by blood sprinkled on the lid
ANSWERS GUILT "accountable to God" · 3:19	**ANSWERS BONDAGE** "all under sin" · 3:9	**ANSWERS WRATH** "the wrath of God" · 1:18

Paul puts the courtroom, the slave market and the tabernacle side by side: each picture answers a different part of the sinner's plight — guilt, bondage and wrath.

What advantage, then (vv1–2)? The Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God — Trapp's line, in Guzik, and Henry's both: they were "library-keepers." Sproul: Paul's "first of all" means first in importance — "There is no greater advantage for any person in the world than to be within earshot of the Word of God." Henry adds the guard rail: "The Jews had the means of salvation, but they had not the monopoly of salvation." Privilege is a trust, not a guarantee.

Does unbelief cancel God (vv3–4)? No. *Katargeō* — make idle, nullify. Israel's unbelief cannot put God's faithfulness out of work. Paul quotes David's confession (Ps 51:4): when the sinner owns his sin, God is justified in His sentence. Spurgeon (No. 2255): truth is not settled by a vote of the whole human race — "The gospel is no failure."

Is God unfair to judge sin that serves His glory (vv5–8)? Paul calls this "speaking in human terms." Sproul: "It's because God is righteous that He is wrathful" — wrath is His justice in action, and a God who could not judge could not judge the world (v6). Guzik points to Judas: God used his treachery, but the sin was still Judas's own. Henry:

"The sin has never the less of malignity and demerit in it though God bring glory to himself out of it." And the slander of v8 — "let us do evil that good may come" — shows Paul preached grace so freely that people accused him of licensing sin. Real grace always draws that charge; real grace never deserves it.

All under sin — the catena (vv9–18). A chain of Israel's own Scriptures: Ps 14:1–3 / 53:1–3 (vv10–12), Ps 5:9 (v13a), Ps 140:3 (v13b), Ps 10:7 (v14), Isa 59:7–8 (vv15–17), Ps 36:1 (v18). Guzik, after Wiersbe: "An X-ray study of the lost sinner, from head to foot." Henry sorts it into habitual sin (none righteous, none seeking) and actual sin (tongue, lips, feet), and finds the root in v18: "The root of all this we have: There is no fear of God before their eyes." Sproul presses "none seeks": "No one seeks after Christ until they have first been found by Christ."

Every mouth closed (vv19–20). The Psalms were read over "those who are under the Law" — the religious Jew cannot hand the indictment to the Gentiles. *Hypodikos* (accountable) is a courtroom word: the defendant has lost his case. The Law's job is diagnosis. Spurgeon: "The law of the Lord is like a looking glass" — "you cannot get rid of the spots by looking in the glass." Guzik (quoting Phillips): the straight-edge shows how crooked we are.

"But now" (v21). Guzik: "the most glorious transition from the judgment of Romans 3:20 to the justification of Romans 3:21." The righteousness of God here is not only God's own character but a righteousness *from* God given to sinners — apart from the Law, yet witnessed by it (Gen 15:6; Hab 2:4).

"Through faith in Jesus Christ" (v22). The Greek *pisteōs Iēsou Christou* can be read "faith in Jesus Christ" (NASB95) or "faith of Jesus Christ" (KJV); some modern scholars read "the faithfulness of Jesus Christ." Either way, the next phrase — "for all those who believe" — makes our believing the means of receiving it.

Justified as a gift (v24). Sproul: "Justification is that act by which God judicially declares a person to be righteous in His sight" — declared, not made righteous by degrees; the ground is an alien righteousness, Christ's, credited to us. *Dōrean* is the word of John 15:25, "without a cause." Spurgeon (No. 126): "The sacrifice of Calvary was not a part payment." Free to me, costly to Him — redemption "has the idea of buying back something, and involves cost" (Guzik).

Propitiation (v25). *Hilastērion* is the mercy seat in Heb 9:5 and in the Greek Old Testament (Lev 16:15). Sproul defends both propitiation (wrath satisfied — toward God) and expiation (sin removed — toward us): "Do not ever get rid of the words propitiation and expiation." Guzik, Spurgeon and Henry all hear the mercy seat. Henry: "Faith is the bunch of hyssop, and the blood of Christ is the blood of sprinkling."

Passed over, then demonstrated (vv25–26). *Paresis* — God held back the full sentence on Old Testament sins in His forbearance. The cross proves He never looked the other way. Sproul: "Beloved, God never negotiates His own righteousness." Spurgeon (No. 255): "when justice once is satisfied it were injustice if it should ask for more." Henry: God will not "demand the debt of the principal when the surety has paid it."

Boasting excluded; the Law established (vv27–31). Guzik: "Grace absolutely refuses to recognize his (imagined) merits." Lenski, in Guzik: "Since all works of law are barred out, faith alone is left." Sproul: faith is not a virtue that earns — "Faith is simply that which links you to Christ" — and "The law was never given as a way to justify anyone." Henry: faith "is a depending, self-emptying, self-denying grace, and casts every crown before the throne." One God (Deut 6:4) means one way for Jew and Gentile. Faith establishes the Law because it agrees with the Law's verdict and rests on a Christ who paid the Law's penalty — and chapter 4 will show Abraham and David as proof.

Word study (Greek):

- **oracles — *logia* (G3051):** divine utterances; only 4× in the NT (Acts 7:38; Rom 3:2; Heb 5:12; 1 Pet 4:11).

- **nullify — *katargeō* (G2673):** make idle, render ineffective; v3 and v31 bookend the chapter.
- **May it never be — *mē genoito* (G1096):** "may it not come to be," Paul's strongest denial; vv4, 6, 31.
- **become useless — *achreioō* (G889):** only here in the NT — spoiled, gone bad (Ps 14:3 LXX).
- **closed — *phrassō* (G5420):** stopped, fenced in; the mouths of lions in Heb 11:33.
- **accountable — *hypodikos* (G5267):** under sentence; only here in the NT.
- **justified — *dikaioō* (G1344):** to declare righteous, acquit — a verdict.
- **as a gift — *dōrean* (G1432):** freely, without cause (John 15:25).
- **redemption — *apolytrōsis* (G629):** release by a ransom paid.
- **propitiation — *hilastērion* (G2435):** the mercy seat (Heb 9:5); the place where wrath is turned away by blood.
- **passed over — *paresis* (G3929):** only here — a letting-go for the time, not final forgiveness.
- **excluded — *ekkleiō* (G1576):** shut out; only here and Gal 4:17.

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. The first advantage is the Word itself (v2).
2. Unbelief cannot nullify God; faith does not nullify the Law — the same verb (vv3, 31).
3. Grace has always been slandered as license; Paul answers, it is condemned (v8).
4. Every line of the catena is Israel's own Scripture, aimed at "those under the Law" (vv10–19).
5. The root of all sin is a missing fear of God (v18).
6. The Law is a mirror, not a washbasin (v20).
7. "But now" is the hinge of the letter (v21).
8. Justified means declared righteous, on Christ's righteousness, through faith (vv22–24).
9. The mercy seat moved from behind the veil into the open at the cross (v25).
10. God is just and the justifier — justice satisfied in a Substitute (v26).

Cross-references: Ps 51:4 · Ps 14:1–3 · Ps 53:1–3 · Ps 5:9 · Ps 140:3 · Ps 10:7 · Isa 59:7–8 · Ps 36:1 · Ps 143:2 · Gen 15:6 · Hab 2:4 · Lev 16:15 · Heb 9:5 · 2 Cor 5:21 · Gal 2:16 · Eph 2:8–9 · 1 John 2:2 · Deut 6:4

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 3:24

"being △justified as a gift by His grace through ☆the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;"

FIGURE · "BUT NOW" — THE HINGE OF ROMANS (3:21)



Everything from 1:18 to 3:20 closes the mouth of the world; from 3:21 on, God opens His own — and the same word "righteousness" that condemned now comes as a gift.

Command to obey — let God be found true (v4). When my opinion, my feelings, or the whole room says one thing and God's Word says another, I side with God. That starts with the hard sentences — the ones about me. David said "against You, You only, I have sinned … so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge." I want to stop arguing with God's verdict on me and start agreeing with it.

Sin to confess — my mouth and my feet (vv13–18). I read the X-ray and I see myself. My throat, my tongue, my lips: lies I told to cover, the bitterness I let out on people who loved me. My feet: how fast I ran to the places that destroyed me, and how I never knew the path of peace. And under it all, my eyes — no fear of God. I confess that it was not just bad habits. It was a heart that did not fear God.

Sin to confess — boasting (v27). I am tempted to boast in my record now — my clean time, my Bible knowledge, my service. Henry says faith "casts every crown before the throne." My mouth was closed in guilt (v19); I don't get to open it again to brag. Boasting is not managed in the gospel; it is shut out.

Promise to trust — justified as a gift (vv24–26). I am not on probation. God has declared me righteous — not because I improved, but because Christ paid "to the utmost farthing." The mercy seat is not behind a veil anymore. If God has accepted the payment, I will not try to pay it again with guilt, and I will not let the enemy tell me the bill is still open. He is just *and* the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus — and that is me.

Example to follow — Paul with the objector (vv1–8). Paul did not dodge hard questions; he answered them with Scripture and with "May it never be!" When the men I walk with throw objections — "If God is good, why …?" "If grace is free, why not keep sinning?" — I want to answer the way he did: honestly, from the Word, and without watering grace down.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Paul says the chief advantage of the Jew was the Word of God (v2). What advantages have you had with the Word, and what have you done with them? *(3:1–3; Heb 5:12)*
2. Read the catena aloud (vv10–18). Which body part on the X-ray do you recognize in your own life before Christ — or this week? *(3:13–18; James 3:6)*
3. Why does Paul aim the Psalms at "those who are under the Law" (v19) — the religious people? Where do church people most often exempt themselves? *(3:9, 19; Luke 18:11)*
4. Justified, redeemed, propitiated (vv24–25). Which of the three pictures speaks most to where you have been — guilt, bondage or wrath? *(3:24–25; Heb 9:5)*
5. How can God be both "just and the justifier" (v26)? Explain it in a sentence you could say to a man who thinks he is too far gone. *(3:26; 2 Cor 5:21)*
6. Where does boasting still creep into your faith — your record, your recovery, your Bible knowledge (v27)? *(3:27–28; Eph 2:8–9)*

Worship. I praise God who is true when I am not; who never negotiates His righteousness and never stopped loving me; who set His Son out in the open as my mercy seat. I worship the Judge who became my Justifier.

Prayer. Father, Your Word has closed my mouth. I have nothing to plead but Jesus. Thank You that "but now" is my story — that while I was guilty, in bondage, and under Your wrath, You justified me as a gift, bought me back, and covered me with the blood of Your Son. Put the fear of God back in my eyes. Guard my tongue and turn my feet to the path of peace. Keep me from boasting in anything but Christ, and make me a man who tells other men the same good news. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 4

Faith Credited as Righteousness — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God has always declared sinners righteous the same way: He credits righteousness to the one who believes Him, apart from works, rites or Law — Abraham before circumcision, David after his sin, and me. Abraham's faith looked at a dead body and a living promise and trusted the God who raises the dead, and that same God raised Jesus for my justification.

00 The Text

ROMANS 4 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?

2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

3 For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."

4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.

5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7 "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.

8 "BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."

9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."

10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;

11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,

12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified;

15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.

16 For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

17 (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

18 In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE."

19 Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;

20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,

21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

22 Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

23 Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him,

24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,

25 He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

Marked in the text

- **v3** "credited" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v6** "credits" — Key repeated word
- **v8** "TAKE INTO ACCOUNT" — Key repeated word
- **v2** "he has something to boast about" — Sin / warning
- **v4** "as what is due" — Time / place / contrast
- **v5** "Him who justifies the ungodly" — God — His character & actions
- **v7** "LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN" — Promise / blessing
- **v7** "SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED" — Promise / blessing
- **v10** "Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised" — Time / place / contrast
- **v11** "a seal of the righteousness of the faith" — Promise / blessing
- **v11** "the father of all who believe" — Promise / blessing
- **v12** "follow in the steps of the faith" — Command / instruction
- **v13** "not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith" — Time / place / contrast
- **v15** "the Law brings about wrath" — Sin / warning
- **v16** "in accordance with grace" — God — His character & actions
- **v16** "the promise will be guaranteed" — Promise / blessing
- **v17** "who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist" — God — His character & actions
- **v18** "In hope against hope he believed" — Time / place / contrast
- **v19** "as good as dead" — Time / place / contrast
- **v20** "did not waver in unbelief" — Sin / warning
- **v20** "grew strong in faith, giving glory to God" — Command / instruction
- **v21** "He was able also to perform" — God — His character & actions
- **v24** "but for our sake also" — Promise / blessing
- **v24** "Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" — God — His character & actions
- **v25** "delivered over because of our transgressions" — Sin / warning
- **v25** "raised because of our justification" — Promise / blessing

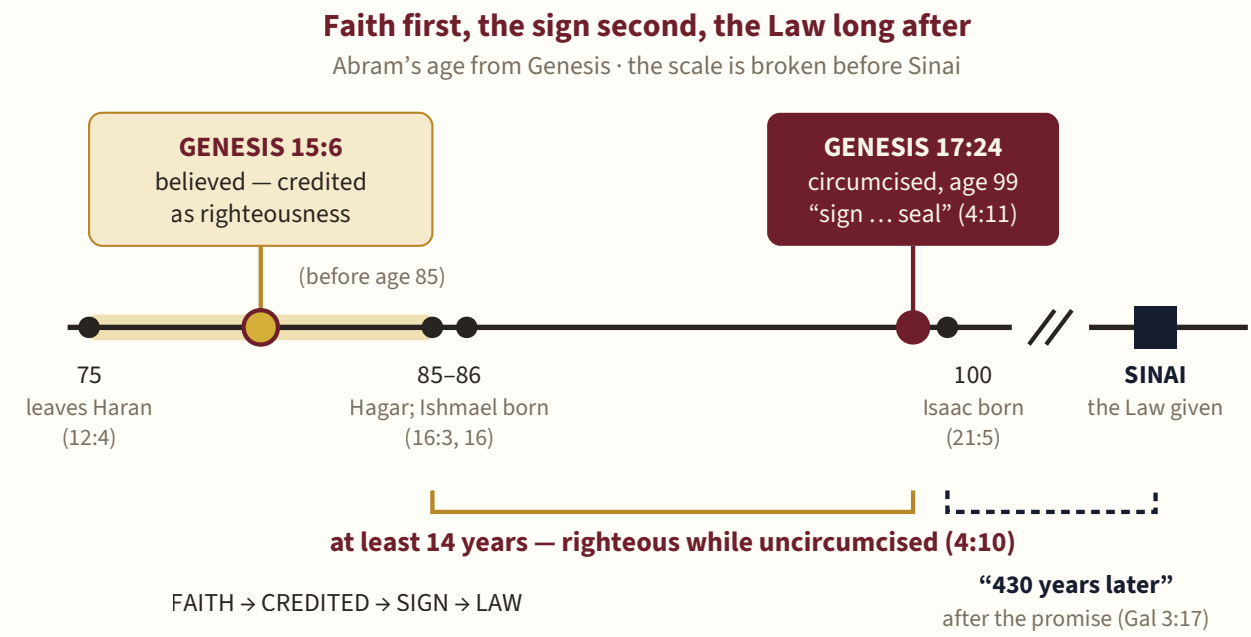
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 4:3

"For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.""

FIGURE · ABRAHAM'S CALENDAR



See the order Paul argues from: Abraham was counted righteous in Genesis 15, circumcised at least fourteen years later, and the Law came 430 years after the promise.

Setting. Romans 3 has just said that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law (3:28), and that this establishes the Law rather than nullifying it (3:31). Chapter 4 is Paul's proof from the Law itself — Genesis 15:6 and Psalm 32. Two witnesses (Deut 19:15): Abraham, "our forefather according to the flesh" (v1), and David, Israel's king.

Structure:

- vv1–8 — **credited, not earned:** If Abraham was justified by works he could boast — "but not before God" (v2). Scripture says "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS" (v3, Gen 15:6). A worker's wage is "what is due"; the one who "does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly" has his faith credited as righteousness (vv4–5). David says the same in Psalm 32: lawless deeds forgiven, sins covered, sin the Lord will not take into account (vv6–8).
- vv9–12 — **before the knife:** Is this blessing only for the circumcised? When was it credited — "Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised" (v10). Circumcision was "the sign … a seal of the righteousness of the

faith which he had while uncircumcised" (v11), so Abraham is father of all who believe, circumcised or not, if they "follow in the steps of the faith" (vv11–12).

- vv13–17 — **the promise by faith:** The promise that he would be "heir of the world" was "not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith" (v13). If Law-keepers are heirs, faith is void and the promise nullified, for "the Law brings about wrath" (vv14–15). So it is by faith, "in accordance with grace," that the promise may be "guaranteed to all the descendants" (v16) — Abraham is "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS" before the God "who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist" (v17).
- vv18–22 — **hope against hope:** He believed "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE" (v18). He contemplated his body, as good as dead at about a hundred, and Sarah's dead womb (v19), yet "did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God" (v20), "fully assured" God "was able also to perform" (v21). "Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS" (v22).
- vv23–25 — **for our sake also:** It was written not for his sake only, but for ours, "to whom it will be credited" if we believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead (vv23–24) — "He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification" (v25).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- **credited / credits / take into account** — 11 (all *logizomai*): "credited" vv3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24; "credits" v6; "take into account" v8.
- **faith** — 10: vv5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16 (×2), 19, 20.
- **circumcised / circumcision / uncircumcised** — 12 in vv9–12 alone (v9 ×2, v10 ×4, v11 ×3, v12 ×3); 5 of them "uncircumcised."
- **righteousness** — 8: vv3, 5, 6, 9, 11 (×2), 13, 22.
- **father / forefather** — 7: vv1, 11, 12 (×2), 16, 17, 18.
- **Abraham** — 7: vv1, 2, 3, 9, 12, 13, 16.
- **God** — 7: vv2, 3, 6, 17, 20 (×2), 21.
- **believe(d/s)** — 6: vv3, 5, 11, 17, 18, 24.
- **promise(d)** — 5: vv13, 14, 16, 20, 21. **Law** — 5: vv13, 14, 15 (×2), 16.
- **blessing / blessed** — 4: vv6, 7, 8, 9. **work(s)** — 4: vv2, 4, 5, 6. **dead / deadness** — 4: vv17, 19 (×2), 24.

Contrasts: works ⟷ believing (vv4–5) · "as a favor" ⟷ "as what is due" (v4) · the ungodly ⟷ righteousness (v5) · circumcised ⟷ uncircumcised (vv9–12) · Law ⟷ promise (vv13–16) · wrath ⟷ grace (vv15–16) · hope against hope (v18) · a body as good as dead ⟷ the God who gives life to the dead (vv17, 19) · waver in unbelief ⟷ grow strong in faith (v20) · his sake only ⟷ our sake also (vv23–24) · delivered over ⟷ raised (v25).

Shape of the chapter: a question (v1), a Scripture (v3), and an argument that walks forward through Abraham's life in order — Genesis 15, Genesis 17, the promise, the birth of Isaac — and then steps out of the story and points at me (vv23–25). It opens with Abraham "credited" and closes with Jesus "raised"; the bookkeeping word runs through the middle like a thread.

Chapter theme (my words): Righteousness has always been a gift entered to the account of the ungodly who believe God. Abraham received it before any sign or Law, by trusting the God who raises the dead — and the same credit is mine through faith in Him who raised Jesus.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 4:11

"and he received the sign of circumcision, ☆ a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had ◷ while uncircumcised, so that he might be ☆ the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,"

FIGURE · THE LEDGER OF GRACE

λογίζομαι · logizomai · "to credit, put to one's account" (G3049)

Two ways a payment can be entered in the book (Romans 4:4–5)

WAGES · v. 4		GIFT · v. 5
WHO the one who works		WHO the one who does not work, but believes
ENTERED AS "what is due" · *kata opheilēma*	≠	ENTERED AS "a favor" · *kata charin*
GOD IS the employer who owes		GOD IS "Him who justifies the ungodly"
RESULT "something to boast about" (v. 2)		RESULT faith credited as righteousness

DAVID'S LEDGER · vv. 6–8 (Psalm 32:1–2)

DEBIT column · my sin	CREDIT column · righteousness
"the Lord will not take into account"	"God credits … apart from works"

Read across the two columns: the same verb, "credited," enters either a debt God owes or a gift God gives — and David's ledger shows both columns of the sinner's account changed by grace.

Was Abraham justified by faith or by works? Paul says faith (Gen 15:6); James 2:21 says Abraham was "justified by works when he offered up Isaac." Sproul refuses to make the Bible speak with a "forked tongue": Paul asks how an unjust man is declared righteous before God; James asks whether a faith that produces nothing is real. Genesis 15 is the declaration; Genesis 22, decades later, is the demonstration. *Dikaioō* can mean to declare righteous or to show to be righteous. His summary: justification is by faith alone, "but not by a faith that is alone."

What does "credited" mean? *Logizomai* is ledger language — to put to someone's account. Guzik: "Our justification is not God making us perfectly righteous, but counting us as perfectly righteous" (with Wuest's picture of a deposit

placed in a bank account). Sproul presses this against Trent: Rome said righteousness must be infused into us before God declares us righteous; the Reformers said Christ's righteousness is credited to us from outside, *extra nos*. "It is Christ's righteousness counted for you." Henry: "The gospel way of justification is by an imputed righteousness." Sproul also answers the charge of "legal fiction": "This is not a legal fiction. Rather, it is a legal declaration."

Is my faith itself the righteousness? No. Spurgeon: "Faith cannot be its own righteousness, for it is of the very nature of faith to look out of self to Christ" and "Faith justifies, but not in and by itself, but because it grasps the obedience of Christ." Sproul: faith is the instrument, never the ground. Abraham's faith looked forward to the promised Seed; mine looks back to the cross and empty tomb (vv24–25).

Whom does God justify? "The ungodly" (v5). Not the improving, not the almost-good. Spurgeon: "Pardon must be for the guilty. Forgiveness must be for the sinful." Guzik: we are justified not because of our ungodliness but despite it — and "God isn't praising laziness here." David proves it: forgiven lawless deeds, covered sins, sin not counted (vv7–8). Henry: "Pardoned people are the only blessed people."

Why does the timing of circumcision matter? Genesis 15 comes before Abram had lived ten years in Canaan (Gen 16:3, age 85); he was circumcised at ninety-nine (Gen 17:24) — at least fourteen years later (Guzik; Henry says fourteen, "some say twenty-five"). So the sign could not be the cause; it was a seal on a righteousness he already had. The Law came "four hundred and thirty years later" (Gal 3:17). Sproul (Presbyterian) and Henry use sign-and-seal to explain baptism, including infant baptism; Spurgeon (Baptist) differed on who receives the sign — but all four agree no rite justifies. Sproul: "The sacrament does not justify anybody."

What does "heir of the world" mean? The land promise widened to the whole earth through the Seed. Henry: "Now Christ is the heir of the world … and it is in him that Abraham was so." Sproul: "the only proper heir of God the Father is God the Son"; we are joint heirs in Him (8:17).

Did Abraham "consider" his body or "not consider" it (v19)? A real textual difference. The text NASB95 follows reads he *contemplated* his body as good as dead — faith faced the facts. The Byzantine text behind the KJV/NKJV reads he "considered not" his body. Guzik (NKJV) prefers "did not consider"; Henry (KJV) reads it the same way. Both end in one place: the facts were real, and they did not get the final vote.

Why "raised because of our justification" (v25)? Same preposition, *dia*, in both lines. Sproul: a moral debt need not be accepted from a substitute; the resurrection is the Father saying, "I accept this payment for those debtors who cannot pay." Henry: "By the merit of his death he paid our debt, in his resurrection he took out our acquittance."

Word study (Greek):

- **credited — *logizomai* (G3049):** to reckon, put to one's account; 11× in this chapter.
- **ungodly — *asebēs* (G765):** without reverence for God (v5).
- **what is due — *opheilēma* (G3783):** a debt owed; only here and Matthew 6:12.
- **favor / grace — *charis* (G5485):** a gift freely given (vv4, 16).
- **seal — *sphragis* (G4973):** a signet impression that certifies what already exists (v11).
- **steps — *ichnos* (G2487):** footprints; walk in line in them (*stoicheō*, G4748) (v12).
- **guaranteed — *bebaios* (G949):** firm footing, legally valid (v16).
- **gives life — *zōopoieō* (G2227):** to make alive (v17).
- **contemplated — *katanoeō* (G2657):** to consider attentively (v19).

- **waver — *diakrinō* (G1252):** to be divided in oneself (v20).
- **fully assured — *plērophoreō* (G4135):** carried full, fully convinced (v21).
- **delivered over — *paradidōmi* (G3860):** handed over (v25).
- **justification — *dikaiōsis* (G1347):** acquittal; only 4:25 and 5:18.

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **One verb, eleven times.** *Logizomai* — credited, credits, take into account — is the spine of the chapter.
2. **Counted righteous, not made perfect.** Change follows justification; it is not its ground.
3. **God justifies the ungodly — not the improved.** "The sinner is the gospel's reason for existence" (Spurgeon).
4. **Wages and gifts cannot share a column.** If I earned it, God owes me — and no man can make God his debtor (Henry).
5. **Paul and James answer different questions.** Declared righteous (Gen 15) and shown righteous (Gen 22).
6. **The sign came after the substance.** Faith, then circumcision fourteen-plus years later, then the Law 430 years after the promise.
7. **Abraham's children are known by footprints,** not by the marks on their bodies.
8. **Faith looked at the facts and did not flinch.** "Contemplated" or "considered not" — the promise outweighed the body.
9. **Strength came from outside.** "He was strengthened" is passive; God empties us of self before He fills us (Spurgeon).
10. **The empty tomb is the receipt.** Raised because of our justification.

Cross-references: Gen 12:1–4; 15:1–6; 16:3, 16; 17:1–11, 24; 21:1–5; 22:1–18; Deut 19:15; Ps 32:1–5; Isa 53:5, 11–12; Hab 2:4; Rom 3:21–31; 5:1, 18; 8:17, 32; 2 Cor 5:19–21; Gal 3:6–9, 16–18; Eph 2:8–9; Heb 11:8–12, 17–19; James 2:21–24; 1 Pet 2:21.

03 Application

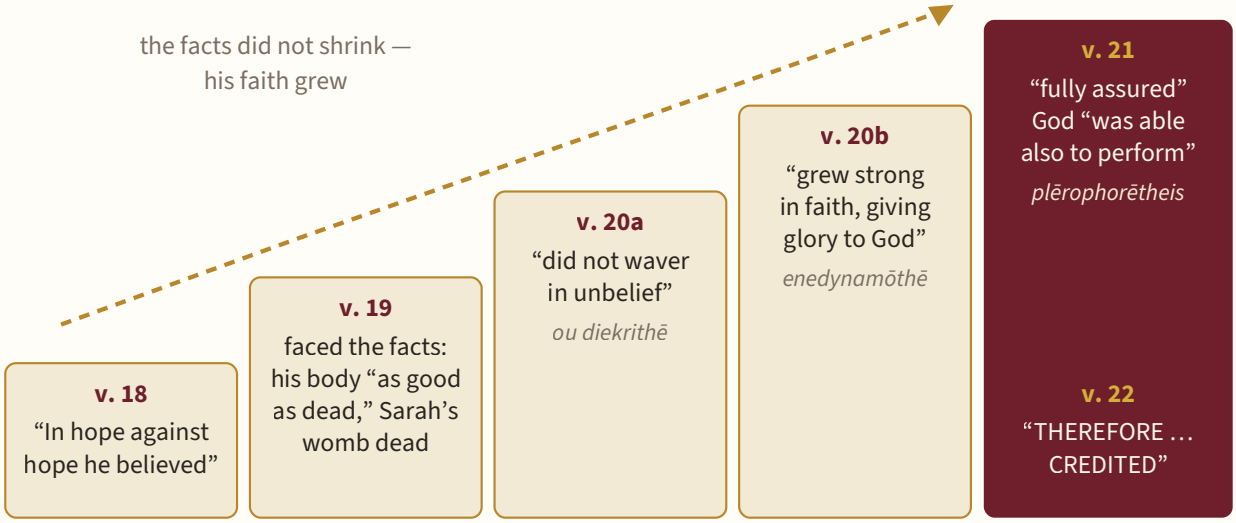
HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 4:20–21

"yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform."

FIGURE · HOPE AGAINST HOPE

The anatomy of Abraham's faith · Romans 4:18–22



Climb the steps of verses 18–21: the obstacles stay the same size while Abraham's faith grows, until God credits it as righteousness.

Promise to trust — "the Lord will not take into account." David's sins were adultery and murder, and God did not enter them in his book (v8). The worst things I have done are not on my account if I am in Christ. The accuser keeps reading me an old ledger; God's ledger says "credited — righteousness," and "not counted — sin." When the shame comes back, I will answer it with verse 8, out loud if I have to.

Sin to confess — keeping score. Verse 4 exposes me. I still live like a wage-earner with God — a good week of prayer and I feel He owes me; a bad week and I feel He's done with me. That is boasting (v2) and it is unbelief. I confess that I keep trying to work my way into a gift. The men I walk with in recovery know this well: "ninety days clean" is a mercy to celebrate, not a balance to stand on before God.

Command to obey — "follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham." Abraham's children are known by their footprints (v12). This week that means taking one step I can only take if God's promise is true — making the phone call, confessing to a brother, giving when it is tight, going back to the man who hurt me.

Example to follow — look at the facts, then look at God. Abraham did not pretend his body was young (v19). He did not waver either (v20). I can be honest about a marriage, a diagnosis, a prodigal child or a prison sentence and still say God "was able also to perform" (v21). Faith is not denial; it is weighing the facts against the God who gives life to the dead.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. If God kept a wage ledger on you, what would you be owed? Why is verse 4 bad news and verse 5 good news? (4:4–5; Eph 2:8–9) *A wage is entered "as what is due"; a gift only "as a favor."*
2. David most likely wrote Psalm 32 after his adultery and murder. What does it tell you that Paul chose him as the second witness? (4:6–8; Ps 32:1–5) *"Pardoned people are the only blessed people."*
3. What "circumcision" are you tempted to trust — baptism, church membership, a clean record, a year sober — as if it made you right with God? (4:9–12; Gal 5:6) *Signs point; only Christ justifies.*
4. Abraham "contemplated his own body, now as good as dead." What fact in your life looks as good as dead, and what promise speaks to it? (4:18–21; Heb 11:11–12) *Faith does not deny the facts; it refuses to let them have the last word.*
5. "He grew strong in faith" — he was strengthened. Where do you need strength you cannot produce, and how does giving God glory feed it? (4:20–21; 2 Cor 12:9) *Trusting Him to perform is itself the glory we give Him.*
6. Why does Paul say Jesus was raised "because of our justification"? What would be missing if the tomb were still sealed? (4:24–25; 1 Cor 15:17) *The cross paid; the resurrection is the Father's receipt.*

Worship. I worship the God "who justifies the ungodly," who "gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist." He did it in Sarah's womb, He did it in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb, and He did it in me. Spurgeon was right: "To justify the ungodly — this is a miracle worthy of a God."

Prayer. Father, I come with nothing in my hands but the promise You made. Thank You for not counting my sin against me and for crediting to me the righteousness of Jesus. Stop me from keeping score with You. When my circumstances look as good as dead, strengthen my faith from outside myself so that I do not waver, and let my trust give You glory. Help me walk in Abraham's footsteps this week, and help the men I serve to believe that Jesus was delivered over for their transgressions and raised for their justification. In His name, Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 5

Peace with God, and the Reign of Grace — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Because God has declared me righteous through faith in Jesus, the war between us is over — I have peace, access, hope, and a love that held me when I was His enemy. And I am counted in a new Head: what Adam lost for me, Christ has restored, and much more.

00 The Text

ROMANS 5 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;

4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;

5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.

8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

15 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

16 The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.

17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

20 The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

21 so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Marked in the text

- **v1** "having been justified by faith" — Promise / blessing
- **v1** "peace with God" — Promise / blessing
- **v2** "introduction" — Promise / blessing
- **v2** "hope of the glory of God" — Promise / blessing
- **v2** "exult" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v3** "tribulation brings about perseverance" — Time / place / contrast
- **v4** "proven character" — Time / place / contrast
- **v5** "hope does not disappoint" — Promise / blessing
- **v5** "the love of God has been poured out within our hearts" — God — His character & actions
- **v6** "while we were still helpless" — Sin / warning
- **v6** "Christ died for the ungodly" — God — His character & actions
- **v8** "God demonstrates His own love toward us" — God — His character & actions
- **v8** "while we were yet sinners" — Sin / warning
- **v9** "much more" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v9** "saved from the wrath of God" — Promise / blessing
- **v10** "while we were enemies" — Sin / warning
- **v10** "we shall be saved by His life" — Promise / blessing
- **v11** "received the reconciliation" — Promise / blessing
- **v12** "through one man sin entered into the world" — Sin / warning
- **v12** "death spread to all men" — Sin / warning
- **v14** "death reigned" — Sin / warning
- **v14** "a type of Him who was to come" — Time / place / contrast
- **v15** "the free gift is not like the transgression" — Time / place / contrast
- **v17** "reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ" — Promise / blessing
- **v18** "justification of life" — Promise / blessing
- **v19** "the many were made sinners" — Sin / warning
- **v19** "many were made sinners" — Sin / warning
- **v19** "the many will be made righteous" — Promise / blessing
- **v20** "The Law came in" — Time / place / contrast
- **v20** "grace abounded all the more" — God — His character & actions
- **v21** "sin reigned in death" — Sin / warning
- **v21** "grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life" — God — His character & actions

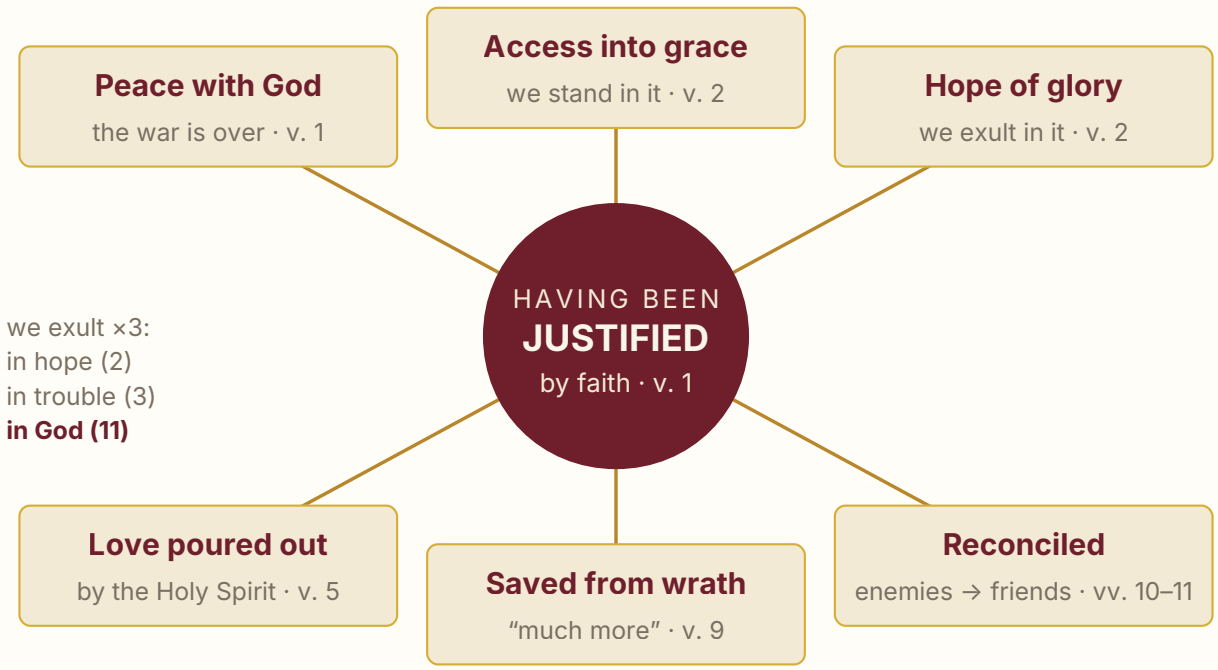
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 5:1

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"

FIGURE · THE FRUIT OF JUSTIFICATION, ROMANS 5:1–11



Everything on the ring flows from the verdict at the center — six gifts the justified already have, and a joy that climbs from hope, through trouble, to God Himself.

Setting. "Therefore" (v1) — Paul has just finished Abraham: righteousness credited by faith, "to us also … who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" (4:24–25). Chapter 5 counts what a justified man has, then widens to the whole human race in Adam and in Christ.

Structure:

- vv1–5 — **the fruit of justification:** peace with God through Jesus (v1); introduction by faith into grace, where we stand (v2); exulting in hope of the glory of God (v2) — and in tribulations, because tribulation → perseverance → proven character → hope (vv3–4); hope does not disappoint because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit (v5).
- vv6–8 — **the love that came down:** while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly (v6); hardly anyone dies for a righteous man, perhaps for a good man (v7); but God demonstrates His own love: while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (v8).

- vv9–11 — **"much more":** justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him (v9); reconciled as enemies by His death, much more saved by His life (v10); we exult in God, through whom we have received the reconciliation (v11).
- vv12–14 — **through one man:** sin entered the world through one man, death through sin, and death spread to all men because all sinned (v12); sin was in the world before the Law (v13); death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who did not sin like Adam — "a type of Him who was to come" (v14).
- vv15–19 — **not like the transgression:** five comparisons of Adam and Christ — the many died / grace abounded to the many (v15); one transgression → condemnation / many transgressions → justification (v16); death reigned / believers will reign in life (v17); one transgression → condemnation to all men / one act of righteousness → justification of life to all men (v18); disobedience → many made sinners / obedience → many made righteous (v19).
- vv20–21 — **the reign of grace:** the Law came in so that the transgression would increase; where sin increased, grace abounded all the more (v20); as sin reigned in death, grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (v21).

Repeated words, with counts: "one / One" ×14 — v7, 12, 15×2, 16×3, 17×3, 18×2, 19×2 (thirteen of them in vv12–19); "through" ×18 — vv1, 2, 5, 9, 10, 11×2, 12×2, 16, 17×2, 18×2, 19×2, 21×2 (everything comes *through* someone); "much more" ×4 — vv9, 10, 15, 17 (plus "all the more," v20); "transgression(s)" ×7 — vv15×2, 16×2, 17, 18, 20; "sin" ×6 — vv12×2, 13×2, 20, 21 (plus "sinned/sinners" ×5 — vv8, 12, 14, 16, 19); "grace" ×6 — vv2, 15×2, 17, 20, 21; "death" ×6 — vv10, 12×2, 14, 17, 21; "reign/reigned" ×5 — vv14, 17×2, 21×2; "gift / free gift" ×5 — vv15×2, 16×2, 17; "justified / justification" ×4 — vv1, 9, 16, 18; "exult" ×3 — vv2, 3, 11; "hope" ×3 — vv2, 4, 5; "reconciled / reconciliation" ×3 — vv10×2, 11; "the many" ×4 — vv15×2, 19×2; "all men" ×3 — vv12, 18×2.

Contrasts: enemies ⟷ reconciled (v10). Helpless, ungodly, sinners (vv6–8) ⟷ God's own love (v8). Saved by His death ⟷ much more by His life (v10). One man ⟷ the one Man (vv12–19). Transgression ⟷ free gift; condemnation ⟷ justification of life; disobedience ⟷ obedience; made sinners ⟷ made righteous. Death reigned ⟷ believers reign in life (v17). Sin increased ⟷ grace abounded all the more (v20). Sin reigned in death ⟷ grace reigns to eternal life (v21).

Shape of the chapter: a "therefore" (v1), a list of gifts that rises by "much more" (vv1–11), then a long sentence Paul starts in v12 ("just as through one man…"), breaks off to explain (vv13–17), and finally finishes in vv18–19 ("so then as … even so"). It ends where chapter 6 will pick up: grace on the throne.

Chapter theme (my words): Justified by faith, I have peace with God and a hope that will not let me down, because God loved me while I was His enemy. And I belong to a new Head — what Adam's one sin brought on the whole race, Christ's one act of righteousness has more than answered.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 5:19

"For as through the one man's disobedience ⚠ the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One ☆ the many will be made righteous."

FIGURE · TWO MEN, TWO RACES — ROMANS 5:12–21

IN ADAM "a type of Him who was to come" · v. 14		IN CHRIST "the one Man, Jesus Christ" · v. 15
one man · one transgression	→	one Man · one act of righteousness
disobedience (v. 19)	MUCH MORE	obedience (v. 19)
judgment → condemnation (v. 18)	→	free gift → justification of life (v. 18)
the many made sinners (v. 19)	MUCH MORE	the many made righteous (v. 19)
death reigned (vv. 14, 17)	→	they reign in life (v. 17)
sin reigned in death (v. 21)		grace reigns to eternal life (v. 21)

Not like the transgression (vv. 15–16): one sin was enough to condemn,
but the gift answered "many transgressions" — grace abounded all the more (v. 20).

Read across each row: every loss in Adam has its answer in Christ, and the gold arrows mark Paul's "much more" — the answer is greater than the loss.

Peace with God or peace of God (v1)? Guzik and Sproul both stress that this is peace *with* God — the end of a real war, not first a feeling. Sproul: "They could not get excited about a peace treaty with God because they did not know that there was a war." Spurgeon separates the *fact* of peace (settled in God's court through a Substitute) from the *feeling* of it (which unbelief can cloud): "We do not get peace before we are justified, neither is peace a means of justification." Henry: "God is either the worst enemy or the best friend."

Exulting in tribulation (vv3–5). Not enjoying pain, but knowing what God does with it. Sproul: "We glory in tribulations because we know what tribulation does," and "Character is forged in the crucible of pain." Henry is

careful: "Tribulation in itself worketh impatience; but, as it is sanctified to the saints, it worketh patience." Spurgeon pictures a ladder — "Tribulation is the foot" — climbed like the pilgrim songs of ascent. Hope will not put us to shame because God's love has been poured, not trickled (Guzik), into our hearts by the Spirit.

For whom did Christ die (vv6–8, 18)? Here the teachers lean differently, and I want to hear each fairly. Sproul reads "for the ungodly" with definite atonement — "The Bible does not teach that Christ died to make salvation possible" — and distinguishes God's general goodness from the love of delight He has for those in Christ. Guzik reads "all men" in v18 as the gift *offered* to all and *received* by faith, quoting Harrison that universalism would make Paul contradict himself. Spurgeon presses the free offer: "Then sin cannot shut any man out from the grace of God if he believes." All four reject universalism; all four say Christ died for the helpless and ungodly, not the deserving.

"Much more" (vv9–10). An argument from the harder thing to the easier. If God justified and reconciled us as *enemies* by Christ's death, He will much more save us as *friends* by His life. Henry: "Christ dying was the testator, who bequeathed us the legacy; but Christ living is the executor, who pays it." Sproul adds that the hostility ran both ways — ours from evil, God's from holiness — and both are ended at the cross.

How did Adam's sin become ours (v12)? "Because all sinned" — an aorist, one act. Guzik takes Genesis 3 as history and says infants are born sinners: "Every grave is mute evidence to the spread and reign of sin since the time of Adam." Sproul lays out *realism* (we were present in Adam) and *federalism* (Adam was our appointed representative) and holds the second: "When God selects your representative, He makes that selection infallibly" — "No damnation without representation." Spurgeon argues from infant deaths: "They die, for Adam sinned; they live, for Jesus died." Henry sees death as "a mighty prince" with an absolute monarchy.

Adam a type (v14) — and not like (vv15–17). The pattern is the same (one man's act counts for many), but the results are not equal. Henry: "The plaster is wider than the wound, and more healing than the wound is killing." One sin was enough to condemn; the gift answered "many transgressions" (v16).

Imputation (vv18–19). "Made sinners … made righteous" (*kathistēmi*, constituted). Sproul: "Paul labors the point that Adam's sin is reckoned, transferred, or imputed to the entire human race" — and Christ's righteousness is reckoned to believers. Christ kept what Adam broke; we are saved by works — His. Guzik's illustration: righteousness can be credited through Another only because sin was credited through another.

Why the Law (vv20–21)? It "came in" alongside, to make the transgression increase — exposing sin, not curing it. Sproul: "Does that not sound strange? Why would God want sin to abound?" — and then, "The equation is not equal." Spurgeon: "Sin robbed us of silver, but grace has given us gold." Guzik guards it: "Grace does not wink at unrighteousness, it confronts sin with the atonement at the cross."

Word study (Greek):

- **justified — *dikaiōthentes* (G1344):** aorist participle, "having been declared righteous" — a verdict already given.
- **peace — *eirēnē* (G1515):** the Hebrew *shalom*; peace *pros* (toward) God — the war ended.
- **introduction / access — *prosagōgē* (G4318):** being ushered into a king's presence.
- **exult — *kauchaomai* (G2744):** to boast, glory — in hope (v2), tribulations (v3), God (v11).
- **tribulation — *thlipsis* (G2347):** pressure, crushing.
- **perseverance — *hypomonē* (G5281):** staying under the load.
- **proven character — *dokimē* (G1382):** tested-and-approved metal.
- **disappoint — *kataischynō* (G2617):** to put to shame.
- **poured out — *ekcheō* (G1632):** perfect tense — poured and still flowing.

- **helpless — *asthenēs* (G772):** without strength.
- **demonstrates — *synistēmi* (G4921):** to prove, commend — present tense.
- **reconciled / reconciliation — *katallassō* (G2644) / *katallagē* (G2643):** enmity exchanged for friendship; God the reconciler.
- **type — *typos* (G5179):** the impression of a seal; a pattern pointing ahead.
- **transgression — *paraptōma* (G3900):** a false step; KJV "offence."
- **free gift — *charisma* (G5486) / gift — *dōrea* (G1431):** grace-gift, present.
- **condemnation — *katakrima* (G2631) ⟷ justification — *dikaiōma* (G1345), *dikaiōsis* (G1347):** the two verdicts.
- **made — *kathistēmi* (G2525):** constituted, appointed.
- **disobedience — *parakoē* (G3876) ⟷ obedience — *hypakoē* (G5218).**
- **came in — *pareiserchomai* (G3922):** came in alongside.
- **increased — *pleonazō* (G4121) ⟷ abounded all the more — *hyperperisseuō* (G5248):** super-abounded.
- **reign — *basileuō* (G936):** death, sin, believers, grace — four reigns in vv14–21.

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **Peace is a relationship before it is a feeling.** The war is over because the verdict is in.
2. **"Introduction" means Someone brings you in** — and you stay standing.
3. **Three exults mark the road:** in hope, in trouble, in God Himself.
4. **Tribulation does not sanctify by itself** — grace working in it does (Henry).
5. **The lower the description, the higher the love:** helpless, ungodly, sinners, enemies.
6. **The "much more" runs from the hard to the easy** — if enemies were reconciled, friends will be kept.
7. **No damnation without representation** (Sproul) — reject Adam's headship and you lose Christ's.
8. **The teachers differ on "all men"** — offered to all (Guzik) or secured for His own (Sproul); none teach universalism.
9. **The plaster is wider than the wound** (Henry).
10. **Grace reigns through righteousness** — never by winking at sin.

Cross-references: Gen 2:17; Gen 5; 1 Cor 15:21–22, 45; 2 Cor 5:18–21; Eph 2:1–5, 18; Col 1:21–22; Heb 6:19; James 1:2–4; 1 John 4:10, 19; Rom 6:1–2.

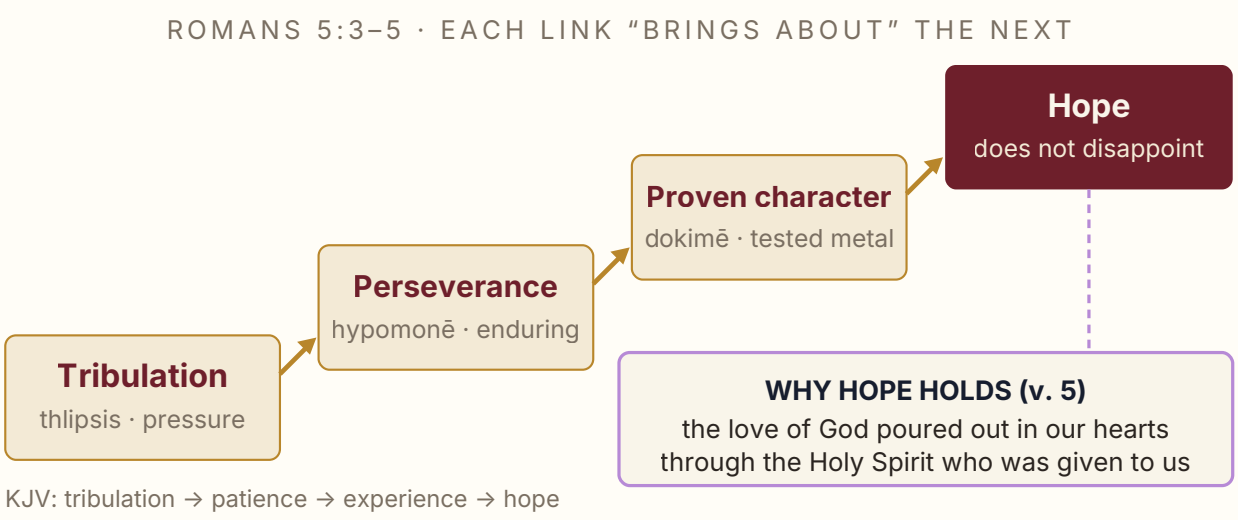
03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 5:5

"and ☆ hope does not disappoint, because △ the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

FIGURE · THE CHAIN OF ROMANS 5:3–5



Read the links left to right and upward: trouble is the bottom rung, and the love of God poured out by the Spirit is why the top rung, hope, does not give way.

Promise to trust — I have peace with God (v1). Not a mood, a fact. On the days my conscience screams, I will go back to the verdict: having been justified by faith, I *have* peace. Spurgeon: "Christian, there is no ground of quarrel between you and your heavenly Father."

Sin to confess — I still secretly think I wasn't that bad. Paul says I was helpless, ungodly, a sinner, an enemy (vv6–10). I confess the pride that wants to have been half-lost. Christ is "the Saviour not of those partly lost, but of the wholly lost" — and that is the only kind of Savior who could help me.

Truth to stand on — I am in a new Head. Adam's one sin counted for me before I ever chose; Christ's one act of righteousness counts for me now that I believe (vv18–19). My standing is not my record — it is His.

Example to follow — Paul exults in tribulation (v3). This week I will name one trouble I'm in and ask God what perseverance, proven character and hope He means to build out of it — and I'll tell one brother at the table so he can hold me to it.

Command to obey (implied) — Receive (v17). The abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness are given to "those who receive." I will stop trying to earn what God is handing me, and I will stop using grace as an excuse (6:1).

For the men I walk with — Many of us know what "death reigned" looks like — in addictions, broken homes, years behind walls. Verse 21 says another King has taken the throne. Where sin increased in my story, grace abounded all the more. That is not a slogan; it is the reason there is hope for any of us.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Paul lists what justification gives in 5:1–11. Which of these do you actually live from this week, and which do you only know about? *Peace, access, hope, love poured out, rescue from wrath, reconciliation — Spurgeon's fact and feeling of peace. (5:1–11; Eph 2:18)*
2. Walk the chain of 5:3–4 with a real trouble from your life. Where are you on the ladder right now? *Tribulation → perseverance → proven character → hope; Henry: grace in the trouble does the work. (5:3–5; James 1:2–4)*
3. Why does Paul describe us as helpless, ungodly, sinners and enemies before he tells us God's love? What happens to your view of God's love if you think you weren't that bad? *Sproul and Spurgeon: the glory of the remedy proves the desperateness of the disease. (5:6–10; 1 John 4:10)*
4. How does the "much more" of verses 9–10 answer the fear that you might lose your salvation after a fall? *Reconciled enemies will be kept as friends — Henry's testator and executor. (5:9–10)*
5. Is it fair that Adam's sin counts for us? What would we lose if it did not? *Sproul: if Adam cannot represent us, neither can Christ. (5:12–19; 1 Cor 15:22)*
6. "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more." How do you hear that verse on your worst day — and how could it be twisted? *Spurgeon: when your sin abounds, recollect that grace much more abounds; Guzik: grace never winks at sin. (5:20–21; 6:1–2)*

Worship. Sing of the love that did not wait for me to get better — "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Thank Him for each gift on the ring: peace, access, hope, love poured out, rescue from wrath, reconciliation. Exult in God Himself (v11).

Prayer. Father, I was helpless and ungodly, a sinner and Your enemy, and You loved me first. Thank You that the war is over because Jesus bore the wrath I earned and gave me the righteousness I could never earn. When trouble comes, work perseverance, proven character and hope in me, and pour Your love into my heart by Your Spirit. Where sin has reigned in my life and in the lives of the men I walk with, let grace reign through righteousness to eternal life. Keep me by the life of Your Son as surely as You reconciled me by His death. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Scripture: New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. · Teacher material summarized from David Guzik (Enduring Word), R.C. Sproul (Ligonier), C.H. Spurgeon and Matthew Henry — see Romans-5-Deep-Dive-Four-Voices.pdf for sources. · Importable: the companion .md carries the berean-study block.

SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 6

Dead to Sin, Alive to God — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Grace does not leave a man where it found him. Everyone joined to Christ has died to sin's rule and been raised to a new life and a new Master — so I count it true, hand my body over to God, and receive eternal life as a gift, not a wage.

00 The Text

ROMANS 6 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,

6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

7 for he who has died is freed from sin.

8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,

13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!

16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,

18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

19 I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.

22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Marked in the text

- **v1** “continue in sin” — Sin / warning
- **v2** “May it never be” — Time / place / contrast
- **v2** “died to sin” — Promise / blessing
- **v3** “baptized into His death” — Promise / blessing
- **v4** “buried with Him” — Promise / blessing
- **v4** “the glory of the Father” — God — His character & actions
- **v4** “walk in newness of life” — Command / instruction
- **v6** “our old self was crucified with Him” — God — His character & actions
- **v6** “slaves to sin” — Sin / warning
- **v9** “death no longer is master over Him” — God — His character & actions
- **v10** “once for all” — Time / place / contrast
- **v11** “consider yourselves to be dead to sin” — Command / instruction
- **v11** “alive to God in Christ Jesus” — Promise / blessing
- **v12** “do not let sin reign” — Command / instruction
- **v13** “present yourselves to God” — Command / instruction
- **v14** “sin shall not be master over you” — Promise / blessing
- **v17** “thanks be to God” — God — His character & actions
- **v17** “obedient from the heart” — Command / instruction
- **v19** “resulting in further lawlessness” — Sin / warning
- **v19** “present your members as slaves to righteousness” — Command / instruction
- **v21** “the outcome of those things is death” — Sin / warning
- **v22** “enslaved to God” — Promise / blessing
- **v23** “the wages of sin is death” — Sin / warning
- **v23** “the free gift of God is eternal life” — Promise / blessing
- **v3** “know” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v6** “knowing” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v6** “slaves” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v19** “sanctification” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v1** “grace” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

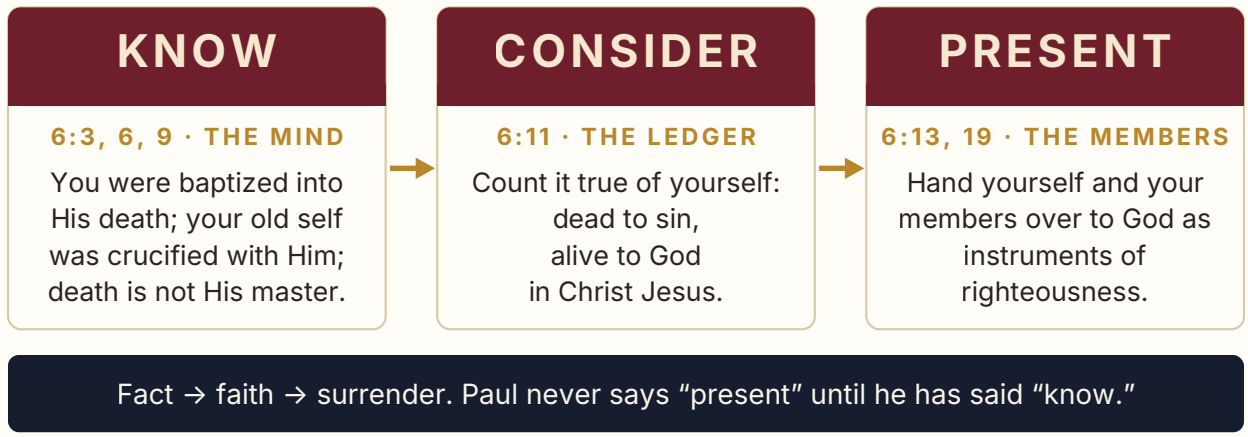
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 6:4

"Therefore we have been ☆ buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through △ the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."

FIGURE · KNOW · CONSIDER · PRESENT



Read the three panels left to right: what God has done is learned (know), then counted true of yourself (consider), and only then acted on with the body (present).

Setting. Romans 5 ended with two reigns — "as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life" (5:21) — and with a sentence that invites abuse: "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (5:20). Chapter 6 opens with the objection Paul knows is coming: "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?" (v1).

Structure:

- vv1–2 — **the first objection:** keep on sinning so grace can increase? "May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?"
- vv3–4 — **baptized into His death:** baptized into Christ Jesus = baptized into His death; buried with Him "so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."
- vv5–7 — **united with Him:** in the likeness of His death and His resurrection; "our old self was crucified with Him," the body of sin done away with, "no longer … slaves to sin"; "he who has died is freed from sin."
- vv8–10 — **Christ's death and life:** raised, "never to die again; death no longer is master over Him." He died to sin "once for all"; He lives to God.

- v11 — **the first command:** "consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."
- vv12–14 — **the second command and a promise:** do not let sin reign; do not present your members to sin; present yourselves to God. "For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace."
- v15 — **the second objection:** "Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!"
- vv16–18 — **you are slaves of the one you obey:** sin → death, or obedience → righteousness. "But thanks be to God" — once slaves of sin, now obedient from the heart, freed from sin, slaves of righteousness.
- v19 — **present your members:** as once to impurity and lawlessness "resulting in further lawlessness," so now to righteousness "resulting in sanctification."
- vv20–23 — **the outcomes:** what benefit then? "things of which you are now ashamed … the outcome of those things is death." Now: benefit → sanctification → eternal life. "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- "sin" ×17 — vv1, 2, 6 (×2), 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23. Almost every verse.
- death / died / die / dead ×18 — "death" ×8 (vv3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 16, 21, 23); "died/die" ×6 (vv2, 7, 8, 9, 10 ×2); "dead" ×4 (vv4, 9, 11, 13).
- life / live / lives / alive ×10 — vv2, 4, 8, 10 (×3), 11, 13, 22, 23. Death language outnumbers life language, but life gets the last word.
- slaves / enslaved ×9 — vv6, 16 (×2), 17, 18, 19 (×2), 20, 22. All of them in the second half except v6.
- "with Him / with Christ" ×5 — vv4, 5, 6, 8 (×2).
- present / presented / presenting ×5 — vv13 (×2), 16, 19 (×2).
- "resulting in" ×5 — vv16 (×2), 19 (×2), 22.
- righteousness ×5 — vv13, 16, 18, 19, 20 (plus "unrighteousness" v13).
- know / knowing ×4 — vv3, 6, 9, 16. Christ ×6 — vv3, 4, 8, 9, 11, 23. God ×7.
- grace ×3 — vv1, 14, 15. freed ×3 — vv7, 18, 22 (and "free" vv20, 23).
- "May it never be" ×2 — vv2, 15 (the two objections). master ×2 — vv9, 14 (death over Christ, sin over us). sanctification ×2 — vv19, 22.

Contrasts:

- died to sin ⟷ alive to God (vv2, 10, 11)
- the old self crucified ⟷ newness of life (vv4, 6)
- under law ⟷ under grace (vv14, 15)
- instruments of unrighteousness ⟷ instruments of righteousness (v13)
- slaves of sin ⟷ slaves of righteousness / of God (vv17–18, 22)
- lawlessness → further lawlessness ⟷ righteousness → sanctification (v19)
- "free in regard to righteousness" (v20) ⟷ "freed from sin" (v22)
- then / now (vv19, 21, 22): what you were deriving then ⟷ what you derive now
- wages ⟷ free gift; death ⟷ eternal life (v23)

Shape of the chapter: two objections, each answered "May it never be!" (vv1–2, 15). The first answer is a union — died, buried, raised with Christ (vv3–10) — leading to three verbs: know (vv3, 6, 9), consider (v11), present (vv13,

19). The second answer is a slave market — you belong to the master you obey (vv16–19) — ending in two ledgers and two outcomes (vv20–23). The chapter opens on "grace" and closes on "Christ Jesus our Lord."

Chapter theme (my words): Grace is not permission to stay in sin; it is the power that took me out of it. In Christ I died to sin's reign and rose to a new life and a new Master, and every day I count that true and put my body at God's disposal.

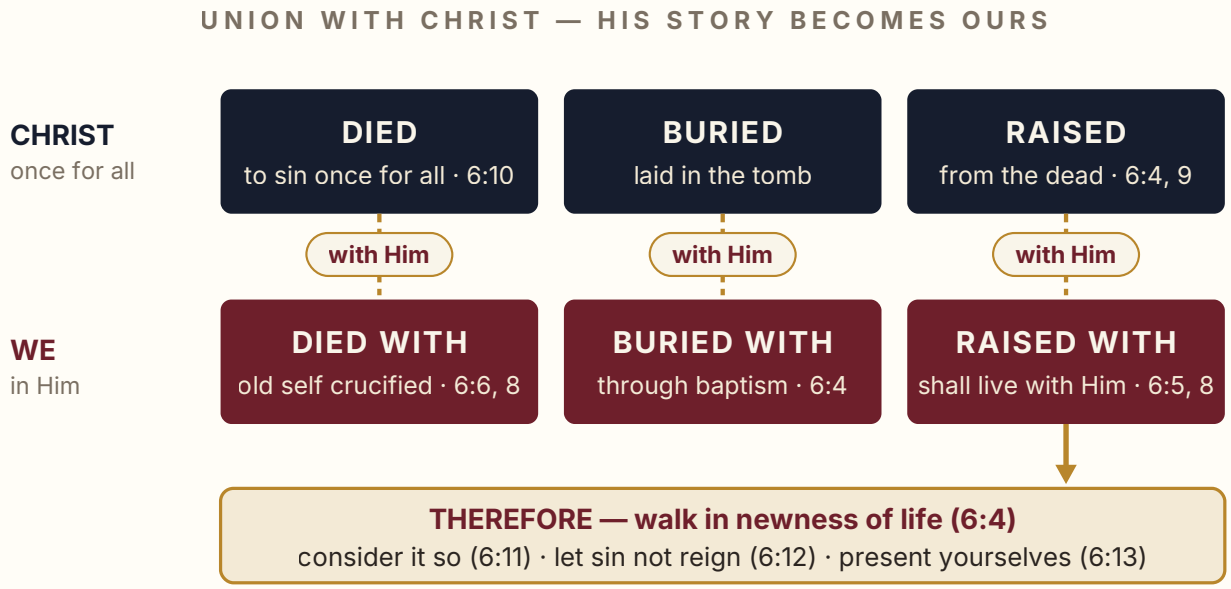
02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 6:6

"knowing this, that △our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would ☆no longer be slaves to sin;"

FIGURE · DIED, BURIED, RAISED — WITH HIM



Each event in Christ's story (top) is joined by "with Him" to the believer's story (bottom), and the chapter's commands flow only from the last box.

Is Paul talking about a single sin or a way of life? Both, in two rounds. Guzik (with Wuest): the verb in v1 is present subjunctive — habitual, continuous sin, a home in sin; the verb in v15 is aorist — a single act, "shall we sin now and then?" Paul refuses both. Sproul names the v1 error antinomianism, the idea that because works do not justify they do not matter: "We are justified unto good works, not justified by good works." Henry calls any teaching that makes room for sin a thing to be "rejected with the greatest abhorrence."

What does "died to sin" mean, if I still sin? The aorist *apethanomen* points to a finished event — our death with Christ — and "sin" has the article: sin as a power, a king. We died to its *reign*. Spurgeon: "We are dead to the reigning power of sin." Sproul is candid that the struggle continues — the old man "keeps kicking and screaming" and dies "by inches" — and in his third sermon simply says, "We still sin when we are Christians." Spurgeon's balance: sin "may vex you and thrust itself upon you, but it cannot become your lord." Henry: sin will be present, but "Let it not make laws, nor preside in councils, nor command the militia."

Baptism (vv3–4). All four teachers say baptism signifies union with Christ's death, burial and resurrection; none says the water itself saves. Sproul: "Baptism does not make us justified, but it is the sign of God's promise." Spurgeon: burial is "the certificate of decease," and baptism "the funeral rite by which death to sin is openly set forth before all men." Henry: "*externa ansa Christi*—the external handle of Christ." They differ on who should be baptized — Sproul defends infant baptism, Spurgeon preached believer's immersion — and this study does not settle that; the chapter's point is the union the sign points to.

The old self, the body of sin, the flesh (vv6–7). Guzik keeps three things apart: the old man (who I was in Adam — crucified, done), the new man (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10), and the flesh (the part of me trained by the old man, the world and the devil — still to be resisted). "Done away with" (*katargeō*) means made powerless, put out of business, not annihilated. Sproul is honest that "body of sin" is hard; he rejects the idea that the physical body is evil (Plato, not Paul) and reads it as the mass of sin. Verse 7's "freed" is literally "justified" (*dedikaiōtai*): death settles the legal claim — Henry, "Death brings a writ of ease to the weary."

Consider / reckon (v11). Guzik: "Reckon is an accounting word." I don't crucify the old man again; "We simply reckon him as dead." It is the same verb as Abraham's faith "credited" as righteousness (4:3) — God counted something true of me in justification; now I count His facts true in sanctification. Sproul: "thinking, judging, or esteeming" — the old man is ancient history, like D-Day before VE-Day. Spurgeon guards it from becoming a lie: reckoning myself sinless "would be a reckoning based on falsehood"; reckon the truth — guilt gone, reign broken, alive to God.

Present (vv12–13, 19). The negative is present tense (stop handing your members to sin as a habit); the positive is aorist (hand yourself to God decisively). It is the verb of 12:1. *Hopla* are tools and weapons. Guzik brings in the priests' consecration — blood on ear, thumb and toe. Sproul: members are like a sculptor's chisel or a baseball bat, and sanctification is cooperation with grace through Word, prayer and worship. Henry: "Yield yourselves to him as wax to the seal."

"Sin shall not be master" (v14) — a command or a promise? The verb is future indicative: a promise. The ground is grace, not law. Spurgeon preached it as a test ("Has sin dominion over you? If so, then you are not a believer"), a promise ("it cannot become your lord") and an encouragement to the fallen ("it is not his nature to lie there"). Where the teachers differ is on how far victory goes in this life: Sproul allows that sinless perfection is "hypothetically possible" but astronomically unlikely, and saves his case against perfectionism for chapter 7; Spurgeon warns that "None are so provoking to God as sinners who boast their own fancied perfection." Both deny that a Christian is ever sinless in practice; both insist sin cannot rule him.

Two masters (vv16–19). There is no neutral ground. Spurgeon: "There is no interregnum. Man passes from one master to another, but he is always in subjection." Sproul: by nature we are "in bondage to sin," and the commonest road into ancient slavery was selling yourself — which is what presenting your members to sin does. The "form of teaching" (*typos*) is a mold; believers were handed over to it (Henry: "as into a mould, as the wax is cast into the impression of the seal"). Verse 19 describes how habits compound: lawlessness "resulting in further lawlessness" — Guzik, "This describes the dynamic power of our habits"; Henry, "Every sinful act strengthens and confirms the sinful habit."

Wages and gift (vv20–23). "Benefit" is literally fruit; "outcome" is *telos*, the end. *Opsōnia* is a soldier's pay; *charisma* is a free gift. Spurgeon: "death is a wage, but life is a gift." Sproul: "Wages are something you earn; a gift is something you cannot possibly earn," and therefore "the essence of Christian ethics is gratitude." Henry: "Sinners merit hell, but saints do not merit heaven."

Word study (Greek):

- **May it never be — *mē genoito* (G1096):** "let it not come to be," Paul's strongest no; 10× in Romans (vv2, 15 here).
- **continue — *epimenō* (G1961):** remain on, stay in; present tense — a settled habit (v1).
- **died — *apothnēskō* (G599):** aorist in v2 — a finished death with Christ.
- **baptized — *baptizō* (G907):** dip, immerse, overwhelm; "into Christ" = joined to Him.
- **buried with — *synthaptō* (G4916):** only here and Col 2:12.
- **newness — *kainotēs* (G2538):** a new kind of life, not a patched old one.
- **united / planted together — *symphytos* (G4854):** grown together like a graft; only here in the NT.
- **crucified with — *systauroō* (G4957):** used of the thieves beside Jesus and of Paul (Gal 2:20).
- **done away with — *katargeō* (G2673):** made idle, rendered powerless.
- **freed — *dikaioō* (G1344):** "justified" — death settles the legal claim (v7).
- **once for all — *ephapax* (G2178):** a single, unrepeatable act (Heb 7:27; 9:12; 10:10).
- **be master — *kyrieuō* (G2961):** to lord it over; death over Christ (v9), sin over us (v14, future: a promise).
- **consider / reckon — *logizomai* (G3049):** count, credit, reckon — the ledger word of ch. 4.
- **reign — *basileuō* (G936):** the verb of the two reigns in 5:14–21.
- **present — *paristēmi* (G3936):** put at someone's disposal; also 12:1.
- **instruments — *hoplon* (G3696):** tools, weapons (13:12; 2 Cor 6:7; 10:4).
- **slave — *doulos* (G1401) / enslave — *douloō* (G1402):** owned, not hired.
- **form — *typos* (G5179):** imprint, pattern, mold (John 20:25).
- **lawlessness — *anomia* (G458):** life without law; it compounds (v19).
- **sanctification — *hagiasmos* (G38):** the process of being made holy (vv19, 22).
- **benefit — *karpos* (G2590):** fruit; **outcome — *telos* (G5056):** end, goal.
- **wages — *opsōnion* (G3800):** a soldier's pay (Luke 3:14; 1 Cor 9:7).
- **free gift — *charisma* (G5486):** a gift of grace (also 5:15–16).

Cross-references:

- Law and prophets: Gen 2:17; Exod 4:23; 8:1; Lev 8:23–24.
- Gospels: Matt 6:24; John 8:34–36; 15:1–5.
- Romans: 4:3; 5:12–21; 7:1–6; 8:1–13; 12:1.
- Letters: 1 Cor 6:19–20; 10:2; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 2:20; 5:1, 13; Eph 4:22–24; Col 2:12; 3:1–10; Titus 2:11–14; Heb 9:12; 10:10; 1 Pet 2:24.

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **Paul never asks "can a Christian sin?"** He asks whether a Christian can live there (v1) or treat one sin as harmless (v15). "May it never be!"
2. **We died to sin; sin did not die to us.** The tyrant is still in the land; his subject has been executed with Christ.
3. **Burial is the certificate of death** (Spurgeon). Baptism certifies the union; it does not create it.
4. **Reckon is an accounting word** (Guzik). Counting God's facts true is not pretending.
5. **The order of the verbs is the order of the battle:** know → consider → present.

6. **“Done away with” means put out of business** — the body of sin unemployed, not absent.
7. **Verse 14 is a promise** — sin “cannot become your lord” (Spurgeon).
8. **Sanctification is by grace too** — and its engine is gratitude (Sproul).
9. **Habits compound in both directions** — further lawlessness, or sanctification (v19; Henry).
10. **The last verse changes the vocabulary** — wages earned, a gift received.

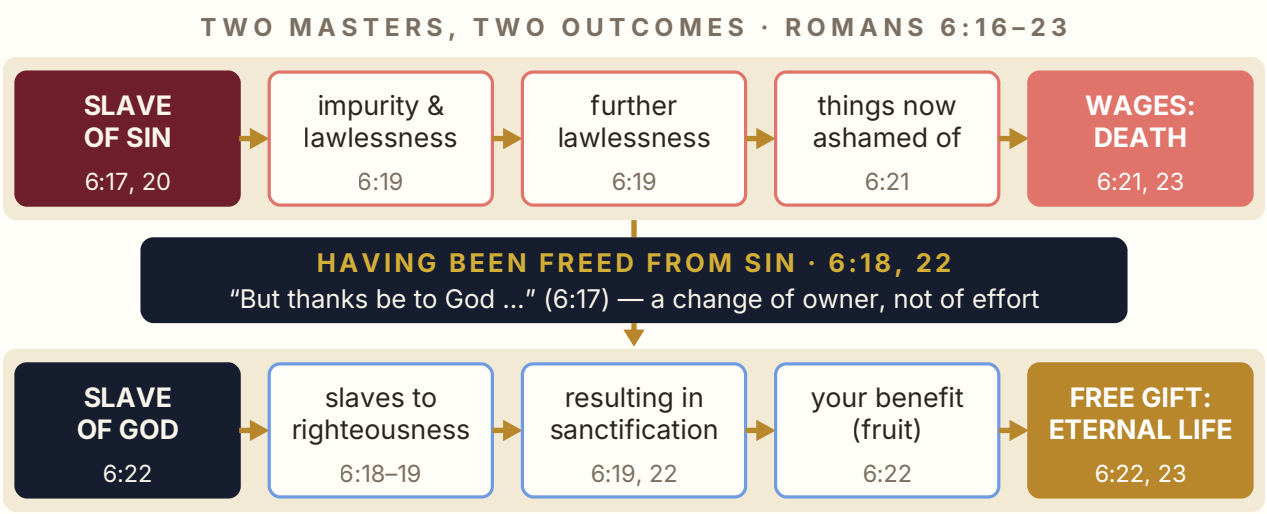
03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 6:13

"and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as ⚠ instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."

FIGURE · TWO MASTERS, TWO WAGES



Sin pays *opsōnia* — wages, earned. God gives *charisma* — a gift, never earned.

Every man serves someone (6:16): follow each lane to its end, and note that the only crossing between them is God's act of setting free.

Fact to know — "our old self was crucified with Him." Before I do anything in this chapter, God tells me what He has already done. When I was joined to Christ, the man I was in Adam died with Him. I don't have to manufacture that, feel it, or earn it. I start every fight from it, not toward it.

Command to obey — "consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God." Reckon is an accounting word. When temptation says, "You'll always be this way," I'm going to open the ledger and read what God wrote: dead to sin, alive to God, in Christ Jesus. For the men I walk with who are fighting addiction, this is not a slogan — it is the first move every morning: say out loud who you are before the craving tells you who it thinks you are.

Command to obey — "present … your members … to God." Paul is concrete, so I will be too. My eyes, my hands, my phone, my car keys, my evenings — these are weapons, and they fight for somebody. Today I'll name the one member sin uses most and hand it over to God on purpose, ahead of time: the phone goes on the charger in the kitchen, the route home skips the store, the hand reaches for the call to a brother instead of the bottle. Presenting is a decision made before the moment, not in it.

Sin to confess — "the things of which you are now ashamed." Paul doesn't pretend the old life was nothing. He asks, "What benefit were you then deriving?" — and the honest answer is shame and death. I confess the places where I've gone back to a master who only ever paid me in loss. But the word is "now ashamed," and the next word is "but now having been freed." Shame is meant to send me back to Christ, not to keep me away from Him (Rom 8:1).

Warning to heed — "resulting in further lawlessness." Sin compounds. Every time I give in, the old road gets wider and the next surrender gets easier; that is how addiction works, and verse 19 describes it exactly. Henry: "Every sinful act strengthens and confirms the sinful habit." But the same law runs the other way: every act of obedience lays another stone on the new road "resulting in sanctification."

Promise to trust — "sin shall not be master over you." This is not a promise that I'll never fall. Sproul: "We still sin when we are Christians." Spurgeon: sin "casts us down, but it cannot make us take delight in its evil," and a child of God may go down, but "it is not his nature to lie there." To the man who relapsed last week: you are not back to square one and you are not back under the old owner. Get up, confess, call your brother, and come back to the table. Grace is the ground you stand on, not the prize for standing.

Example to follow — the freed slave who knows he's free. Guzik's story of the freed woman who wasn't sure she was free is "exactly the place many Christians are." I want to live like a man who has read his papers.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Paul says "we who died to sin" in the past tense. If that is true of me, why does sin still feel so alive? (6:2, 6–7, 14) *Sin has lost its throne, not its voice.*
2. What does my baptism say about me — and do I live like a man whose funeral has already been held? (6:3–4; Col 2:12) *Burial certifies death.*
3. "Consider yourselves to be dead to sin." What lie do I most often believe about who I am — and what does God say is true? (6:11; 2 Cor 5:17) *Reckoning is counting what is true, not pretending.*
4. Which of my members — eyes, hands, tongue, feet, phone — am I still lending to sin? What would it look like to present that one to God this week? (6:12–13, 19; Rom 12:1) *Present the one sin uses most, on purpose, in advance.*
5. Where have I seen "lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness" in my own life — and where have I seen the other chain begin? (6:19–22) *Habits compound both ways.*
6. Sin pays wages; God gives a gift. Am I still trying to earn from God what He only gives — or still collecting from sin what it always pays? (6:21–23; Titus 2:11–12) *Death is a wage; life is a gift.*

Worship. Christ died to sin once for all, and death is no longer master over Him. Everything I have in this chapter — the funeral, the resurrection, the new Master, the gift at the end — is His before it is mine. Spurgeon: "His service is perfect freedom and supreme delight." I serve a Master who gives.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, I was buried with You and I am alive to God in You. Teach me to count it true when I don't feel it. Today I present myself to You — my eyes, my hands, my mouth, my time — as instruments of righteousness. Where I have fallen, lift me; where sin is still asking for the throne, keep it off. Thank You that sin shall not be master over me, because I am under grace. Thank You for the free gift of eternal life. In Christ Jesus our Lord, Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 7

The Law, the Flesh, and the Deliverer — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God set me free from the Law's claim by joining me to the risen Christ, and the Law is still holy — it shows me my sin, but it cannot make me good. When I find myself doing what I hate, the answer is not a better rule but a Rescuer: thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

00 The Text

ROMANS 7 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?

2 For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband.

3 So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man.

4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."

8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.

9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;

10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;

11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

13 Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

14 For we know that △ the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, ⚠ sold into bondage to sin.

15 For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but ⚠ I am doing the very thing I hate.

16 But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the ↻ Law, confessing that the ↻ Law is good.

17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but ⚠ sin which dwells in me.

18 For I know that ⚠ nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but ⚠ sin which dwells in me.

21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

22 For ☆ I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

23 but I see a different ↻ law in the members of my body, ◷ waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the ↻ law of sin which is in my members.

24 ⚠ Wretched man that I am! ◷ Who will set me free from the body of this death?

25 △ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself ◷ with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the ↻ law of sin.

Marked in the text

- **v4** “you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ” — God — His character & actions
- **v4** “joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead” — Promise / blessing
- **v4** “bear fruit for God” — Promise / blessing
- **v5** “the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law” — Sin / warning
- **v5** “bear fruit for death” — Sin / warning
- **v6** “we have been released from the Law” — Promise / blessing
- **v6** “newness of the Spirit” — Promise / blessing
- **v6** “oldness of the letter” — Time / place / contrast
- **v7** “YOU SHALL NOT COVET” — Command / instruction
- **v8** “sin, taking opportunity through the commandment” — Sin / warning
- **v9** “sin became alive and I died” — Sin / warning
- **v11** “deceived me and through it killed me” — Sin / warning
- **v12** “the Law is holy” — God — His character & actions
- **v12** “holy and righteous and good” — God — His character & actions
- **v13** “sin would become utterly sinful” — Sin / warning
- **v14** “the Law is spiritual” — God — His character & actions
- **v14** “sold into bondage to sin” — Sin / warning
- **v15** “I am doing the very thing I hate” — Sin / warning
- **v18** “nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh” — Sin / warning
- **v22** “I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man” — Promise / blessing
- **v23** “waging war against the law of my mind” — Time / place / contrast
- **v24** “Wretched man that I am!” — Sin / warning
- **v24** “Who will set me free from the body of this death?” — Time / place / contrast
- **v25** “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” — God — His character & actions
- **v25** “with my mind am serving the law of God” — Time / place / contrast
- **v17** “sin which dwells in me” — Sin / warning (every occurrence)
- **v7** “May it never be!” — Time / place / contrast (every occurrence)
- **v1** “law” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

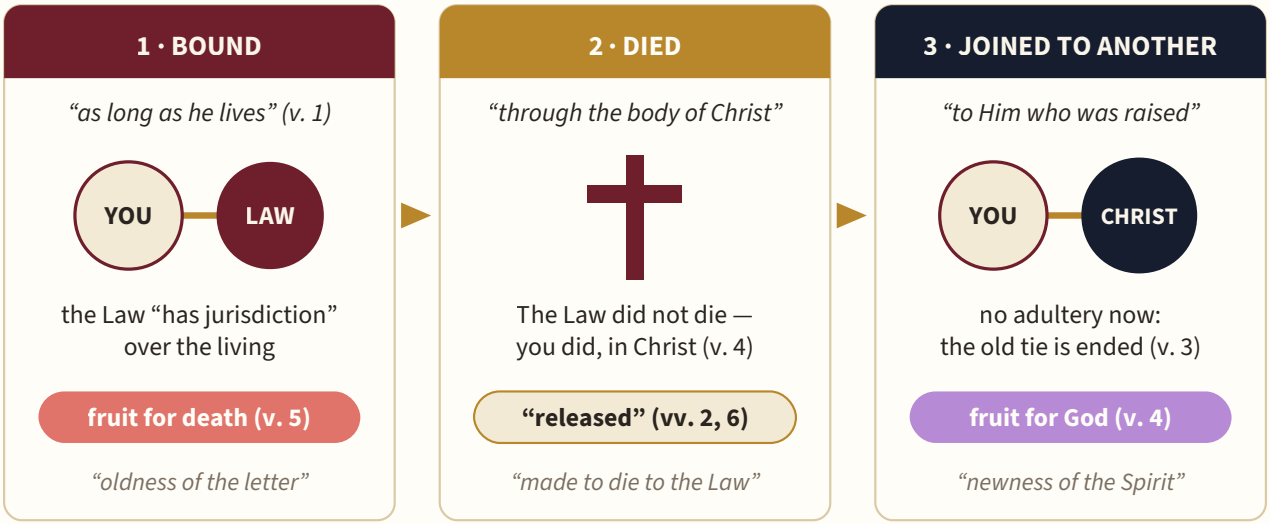
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 7:12

"So then, ⚠ the Law is holy, and the commandment is ⚠ holy and righteous and good."

FIGURE · THE MARRIAGE ILLUSTRATION (7:1–6)



Follow the three panels: the Law does not die — you die with Christ, and so are free to be joined to the risen Lord and bear a different fruit.

Setting. Paul turns to "those who know the law" (v1) — Jewish believers and synagogue-taught Gentiles in Rome. He has just said "you are not under law but under grace" (6:14), and "May it never be!" was his answer to "shall we sin?" (6:15). Chapter 7 explains how we were released from the Law and then defends the Law against the charge that it is sin. Chapter 8 follows with "no condemnation."

Structure:

- vv1–3 — **the principle and the picture:** the law has jurisdiction over a person only while he lives; a married woman is bound to her husband while he lives, free if he dies — and no adulteress if she is then joined to another man.
- vv4–6 — **the application:** "you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ," to be joined to Him who was raised from the dead, to bear fruit for God. Then: in the flesh, passions aroused by the Law bore fruit for death (v5); now, released, we serve in newness of the Spirit, not oldness of the letter (v6).
- vv7–12 — **first question: "Is the Law sin?" May it never be!** The Law made sin known — "YOU SHALL NOT COVET" (v7). Sin took opportunity through the commandment and produced coveting of every kind (v8). "I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died" (v9). Sin deceived me and killed me (v11). So the Law is holy, and the commandment holy and righteous and good (v12).

- v13 — **second question: did the good become death to me? May it never be!** Sin did it, so that sin would be shown to be sin — "utterly sinful."
- vv14–20 — **the war described:** the Law is spiritual, I am of flesh (v14). I do what I hate (v15); I agree the Law is good (v16); "sin which dwells in me" (vv17, 20); nothing good dwells in my flesh — the willing is present, the doing is not (v18).
- vv21–23 — **the laws at war:** evil present in me, the one who wants to do good (v21); I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man (v22), but a different law in my members wages war against the law of my mind and makes me a prisoner (v23).
- vv24–25 — **the cry and the answer:** "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Then the summary: with my mind serving the law of God, with my flesh the law of sin.

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- **law / Law** ×23 — in vv1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 16, 22, 23, 25 (the word is also behind "principle" in v21). "Law of …" ×5: law of God (vv22, 25), law of my mind (v23), law of sin (vv23, 25).
- **sin** ×14 — vv7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20, 23, 25; plus **sinful** ×2 (vv5, 13).
- **I** ×29 — 24 of them in vv14–25; **me** ×12 and **my** ×8. In vv7–25 the first person (I, me, my, myself) comes 48 times.
- **commandment** ×6 — every verse from v8 to v13.
- **good** ×8 — vv12, 13 (×2), 16, 18 (×2), 19, 21.
- **do / doing** ×16 in vv14–25 alone; **want / would like / willing / wants** ×7 (vv15–21).
- **death** ×5 (vv5, 10, 13 ×2, 24) and **die / dies / died** ×5 (vv2, 3, 4, 6, 9).
- **dwells** ×3 (vv17, 18, 20); **flesh** ×4 (vv5, 14, 18, 25); **members** ×3 (vv5, 23 ×2).
- **"May it never be!"** ×2 (vv7, 13) — the two questions of the chapter.

Contrasts: bound ⟷ released (vv2, 6); fruit for death ⟷ fruit for God (vv4–5); newness of the Spirit ⟷ oldness of the letter (v6); "to result in life" ⟷ "proved to result in death" (v10); the Law is spiritual ⟷ I am of flesh (v14); what I want ⟷ what I do (vv15, 19); the law of my mind ⟷ the law of sin in my members (v23); inner man ⟷ members; "Wretched man" ⟷ "Thanks be to God" (vv24–25).

Shape of the chapter: a picture (1–6), a defense in two questions (7–13), a confession in the present tense (14–25) — and the confession ends in thanks before it ends in summary. The pronouns tell the story: "you" and "we" in vv1–6, then "I" almost alone from v7 to the end, until the "I" looks away from itself to "Jesus Christ our Lord."

Chapter theme (my words): I died to the Law with Christ and now belong to Him. The Law is holy and shows me my sin, but it cannot set me free; only God through Jesus Christ can.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 7:4

"Therefore, my brethren, you also were △ made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be ☆ joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might ☆ bear fruit for God."

FIGURE · WHO IS THE "I" OF 7:14–25?

A · A BELIEVER NOW Paul as a regenerate man	B · AN AWAKENED SINNER unregenerate, under the Law	C · PAUL LOOKING BACK his past life under the Law
THE CASE FROM THE TEXT • Present tense from v. 14 on • "I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man" (v. 22) • He hates his sin (v. 15) • v. 25b comes after the thanksgiving	THE CASE FROM THE TEXT • "sold into bondage to sin" (v. 14) • "making me a prisoner of the law of sin" (v. 23) • Contrast 6:18, "freed from sin," and 8:2, "set you free"	THE CASE FROM THE TEXT • vv. 7–13 are past tense: "I was once alive" (v. 9) • The present tense is read as vivid recollection • Compare Phil 3:6 — "found blameless"
OUR TEACHERS SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY — *all three hold A*	OUR TEACHERS Henry weighs it, then prefers A; none of our four holds it	OUR TEACHERS Sproul names it and finds "no justification" for it; none of four holds it

Spurgeon, of all pre-conversion readings: *"evidently mistaken"*

GUZIK · "In a sense this is an irrelevant question" — it is the struggle of anyone who tries to obey God in his own strength; yet "the new man is the real Paul."

The three main readings side by side, with the case each one makes from the text and where our four teachers stand — three hold reading A; Guzik calls the question secondary to the struggle itself.

FIGURE · WHAT THE LAW IS — AND WHAT IT CANNOT DO

WHAT THE LAW IS	WHAT SIN DOES WITH IT	WHAT IT CANNOT DO
◆ **holy** — v. 12	**EXPOSED** by it — v. 7 *"I would not have come to know sin"*	**cannot supply the doing** *"the doing of the good is not" — v. 18*
◆ **righteous** — v. 12	**AROUSED** by it — vv. 5, 8 *"coveting of every kind"*	**cannot change the flesh** *"I am of flesh" — v. 14; "with my flesh" — v. 25*
◆ **good** — vv. 12, 13, 16	**USES** it as a base — vv. 8, 11 *"taking opportunity"*	**cannot set me free** *"Who will set me free …?" — v. 24*
◆ **spiritual** — v. 14	**KILLS** through it — vv. 9–11 *"deceived me … killed me"*	
◆ **"to result in life"** — v. 10	**UNMASKED** by it — v. 13 *"utterly sinful"*	

THE ANSWER IS A PERSON, NOT A RULE

"Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (7:25) — "For what the Law could not do … God did" (8:3)

Read the columns across: the fault is never in the Law (left); sin turns the good commandment into its weapon (middle); and the Law has no power to free or change (right) — so the answer comes from outside it.

Who is the husband, and who dies? (vv1–6). The first husband is the Law (Henry: "Our first marriage was to the law"). But Paul bends the picture on purpose: in the illustration the husband dies; in the application the wife does. Sproul: "Paul does not say that the law has died, but you are the one who has died." *Ethanatōthēte* is passive — I was put to death, "through the body of Christ," by being united to Him in His death (6:3–6). Guzik: dead to the law as a principle of justification *or* sanctification; Morris, in Guzik: "Believers are through with the law." The goal is not freedom for its own sake but fruit for God (Guzik: free to be "married" to Jesus). Spurgeon: "Jesus is our husband, grace is the ruling principle of his house, and holiness is the fruit of the marriage." Sproul's guardrail: release from the Law's dominion "does not give us a license to sin." Henry's two pictures of life under the Law: an imperfect dam that only makes the stream of sin swell higher, and the sun on a dunghill.

Is the Law sin? (vv7–12). No — it is the x-ray, not the disease (Guzik: "it reveals what is there but hidden"). Sproul: "The law is not sin, but the law makes known to us our sin." But sin is not passive: it takes the commandment as a base of operations (*aphormē*) and launches desire from it — "coveting of every kind." Guzik: "Once God draws a boundary for us, we are immediately enticed to cross that boundary" (Augustine's pears). Paul names the tenth commandment because it reaches the heart; Spurgeon tells how "Thou shalt not covet" found out Paul himself. "I was once alive apart from the Law" (v9): Henry and Sproul both read this as Paul's self-confidence before the commandment came home — sin was dormant, and Sproul's picture is Yamamoto's "sleeping giant." The verb "deceived" (v11) is the serpent's verb (2 Cor 11:3) — Eden replayed in one man.

Did the good become death? (v13). No — sin did it, using the good, so that sin would be seen as "utterly sinful" (*kath' hyperbolēn*, beyond measure). Spurgeon: "Sin kills men by that which was ordained to life"; "The Lord

brings good out of evil, but sin brings evil out of good"; "Unless sin is seen to be sin, grace will never be seen to be grace."

Who is the "I" of vv14–25? This is the chapter's great question, and good men differ. Three main readings:

- **A believer now (regenerate Paul).** The verbs turn to the present tense at v14 and stay there; the man hates his sin (v15), agrees that the Law is good (v16), and "joyfully concurs with the law of God in the inner man" (v22); and v25b comes *after* the thanksgiving. **Sproul:** "I find absolutely no justification whatsoever for finding in this text anything other than the contemporary struggle"; love for the Law is among "sentiments that you do not find in unregenerate people." **Spurgeon:** "It is Paul, the saint and the apostle, who here exclaims"; those who read it otherwise are "evidently mistaken." **Henry**, after weighing the other view: "the struggles that are maintained between grace and corruption in sanctified souls."
- **An awakened but unregenerate man under the Law.** Its strongest lines: "sold into bondage to sin" (v14), "nothing good dwells in me" (v18), "a prisoner of the law of sin" (v23) — set against 6:18 ("freed from sin") and 8:2 ("set you free"). Henry names this reading and sets it aside; none of our four holds it.
- **Paul recalling his own past under the Law.** vv7–13 are past tense ("I was once alive," v9), and this reading takes the present tense of vv14–25 as vivid recollection (compare Phil 3:6, "found blameless"). Sproul names it — the reading perfectionists use — and rejects it on the grammar.
- **Guzik** frames the question differently: "In a sense this is an irrelevant question, for this is the struggle of anyone who tries to obey God in their own strength." Yet he leans toward the believer: "His awareness of carnality shows that God did a work in him," and "The new man is the real Paul."

My own take for the table: the text gives weight on both sides, and the teachers I trust most here (Sproul, Spurgeon, Henry) read it of the believer. What all four agree on is the point Paul is making: the Law — however holy — gives no power; the willing is present, the doing is not, and the rescue is a Person.

Sin which dwells in me (vv17, 20). Not an excuse but a diagnosis. Sproul: "Paul recognizes where sin dwells: It dwells in him." The same verb (*oikeō*) is used of the Spirit dwelling in us in 8:9 — two tenants, two chapters. Sproul (from Augustine): after regeneration "the rest of your life is the battle between two jockeys regarding who will ride this horse"; from Edwards, "Part of me wants to obey Christ but not all of me." Spurgeon: the old nature is "unchanged, unaltered, just the same, as bad as ever it was"; "The dual life provokes a daily duel"; "We do sin, but we hate sin." Sproul also rejects the "carnal Christian" who lives in unrepentant sin as an excuse: "There is no such thing as a carnal Christian who is completely carnal."

Wretched man — and the answer (vv24–25). *Talaipōros*: worn down by strain (Guzik: worn out by hard labor). "The body of this death": Spurgeon and Henry both use the picture of a corpse tied to a living man (Henry: "as if he had had a dead body tied to him"); Guzik notes the ancient tyrants' cruelty and, with Calvin and Murray, "the whole mass of sin." The question is "who," not "what." Guzik: "You don't need a teacher, you need a Savior." Sproul: "The answer to 'Who will deliver me?' is God." Spurgeon: the fainting warrior rises "shouting, 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.'" Henry: "It is a special remedy against fears and sorrows to be much in praise." And then 8:1 — Sproul: no condemnation even "for what you will do tomorrow."

Word study (Greek):

- **has jurisdiction — *kyrieuō* (G2961):** to rule as lord; the same verb as 6:9, 14.
- **made to die — *thanatoō* (G2289):** to put to death; passive — it was done to us, through Christ's body.
- **released — *katargeō* (G2673):** made inoperative, its claim switched off (vv2, 6).

- **bear fruit — *karpophoreō* (G2592):** to bear fruit; fruit for God (v4) or for death (v5).
- **newness — *kainotēs* (G2538):** a new kind of thing; only here and 6:4.
- **opportunity — *aphormē* (G874):** a starting point, "a base of operations" (Thayer).
- **coveting — *epithymia* (G1939):** desire for what is forbidden; verb *epithymeō* (G1937).
- **became alive — *anazaō* (G326):** to come back to life; sin was only sleeping.
- **deceived — *exapataō* (G1818):** to deceive thoroughly; the serpent's verb (2 Cor 11:3).
- **utterly — *hyperbolē* (G5236):** a throwing beyond; beyond measure.
- **of flesh — *sarkinos* (G4560):** made of flesh, fleshly.
- **sold — *pipraskō* (G4097):** to sell, as into slavery; perfect passive — sold, and still under it.
- **joyfully concur — *synēdomai* (G4913):** to delight in; only here in the NT.
- **waging war against — *antistrateuomai* (G497):** to make war against; only here in the NT.
- **making me a prisoner — *aichmalōtizō* (G163):** to take captive in war (cf. 2 Cor 10:5).
- **wretched — *talaipōros* (G5005):** miserable, worn down by continued trial.
- **set free — *rhyomai* (G4506):** to rescue, draw out of danger to oneself.

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. The Law did not die — you did, in Christ (Sproul).
2. Every marriage bears fruit; the question is to whom (*karpophoreō*, vv4–5).
3. The Law is an x-ray, not the disease (Guzik).
4. Sin needs a base of operations — and it took the commandment (*aphormē*).
5. "The Lord brings good out of evil, but sin brings evil out of good" (Spurgeon).
6. Verse 11 is Eden in one man's story — a command for life, a deceiver, and death.
7. Delight in God's law is a mark of the new birth (Henry; Sproul; Spurgeon).
8. The struggle is real whatever the label (Guzik).
9. "Who," not "what": the answer is a Person (v25).
10. "We do sin, but we hate sin" — the war itself is a sign of life (Spurgeon).

Cross-references: Gal 2:19–20 · Gal 5:16–18 · 2 Cor 3:6 · 1 Tim 1:8 · Ps 1:2 · Phil 3:6 · 1 John 1:8–9 · Rom 6:14, 18 · Rom 8:1–4, 9 · Ex 20:17

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 7:24–25a

"⚠ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? △ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

Truth to stand on — I died to the Law with Christ and I belong to Him now (v4). I don't have to earn His love by keeping rules, and I don't get a license to sin either. I'm married to the risen Lord, and the point of a marriage is fruit. Today I ask: what fruit is my life bearing, and for whom?

Sin to confess — I know the "do not" that makes me want the thing more. For me it's __ (I'll name it, to God and to one brother). The commandment is not the problem; the coveting in me is. I won't blame the Law, my past, or the people around me — and I won't hide behind "sin which dwells in me" as an excuse. The deeds are mine. The diagnosis is honest so the cure can be real.

Promise to trust — "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (v25) and "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (8:1). When I fall, the fight is not proof that I am lost; Spurgeon says the unbeliever knows no such warfare. I can hate my sin and still rest in my Savior.

Example to follow — Paul's honesty. An apostle wrote "Wretched man that I am!" in a letter to a church he had never visited. The men I sit with — in recovery, behind the walls, at my own table — need leaders who will admit "I fight this too," and then point past themselves to Christ. I'll do that this week.

Practice for the week — Sproul's counsel on the will: we choose by our strongest inclination, so feed the new man and starve the old. Concretely: (1) a daily time in the Word and prayer before my phone; (2) one accountability call when the pull is strongest; (3) remove one "base of operations" sin has been using in my house or my habits.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. In Paul's picture, who dies — the Law or you? Why does that difference matter for how you see God's commands today? *The Law still stands and is holy; you died to its claim in Christ (v4). Freedom is a new marriage that bears fruit for God. — 7:1–6; Gal 2:19–20*
2. Where has a "do not" stirred up the very desire it forbids in you? What does that show about the commandment, and about you? *Sin takes the commandment as its base of operations (v8); the fault is in us, not in the Law (Guzik). — 7:7–11*
3. Why does Paul insist the Law is "holy and righteous and good" right after saying it killed him? *Sin did the killing, using the Law; the Law only exposed how utterly sinful sin is (v13). — 7:12–13; 1 Tim 1:8*
4. Who do you think the "I" of verses 14–25 is? Which line in the text weighs most with you, and why? *Weigh v14 and v22; Sproul, Spurgeon and Henry hold the believer reading; Guzik says the struggle is the same either way. — 7:14–25; Gal 5:17*
5. What is the difference between "sin which dwells in me" as a diagnosis and as an excuse? *The deeds are still his (v15) and he hates them; ownership and hope together. — 7:17–20; 1 John 1:8*

6. When you cry “Who will set me free?”, where do you usually look first — a method, a program, or a Person? *The question is “who,” and the answer is thanks to God through Jesus Christ (v25), then no condemnation (8:1). — 7:24–25; Rom 8:1–2*

Worship. Henry says praise is “a special remedy against fears and sorrows.” So I’ll end the struggle the way Paul did — not with a resolution but with thanks. Sing or read something that names Jesus as Rescuer, and say verse 25 out loud.

Prayer. Father, Your Law is holy and righteous and good, and it has shown me my sin. I confess that I have done what I hate and left undone what I wanted to do. I will not blame Your commandment, and I will not excuse myself. Thank You that I died to the Law through the body of Christ and that I belong to Him who was raised from the dead. Make my life bear fruit for You. When I cry, “Who will set me free?”, turn my eyes from myself to Jesus. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. In His name, Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 8

No Condemnation, No Separation — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

In Christ there is no condemnation behind me and no separation ahead of me. The Spirit who lives in me fights my flesh, calls God my Father, groans with me in this broken world, and will finish what God began.

00 The Text

ROMANS 8 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so,

8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—

13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and ☆ fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

18 For I consider that ◷ the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with ☆ the glory that is to be revealed to us.

19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

20 For the creation was ⚠ subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope

21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation ⟲ groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the ☆ first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves ⟲ groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?

25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

26 In the same way the ⟲ Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but △ the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with ⟲ groanings too deep for words;

27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the ⟲ Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

28 And we know that △ God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

29 For those whom He foreknew, He also ⟲ predestined to become ☆ conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

30 and these whom He ⟲ predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, ◷ He also glorified.

31 What then shall we say to these things? △ If God is for us, who is against us?

32 He who △ did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? △ God is the one who justifies;

34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, △ who also intercedes for us.

35 Who will ⟲ separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."

37 But in all these things we ☆ overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to ⟲ separate us from ☆ the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Marked in the text

- **v1** "no condemnation" — Promise / blessing
- **v2** "has set you free from the law of sin and of death" — God — His character & actions
- **v3** "what the Law could not do" — Time / place / contrast
- **v3** "sending His own Son" — God — His character & actions
- **v3** "condemned sin in the flesh" — God — His character & actions
- **v6** "the mind set on the flesh is death" — Sin / warning
- **v6** "the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace" — Promise / blessing
- **v7** "hostile toward God" — Sin / warning
- **v8** "cannot please God" — Sin / warning
- **v9** "the Spirit of God dwells in you" — God — His character & actions
- **v11** "will also give life to your mortal bodies" — Promise / blessing

- **v13** “putting to death the deeds of the body” — Command / instruction
- **v15** “Abba! Father!” — Promise / blessing
- **v16** “testifies with our spirit” — God — His character & actions
- **v17** “fellow heirs with Christ” — Promise / blessing
- **v18** “the sufferings of this present time” — Time / place / contrast
- **v18** “the glory that is to be revealed to us” — Promise / blessing
- **v20** “subjected to futility” — Sin / warning
- **v23** “first fruits of the Spirit” — Promise / blessing
- **v26** “the Spirit Himself intercedes for us” — God — His character & actions
- **v28** “God causes all things to work together for good” — God — His character & actions
- **v29** “conformed to the image of His Son” — Promise / blessing
- **v30** “He also glorified” — Time / place / contrast
- **v31** “If God is for us, who is against us?” — God — His character & actions
- **v32** “did not spare His own Son” — God — His character & actions
- **v33** “God is the one who justifies” — God — His character & actions
- **v34** “who also intercedes for us” — God — His character & actions
- **v37** “overwhelmingly conquer” — Promise / blessing
- **v39** “the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” — Promise / blessing
- **v5** “flesh” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v2** “Spirit” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v22** “groans” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v23** “groan” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v26** “groanings” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v29** “predestined” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v35** “separate” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 8:6

"For ⚠the mind set on the flesh is death, but ☆the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,"

Setting. Romans 8 follows straight on from the cry of 7:24–25 — "Wretched man that I am! … Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" The "therefore" of verse 1 is the conclusion of everything since 3:21. Paul is writing to believers in Rome he has not yet visited, laying out the gospel he preaches.

Structure:

- vv1–4 — **the verdict:** no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. The law of the Spirit of life has set us free; God did what the Law could not do, sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and condemning sin in the flesh, so that the Law's requirement is fulfilled in us.
- vv5–13 — **two minds:** the mind set on the flesh is death, hostile toward God, cannot please Him; the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. You are in the Spirit if the Spirit of God dwells in you (v9). He who raised Jesus will give life to your mortal bodies (v11). We are under obligation, not to the flesh; by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body, and live (vv12–13).
- vv14–17 — **the family:** led by the Spirit = sons of God; not a spirit of slavery leading to fear, but of adoption — "Abba! Father!" The Spirit testifies with our spirit; if children, heirs — fellow heirs with Christ, if we suffer with Him.
- vv18–27 — **the groans:** present sufferings are not worthy to be compared with coming glory. Creation, subjected to futility, waits for the revealing of the sons of God and groans in childbirth (vv19–22). We groan, having the first fruits of the Spirit, waiting for adoption — the redemption of our body (vv23–25). The Spirit helps our weakness and intercedes with groanings too deep for words (vv26–27).
- vv28–30 — **the purpose:** God causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him; foreknew → predestined → called → justified → glorified.
- vv31–39 — **the triumph:** five questions (vv31–35), Psalm 44:22 quoted (v36), "we overwhelmingly conquer" (v37), and ten things that cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (vv38–39).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "Spirit" (capital S) ×17 — vv2, 4, 5 (×2), 6, 9 (×3), 11 (×2), 13, 14, 16, 23, 26 (×2), 27; plus "spirit" ×4 — vv10, 15 (×2), 16. Twenty-one in all (Greek *pneuma*).
- "God" ×19 (+ "God's" v33) — vv3, 7 (×2), 8, 9, 14 (×2), 16, 17, 19, 21, 27, 28 (×2), 31, 33 (×2), 34, 39.
- "flesh" ×13 — vv3 (×3), 4, 5 (×2), 6, 7, 8, 9, 12 (×2), 13.
- "Christ" ×9 — vv1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 17, 34, 35, 39; "in Christ Jesus" ×3 — vv1, 2, 39.
- "death / dead / die" ×9 — vv2, 6, 10, 11 (×2), 13 (×2), 36, 38.
- "according to" ×8 — vv4 (×2), 5 (×2), 12, 13, 27, 28.
- "son(s)" ×7 — vv3, 14, 15, 19, 23, 29, 32; "children" ×3 — vv16, 17, 21; "heirs" ×3 — v17.

- “hope” ×6 — vv20, 24 (×4), 25.
- “law” ×5 — vv2 (×2), 3, 4, 7 (compare chapter 7).
- “mind / minds” ×5 — vv5, 6 (×2), 7, 27.
- “glory / glorified” ×4 — vv17, 18, 21, 30; “creation” ×4 — vv19, 20, 21, 22.
- “love / loved” ×4 — vv28, 35, 37, 39.
- “groan(s) / groanings” ×3 — vv22, 23, 26; “waits / waiting / wait eagerly” ×3 — vv19, 23, 25; “intercede(s)” ×3 — vv26, 27, 34.
- “condemnation / condemned / condemns” ×3 — vv1, 3, 34; “separate” ×2 — vv35, 39.
- “nor” ×9 in vv38–39 (with “neither,” ten things named).

Contrasts: condemnation (v1) ⟷ no separation (v39). The law of the Spirit of life ⟷ the law of sin and of death (v2). Flesh ⟷ Spirit, death ⟷ life and peace (vv5–13). Slavery leading to fear ⟷ adoption (v15). Sufferings of this present time ⟷ the glory to be revealed (v18). Futility and slavery to corruption ⟷ the freedom of the glory of the children of God (vv20–21). Hope that is seen ⟷ hope for what we do not see (vv24–25). Who is against us? ⟷ God is for us (v31).

Shape of the chapter: a verdict (1–4), a battle (5–13), a family (14–17), a groaning creation (18–27), an eternal purpose (28–30), a hymn of questions (31–39). It moves from the courtroom to the throne, and it starts and ends “in Christ Jesus.”

Chapter theme (my words): Because God condemned sin in His Son, those in Christ will never be condemned, and because God set His love on them before time, nothing in time can separate them from it. In between, the Spirit is the life of the believer.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 8:30

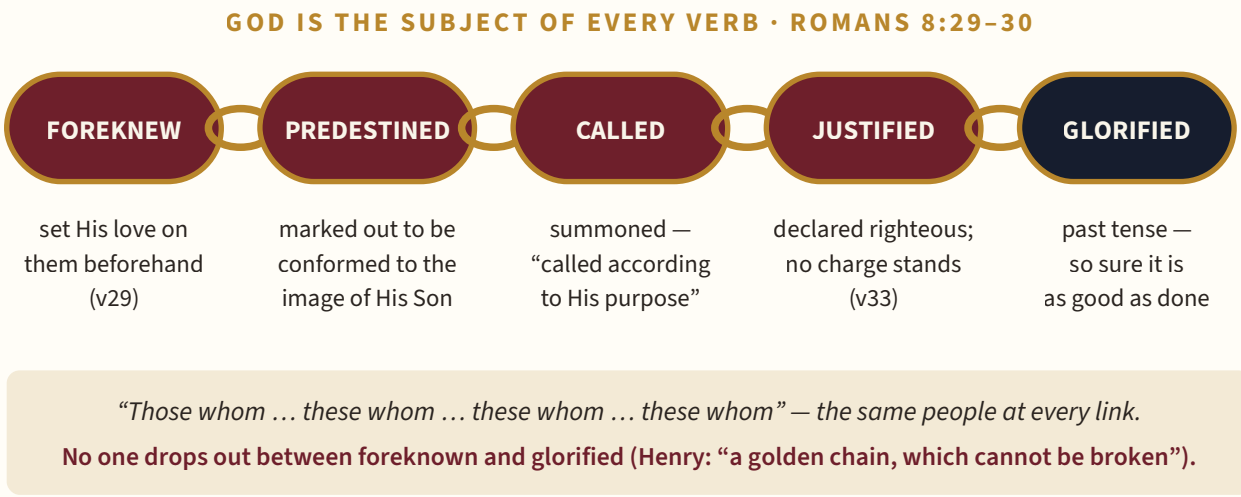
"and these whom He △predestined, He also △called; and these whom He called, He also △justified; and these whom He justified, ◷He also glorified."

FIGURE · TWO MINDS, TWO ENDS

ROMANS 8:4–13	THE MIND SET ON THE FLESH	THE MIND SET ON THE SPIRIT
WHAT IT MINDS	the things of the flesh (v5)	the things of the Spirit (v5)
WHERE IT ENDS	death (v6; "you must die," v13)	life and peace (v6; "you will live," v13)
TOWARD GOD	hostile toward God; cannot please God (vv7–8)	the Spirit of God dwells in you; you belong to Christ (v9)
GOD'S LAW	does not subject itself — is not even able to (v7)	its requirement fulfilled in us (v4)
THE BODY	its deeds rule: living according to the flesh (v13)	its deeds put to death; life to mortal bodies (vv11, 13)

Read across each row: Paul sets the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit side by side on what they think about, where they end, how they stand toward God, His law, and the body.

FIGURE · THE GOLDEN CHAIN



Five verbs, one Subject, the same people at every link — and the last link is already written in the past tense.

Who is the man of chapter 7, and how does chapter 8 answer him? All four of our teachers read 7 and 8 together. Spurgeon preached them as one passage: the believer still struggles, and "Souls that sigh for holiness are not condemned to eternal death, for their sighing proves that they are in Christ Jesus." Sproul says plainly that he still struggles with sin decades after his conversion. Romans 8 does not say the fight is over; it says the verdict is.

The missing clause in verse 1. The KJV adds "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Guzik and Spurgeon both note that it is not in the oldest manuscripts and was borrowed from verse 4. That matters: walking by the Spirit is the *fruit* of being in Christ, not the *condition* of escaping condemnation. Guzik: "You can't acquit the head and condemn the hand."

What the Law could not do (vv3–4). The Law was not bad; it was weak "through the flesh" — it had nothing to work with in us. So God did it: He sent His Son in the *likeness* (*homoiōma*) of sinful flesh — real flesh, not sinful flesh — as a sin offering, and condemned sin there. Sproul: "There is the gospel in a nutshell: What the law cannot do, God can do." The Law's requirement is fulfilled "in us," not by us (Guzik).

Is there such a thing as a "carnal Christian"? Verse 9 says if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him; Guzik: "This means every believer has the Holy Spirit." Sproul: "The idea of a carnal Christian is as far away from the Apostolic teaching as one can get." They do not mean believers never act carnally (1 Cor 3:1–3), but that no one can be in Christ and settled in the flesh. Paul's test is not a feeling but a fight: are you, by the Spirit, putting to death the deeds of the body (v13)?

Spirit or spirit in verse 10? NASB prints "the spirit is alive," the human spirit; KJV prints "the Spirit is life." Sproul reads the human spirit made alive by the indwelling Spirit and says the practical difference is small. The point stands either way: the body still dies because of sin, but the One who raised Jesus will raise it (v11).

Led by the Spirit (v14). Sproul warns against turning this into private hunches about decisions: in context the Spirit leads God's sons into holiness — "this is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thess 4:3) — and "never, ever against the Word." Guzik: "we become sons first and then the Spirit of God leads us."

What does creation wait for (vv19–22)? Creation was subjected to futility "because of Him who subjected it" — God, after Adam's sin (Gen 3:17) — "in hope." Its groan is a birth-pang (Guzik: "not … death pangs… but birth pangs"). Henry: "a general outcry of the whole creation against the sin of man." Sproul: "It was not by vote." The new creation comes when the sons of God are revealed.

The Spirit's groanings (vv26–27). We do not know what to pray as we should; the Spirit intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words, and always according to the will of God. Guzik allows that this may include tongues but is not limited to it. Henry: "Christ intercedes for us in heaven, the Spirit intercedes for us in our hearts." Sproul: "Prayer is a Trinitarian activity."

Romans 8:28 — what it promises and to whom. Not that all things are good, but that God works them together toward good — the good of verse 29, likeness to Christ. Sproul separates the evil done from the good God brings out of it (Gen 50:20): "But in the ultimate sense, there are no tragedies for the Christian." The promise has an address: those who love God, the called.

Foreknowledge and predestination (vv29–30) — where Christians differ. Our four teachers read the chain in the Reformed way: God's foreknowledge is His loving choice of persons, not His foresight of their faith. Sproul: "Scripture nowhere says that predestination is based upon foreknowledge"; *proegnō* means those He "fore-loved." Spurgeon tells us to find our election by our calling: "If I am called, then I am predestinated." Henry: "a golden chain, which cannot be broken." Guzik also affirms predestination while stressing that God works our conformity with our cooperation. Many faithful Arminian readers take "foreknew" as foresight of faith; I want my men to know both readings exist and to land where all agree: the chain is God's work at every link, and its goal is that we look like Jesus.

For whom was the Son delivered up (v32)? Sproul reads "for us all" as the elect — "I do not believe for a moment that this was for all mankind." Other believers read it more broadly. The comfort of the verse doesn't depend on settling that: the God who gave His Son will not hold back anything lesser.

Word study (Greek):

- **condemnation — *katakrima* (G2631):** the sentence and its penalty; only Rom 5:16, 18; 8:1.
- **likeness — *homoiōma* (G3667):** real resemblance, not identity (Rom 8:3; Phil 2:7).
- **mind set — *phronēma* (G5427):** the whole bent of a life; four times, all in Romans 8 (vv6, 6, 7, 27).
- **hostile / enmity — *echthra* (G2189):** a noun — the fleshly mind *is* enmity.
- **putting to death — *thanatoō* (G2289):** present tense — keep on executing the deeds of the body, by the Spirit.
- **adoption — *huiothesia* (G5206):** son-placing; now (v15) and not yet (v23); Paul only (Rom 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5).
- **Abba — *Abba* (G5):** Aramaic "Father," the word of Gethsemane (Mark 14:36).
- **testifies with — *symmartyreō* (G4828):** a second witness beside our own spirit.
- **anxious longing — *apokaradokia* (G603):** watching with neck stretched out; only here and Phil 1:20.
- **futility — *mataiotēs* (G3153):** frustration of purpose; Ecclesiastes' "vanity."
- **first fruits — *aparchē* (G536):** the first sheaf pledging the whole harvest.
- **intercedes — *hyperentynchanō* (G5241):** pleads on our behalf; only here.
- **groanings — *stenagmos* (G4726):** only here and Acts 7:34 (Israel in Egypt).
- **work together — *synergeō* (G4903):** synergy; all things worked together toward good.

- **foreknew — *proginōskō* (G4267):** to know beforehand; with God, of persons (Rom 8:29; 11:2; 1 Pet 1:20).
- **predestined — *proorizō* (G4309):** to mark out beforehand; six times (Acts 4:28; Rom 8:29, 30; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 1:5, 11).
- **bring a charge — *enkaleō* (G1458):** to file a formal accusation; elsewhere only in Acts.
- **separate — *chōrizō* (G5563):** to divide, part (Matt 19:6).
- **overwhelmingly conquer — *hypernikaō* (G5245):** super-conquer; only here, present tense.

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **"No condemnation" and "no separation" are bookends** — both rest on "in Christ Jesus" (vv1, 39).
2. **The Spirit is the chapter's main character** — *pneuma* twenty-one times; chapter 7 was crowded with "law."
3. **The sentence still fell — on sin, in Christ's flesh** (vv1, 3). God did not cancel condemnation; He carried it out on His Son.
4. **The mind is not neutral.** The fleshly mind is not merely hostile; it is enmity (Henry: "not only an enemy, but enmity itself").
5. **Led by the Spirit means led into holiness,** never against the Word (Sproul).
6. **Adopted now, adopted in full later** — the name now, the redeemed body later (vv15, 23).
7. **Three groans, one hope** — creation, we ourselves, the Spirit; labor pains, not death throes.
8. **"Glorified" is already past tense.** All five verbs of the chain are aorist.
9. **Every question has the same answer** — a Person, not our record (vv31–35).
10. **The anvil outlasts the hammers** (Spurgeon) — we conquer in all these things, not by escaping them.

Cross-references: Gen 3:17; 22:12; 50:20; Exod 4:22; Lev 23:10; Deut 19:15; Ps 44:22; Isa 11:6–9; 50:8–9; Amos 3:2; Matt 19:6; Mark 14:36; John 3:6; 8:39–44; 10:28–29; Acts 7:34; Rom 5:16–18; 7:24–25; 1 Cor 3:1–3; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:21; Gal 4:4–7; 5:16–25; Eph 1:5, 11–14; 5:18; Phil 1:20; 2:7; 1 Thess 4:3; Heb 7:25; 1 Pet 1:20; 1 John 3:2.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 8:13

"for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live."

FIGURE · FIVE QUESTIONS AND SEVENTEEN THINGS THAT CANNOT SEPARATE

FIVE QUESTIONS NO ONE CAN ANSWER AGAINST US · ROMANS 8:31–35

1	If God is for us, who is against us?	v31	no one who can prevail
2	How will He not … freely give us all things?	v32	He already gave His own Son
3	Who will bring a charge against God's elect?	v33	God is the one who justifies
4	Who is the one who condemns?	v34	Christ died, rose, reigns, intercedes
5	Who will separate us from the love of Christ?	v35	nothing — see below (vv38–39)

SEVEN TROUBLES (v35)

- tribulation
- distress
- persecution
- famine
- nakedness
- peril
- sword

TEN POWERS (vv38–39)

- death
- life
- angels
- principalities
- things present
- things to come
- powers
- height
- depth
- nor any other created thing

None of them "will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (v39).

Each of Paul's questions has the same answer — Christ — and every trouble and power he can name is listed only to be shut out.

Promise to trust — "no condemnation." I know men who can quote this verse and still live under a sentence — the courtroom, the ex-wife, the father who said they'd never amount to anything, their own voice at 3 a.m. I've heard that voice too. Romans 8:1 is not a feeling God hopes I'll have; it's a verdict He has already given, because the sentence fell on sin in Christ's flesh. When the accuser starts his case, I answer with verse 34: Christ died, was raised, sits at God's right hand, and intercedes for me.

Command to obey — "by the Spirit … putting to death the deeds of the body." This is present tense: not one big moment at the altar, but a daily execution. For the men in recovery I walk with, that means naming the deed, cutting off its supply lines, telling a brother, and asking the Spirit for strength in that hour — not white-knuckling

it in the flesh. I owe the flesh nothing (v12). This week I will name one deed of the body and put it to death, by the Spirit, out loud with another man.

Sin to confess — a mind set on the flesh. Paul says the battle is in what I set my mind on (vv5–6). I confess the hours I give to things that feed the flesh — the screen, the grudge, the fantasy, the worry — and the little time I give to the things of the Spirit. The forge of my thoughts is shaping the man I am becoming.

Truth to live in — "Abba! Father!" So many of the men I serve never had a father they could run to; some had one they ran from. The Spirit of adoption doesn't just let me say "God"; He lets me say "Abba." I'm not a slave on probation, waiting to be thrown out. I'm a son and an heir.

Example to follow — the groaning Spirit. When I don't know how to pray — over a man who relapsed, a marriage coming apart, a diagnosis — I don't have to have the words. The Spirit groans for me, and He prays according to the will of God. My groaning is not unbelief; it's labor pain, and it leans toward glory.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Where do I still live as if I were under condemnation — replaying old guilt, waiting for the sentence to fall? (8:1–3; 2 Cor 5:21) *The sentence did fall — on sin, in Christ's flesh. "No condemnation" is a verdict, not a mood.*
2. What has my mind been set on this week? If someone read my thoughts, would they say "flesh" or "Spirit"? (8:5–6) *The mind is the forge of thoughts; what it minds, it becomes.*
3. Name one deed of the body I need to put to death, by the Spirit, starting today — and who will help me keep at it. (8:13) *Present tense: an ongoing practice, never in our own strength.*
4. Many of us grew up with absent or harsh fathers. What changes when I can call God "Abba! Father!"? (8:15–16; Gal 4:6) *A spirit of adoption, not of slavery leading to fear again.*
5. What suffering am I carrying that I have never weighed against "the glory that is to be revealed"? (8:18, 28) *Henry: weighed in the balance and found light.*
6. Which of the seventeen things in vv35–39 do I most fear could separate me from Christ — and what does Paul say about it? (8:35–39; John 10:28) *Each is named only to be shut out.*

Worship. The chain runs from before time to after it — foreknew, predestined, called, justified, glorified — and God holds every link. Paul ran out of arguments and started asking questions no one can answer. Who is against us? Who will bring a charge? Who condemns? Who will separate? No one. Nothing. Not death, not life, not anything in all creation.

Prayer. Abba, Father — thank You that there is no condemnation for me in Christ Jesus, and that nothing in all creation will be able to separate me from Your love in Him. Set my mind on the things of the Spirit. By Your Spirit, help me put to death what is killing me. When I don't know how to pray, pray in me. Work all things together for my good — make me look like Your Son — and keep me, and the men I serve, until the day You finish what You began. Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 9

Great Sorrow and Sovereign Mercy — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God's word to Israel has not failed: the promise always ran through God's free choice and mercy, never through birth or effort. Paul teaches it with tears for his people, and ends with a Stone that trips the proud and holds up everyone who believes.

00 The Text

ROMANS 9 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit,

2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,

5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;

7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED."

8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

9 For this is the word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON."

10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;

11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER."

13 Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!

15 For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION."

16 So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP,
TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY

NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH."

18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and ⚠ He hardens whom He desires.

19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"

20 On the contrary, ⚠ who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?

21 Or does not ⚠ the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience ⚠ vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

23 And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon ☆ vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

24 even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

25 As He says also in Hosea, "I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'"

26 "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED ☆ SONS OF THE LIVING GOD."

27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, ☆ IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED;

28 FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY."

29 And just as Isaiah foretold, "UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH."

30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even ☆ the righteousness which is by faith;

31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.

32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but ⚠ as though it were by works. ⚠ They stumbled over the stumbling stone,

33 just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND ☆ HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

Marked in the text

- **v2** "great sorrow and unceasing grief" — Time / place / contrast
- **v3** "accursed, separated from Christ" — Sin / warning
- **v4** "the adoption as sons" — Promise / blessing
- **v4** "the adoption" — Promise / blessing
- **v4** "the promises" — Promise / blessing
- **v5** "God blessed forever" — God — His character & actions
- **v6** "the word of God has failed" — Time / place / contrast
- **v8** "the children of the promise" — Promise / blessing
- **v11** "God's purpose according to His choice would stand" — God — His character & actions
- **v11** "not because of works but because of Him who calls" — God — His character & actions
- **v13** "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED" — Time / place / contrast
- **v14** "There is no injustice with God" — God — His character & actions
- **v16** "on God who has mercy" — God — His character & actions
- **v17** "TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU" — God — His character & actions
- **v18** "He hardens whom He desires" — Sin / warning
- **v20** "who are you, O man, who answers back to God" — Sin / warning
- **v21** "the potter have a right over the clay" — God — His character & actions
- **v22** "vessels of wrath prepared for destruction" — Sin / warning
- **v23** "vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory" — Promise / blessing
- **v24** "not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles" — Time / place / contrast
- **v26** "SONS OF THE LIVING GOD" — Promise / blessing
- **v27** "IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED" — Promise / blessing
- **v30** "the righteousness which is by faith" — Promise / blessing
- **v32** "as though it were by works" — Sin / warning
- **v32** "They stumbled over the stumbling stone" — Sin / warning

- **v33** “HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED” — Promise / blessing

- **v15** “mercy” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

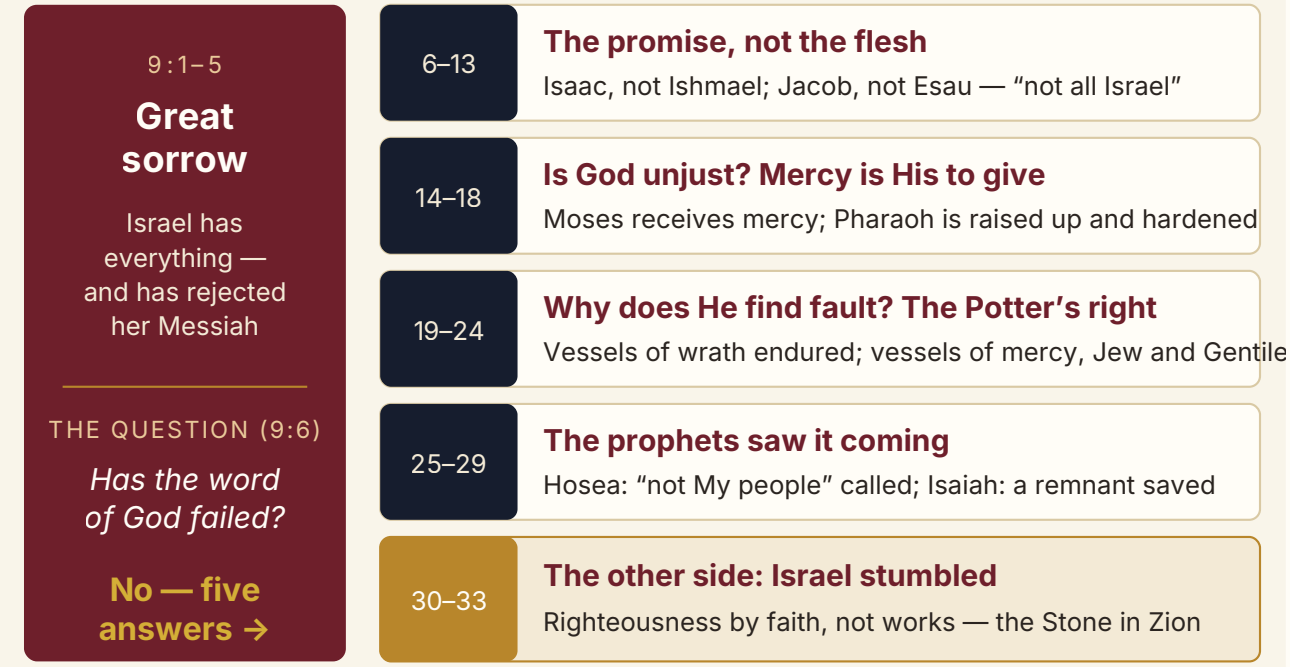
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 9:6

"But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;"

FIGURE · THE SHAPE OF ROMANS 9



Read the left panel first: Paul's grief raises the question, and every block on the right is one of his five answers — the last one turns from God's side to Israel's.

Setting. Romans 8 ended with "no separation" (8:35–39). Romans 9 opens with Paul's solemn declaration — "I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying" — confessing "great sorrow and unceasing grief" for his own people, Israel (vv1–3). Chapters 9–11 belong together: Israel's past (election), present (unbelief) and future ("all Israel will be saved," 11:26).

Structure:

- vv1–5 — **Paul's grief and Israel's gifts.** He could wish himself accursed for his kinsmen. To them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the Law, the temple service, the promises, the fathers — and the Christ, "who is over all, God blessed forever."
- vv6–13 — **The word has not failed.** "They are not all Israel who are descended from Israel." Isaac, not Ishmael (vv7–9); Jacob, not Esau, chosen before birth, "not because of works but because of Him who calls" (vv10–13).

- vv14–18 — **Is God unjust? May it never be!** "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY" (Moses). Pharaoh raised up to show God's power. "He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires."
- vv19–24 — **Why does He still find fault?** "Who are you, O man?" The potter and the clay; vessels of wrath endured with patience; vessels of mercy prepared for glory — "even us," Jews and Gentiles.
- vv25–29 — **The prophets foretold it.** Hosea: "not My people" become "sons of the living God." Isaiah: only a remnant saved; without a posterity Israel would be Sodom.
- vv30–33 — **What shall we say then?** Gentiles attained righteousness by faith; Israel pursued it by works and stumbled over the stone in Zion. "HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95, counted in the text):

- **mercy** ×5 — vv15 (twice), 16, 18, 23; plus **compassion** ×2 (v15). Seven times in nine verses.
- **Israel** ×5 — vv6 (twice), 27 (twice), 31; plus **Israelites** (v4).
- **righteousness** ×4 — vv30 (three times), 31.
- **children** ×4 — vv7, 8 (three times); **sons** ×3 — vv4, 26, 27.
- **call / called / calls** ×4 — vv11, 24, 25, 26.
- **descendants** ×3 — vv7 (twice), 8; and **posterity** (v29) — the same Greek word, *sperma*.
- **flesh** ×3 — vv3, 5, 8.
- **vessel(s)** ×3 — vv21, 22, 23.
- **pursue / pursuing** ×3 — vv30, 31, 32.
- **works** ×2 (vv11, 32) against **faith** ×2 (vv30, 32).
- **"What shall we say then?"** ×2 — vv14, 30: the two turning points.
- **God** ×9 — every section is about what He does.

Contrasts: flesh ⟷ promise (v8); Isaac ⟷ Ishmael; Jacob ⟷ Esau; older ⟷ younger (v12); works ⟷ Him who calls (v11); mercy ⟷ hardening (v18); the potter ⟷ the clay (v21); honorable use ⟷ common use (v21); vessels of wrath ⟷ vessels of mercy (vv22–23); "not My people" ⟷ "My people" (v25); sand of the sea ⟷ the remnant (v27); Gentiles who did not pursue ⟷ Israel pursuing (vv30–31); faith ⟷ works (v32); stumbling stone ⟷ the one who believes (v33).

Shape of the chapter: tears (1–5), then one question — has God's word failed? — answered five ways: from the patriarchs (6–13), from Moses and Pharaoh (14–18), from the potter (19–24), from the prophets (25–29), and from Israel's own choice (30–33). Paul quotes the Old Testament about a dozen times in 33 verses.

Chapter theme (my words): God keeps His promise His way — by mercy He chooses, not by birth or effort we bring. Paul says it weeping for Israel, and ends with the Stone everyone must either trip over or stand on.

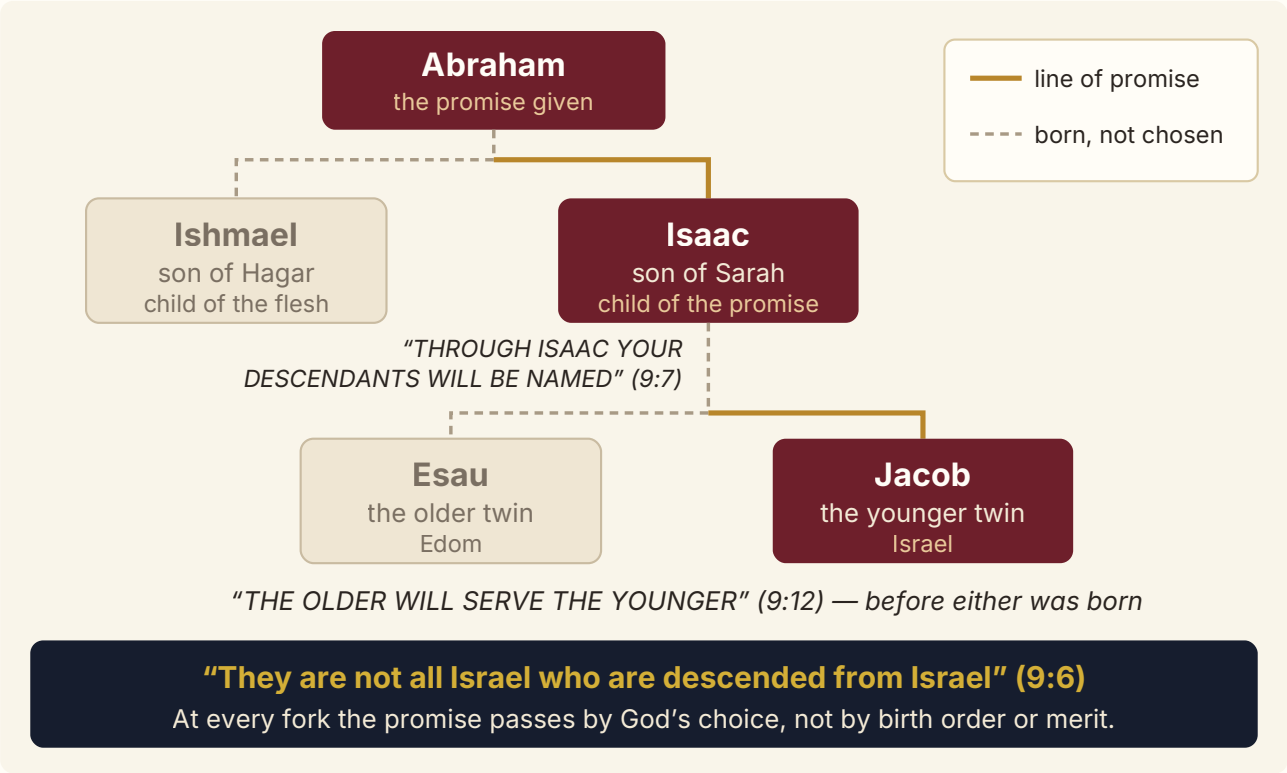
02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 9:11

"for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that △God's purpose according to His choice would stand, △not because of works but because of Him who calls,"

FIGURE · THE LINE OF PROMISE



Follow the gold line: at each generation one son carries the promise and one does not — which is how "not all Israel" can be Israel.

Why the grief? Because Israel had every privilege and still rejected her Messiah. Guzik: Paul is looking at a people who seem to be separated from God's love — the very thing 8:39 says cannot happen to those in Christ — and his heart echoes Moses at Sinai (Exodus 32:32). Sproul: *anathema* is the strongest language Paul ever uses. Henry: "a very high pang of zeal and affection for his countrymen." Spurgeon: "It always grieved him to think that his kinsmen should reject Christ." This is where I start with Israel too — love before doctrine.

Christ is God (v5). Guzik, Sproul and Henry all read the NASB95 punctuation: Christ "who is over all, God blessed forever." Henry: "he is not only over all, as Mediator, but he is God blessed for ever." Guzik fairly notes that some scholars punctuate it as a separate blessing of God.

"Not all Israel" (v6). God's word did not fail, because the promise was never carried by physical descent alone. Henry: "Grace does not run in the blood." Sproul applies it to the visible church — membership is no guarantee.

Jacob and Esau — what kind of election? This is where the teachers part, and I want to hear each fairly:

- **Sproul:** individual, unconditional election to salvation. He rejects the national, temporal and foreseen-faith readings because Paul names two persons, the context (ch. 8) is salvation, and the purpose clause says the choice was "not because of works." "The ground of our election is never found in us."
- **Henry:** the twins stand first for *peoples* — Israel and Edom — "people considered complexly," and the choice is "typical," a shadow of "some other election," which he says is "very applicable to" individuals. In vv14–18 he speaks plainly of "effectual grace, which is given to some particular persons."
- **Guzik:** God hated Esau "in regard to inheriting the covenant, not in regard to blessing in this life or the next"; yet "one was the heir of God's covenant of salvation, and one was not." God's choices are "not capricious."
- **Spurgeon:** Jacob was loved by "sovereign grace"; Esau was hated because he "sold it himself." "Salvation all of grace, and damnation all of sin." He will not reconcile them: "These two doctrines are friends with one another." All four agree "hated" is not malice — Sproul calls it "such a lower degree of love."

Is God unjust? (vv14–18). Mercy can't be owed. Guzik: "If God is obliged to show mercy, then it is not mercy – it is obligation." Sproul: "If grace is owed, it is not grace"; the elect get grace, the non-elect justice, no one injustice. On Pharaoh: Guzik stresses Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Exodus 7:13) and God allowed it; Sproul says "God hardened a man whose heart was already hard" by giving him over; Henry, God "withdraw[s] softening grace, leave[s] him to himself." Three ways of describing a real, just hardening of a man already hard.

The potter (vv19–24). The creature cannot put the Creator on trial (Isaiah 29:16; Jeremiah 18:6). Watch the verbs: vessels of wrath "prepared for destruction" (no agent named); vessels of mercy "which He prepared beforehand." Henry: "Sinners fit themselves for hell, but it is God that prepares saints for heaven." Spurgeon: "they fitted themselves." Guzik: "Those vessels do an adequate job on their own." Sproul calls election a doctrine of grace — humanity a "mass of perdition" from which God saves some.

The prophets (vv25–29). Hosea's "not My people" is reversed for the Gentiles; Isaiah promises a remnant. Bruce, in Guzik: "But if only a remnant will survive, at least a remnant will survive." The remnant is not the end of Israel's story — 11:5 and 11:26 carry it on.

The other side of the coin (vv30–33). Guzik: Paul now shows "the side of human responsibility, instead of the side of God's sovereign choice" — Israel stumbled because she pursued righteousness by works. Sproul: "Israel tripped over grace." Spurgeon: "Christ offends men because His gospel is intolerant of sin." Romans 9 holds both sides in one chapter, and so must I.

Word study (Greek):

- **accursed — *anathema* (G331):** devoted to destruction; Paul's wish to be cut off for Israel.
- **adoption as sons — *huiothesia* (G5206):** Israel was God's son first (Exodus 4:22).
- **purpose — *prothesis* (G4286); choice — *eklogē* (G1589):** God's purpose according to election, so that it would stand.
- **hated — *miseō* (G3404):** a Hebrew-style contrast of choice (Genesis 29:31; Luke 14:26), not malice.
- **have mercy — *eleeō* (G1653); compassion — *oiktirō* (G3627):** the chapter's key word.
- **hardens — *sklērynō* (G4645):** the Exodus word; Pharaoh hardened himself and God hardened him.

- **prepared — *katartizō* (G2675) vs. prepared beforehand — *proetoimazō* (G4282):** no agent for wrath; God the agent for glory.
- **remnant — *hypoleimma* (G5275); posterity — *sperma* (G4690):** the seed of v7 is the seed of v29.
- **stumbling — *proskomma* (G4348); offense — *skandalon* (G4625); disappointed — *kataischynō* (G2617).**

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. The doctrine of election begins in tears — whatever I conclude, it must not make me colder toward the lost or toward Israel.
2. Israel's eight gifts end in the Messiah, "God blessed forever."
3. "Grace does not run in the blood" (Henry).
4. The objection "Is there injustice?" shows the choice was not based on works (Sproul).
5. Mercy that is owed is not mercy (Guzik).
6. The verbs change between vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy.
7. Sovereignty and responsibility are "friends" (Spurgeon).
8. The seed of v7 is the seed of v29 — the line of promise and the remnant are one thread.
9. Israel tripped over grace — and Paul holds her responsible.
10. The chapter ends with a guarantee for whoever believes.

Cross-references: Exodus 4:22; 32:32; 33:19; 9:16 · Genesis 21:12; 25:23 · Malachi 1:2–3 · Isaiah 1:9; 8:14; 10:22–23; 28:16; 29:16; 45:9 · Jeremiah 18:6 · Hosea 1:10; 2:23 · Ezekiel 33:11 · Matthew 23:37 · John 6:37 · Ephesians 1:4–5 · 1 Peter 2:6–10 · Romans 8:28–39; 10:1; 11:1–5, 26

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 9:33

"just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND ☆HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.""

FIGURE · ISRAEL'S EIGHT PRIVILEGES (9:4-5)

ROMANS 9:4–5 · "WHO ARE ISRAELITES, TO WHOM BELONGS …"

1 **The adoption** Exodus 4:22	2 **The glory** The Shekinah	3 **The covenants** Abraham to David	4 **The Law** Given at Sinai
5 **Temple service** Altar and priests	6 **The promises** A coming King	7 **The fathers** Abraham to Jacob	8 **The Christ** Born of Israel

↓

"who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen."

Every gift was a signpost to Him — and Paul grieves because Israel walked past the last one.

Seven gifts lead to the eighth: the Messiah came from Israel "according to the flesh," and He is "over all, God blessed forever."

Example to follow — Paul's tears for Israel. Before Paul teaches one word about election, he weeps for his people. I love Israel, and this chapter tells me how to love her: not with a chart, but with "great sorrow and unceasing grief" that turns into prayer (10:1). I owe Israel the covenants, the Scriptures and my Savior. This week I will pray by name for the Jewish people I know, and for the peace of Jerusalem.

Sin to confess — trusting in my pedigree or my running. "It does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs." I confess the times I've thought I was in because of my background, my ministry, my years sober or my good week. Grace does not run in the blood, and it doesn't run on my effort either. The men I sit with — some fresh out, some decades in recovery — need to hear it from me plainly: nobody earns mercy, and nobody is too far gone to receive it.

Warning to heed — answering back to God. "Who are you, O man, who answers back to God?" When I don't understand what God is doing — in my life, in a brother's relapse, in Israel's story — I can bring Him my questions, but not my verdict. The clay doesn't cross-examine the Potter.

Promise to trust — He who believes will not be disappointed. The same Stone that trips the proud holds up the one who believes (v33; 10:11). I don't have to solve every question in this chapter to stand on that promise tonight. Spurgeon: "None may give up themselves in despair."

Command to obey — keep both truths and keep preaching. Paul holds God's sovereign choice and Israel's responsibility in one chapter, and so will I. I'll tell every man: God's mercy is free, and the door is open — "whosoever will." And I'll love brothers who read Romans 9 differently than I do.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Paul would have given up his own place in Christ for his people. Who is the one person whose lostness grieves you most? When did you last pray for him by name? (9:1–3; 10:1) *"You must love before you can plead."*
2. What spiritual privileges were you born into or given — and have you treated any of them as if they saved you? (9:4–8) *Grace does not run in the blood.*
3. Spurgeon's difficulty was not why God hated Esau, but how God could love Jacob. Which question feels harder to you, and why? (9:10–13; Mal 1:2–3) *Every man at the table is a Jacob.*
4. Where are you still running to earn what God gives by mercy? (9:15–16; Eph 2:8–9) *Mercy cannot be owed; it can only be received.*
5. How can brothers who read Romans 9 differently still pray, evangelize and love Israel together? (9:14–24; 14:1) *All four teachers agree on grief, mercy, responsibility and the Stone.*
6. What does stumbling over the Stone look like in a man's life today — and what does building on it look like? (9:30–33; 1 Pet 2:6–8) *A trip-hazard to the proud, a foundation to the believer.*

Worship. God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — You keep Your word. Your mercy is Yours to give, and You gave it to me, a Gentile who was "not My people." From Israel, according to the flesh, came the Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Prayer. Father, give me Paul's heart for Israel and for every lost man I know. Break my pride where I've thought I earned Your mercy. When I don't understand Your ways, keep me from answering back, and keep me on the Stone You laid in Zion. Let me tell everyone that whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 10

The Word Is Near You — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Israel had zeal without knowledge and tried to build its own righteousness, but Christ is the end of the law for everyone who believes. The word is near — confess Jesus as Lord, believe God raised Him, call on His name — and God sends people with beautiful feet to carry it, while His hands stay open all day long.

00 The Text

ROMANS 10 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.

2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

3 For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

5 For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness.

6 But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down),

7 or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)."

8 But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching,

9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

11 For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him;

13 for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?

15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"

16 However, ⚠ they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?"

17 So △ faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

18 But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have; "THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD."

19 But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? First Moses says, "△ I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION, BY A NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WILL I ANGER YOU."

20 And Isaiah is very bold and says, "△ I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK ME, I BECAME MANIFEST TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME."

21 But as for Israel He says, "△ ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS TO ⚠ A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE."

Marked in the text

- **v1** "my heart's desire and my prayer to God" — Promise / blessing
- **v1** "for their salvation" — Promise / blessing
- **v2** "a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge" — Sin / warning
- **v3** "seeking to establish their own" — Sin / warning
- **v3** "they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" — Sin / warning
- **v4** "Christ is the end of the law" — God — His character & actions
- **v4** "to everyone who believes" — Promise / blessing
- **v5** "the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law" — Time / place / contrast
- **v6** "the righteousness based on faith" — Time / place / contrast
- **v8** "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU" — Promise / blessing
- **v9** "confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord" — Command / instruction
- **v9** "believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead" — Command / instruction
- **v9** "you will be saved" — Promise / blessing
- **v11** "WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED" — Promise / blessing
- **v12** "there is no distinction between Jew and Greek" — Time / place / contrast
- **v12** "abounding in riches for all who call on Him" — God — His character & actions
- **v13** "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED" — Promise / blessing
- **v15** "unless they are sent" — God — His character & actions
- **v15** "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET" — Promise / blessing
- **v16** "they did not all heed the good news" — Sin / warning
- **v17** "faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" — God — His character & actions
- **v19** "I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS" — God — His character & actions
- **v20** "I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK ME" — God — His character & actions
- **v21** "ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS" — God — His character & actions
- **v21** "A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE" — Sin / warning
- **v3** "righteousness" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v1** "heart" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v14** "how" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

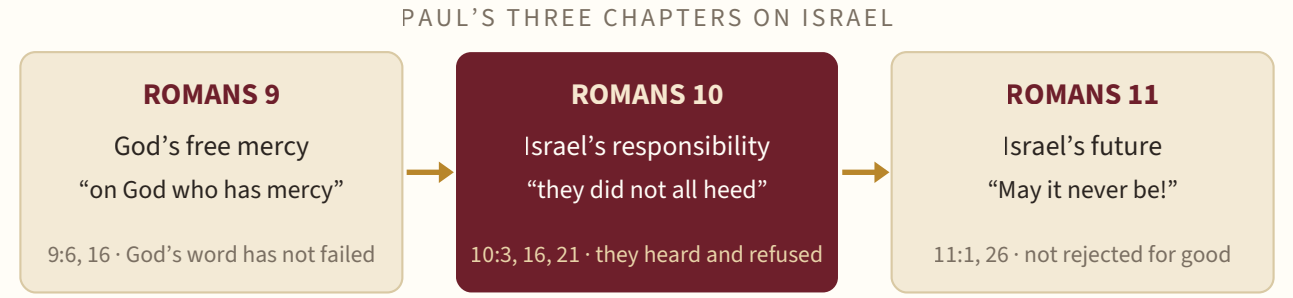
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 10:10

"for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

FIGURE · ROMANS 9–11 — WHERE CHAPTER 10 STANDS



Hinge, 9:30–33: Israel pursued righteousness "as though it were by works" and stumbled over the stone.

Chapter 10 is the middle panel: between God's free choice (ch. 9) and Israel's future (ch. 11) stands Israel's own refusal to submit.

Setting. Paul has just finished the hard chapter on God's sovereign choice (Romans 9) and ended it at the stumbling stone: Gentiles who weren't looking found righteousness by faith, while Israel, "pursuing a law of righteousness," missed it "as though it were by works" (9:30–33). Chapter 10 picks up right there, with "Brethren" and a prayer.

Structure:

- vv1–4 — **Paul's prayer and Israel's problem:** his heart's desire is their salvation (v1). They have zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge (v2). Not knowing God's righteousness, they tried to establish their own and did not subject themselves to God's (v3). Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes (v4).
- vv5–8 — **two righteousnesses:** the law's — "the man who practices" it "shall live by" it (v5; Lev 18:5); faith's — no one has to ascend to heaven to bring Christ down or descend into the abyss to bring Him up (vv6–7); "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART" — the word of faith Paul preaches (v8; Deut 30:12–14).
- vv9–13 — **mouth and heart:** confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, believe in your heart God raised Him, and you will be saved (v9). Heart → righteousness; mouth → salvation (v10). Whoever believes will not be disappointed (v11; Isa 28:16). No distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is rich to all who call (v12). Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (v13; Joel 2:32).
- vv14–17 — **the chain:** call ← believe ← hear ← preacher ← sent (vv14–15). Beautiful feet (v15; Isa 52:7). Not all heeded — "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?" (v16; Isa 53:1). Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ (v17).

- vv18–21 — **the witnesses:** Did they not hear? They did — Psalm 19:4 (v18). Did Israel not know? Moses: God will make them jealous by a non-nation (v19; Deut 32:21). Isaiah: found by those who did not seek Him (v20; Isa 65:1). And to Israel: "ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE" (v21; Isa 65:2).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- **righteousness** ×7 — vv3 (twice), 4, 5 (twice), 6, 10.
- **believe / believes / believed** ×7 — vv4, 9, 10, 11, 14 (twice), 16.
- **heart** ×5 — vv1, 6, 8, 9, 10.
- **Lord / LORD** ×5 — vv9, 12 (twice), 13, 16.
- **hear / heard / hearing** ×5 — vv14 (twice), 17 (twice), 18.
- **How / how** ×5 — v14 (three times), v15 (twice).
- **saved / salvation** ×4 — vv1, 9, 10, 13.
- **mouth** ×3 — vv8, 9, 10. **word** ×3 — vv8 (twice), 17. **call** ×3 — vv12, 13, 14. **preach / preacher** ×3 — vv8, 14, 15. **faith** ×3 — vv6, 8, 17.
- **says / say** ×9 — vv6, 8, 11, 16, 18, 19 (twice), 20, 21: Scripture keeps "speaking" in this chapter. Ten Old Testament quotations in 21 verses.
- **whoever** ×2 — vv11, 13. **Moses** ×2 — vv5, 19. **Isaiah** ×2 — vv16, 20. **Israel** ×2 — vv19, 21.

Contrasts: zeal ⟷ knowledge (v2). Their own righteousness ⟷ the righteousness of God (v3). "Based on law" (v5) ⟷ "based on faith" (v6). Ascend/descend ⟷ "near you" (vv6–8). Mouth ⟷ heart, and the order flips between v9 and v10. Jew ⟷ Greek, but "no distinction" (v12). Those who did not seek found Him (v20) ⟷ Israel, to whom He reached all day, refused (v21). Paul's heart's desire (v1) ⟷ God's outstretched hands (v21).

Shape of the chapter: a prayer (1–4), a sermon on nearness (5–13), a chain of questions (14–17), and a courtroom of witnesses (18–21). It begins with longing and ends with longing.

Chapter theme (my words): Religious effort can't make anyone right with God — Christ already did. The word that saves is near enough to say and believe, open to whoever calls, and God sends people to carry it while He keeps reaching for those who keep refusing.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 10:17

"So △faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

FIGURE · TWO RIGHTEOUSNESSES — MOSES BESIDE PAUL

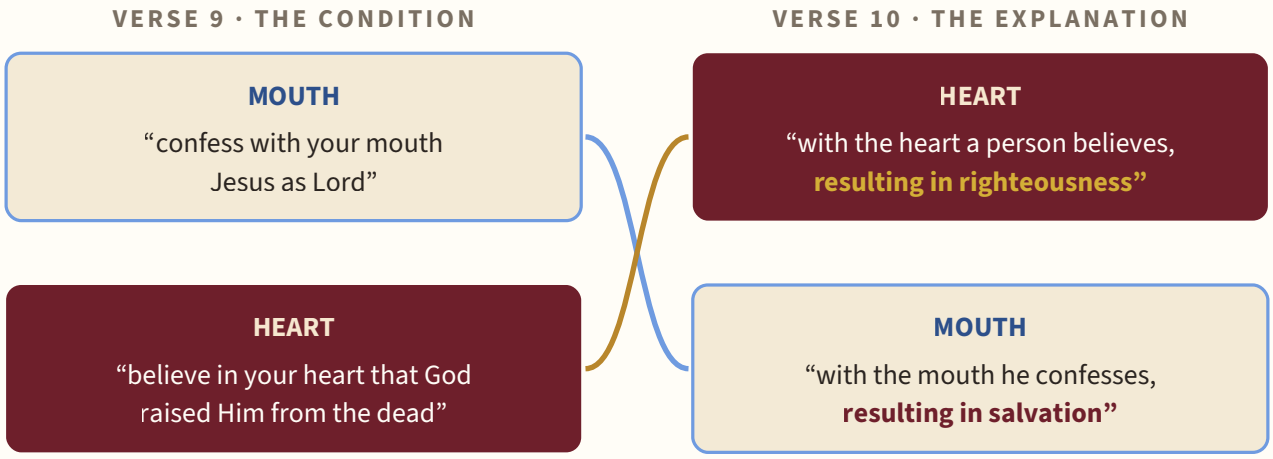
BASED ON LAW · 10:5	BASED ON FAITH · 10:6–8
"the man who practices … shall live by that righteousness"	**"THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"**
Leviticus 18:5 · the promise is real, but it pays only a perfect doer	Deuteronomy 30:14 · not a ladder to climb but a word to receive

MOSES · DEUTERONOMY 30:12–14	PAUL · ROMANS 10:6–8
"Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us …?" v. 12	→ "WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?" **— to bring Christ down** v. 6 · He already came: the incarnation
"Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us …?" v. 13	→ "WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?" **— to bring Christ up from the dead** v. 7 · He already rose: the resurrection
"the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart" v. 14 · "that you may observe it"	→ "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU …" **— the word of faith we preach** v. 8 · confessed and believed (vv. 9–10)

Moses: the commandment is not out of reach. Paul: Christ is not out of reach — He has done the climbing.

Paul sets the law's "do and live" against faith's "the word is near," then reads Deuteronomy 30 line by line as a picture of Christ — no one has to climb up or dig down, because He has already come down and come up.

FIGURE · MOUTH AND HEART — PAUL'S CROSSING LINES (10:9–10)



Heart without mouth hides Christ; mouth without heart is only words. Paul will not separate them.

Verse 9 runs mouth → heart, verse 10 runs heart → mouth: the order flips, but the two always travel together — the inward trust that God credits as righteousness, and the outward confession that owns Jesus as Lord.

Zeal without knowledge (vv1–3). Guzik: Paul readily recognizes Israel's zeal but sees it is "not according to knowledge," and election (ch. 9) doesn't cancel responsibility (ch. 10). Sproul borrows the definition of a fanatic — one who "has lost sight of where he is going but redoubles his effort to get there." Henry: "There is such a thing as a blind misguided zeal," and "Unbelief is a non-submission to the righteousness of God." The sin of verse 3 is not laziness but self-made righteousness — building, in Sproul's words, "upon the foundation of their own merit."

"Christ is the end of the law" (v4). *Telos* means end, goal, completion. Spurgeon finds three senses at once: Christ is the law's *purpose* (it was a schoolmaster to bring us to Him), its *fulfillment* (He kept it and bore its penalty — "Christ did not come to make the law milder"), and its *termination* for the believer as a covenant of life. Henry: the moral law searched the wound, the ceremonial law shadowed the remedy, "but Christ is the end of both." Note the qualifier: "for righteousness to everyone who believes." The law still shows me my sin; it is no longer a ladder.

The two righteousnesses and Deuteronomy 30 (vv5–8). Leviticus 18:5 promises life to the doer — and no one has done it. Faith-righteousness "speaks" in Moses' own words from Deuteronomy 30, where the commandment was "not out of reach." Paul reads those lines as a picture of Christ: no one needs to ascend to bring Him down (He came — the incarnation) or descend to bring Him up (He rose — the resurrection). Sproul: those are "manifest impossibilities"; "The gospel is right in front of you." Guzik: "We believe and receive." Henry: the law's tenor is "Do, and live"; the gospel "is very plain and easy." Spurgeon: "As thou art, believe and live." (Sproul's sermon doesn't take up Deuteronomy 30 directly; that link is Paul's own quotation.)

Mouth and heart (vv9–10). Verse 9 goes mouth → heart; verse 10 goes heart → mouth. They are not two steps but two sides of one faith. Confessing "Jesus as Lord" gives Him the divine name — verse 13 applies Joel's "the LORD" (Yahweh) to Jesus. Guzik: confessing is agreeing with what God said about Jesus, and "Mere intellectual agreement … is not enough." Sproul is the sharpest here: "It is the possession of faith, not the profession of it," that justifies; faith has content, assent and personal trust, and "Every demon from hell knows that information." Henry: heart-belief is the consent of the will; true faith will not stay silent.

"Whoever" and election (vv11–13). Here the teachers sound different notes, and I should say so honestly. Spurgeon preaches "whosoever" wide open — "thou canst not pray and perish" — and still says "No man ever called on Christ's name yet who was not elected." Sproul, in the next sermon, is the most openly Reformed: "Jesus does not die for everyone indiscriminately; He dies for believers," and he rejects "God loves you and has a wonderful plan" as honest evangelism. Henry speaks of God offering life "with the greatest sincerity and seriousness that can be." Guzik keeps both truths in view without resolving them. All four agree on the thing I can act on: anyone who truly calls will be saved.

The chain (vv14–17). Paul asks backward: call ← believe ← hear ← preacher ← sent. Read forward, it's the road salvation travels. Sproul: election doesn't make evangelism pointless — "God has chosen chiefly the foolishness of preaching as the means by which He will gather His elect" — and "No preacher is indispensable." Spurgeon: "The gift of preaching is the responsibility for preaching." Guzik: preachers "partner with God for the salvation of men." Henry: "Preachers and hearers are correlates," and "the holiness of ministers' lives is the beauty of their feet." Verse 16 adds the hard truth: hearing is necessary but not sufficient — Sproul: "You cannot have faith without it, but you can have unbelief even with it." *Text note:* NASB95 and SBLGNT read "word of Christ" in v17; KJV reads "word of God."

The witnesses and the hands (vv18–21). Psalm 19:4 — the message went out. Deuteronomy 32:21 — God would stir Israel's jealousy through outsiders (Paul builds chapter 11 on this: 11:11, 14). Isaiah 65:1–2 — found by the unseeking, refused by His own. Guzik: Israel's responsibility is "all the more so" because of their privilege. Sproul: the Gentile turn was God's plan from the beginning, and the power is "in the Word." Henry: "The patience of God towards provoking sinners is admirable." The chapter's last picture is not a closed door but open hands.

Word study (Greek):

- **zeal — *zēlos* (G2205):** heat, fervor; good or bad depending on its object.
- **knowledge — *epignōsis* (G1922):** full, discerning recognition — not just information.
- **end — *telos* (G5056):** end, goal, completion, fulfillment.
- **near — *engys* (G1451):** near in place or time, within reach.
- **word — *rhēma* (G4487):** a spoken word, an utterance — "the word of faith which we are preaching."
- **confess — *homologeō* (G3670):** to say the same thing, to agree openly.
- **call on — *epikaleō* (G1941):** to call upon, invoke, appeal to.
- **disappointed — *kataischynō* (G2617):** to put to shame, to let down in one's hope.
- **distinction — *diastolē* (G1293):** difference, separation (same word as 3:22).
- **sent — *apostellō* (G649):** to send out on a mission.
- **beautiful — *hōraios* (G5611):** timely, seasonable, beautiful for its hour.
- **hearing — *akoē* (G189):** hearing, and the report that is heard.
- **make jealous — *parazēloō* (G3863):** to provoke to jealousy or rivalry.
- **disobedient — *apeitheō* (G544):** to refuse to be persuaded. **obstinate — *antilegō* (G483):** to speak against, answer back.

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. Sincerity is not enough — zeal needs knowledge.
2. The root sin is self-made righteousness; unbelief is non-submission (Henry).

3. *Telos* is goal and finish: Christ is what the law aimed at, so He ends it as a ladder.
4. The gospel is near, not hard — Christ has done the climbing up and down.
5. Possession, not profession, justifies (Sproul).
6. "Jesus is Lord" gives Him the divine name of Joel 2:32.
7. Whoever means whoever — no distinction in sin, none in mercy.
8. God ordains the means: someone is sent, someone preaches, someone hears.
9. The feet are beautiful because they are timely — and because the walk matches the message.
10. The chapter ends with God's hands open all day long.

Cross-references: Lev 18:5 · Deut 30:11–14 · Isa 28:16 · Joel 2:32 · Isa 52:7 · Isa 53:1 · Ps 19:1–4 · Deut 32:21 · Isa 65:1–2 · Rom 3:21–22 · Rom 9:30–33 · Rom 11:11 · Gal 3:24 · Phil 2:9–11 · Phil 3:6 · Acts 4:12

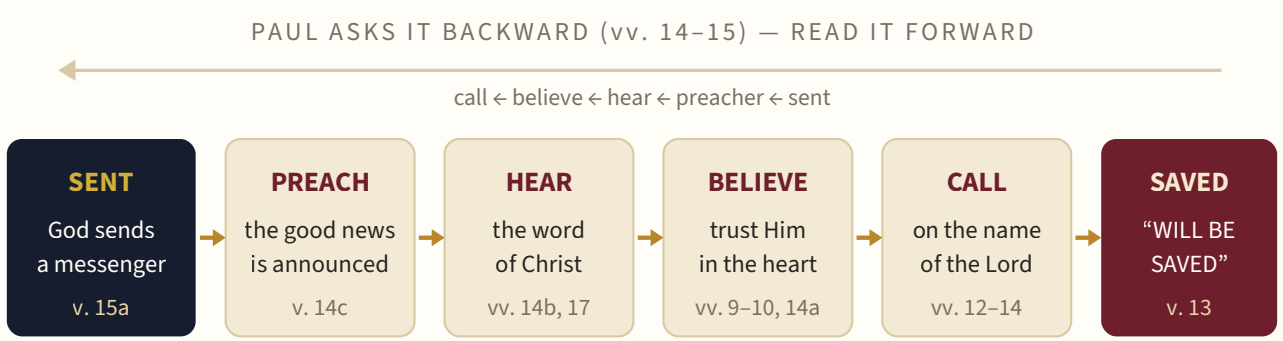
03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 10:15

"How will they preach △unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "☆HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!""

FIGURE · THE CHAIN OF 10:14–15, DRAWN BACKWARD



"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." — 10:17

"HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET …" (v. 15, Isaiah 52:7) — the first link is a pair of feet on the road.

Paul asks his questions from the last link back to the first; read them forward and you see how a person comes to be saved — it starts with God sending someone, and it ends with a sinner calling on the Lord.

Sin to confess — "seeking to establish their own." My problem has never been too little effort. It's been effort aimed at the wrong thing — trying to stack up enough good days, enough clean time, enough service, so I can feel right with God. That is building my own righteousness. Today I'll name the thing I'm quietly leaning on to feel acceptable, and lay it down in front of the cross.

Promise to trust — "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU." No one has to climb up to bring Christ down or dig down to bring Him up. He's already come, already died, already risen. For the men I sit with — in a prison chapel, a recovery room, a kitchen table — that means nobody is too far away, too far gone, or too uneducated. The word is as near as their own mouth and heart.

Command to obey — "confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord." Heart and mouth go together. If I believe it, I'll say it — at work, at home, to the man next to me. And "Lord" means Lord: not a helper I call in a crisis, but the One whose name is above every name. Where am I keeping my faith private because saying it out loud would cost me something?

Example to follow — the beautiful feet. Someone was sent to me. Someone preached, and I heard. I want to be the next link: to go, to speak, and to help send others. Henry says the holiness of a minister's life is the beauty of his feet — so my walk has to match my message.

Warning to heed — "they did not all heed." Hearing isn't the same as obeying. I've heard the gospel a thousand times. The question is whether I'm still answering back — "disobedient and obstinate" — in some corner of my life while God keeps holding out His hands.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Paul says Israel had "a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge." Where have I been sincere and busy for God while still running on my own steam? (10:2–3; Phil 3:6) *Zeal is heat; it needs the light of knowing what God has done.*
2. What does it look like, in a man's actual week, to "establish his own righteousness" — and what would it look like to "subject himself to the righteousness of God" instead? (10:3; 9:31–32) *The opposite of earning is receiving.*
3. Moses said the word was "not out of reach"; Paul says no one has to bring Christ down or up. What "climbing" am I still doing to feel right with God? (10:6–8; Deut 30:11–14) *He has done the ascending and the descending.*
4. Sproul says a raised hand or a signed card never justified anyone. How do I tell the difference between professing faith and possessing it — in myself and in the men I walk with? (10:9–10; Jas 2:19) *Mouth and heart travel together.*
5. Who were the "beautiful feet" that brought the gospel to me? Whom am I being sent to right now — and what part do I play in sending others? (10:14–15; Isa 52:7) *Every saved man is the end of someone's chain and the start of another.*
6. God says, "All the day long I have stretched out My hands." Where am I being "disobedient and obstinate" — answering back — while He keeps reaching? (10:21; Isa 65:2) *The patience of God toward provoking sinners is admirable.*

Worship. The God who could have shut the door kept His hands open all day long. Christ came down so I wouldn't have to climb up; He rose so I wouldn't have to dig Him out of the grave. The same Lord is rich to all who call on Him — and I called, and He did not disappoint me.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, You are the end of the law and the only righteousness I have. Forgive me for trying to build my own. Put Your word in my heart and on my lips; make my faith real, not just spoken. Thank You for the feet that brought the gospel to me — now send me. Give me patience like Yours with the men who keep answering back, because You were patient with me. Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 11

God Has Not Rejected His People — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God has not rejected Israel: He keeps a remnant by grace, uses Israel's stumbling to bring the nations in, and has set an "until" on Israel's hardening, after which "all Israel will be saved." The whole plan is mercy on the undeserving, and it leaves me — a grafted-in branch — humble, watchful and on my knees in praise.

00 The Text

ROMANS 11 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?

3 "Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE."

4 But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL."

5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.

6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

7 What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;

8 just as it is written, "GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY."

9 And David says, "LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM.

10 "LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT, AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER."

11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

12 Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!

13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,

14 if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.

15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but ☆ life from the dead?

16 If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and △ if the root is holy, the branches are too.

17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were ⟳ grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree,

18 ▤ do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but △ the root supports you.

19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be ⟳ grafted in."

20 Quite right, ⚠ they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. ▤ Do not be conceited, but fear;

21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.

22 △ Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; ⚠ otherwise you also will be cut off.

23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be ⟳ grafted in, for ☆ God is able to graft them in again.

24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were ⟳ grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be ⟳ grafted into their own olive tree?

25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that ◷ a partial hardening has happened to Israel ◷ until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

26 ☆ and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "△ THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB."

27 "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, △ WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."

28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are ☆ beloved for the sake of the fathers;

29 for ☆ the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown ⟳ mercy because of their disobedience,

31 so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the ⟳ mercy shown to you they also may now be shown ⟳ mercy.

32 For △ God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.

33 △ Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

34 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?

35 Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN?

36 For △ from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Marked in the text

- **v2** "God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew" — God — His character & actions
- **v4** "I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN" — God — His character & actions
- **v5** "a remnant according to God's gracious choice" — Promise / blessing
- **v7** "the rest were hardened" — Sin / warning
- **v8** "GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR" — Sin / warning
- **v11** "they did not stumble so as to fall" — Time / place / contrast
- **v11** "salvation has come to the Gentiles" — Promise / blessing
- **v12** "how much more will their fulfillment be" — Promise / blessing
- **v15** "life from the dead" — Promise / blessing
- **v16** "if the root is holy, the branches are too" — God — His character & actions
- **v18** "do not be arrogant toward the branches" — Command / instruction
- **v18** "the root supports you" — God — His character & actions
- **v20** "they were broken off for their unbelief" — Sin / warning
- **v20** "Do not be conceited, but fear" — Command / instruction

- **v22** “Behold then the kindness and severity of God” — God — His character & actions
- **v22** “otherwise you also will be cut off” — Sin / warning
- **v23** “God is able to graft them in again” — Promise / blessing
- **v25** “a partial hardening has happened to Israel” — Time / place / contrast
- **v25** “until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in” — Time / place / contrast
- **v26** “and so all Israel will be saved” — Promise / blessing
- **v26** “THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION” — God — His character & actions
- **v27** “WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS” — God — His character & actions
- **v28** “beloved for the sake of the fathers” — Promise / blessing
- **v29** “the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” — Promise / blessing
- **v32** “God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all” — God — His character & actions
- **v33** “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God” — God — His character & actions
- **v36** “from Him and through Him and to Him are all things” — God — His character & actions
- **v1** “May it never be” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v17** “grafted” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v30** “mercy” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

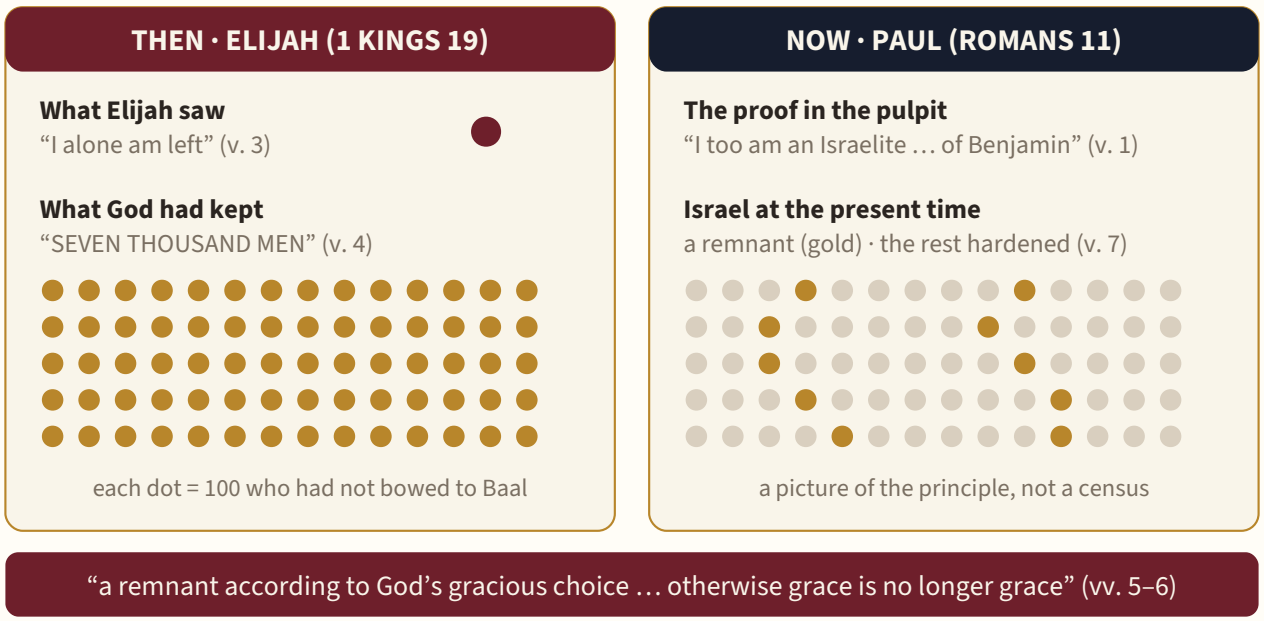
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 11:5

"In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time ☆a remnant according to God's gracious choice."

FIGURE · THE REMNANT THEN AND NOW



Elijah counted one faithful man; God counted seven thousand — and Paul says the same grace keeps a remnant "at the present time."

Setting. Romans 9–11 is one argument about Israel. Chapter 9 grounded Israel's story in God's choice ("it is not as though the word of God has failed," 9:6); chapter 10 laid Israel's unbelief at Israel's own feet ("A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE," 10:21). Chapter 11 asks the question that leaves: "God has not rejected His people, has He?" (v1). Paul writes as an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin (v1; Phil 3:5) to a church in Rome with many Gentile believers ("I am speaking to you who are Gentiles," v13).

Structure:

- vv1–10 — **the remnant:** Paul himself is proof (v1). Elijah thought he alone was left; God had kept seven thousand who had not bowed to Baal (vv2–4). "In the same way then … a remnant according to God's gracious choice" (v5) — by grace, not works (v6). The chosen obtained it; the rest were hardened (v7), as Moses, Isaiah and David foresaw (vv8–10).
- vv11–15 — **stumbled, not fallen:** "May it never be!" Their transgression brought salvation to the Gentiles, to make Israel jealous (v11). If their failure is riches, "how much more will their fulfillment be!" (v12). Paul magnifies his Gentile ministry to save some of his countrymen (vv13–14). Their acceptance will be "life from the dead" (v15).

- vv16–24 — **the olive tree:** holy firstfruits, holy lump; holy root, holy branches (v16). Some natural branches broken off; a wild olive grafted in (v17). Do not be arrogant — the root supports you (v18). They were broken off for unbelief; you stand by faith — so fear (vv19–21). Behold the kindness and severity of God (v22). God is able to graft them in again — "how much more" the natural branches (vv23–24).
- vv25–32 — **the mystery:** a partial hardening "until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved" (vv25–26), with Isaiah's Deliverer and the covenant of forgiveness (vv26–27). Enemies for the gospel's sake, beloved for the fathers' sake (v28); the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable (v29). Disobedience and mercy, Gentile and Jew, in turn — "God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all" (vv30–32).
- vv33–36 — **the doxology:** the depth of God's riches, wisdom and knowledge; no one His counselor, no one His creditor; "from Him and through Him and to Him are all things" (vv33–36).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95): "graft/grafted" ×6 (vv17, 19, 23 twice, 24 twice); "branch(es)" ×6 (vv16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 24); "olive (tree)" ×5 (v17 twice, v24 three times); "Gentiles" ×5 (vv11, 12, 13 twice, 25); "Israel" ×4 (vv2, 7, 25, 26) plus "Israelite" (v1); "mercy" ×4 (v30, v31 twice, v32) with "disobedient/disobedience" ×4 (v30 twice, vv31, 32); "root" ×4 (vv16, 17, 18 twice); "kindness" ×3, all in v22, with "severity" ×2; "grace" ×3, all in v6; "rejected/rejection" ×3 (vv1, 2, 15); "Him" ×6 in the doxology (v35 twice, v36 four times); "May it never be" ×2 (vv1, 11); "how much more" ×2 (vv12, 24); "jealous/jealousy" ×2 (vv11, 14); "hardened/hardening" ×2 (vv7, 25); "unbelief" ×2 (vv20, 23); "natural" ×2 (vv21, 24).

Contrasts: stumble ⟷ fall (v11). Transgression and failure ⟷ fulfillment (v12). Rejection ⟷ acceptance; reconciliation of the world ⟷ life from the dead (v15). Natural branches ⟷ wild olive (vv17, 24). Unbelief ⟷ faith (v20). Kindness ⟷ severity (v22). Partial hardening ⟷ "all Israel" (vv25–26). Enemies ⟷ beloved (v28). Disobedience ⟷ mercy (vv30–32). And the biggest one: God's unsearchable ways ⟷ every human counselor and creditor (vv33–35).

Shape of the chapter: two questions answered "May it never be!" (vv1, 11), one picture (the olive tree, vv16–24), one revealed secret (vv25–32), and one hymn (vv33–36). It starts with a man (Paul) and ends with God ("to Him be the glory").

Chapter theme (my words): God has not cast off His people. He keeps a remnant by grace, uses Israel's stumbling to bring the nations in, warns the grafted-in branches against pride, and has set an "until" on Israel's hardening — after which all Israel will be saved. It is mercy from beginning to end, and it ends in worship.

02 Interpretation

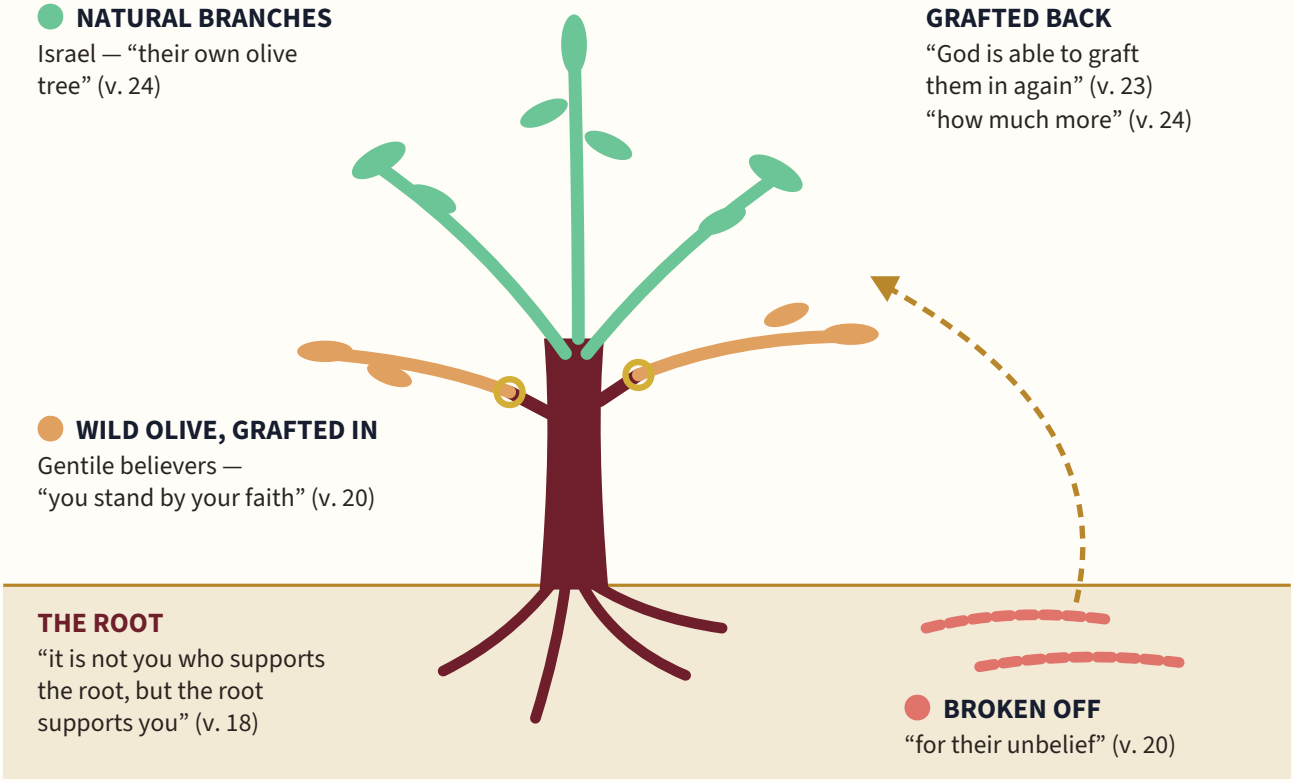
WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 11:29

“for ☆ the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”

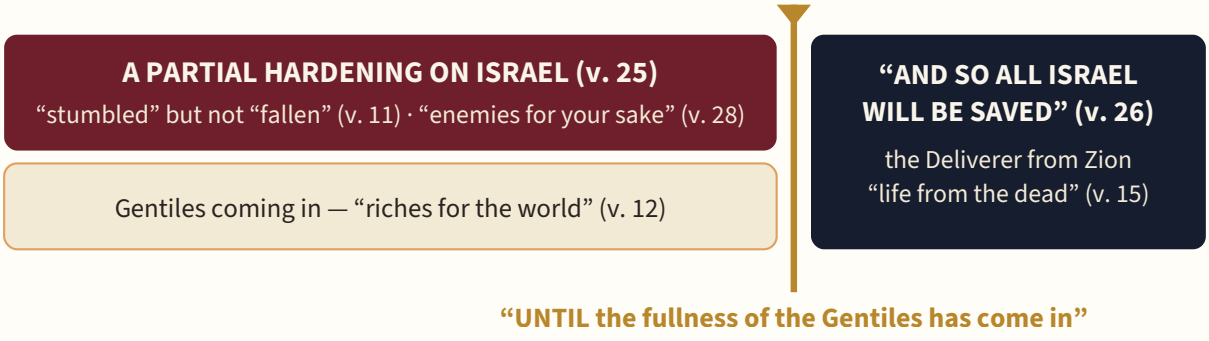
FIGURE · THE OLIVE TREE (ROMANS 11:16–24)

“Behold then the kindness and severity of God” (v. 22)



One tree, one root: natural branches broken off for unbelief, wild branches grafted in by faith, and the broken branches able to be grafted back.

FIGURE · A HARDENING WITH AN END DATE



all along: "a remnant according to God's gracious choice" (v. 5) — Paul himself (v. 1)

HOW THE FOUR VOICES READ "ALL ISRAEL"

Guzik — the nation as a whole (not every Jew), before and tied to Christ's return

Sproul — the full complement of elect Israel, in a future visitation of the Spirit

Spurgeon — restored to their land and converted to Christ (sermon on Ezekiel 37)

Henry — the Jews converted as a body, grafted back into the one church

The hardening is partial (a remnant all along) and temporary ("until"); read the bottom panel to see where the four teachers agree and differ.

Has God rejected Israel? (vv1–10) No — and the rejection is not total. Paul is himself the proof (v1). Elijah's complaint (1 Kings 19:10) met God's answer: seven thousand kept (1 Kings 19:18). Sproul calls Elijah's despair "the Elijah syndrome" — the faithful man's conviction that he is the last one — and says God's preservation is why the church can never be erased. Guzik: God has often worked in Israel through a faithful remnant. Henry: "It is his free and almighty grace that makes the difference between them and others." The rest were hardened (v7). All three hold both truths: the hardening is a judgment on Israel's own refusal (Henry: "They shut their eyes, and would not see; this was their sin"; Sproul: "Their blindness was a punishment for their sin"), and it is God's act.

Why did Israel stumble? (vv11–15) Not to fall for good. Guzik: "You can recover from a stumble, but if you fall you're down." God used Israel's misstep to open the door to the nations, and He means the Gentiles' joy to make Israel jealous (Deut 32:21; Rom 10:19). Sproul compares the "how much more" of v12 to Jesus' argument from the unjust judge; Henry reads "their fulfillment" as Israel filling up again the place left empty in the church, and "life from the dead" as the prodigal's homecoming (Luke 15:32).

The olive tree (vv16–24). Who is the root? The teachers differ in detail: Guzik says the root is Israel (and the firstfruits the first Jewish Christians); Sproul says, "They are the root; we are the wild olive branch"; Henry says the tree is the visible church (Jer 11:16) whose root of administration is Abraham, while Christ is the root that feeds it. They agree on the point Paul presses: the Gentile branch is there by grace through faith and must not boast. Henry: "Men graft to mend the tree; but God grafts to mend the branch." The "if you continue" of v22 is a real warning — Guzik: not salvation by works but continuing in grace; Sproul: apostasy can pollute the church as it did Israel. And v23 is a real hope: "God is able to graft them in again."

What is the mystery, and who is "all Israel"? (vv25–27) The hardening is *partial* (Paul is a Jew) and *temporary* — "until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in." Sproul: the word "until" "has a terminal dimension to it." Then "so all Israel will be saved." Here is where the four voices must be heard on their own terms:

- **Guzik:** ethnic Israel as a nation, not "spiritual Israel," not every last Jew — "Israel as a whole will be a saved people," and this is "a necessary condition for the return of Jesus Christ" (Matt 23:39; Zech 12:10). He mentions Calvin's reading (all the redeemed, Jew and Gentile) and rejects it.
- **Sproul:** not the church, not every Jew, but "the full complement of God's elect from Israel," in a future visitation of the Spirit after the fullness of the Gentiles; no dates; "I do not believe that God has two agendas." He wondered aloud whether, since 1967, God might be close to working again with ethnic Israel.
- **Spurgeon** (on Ezekiel 37, not Romans 11): a political restoration "to their own land" and a spiritual conversion, both still future, and saved the same way any sinner is saved — by Christ.
- **Henry:** the Jews, "though for the present they are cast off," will be "taken in again" as a body "when the fulness of time is come" — grafted back into the one church.

So all four expect a future saving work of God among the Jewish people. What they do not share is the frame: Guzik ties it to the Second Coming and Israel as a nation; Spurgeon adds the land; Sproul speaks of the elect remnant reaching its full number; Henry pictures Israel rejoining the one church. I stand with the national reading — God is not finished with Israel as a people — and I want to hold it the way Paul does, with tears for my Jewish neighbors and no pride in being a grafted branch.

Irrevocable (vv28–32). Two standpoints at once: enemies "from the standpoint of the gospel," beloved "from the standpoint of God's choice … for the sake of the fathers." Sproul uses David's kindness to Mephibosheth for Jonathan's sake. Henry: "we never find God repenting that he had given a man grace, or effectually called him." Then the great leveling: God locked Jew and Gentile in the same cell of disobedience so the only way out would be mercy (v32; Gal 3:22).

The doxology (vv33–36). Paul cannot explain God, so he worships Him. Guzik: "The fact that Paul can't figure out God makes him glorify God all the more." Sproul: theology begins and ends in doxology; "What can you give to God that He does not already own?" Spurgeon pictures Paul putting his pen back into the ink bottle and falling on his knees. Henry: "Men's riches of all kinds are shallow, you may soon see the bottom; but God's riches are deep."

Word study (Greek):

- **foreknew — *proginōskō* (G4267):** to know beforehand; God's people are those He set His love on in advance (v2; 8:29).
- **remnant — *leimma* (G3005):** what is left over; only here in the NT; God "kept" them (v4–5).
- **choice — *eklogē* (G1589):** election, selection; "a remnant according to God's gracious choice" (v5); again in v28.
- **hardened — *pōroō* (G4456) / hardening — *pōrōsis* (G4457):** to petrify, to callus; partial and "until" in v25.
- **stupor — *katanyxis* (G2659):** numbness, a dulled sense; only here, from Isa 29:10 LXX.
- **stumble — *ptaiō* (G4417) / fall — *piptō* (G4098):** a misstep versus going down for good (v11).
- **transgression — *paraptōma* (G3900):** a false step, a trespass (vv11–12).
- **make jealous — *parazēloō* (G3863):** to provoke to jealousy (vv11, 14; 10:19; Deut 32:21).
- **fullness — *plērōma* (G4138):** fulfillment, full number — Israel's (v12) and the Gentiles' (v25).
- **acceptance — *proslēmpsis* (G4356):** a receiving, a welcome; only here (v15).

- **wild olive — *agrielaios* (G65); cultivated olive — *kallielaios* (G2565); graft — *enkentrizō* (G1461):** all found only in this chapter.
- **kindness — *chrēstotēs* (G5544) / severity — *apotomia* (G663):** generous goodness / a cutting sharpness (v22).
- **mystery — *mystērion* (G3466):** a secret God has now revealed (v25).
- **Deliverer — *rhyomai* (G4506):** the Rescuer, the One who sets free (v26; cf. 7:24; 1 Thess 1:10).
- **irrevocable — *ametamelētos* (G278):** without regret, never taken back (v29).
- **shut up — *synkleiō* (G4788):** to lock in on every side (v32; Gal 3:22).
- **unsearchable — *anexeraunētos* (G419); unfathomable — *anexichniastos* (G421):** cannot be searched out; cannot be tracked by footprints (v33).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The first answer is a man.** Paul points to himself before he quotes a prophet.
2. **The remnant is kept, not self-made.** God said, "I have kept for Myself."
3. **The Elijah syndrome** — I am rarely as alone as I feel.
4. **A stumble is not a fall** — Israel tripped; it did not die.
5. **God grafts to mend the branch** (Henry) — grace runs "contrary to nature."
6. **Kindness and severity, together** — the warning is addressed to Gentile believers.
7. **"Until" has an end** — the hardening is partial and temporary.
8. **Not "spiritual Israel"** — Guzik and Sproul both read "Israel" ethnically in v26, though they describe the future differently.
9. **God does not take back His gifts** — and that is my security too.
10. **Theology that ends on its knees** — Paul drops his pen and worships.

Cross-references: Gen 12:3; Deut 29:4; 32:21; 1 Kings 19:10, 14, 18; Ps 69:22–23; Isa 27:9; 29:10; 40:13; 59:20–21; Jer 11:16; 31:33–37; Ezek 37:1–14; Zech 12:10; Job 41:11; Matt 23:39; Luke 15:32; 21:24; Rom 9:6; 10:19–21; 16:25; Gal 3:22; Eph 2:11–22; 3:3–8; Phil 3:5.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 11:22

"⚠ Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; ⚠ otherwise you also will be cut off."

Command to obey — "Do not be arrogant toward the branches … do not be conceited, but fear." I am a wild olive branch. I did not grow on this tree; I was cut out of a scrub tree and grafted in by grace. That leaves no room for pride — not over Israel, not over the men in my group who are still far off, not over the brother who fell. Today I'll pray by name for one Jewish friend or neighbor, and for one man I've quietly written off.

Sin to confess — the Elijah syndrome. I know the feeling of "I alone am left." In ministry, in a hard season, I start believing nobody else is faithful and everything rests on me. That is self-pity dressed up as zeal, and it is a lie — God had seven thousand Elijah could not see. I confess it, and I'll thank God this week for three men who are standing faithfully beside me.

Warning to heed — "otherwise you also will be cut off." God's kindness is real and so is His severity (v22). I don't stand by my record; I stand by faith (v20). Continuing in His kindness means staying close to the root — the Word, prayer, the fellowship — not drifting toward the edge to see how far I can lean.

Promise to trust — "the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." If God has not given up on a nation that rejected its own Messiah, He has not given up on the man in a cell who thinks he burned his last bridge. That includes me on my worst day. What God gives, He does not take back.

Example to follow — Paul's heart for his people. Paul magnified his ministry to the Gentiles so his own people would be moved to want what we have (vv13–14). My life should make someone jealous for Jesus — not of my comforts, but of my peace, my joy, my freedom. And I'll keep watching Israel with hope: the "until" of verse 25 has an end, and "all Israel will be saved."

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Elijah thought he was the only faithful one left. When have you felt that way — at work, in your family, inside a facility — and what did it do to your prayers? (11:2–5; 1 Kings 19:10, 18) *God had seven thousand Elijah could not see; you are rarely as alone as you feel.*
2. "If it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works." Where are you still quietly trying to earn a place in the tree? (11:5–6; Eph 2:8–9) *Grace mixed with works stops being grace; the branch only receives the sap.*
3. Paul wanted his life among the Gentiles to make his own people jealous. Would anyone who watches your life want what you have in Christ? (11:11, 14; Deut 32:21) *Jealousy is God's strategy here — a joy so visible that others want it back.*
4. "Do not be arrogant toward the branches." Where have you looked down on someone whose fall made room for your blessing? (11:17–21) *The root supports you; you do not support the root.*

5. “Behold then the kindness and severity of God.” Which of the two do you find easier to believe about God, and why? (11:22; 2:4) *Both are true at once; the kindness is meant to keep us, the severity to warn us.*
6. “The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” What does that say to a man who believes he has burned his last bridge with God? (11:29; Phil 1:6) *If God has not given up on a rebellious nation, He has not given up on you.*

Worship. Paul ends eleven chapters of the deepest doctrine ever written by putting down his pen and falling on his knees. I don’t have to figure God out to trust Him. His riches are deep, His judgments unsearchable, His ways untraceable — and every one of them ends in mercy. From Him, through Him, to Him: my salvation, my calling, my tomorrow.

Prayer. Father, thank You that You have not rejected Your people, and that You grafted a wild branch like me into the rich root. Keep me humble and keep me close. Break the Elijah syndrome in me and open my eyes to the seven thousand. Remove the hardening from Israel in Your time; let the Deliverer come from Zion and turn ungodliness from Jacob. Make my life a reason for someone to want Jesus. To You be the glory forever. Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 12

A Living Sacrifice and a Renewed Mind — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Because God has poured out His mercy on me, the only reasonable thing left is to give Him all of me — a body on the altar and a mind He keeps remaking. That surrender shows up in ordinary places: using my gift, loving my brothers without a mask, and feeding the man who hurt me instead of getting even.

00 The Text

ROMANS 12 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function,

5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;

7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching;

8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

11 not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.

20 "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Marked in the text

- **v1** "Therefore" — Time / place / contrast
- **v1** "by the mercies of God" — God — His character & actions
- **v1** "present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice" — Command / instruction
- **v2** "do not be conformed to this world" — Sin / warning
- **v2** "be transformed by the renewing of your mind" — Command / instruction
- **v2** "good and acceptable and perfect" — God — His character & actions
- **v3** "not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think" — Sin / warning
- **v3** "God has allotted to each a measure of faith" — God — His character & actions
- **v5** "one body in Christ" — Promise / blessing
- **v6** "gifts that differ according to the grace given to us" — God — His character & actions
- **v9** "Let love be without hypocrisy" — Command / instruction
- **v11** "fervent in spirit" — Command / instruction
- **v12** "rejoicing in hope" — Promise / blessing
- **v12** "devoted to prayer" — Command / instruction
- **v14** "Bless those who persecute you" — Command / instruction
- **v15** "weep with those who weep" — Command / instruction
- **v16** "do not be haughty in mind" — Sin / warning
- **v16** "associate with the lowly" — Command / instruction
- **v17** "Never pay back" — Sin / warning
- **v18** "so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men" — Command / instruction
- **v19** "Never take your own revenge" — Sin / warning
- **v19** "leave room for the wrath of God" — God — His character & actions
- **v19** "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY" — God — His character & actions
- **v20** "IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM" — Command / instruction
- **v21** "overcome evil with good" — Promise / blessing
- **v9** "evil" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v10** "one another" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 12:1

"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."

FIGURE · THE TURN OF THE LETTER



See how one word carries the whole weight: eleven chapters of God's mercies on the left, five chapters of response on the right, and "Therefore" (12:1) as the hinge between them — both halves ending in glory to God.

Setting. Romans 11 ends in a doxology — "To Him be the glory forever. Amen" (11:36). Romans 12 opens with "Therefore." Paul has finished laying out the gospel (chs. 1–11) and now turns to how a church in Rome, Jews and Gentiles meeting in homes, is to live it. The appeal is "by the mercies of God" (v1), and the language is the Temple's: present, sacrifice, holy, acceptable, service of worship.

Structure:

- vv1–2 — **the altar and the mind:** present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice; do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove the will of God — good, acceptable, perfect.
- vv3–8 — **the self and the body:** do not think more highly of yourself than you ought; God has allotted to each a measure of faith (v3). Many members, one body in Christ (vv4–5). Seven gifts, each with its manner: prophecy (by the proportion of faith), service, teaching, exhorting, giving (with liberality), leading (with diligence), mercy (with cheerfulness) (vv6–8).

- vv9–13 — **love in the family:** love without hypocrisy; abhor evil, cling to good (v9); brotherly devotion and honor (v10); diligence, fervor, serving the Lord (v11); hope, perseverance, prayer (v12); meeting the saints' needs and practicing hospitality (v13).
- vv14–16 — **love toward persecutors and the lowly:** bless and do not curse (v14); rejoice and weep with others (v15); the same mind, not haughty, associate with the lowly, not wise in your own estimation (v16).
- vv17–21 — **love toward enemies:** never pay back evil for evil; respect what is right before all men (v17); peace with all, as far as it depends on you (v18); never take your own revenge — "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY" (v19, Deut 32:35); feed your hungry enemy (v20, Prov 25:21–22); overcome evil with good (v21).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95): "evil" ×5 — vv9, 17 (twice), 21 (twice); "one another" ×3 — v10 (twice), v16 (plus "members one of another," v5); "think" ×3, all in v3; "mind" ×3 — v2, v16 (twice); "members" ×3 — v4 (twice), v5; "body/bodies" ×3 — vv1, 4, 5; "God" ×5 — v1 (twice), vv2, 3, 19; "serve/serving/service" ×4 — v1, v7 (twice), v11; "rejoice/rejoicing" ×3 — v12, v15 (twice); "bless" ×2 and "weep" ×2 (vv14, 15); "grace" ×2 and "faith" ×2 (vv3, 6); "acceptable" ×2 (vv1, 2); "devoted" ×2 (vv10, 12); "diligence" ×2 (vv8, 11); "all men" ×2 (vv17, 18); "never" ×2 (vv17, 19); "good" ×3 — vv2, 9, 21.

Contrasts: conformed ⟷ transformed (v2). Thinking "more highly" ⟷ thinking with "sound judgment" (v3). Many members ⟷ one body (vv4–5). Abhor evil ⟷ cling to good (v9). Bless ⟷ curse (v14). Rejoice ⟷ weep (v15). Haughty ⟷ lowly (v16). My revenge ⟷ God's wrath (v19). Overcome by evil ⟷ overcome evil (v21). The chapter opens with "God" twice in one verse (v1) and closes with an enemy at my table (v20).

Shape of the chapter: a staircase down from God to the enemy — God (vv1–2), myself (v3), the body (vv4–8), the family (vv9–13), the persecutor and the lowly (vv14–16), the enemy (vv17–21). The first two verses are long sentences; from verse 9 Paul switches to short, almost verbless commands — about thirty of them in thirteen verses — like Proverbs or the Sermon on the Mount. It begins with a sacrifice on an altar and ends with bread on an enemy's table.

Chapter theme (my words): Mercy received becomes a life offered. A transformed mind shows itself in humble use of my gift, sincere love in the church, and good returned for evil in the world.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 12:3

"For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you ⚠not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as △God has allotted to each a measure of faith."

FIGURE · CONFORMED OR TRANSFORMED (12:2)

DO NOT BE CONFORMED
συσχηματίζεσθε · G4964

Root: σχῆμα — the outward shape, the pose

Pressure: from outside, pressing in

Mold: "this world" — τῷ αἰῶνι, this age

Lasts: "the fashion … passeth away"
(σχῆμα again, 1 Cor 7:31 KJV)

Also: 1 Pet 1:14 — "do not be conformed to the former lusts"

a costume put on

BE TRANSFORMED
μεταμορφοῦσθε · G3339

Root: μορφή — the form, the real nature

Power: from inside, working out

Means: "the renewing (ἀνακαίνωσις) of your mind" — G342

Same verb: the Transfiguration
(Matt 17:2; Mark 9:2) and 2 Cor 3:18

Goal: the image of the Son (8:29)

a new life showing through

Both verbs are present imperatives in the passive voice — you are always being shaped; the result: you "prove" (**δοκιμάζω**, test and approve) God's will — good · acceptable · perfect

Two verbs, two directions: the world presses a shape onto you from outside; the Spirit changes the form from inside by renewing the mind — and both verbs are going on all the time.

FIGURE · SEVEN GIFTS, SEVEN MANNERS (12:6–8)

χαρίσματα · GIFTS OF GRACE — "according to the grace given to us" (v. 6)

	THE GIFT	PAUL'S GREEK	THE MANNER — HOW IT IS TO BE USED	
1	**Prophecy**	προφητεία	according to the proportion of his faith	v. 6
2	**Service**	διακονία	in his serving	v. 7
3	**Teaching**	ὁ διδάσκων	in his teaching	v. 7
4	**Exhorting**	ὁ παρακαλῶν	in his exhortation	v. 8
5	**Giving**	ὁ μεταδιδούς	with liberality — ἐν ἁπλότητι, single-hearted	v. 8
6	**Leading**	ὁ προϊστάμενος	with diligence — ἐν σπουδῇ, eager haste	v. 8
7	**Mercy**	ὁ ἐλεῶν	with cheerfulness — ἐν ἱλαρότητι	v. 8

Every gift is named with its manner — Paul tells not only *what* to do, but *how*.

Read across each row: Paul names the gift and then, every time, the manner of using it — the gift is grace, the manner is faithfulness.

What does "Therefore" point back to? Sproul notes that some take it back only to the doxology of 11:33–36, but most see the whole argument of chapters 1–11 behind it; Guzik reads it as Paul's settled pattern — doctrine, then duty — and quotes Morris: "the Christian life is dependent on the great Christian doctrines." Practically, that means I do not obey to earn mercy; I obey because I have received it. The word for "mercies" (*oiktirmos*) is compassion felt deep inside.

A living sacrifice — what is offered and how? The body, which in Scripture stands for the whole person living in this world (Guzik). The verb "present" is the same one Paul used five times in Romans 6:13–19. A sacrifice was killed; this one is "living" — Guzik: "The sacrifice is living because it is brought alive to the altar." Sproul: not martyrdom but "an offering of your whole self for your whole life." Henry: it is "Christ living in the soul by faith that makes the body a living sacrifice." Spurgeon brings it to work on Monday: "Our everyday labour is to be consecrated into priestly sacrifice."

"Spiritual service of worship" or "reasonable service"? Both. *Logikos* means rational, fitting, of the mind — and in 1 Peter 2:2, "of the word." NASB brings out the inward and spiritual; KJV brings out the logical. Sproul: *logikos latreia* is "logical worship," and he warns a church that prizes feeling over understanding. Guzik: "a life of worship according to God's Word." Henry: "God deals with us as with rational creatures."

Conformed and transformed (v2). "Conformed" (*syschēmatizō*) is the outward pattern — being squeezed into the shape of "this age" (*aiōn*). Sproul uses the Latin *saeculum*: the assumption that this life is all there is. "Transformed" (*metamorphoō*) is the word for Jesus' Transfiguration and for our being changed into His image (2 Cor 3:18) — a change of the real form, from inside out. All four teachers insist that nonconformity alone is not enough: Sproul, "Nonconformity is the easy part"; Spurgeon, "It is not enough to be nonconformists. Be transformed ones"; Henry, "the renewing of the mind is the renewing of the whole man" — and only God can do it.

The result is that I can "prove" (*dokimazō*, test and approve) God's will. Sproul says God's general will is our sanctification (1 Thess 4:3), and that is found through a Word-shaped mind, not fleeces or impressions.

Sober judgment and the measure of faith (v3). The verse is a play on *phroneō* — don't "over-think" yourself (*hyperphroneō*); think toward "sound mind" (*sōphroneō*, the word for the healed demoniac "in his right mind"). Spurgeon: "Humility is sober thinking. Pride is drunken thinking." Sproul: "Paul is not talking about estimation so much as he is esteem" — honest, not low. Guzik: even saving faith is a gift, so pride has nowhere to stand. Henry calls faith "the radical grace" — the root grace from which the gifts grow.

The gifts (vv6–8) — and is prophecy for today? Here the teachers do not say quite the same thing. Sproul doubts the apostolic office continued past the first century and reads New Testament prophecy as "forthtelling" — interpreting God's Word — which he sees today mainly in preaching. Guzik also stresses forth-telling God's heart and notes "the faith" in Greek may mean prophecy must agree with sound doctrine (the Reformers' "analogy of faith"). Henry treats the list as the ordinary offices of the church — teaching, exhorting, giving, ruling, showing mercy. All agree on the main point: every believer has a gift (Sproul: "every Christian has been gifted by the Holy Spirit"), it comes from grace, and it is meant to be used — "Having gifts, let us use them" (Henry). Guzik on balance: teaching without exhortation makes "fat sheep"; exhortation without teaching burns people out.

Love without hypocrisy (vv9–13). *Anypokritos* — love with the actor's mask off. Sproul: "genuine, sincere, and authentic." Guzik: people manage either "abhor evil" or "cling to good," seldom both. *Apostygeō* (abhor) is hatred intensified, used only here; "cling" is the glue word of marriage. The family words of v10 (*philadelphia*, *philostorgos*) make the church a household. "Fervent" is boiling (*zeō*). Spurgeon: "Burn. Let your very soul get hot." Sproul: "The kingdom of God cannot be a secondary interest for a true Christian." Hope is "the absolute certainty that the promises of God for the future will come to pass" (Sproul). Hospitality is *philoxenia*, love of strangers, and Paul says to *pursue* it — the same verb as "persecute" in v14 (Guzik notes "given/practicing" can mean pursue).

Blessing persecutors, weeping, stooping (vv14–16). These echo Jesus (Matt 5:44; Luke 6:28). Guzik: persecution can even come from inside the church (John 16:2). Sproul says presence matters more than words with someone grieving, and "same mind" "means more than just having doctrinal unity." Spurgeon: rejoicing with others is often harder than weeping, because envy comes easier than sympathy. Henry: "Love is a condescending grace." "Associate with the lowly" uses a verb (*synapagō*) that elsewhere means being "carried away" by error — here, let yourself be carried along with humble people.

Revenge, God's wrath, and coals of fire (vv17–21). Paul does not say justice doesn't matter; he says it is not mine. Sproul even says, "Revenge is not a bad thing. Revenge is a good thing" — but it belongs to God, who never exceeds justice; "There is a difference between vindication and vengeance." Henry: "We step into the throne of God if we do and take his work out of his hand." The "coals of fire" (Prov 25:21–22) are read two ways, and the teachers differ in emphasis: Guzik leans to the burning conviction of kindness that can make an enemy a friend ("we can destroy our enemy by making him our friend"); Henry gives both — melting him "into repentance and friendship," or hastening God's wrath on him if he refuses; Sproul's mentor put it bluntly: "The coals of fire are on their heads." Murray (in Guzik): "If it be possible indicates that it may not always be possible." Spurgeon: "Good is the only weapon which in this dread conflict we are permitted to use."

Word study (Greek):

- **urge — *parakaleō* (G3870):** to call alongside; to plead, exhort, comfort.
- **mercies — *oiktirmos* (G3628):** deep, felt compassion; five times in the NT.
- **present — *paristēmi* (G3936):** to place beside, offer — the same verb as Rom 6:13.

- **sacrifice — *thysia* (G2378):** from "to kill"; a slain offering — here, a living one.
- **spiritual / reasonable — *logikos* (G3050):** rational, fitting; only here and 1 Pet 2:2.
- **service of worship — *latreia* (G2999):** sacred, priestly service.
- **conformed — *syschēmatizō* (G4964):** to be molded to an outward pattern; only here and 1 Pet 1:14.
- **transformed — *metamorphoō* (G3339):** changed in form; the Transfiguration word (Matt 17:2; 2 Cor 3:18).
- **renewing — *anakainōsis* (G342):** renovation; only here and Titus 3:5.
- **prove — *dokimazō* (G1381):** to test and approve.
- **think more highly — *hyperphroneō* (G5252):** to over-think oneself; only here.
- **sound judgment — *sōphroneō* (G4993):** to be of sound mind, self-controlled.
- **gifts — *charisma* (G5486):** a gift of grace.
- **proportion — *analogia* (G356):** proportion, agreement; only here.
- **without hypocrisy — *anypokritos* (G505):** unfeigned, unmasked.
- **abhor — *apostygeō* (G655):** to loathe utterly; only here.
- **devoted — *philostorgos* (G5387):** family affection; only here.
- **fervent — *zeō* (G2204):** to boil; only here and Acts 18:25.
- **hospitality — *philoxenia* (G5381):** love of strangers.
- **bless — *eulogeō* (G2127) / curse — *kataraomai* (G2672):** to speak good / to call down evil.
- **associate with — *synapagō* (G4879):** to be carried along with.
- **take revenge — *ekdikeō* (G1556) / vengeance — *ekdikēsis* (G1557).**
- **coals — *anthrax* (G440):** a live coal; only here.
- **overcome — *nikaō* (G3528):** to conquer, prevail; twice in v21.

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The hinge is one word.** "Therefore" turns eleven chapters of mercy into five chapters of response.
2. **The altar now takes the living.** *Thysia* means a slain offering — and Paul calls it "living."
3. **Worship is logical.** After Romans 1–11, giving God everything is the only conclusion that follows.
4. **Conformed is a costume; transformed is a new nature** — and both verbs are present tense.
5. **Humility is sanity.** "Sound judgment" is the word for the healed demoniac in his right mind.
6. **Every gift comes with a manner** — liberality, diligence, cheerfulness.
7. **Love has a recoil and a grip** — abhor evil, cling to good.
8. **Chase the stranger.** "Practicing" hospitality (v13) is the verb for "persecute" (v14).
9. **Revenge is not cancelled; it is surrendered** to the God who never exceeds justice.
10. **Good is the only weapon.** The chapter ends with an enemy fed, not an enemy beaten.

Cross-references: Lev 1; Deut 32:35; Prov 25:21–22; Matt 5:9, 38–48; 17:2; Luke 6:27–36; John 16:2, 33; Acts 18:25; Rom 5:10; 6:13–19; 8:29; 11:32–36; 13:8–10; 1 Cor 12:4–27; 2 Cor 1:3; 3:18; Gal 2:13; Eph 4:7–16, 23; Phil 3:21; 1 Thess 4:3; Titus 3:5; Heb 13:2; 1 Pet 1:14, 22; 2:2; 3:9; 4:9–10.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 12:21

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

FIGURE · THE RAPID-FIRE COMMANDS OF 12:9–21



Under one heading — sincere love — the commands fall into three directions: upward to God, inward to the family of believers, and outward to enemies and all men, until evil itself is overcome.

Command to obey — "present your bodies." God isn't asking for my Sunday morning; He's asking for my body — my eyes, my hands, my mouth, my calendar. Every morning I'll say it plainly: "Lord, this body is Yours today." For the men I walk with, especially men in recovery, this is where it gets real — the body is exactly where the old life lived. Presenting it to God is the opposite of the addiction, which presented it to sin (Rom 6:13).

Sin to confess — being squeezed into the world's mold. I confess how easily I take my shape from this age: what I watch, what I want, what I'm anxious about, the way I talk about people I disagree with. Nonconformity is the easy part — I can avoid a few things and still have a worldly mind. What I need is a renewed mind, and that comes by soaking in the Word until it starts thinking for me.

Command to obey — think soberly and use my gift. Not too high, not falsely low. I'll ask two men who know me well what gift they see in me, and I'll put it to work this month in the way Paul says — with liberality, with diligence, with cheerfulness. No envy of another man's gift, no burying mine. "Keep to your own work; stand in your own niche."

Sin to confess — love with a mask on. I can be polite and still be cold, smile and still keep score. Paul says love must be without hypocrisy, and Sproul says it must be "genuine, sincere, and authentic." I'll name the brother I've been performing for instead of loving, and I'll do one costly thing for him this week — a meal, a call, a visit.

Command to obey — chase the stranger. Hospitality is love of strangers, and Paul says pursue it. In prison ministry and recovery rooms the stranger is the new guy at the back who won't make eye contact. I want to be the first man to cross the room to him.

Promise to trust — "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." When I've been wronged, I don't have to carry the verdict. God sees it, God weighs it, and God never exceeds justice. I can leave room for His wrath and get my hands free to do good. That is not weakness; it is the strongest thing a man can do.

Example to follow — Jesus, who overcame evil with good. He blessed when He was cursed, wept with those who wept, ate with the lowly, and fed the men who would deny Him. "While we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (Rom 5:10). I was the enemy He fed. So I will feed mine.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Paul does not say "present your bodies" until he has spent eleven chapters on "the mercies of God." Which of those mercies most moves you to give God your body this week — your eyes, your hands, your schedule? (12:1; 11:32) *Duty that is not fueled by mercy turns into either pride or burnout.*
2. Where is this age pressing you into its mold right now — in what you watch, what you want, or how you talk about people? What would "the renewing of your mind" look like there, concretely? (12:2; 2 Cor 3:18) *Conformed is outside-in; transformed is inside-out, and both are always happening.*
3. Is your estimate of yourself sober — not too high, not falsely low? What gift has God allotted you, and is it being used, buried, or envied? (12:3–8; 1 Pet 4:10) *Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking truly.*
4. "Let love be without hypocrisy." Where in this group or your home do you wear a mask of love over resentment, indifference or performance? (12:9–10; 1 Pet 1:22) *Sincere love has both a recoil from evil and a grip on good.*
5. Who is hard for you to rejoice with right now — and who is hard to weep with? Which comes more easily to you, and what does that reveal? (12:15–16) *Envy makes the first hard; busyness makes the second hard.*
6. Name one person who has wronged you. What would it look like to "leave room for the wrath of God" and still put bread and water on his table? (12:17–21; Prov 25:21–22) *You are not asked to pretend it did not happen — only to hand the verdict to God.*

Worship. "To Him be the glory forever" (11:36) becomes, one verse later, a body on the altar. Worship isn't only a song; it's a life laid down, every day, in a hundred small surrenders — and God calls it "good and acceptable and perfect."

Prayer. Father of mercies, You have shown me mercy upon mercy — I was Your enemy and You fed me with the bread of life. Here is my body; take it again today. Renew my mind by Your Word until I think Your thoughts. Keep me sober about myself, faithful with my gift, and honest in my love. When I am wronged, take the verdict out of my hands and fill them with bread for my enemy. Let me not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good, in the name of Jesus, who overcame for me. Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 13

The Debt That Is Never Paid Off — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God has put an order over my life — governing authorities who answer to Him — and I owe them what is due, while I keep owing everyone the one debt that never closes: love. The night is almost gone, so I take off what belongs to the dark and put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

00 The Text

ROMANS 13 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;

4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing.

7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.

9 For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

11 Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.

12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

Marked in the text

- **v1** “governing authorities” — Time / place / contrast
- **v1** “no authority except from God” — God — His character & actions
- **v1** “established by God” — God — His character & actions
- **v2** “opposed the ordinance of God” — Sin / warning
- **v3** “Do what is good” — Command / instruction
- **v4** “a minister of God to you for good” — God — His character & actions
- **v4** “bear the sword for nothing” — Sin / warning
- **v4** “an avenger who brings wrath” — Sin / warning
- **v5** “for conscience’ sake” — Command / instruction
- **v7** “Render to all what is due them” — Command / instruction
- **v8** “Owe nothing to anyone” — Command / instruction
- **v8** “has fulfilled the law” — Promise / blessing
- **v9** “summed up in this saying” — Time / place / contrast
- **v10** “love is the fulfillment of the law” — Promise / blessing
- **v11** “knowing the time” — Time / place / contrast
- **v11** “salvation is nearer to us than when we believed” — Promise / blessing
- **v12** “The night is almost gone, and the day is near” — Time / place / contrast
- **v12** “lay aside the deeds of darkness” — Command / instruction
- **v12** “put on the armor of light” — Command / instruction
- **v13** “carousing and drunkenness” — Sin / warning
- **v13** “sexual promiscuity and sensuality” — Sin / warning
- **v13** “strife and jealousy” — Sin / warning
- **v14** “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” — Command / instruction
- **v14** “make no provision for the flesh” — Sin / warning
- **v8** “love” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v1** “authority” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 13:1

"Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God."

Setting. Paul writes to believers living in Rome, the capital of the empire, in the early years of Nero. Chapter 12 ended with "Never take your own revenge … leave room for the wrath of God" (12:19) and "overcome evil with good" (12:21). Chapter 13 shows who carries God's wrath against evil in this age (vv1–7), what we owe our neighbor (vv8–10), and what time it is (vv11–14).

Structure:

- vv1–2 — **the principle:** every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. Why: there is no authority except from God; those which exist are established by God. So resisting authority is opposing the ordinance of God, and brings condemnation.
- vv3–4 — **the job of the authority:** rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do what is good and you will have praise. It is "a minister of God to you for good." If you do evil, be afraid: "it does not bear the sword for nothing" — it is "a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil."
- vv5–7 — **our response:** be in subjection "not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake" (v5). Pay taxes, because rulers are servants of God devoted to this very thing (v6). "Render to all what is due them": tax, custom, fear, honor (v7).
- vv8–10 — **the one debt:** "Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another"; whoever loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law (v8). Four commandments — adultery, murder, stealing, coveting — and "any other commandment" are summed up in "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (v9). "Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (v10).
- vv11–12 — **the time:** it is already the hour to awaken from sleep; salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is almost gone, the day is near — lay aside the deeds of darkness, put on the armor of light.
- vv13–14 — **the clothes:** behave properly as in the day — not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ; make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- "God" ×6 — v1 (×2), v2, v4 (×2), v6, all in vv1–6: the authority's whole claim is borrowed from Him.
- "authority / authorities" ×4 — v1 (×2), v2, v3.
- "love / loves" ×5 — v8 (×2), v9, v10 (×2).
- "fear" ×4 — v3 (×2), v7 (×2); plus "be afraid" v4.
- "good" ×3 — v3 (×2), v4; "evil" ×3 — v3, v4 (×2).
- "tax / taxes" ×3 — v6, v7 (×2); "custom" ×2, "honor" ×2, "due" ×2 — all v7.

- "neighbor" ×3 — vv8, 9, 10. "law" ×2 — vv8, 10. "minister" ×2 — v4; "servants" v6. "wrath" ×2 — vv4, 5 (and 12:19). "subjection" ×2 — vv1, 5. "rulers" ×2 — vv3, 6.
- "put on" ×2 — v12 (armor of light), v14 (the Lord Jesus Christ). "day" ×2 — vv12, 13; "night" v12; "darkness" and "light" v12.

Contrasts: good behavior ⟷ evil (vv3–4). Praise ⟷ wrath (vv3–4). Subjection because of wrath ⟷ for conscience' sake (v5). Every due paid (v7) ⟷ the one debt still owed (v8). "Owe" (v8) and "what is due" (v7) are the same Greek root. Night ⟷ day; darkness ⟷ light (v12). Lay aside ⟷ put on (vv12, 14). The armor of light (v12) ⟷ the Lord Jesus Christ (v14) — the armor turns out to be a Person.

Shape of the chapter: outward to the state (1–7), sideways to the neighbor (8–10), forward to the day (11–14). Each part has an "owing": dues to authority, love to the neighbor, readiness to the coming Lord. Wrath in vv4–5 picks up the wrath of 12:19; the "put on" of v14 answers the "do not be conformed" of 12:2.

Chapter theme (my words): Every authority over me stands under God and serves Him, so I give it what it is due — but my deepest debt is love, and I live awake and dressed in Christ because the day is almost here.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 13:10

"Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore ☆ love is the fulfillment of the law."

FIGURE · THE GOVERNMENT'S GOD-GIVEN JOB DESCRIPTION

THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY

"no authority except from God … established by God" · 13:1

ITS JOB DESCRIPTION · vv. 3–4, 6

- A minister of God to you for good
- Gives praise to those who do good
- An avenger who brings wrath on evil
- Does not bear the sword for nothing
- Servants of God, devoted to this

OUR DUES · vv. 5–7

Subjection — for wrath and conscience

Tax to whom tax is due

Custom to whom custom

Fear to whom fear

Honor to whom honor

THE LIMIT · A SERVANT OF GOD, NOT GOD

"We must obey God rather than men." — Acts 5:29

Pilate's authority was "given … from above" — and he still sinned (John 19:11)

Read across: on the left, what God appointed the authority to do; on the right, what we owe it — and, underneath, the line no authority may cross.

FIGURE · THE ONE DEBT THAT IS NEVER PAID OFF



The second table of the Law (Exodus 20:13–17). The KJV, following later manuscripts, also lists false witness (9th).

Every due to Caesar can be stamped "paid"; the debt of love stays open, and it gathers up every commandment about our neighbor that Paul quotes in verse 9.

Does "every person is to be in subjection" mean blind obedience? No. All four teachers say the office is from God, and all four set a limit. Guzik: Christian obedience "is never blind – it obeys with the eyes of conscience wide open"; when government commands what God forbids, we obey God rather than men (Acts 4:19; 5:29). Sproul: obey unless the authority commands what God forbids or forbids what God commands — then "you must disobey" — but never just because it is inconvenient. Henry separates the *place* of power, which is God's ordinance, from its abuse and usurpation, which are not. Where they differ is on *resistance*: Henry counsels patient suffering under even a Nero; Sproul calls the question of resisting Britain in 1776 still "complicated"; Guzik adds that in a democracy citizens share responsibility for government. Paul wrote this under Rome and later suffered under Rome — submission is not approval of every act.

What is "the sword"? *Machaira*, the short sword — the power to punish, up to death. Guzik and Sproul both read it as including capital punishment; Sproul roots it in Genesis 9:6, God's covenant with all humanity to protect the life that bears His image, and warns that no government can be trusted to use force justly on its own. Henry calls it "not only the sword of war, but the sword of justice," given "for the restraining and suppressing of disorders." All agree the sword is real and God-given, and that it is *borrowed*: the same word "avenger" (*ekdikos*) is used of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 4:6. For a man who has lived under that sword: the office was God's, the officer answers to God (John 19:11), and neither the sentence nor the prison is the last word on him.

Does "owe nothing" forbid all debt? Guzik and Sproul both say no — Scripture regulates lending and borrowing (Matt 5:42); Proverbs 22:7 warns of the bondage of debt. Sproul: "If you borrow money, and you owe it, there is no

sin in that." The sin comes "when you do not pay it back." Paul's point is to settle every account you can — and then to treat love as the one account that never closes. Henry: "a debt that must be always in the paying, and yet always owing."

Why these commandments? Verse 9 quotes the second table — the commands about our neighbor: adultery (7th), murder (6th), stealing (8th), coveting (10th). They are "summed up" (*anakephalaioutai*) in Leviticus 19:18. The KJV adds "Thou shalt not bear false witness" (9th), following the later manuscripts; the NASB follows the older ones. Sproul warns against "situation ethics" that lets "love" override the commandments: love fulfills the law; it never cancels it.

What night, and what day? Guzik and Sproul read the "day" as the return of Christ and the completion of salvation; Sproul: "we are now in the last watch of the night." Henry reads it two ways — the end of "Jewish rage and cruelty" against the first Christians, and beyond it "the day of our complete salvation, in the heavenly glory." Spurgeon: "It is the early morning, it is the dawning of the eternal day." Either way, it is time to get dressed.

Putting on Christ — justification or sanctification? Henry says both: "Put on the righteousness of Christ for justification," and His spirit and example for sanctification. Spurgeon, in "Christ Put On," says this text is about daily holiness, not the imputed righteousness that justifies — though in "Dressing in the Morning" he also preaches Christ as the covering for the soul's guilt. Galatians 3:27 says believers "have clothed yourselves with Christ" already; Romans 13:14 says wear Him today.

Word study (Greek):

- **be in subjection — *hypotassō* (G5293):** to rank oneself under; built on *tassō* (G5021), "to arrange," as are "established" (v1), "resists" and "ordinance" (v2).
- **authority — *exousia* (G1849):** delegated right, not raw power; Jesus to Pilate, "given you from above" (John 19:11).
- **minister — *diakonos* (G1249); servants — *leitourgos* (G3011):** a household servant / deacon; a public servant, elsewhere always of sacred service.
- **sword — *machaira* (G3162); avenger — *ekdikos* (G1558):** the short sword; "avenger" used only of the magistrate and of the Lord (1 Thess 4:6).
- **what is due — *opheilē* (G3782); owe — *opheilō* (G3784):** one root in vv7–8 — the dues you can pay, the love you always owe.
- **summed up — *anakephalaioō* (G346); fulfillment — *plērōma* (G4138):** gathered under one head (also Eph 1:10); fullness.
- **time — *kairos* (G2540):** the critical season, not clock time.
- **almost gone — *prokoptō* (G4298); armor — *hoplon* (G3696):** the night has advanced; weapons, armor.
- **put on — *endyō* (G1746):** to clothe oneself.
- **provision — *pronoia* (G4307):** forethought, planning ahead (the root of "providence").

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. "Wrath" is handed over, not abolished: what I leave to God (12:19), God's servant carries (13:4).
2. The magistrate's titles are church words — deacon and priestly servant: the office is raised, the officer humbled.
3. Office and officer are not the same; "the abuse of power [is] not of God" (Henry).

4. There is a ceiling on obedience — but inconvenience never reaches it (Sproul).
5. The sword is borrowed; every judge stands under a Judge.
6. Pay every bill; keep one account open — love is "a debt impossible to discharge" (Morris, in Guzik).
7. Four commandments, one sentence: love your neighbor as yourself.
8. Love fills the law; it does not empty it.
9. It is dawn, not midnight (Spurgeon).
10. Provision is planning — stop doing the flesh's planning for it.

Cross-references: Rom 12:17–21 · Matt 22:21, 37–40 · Acts 4:19; 5:29 · John 19:11 · 1 Pet 2:13–17 · Titus 3:1 · 1 Tim 2:1–2 · Gen 9:6 · Dan 2:21 · Exod 20:13–17 · Lev 19:18 · Gal 5:14 · 1 Thess 5:4–8 · Eph 6:10–18 · Gal 3:27 · Col 3:12–14

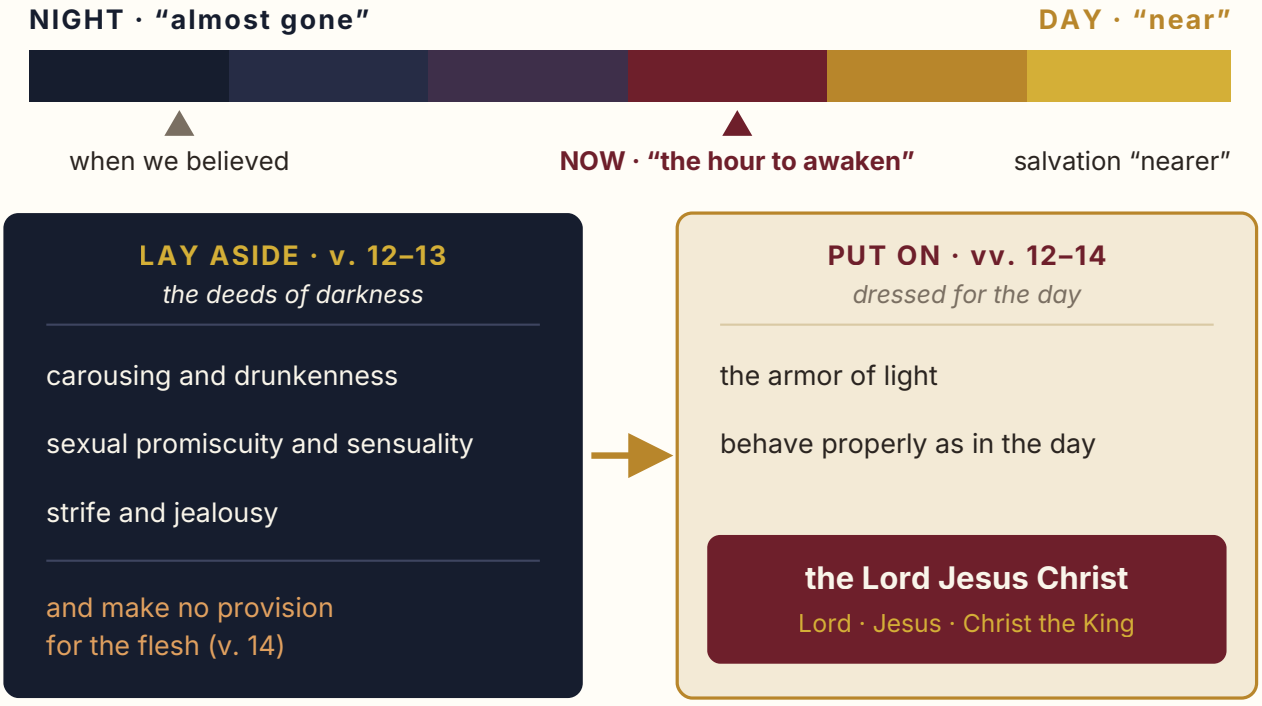
03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 13:14

"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts."

FIGURE · THE CLOCK IS LATE



Augustine heard "take up and read," opened to 13:13–14, and rose a new man.

"The fitness lies in the dress, not in you." — Spurgeon

It is past the middle of the night and close to dawn: take off the night clothes on the left and put on what is on the right — finally, a Person.

Command to obey — "Render to all what is due them." I am not exempt because I disagree with the people in charge. Taxes, fines, child support, restitution, an honest day's work, a respectful word to an officer or a boss — these are dues, and God says pay them, "not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake." For the men I walk with, this may mean finishing parole well, paying a fine down a little at a time, or speaking to an officer with honor when it would be easier to sneer.

Truth to hold — the office is God's; the abuse is not. Some of the men at my table have felt "the sword" of verse 4. Romans 13 does not ask them to call every officer good or every sentence fair. Pilate had authority "given … from

above" and still sinned (John 19:11). God will judge the judges. And when an authority commands me to sin, I must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29) — and take whatever comes for it, the way Peter and Paul did.

Debt to pay — love. My sentence to the state can be served and finished. My debt to God I could never pay — Christ paid it. But the debt of love stays open every morning. Who in my house, my cell block, my church or my job do I owe love today? Love "does no wrong to a neighbor": no adultery, no murder, no stealing, no coveting — and no withholding the good I could do.

Sin to confess — "provision for the flesh." I know how my falls are arranged: the route home, the phone, the cash, the old friend, the late night. Paul says stop planning for the flesh. Today I will name one provision I keep making and remove it. I can't stop the birds from flying overhead, but I don't have to let them nest in my hair (Luther's picture, via Sproul).

Promise to trust — "salvation is nearer to us than when we believed." Every day I live in Christ, the day of His coming is closer. It is dawn, not midnight. The night of my old life is almost gone; the shame of the dark does not get the last word.

Example to follow — Paul. He wrote "be in subjection" to Rome and later wore Rome's chains — still free in Christ, still paying the debt of love to the soldiers who guarded him (Acts 28:16, 30–31; Phil 1:13).

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Where do I find it hardest to honor an authority over me — a boss, an officer, a parole agent, a government — and what would subjection "for conscience' sake" look like there? (13:1–5; 1 Pet 2:13–17) *I honor the office because of the One who gave it.*
2. Which of my complaints about authority are conscience, and which are only inconvenience? (13:2; Acts 5:29) *Acts 5:29 is a narrow door; most of my resistance does not fit through it.*
3. How can a man accept that the office was God's without pretending every officer or sentence was just? (13:4; John 19:11) *God judges the judges.*
4. Is there a tax, fine, support payment, restitution or simple debt I've been avoiding? What is one step this week? (13:6–8) *"If you owe somebody something, … pay what you owe."*
5. Who is the person I find hardest to love — and what changes if I treat love for him as a debt I owe, not a favor I might do? (13:8–10; Lev 19:18) *Always in the paying, always owing.*
6. Where am I making "provision for the flesh," and what would it look like to provide for my soul instead? (13:13–14; Gal 3:27) *Put on Christ before you leave the house.*

Worship. Lord, You are over every throne, bench and badge, and every one answers to You. You paid the debt I could never pay, and You clothe me in Your Son.

Prayer. Father, I rank myself under Your order today. Help me pay what I owe — to the state, to my employer, to my family — honestly and without bitterness, and give me courage to obey You when men command what You forbid. Keep me owing love, and paying it, to the hardest person in front of me. Wake me up. Strip off what belongs to the dark — the drinking, the bed that isn't mine, the strife and the envy — and show me the provisions I keep making for my flesh. I put on the Lord Jesus Christ: Lord to obey, Jesus to save me, Christ my King. Amen.

Scripture: New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. · Teacher material summarized from David Guzik (Enduring Word), R.C. Sproul (Ligonier), C.H. Spurgeon and Matthew Henry — see Romans-13-Deep-Dive-Four-Voices.pdf for sources. · Importable: the companion .md carries the berean-study block.

SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 14

The Weak, the Strong, and the Lord — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Where the Bible leaves a matter open, I receive my brother instead of judging or despising him, because Christ is his Lord and mine and we will both answer to God. My liberty is real, but love decides how I use it — and I never act against a conscience I have not yet settled in faith.

00 The Text

ROMANS 14 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.

2 One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only.

3 The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him.

4 Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

5 One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.

6 He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.

7 For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself;

8 for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

11 For it is written, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD."

12 So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this— not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.

14 I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

15 For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.

16 Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil;

17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

18 For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.

19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

20 Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense.

21 It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles.

22 The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

Marked in the text

- **v1** "accept the one who is weak in faith" — Command / instruction
- **v2** "he who is weak eats vegetables only" — Time / place / contrast
- **v3** "regard with contempt" — Sin / warning
- **v3** "for God has accepted him" — God — His character & actions
- **v4** "he will stand" — Promise / blessing
- **v5** "Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind" — Command / instruction
- **v8** "whether we live or die" — Promise / blessing
- **v9** "Christ died and lived again" — God — His character & actions
- **v10** "we will all stand before the judgment seat of God" — Time / place / contrast
- **v11** "EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME" — God — His character & actions
- **v12** "each one of us will give an account of himself to God" — Time / place / contrast
- **v13** "not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way" — Command / instruction
- **v14** "nothing is unclean in itself" — Time / place / contrast
- **v15** "you are no longer walking according to love" — Sin / warning
- **v15** "Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died" — Command / instruction
- **v16** "do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil" — Command / instruction
- **v17** "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking" — Time / place / contrast
- **v17** "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" — Promise / blessing
- **v18** "acceptable to God and approved by men" — Promise / blessing
- **v19** "pursue the things which make for peace" — Command / instruction
- **v20** "Do not tear down the work of God" — Command / instruction
- **v21** "It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine" — Command / instruction
- **v22** "Happy is he who does not condemn himself" — Promise / blessing
- **v23** "whatever is not from faith is sin" — Sin / warning
- **v3** "judge" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v4** "Lord" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v10** "brother" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

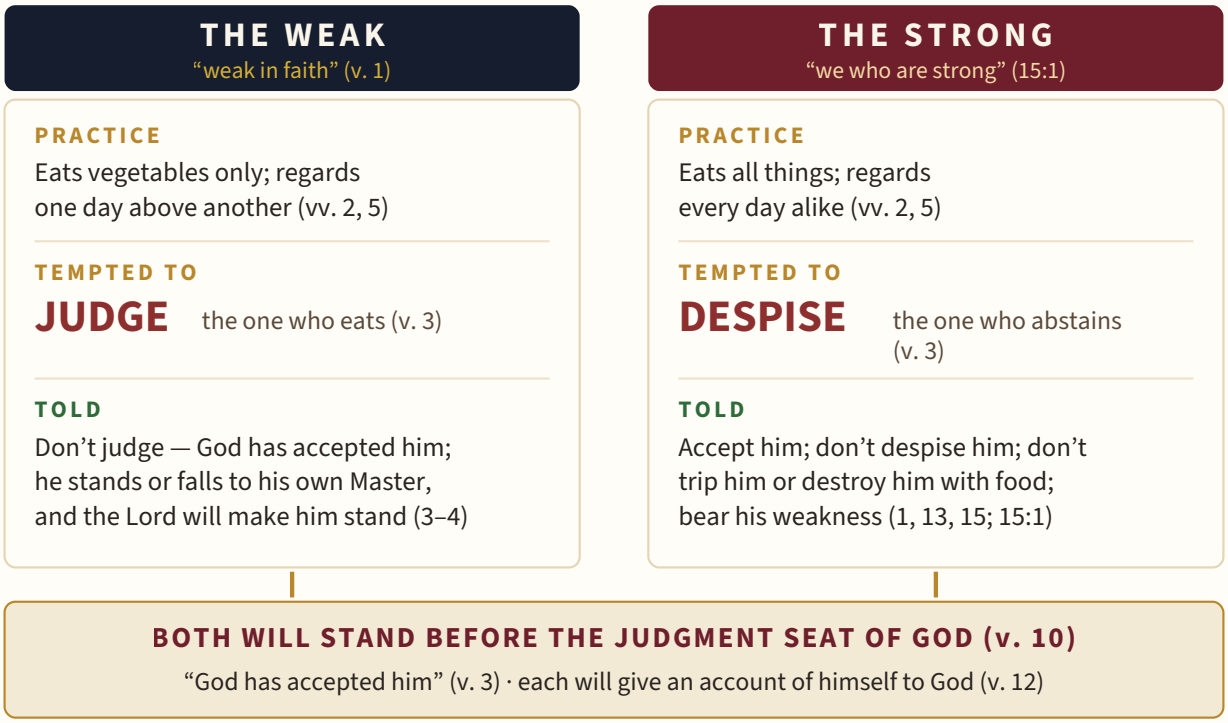
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 14:1

"Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions."

FIGURE · WEAK AND STRONG



Read across: each side has its own practice, its own temptation (judge or despise, v. 3) and its own instruction — and both end up before the same judgment seat.

Setting. Romans 12–13 have told the church how to live as a living sacrifice and how love fulfills the law. Chapter 14 lands on a real quarrel in the Roman congregation: some believers eat "all things," others eat "vegetables only" (v2); some regard one day above another, others regard every day alike (v5). The argument runs on to 15:13 — "we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength" (15:1).

Structure:

- vv1–4 — **receive the weak.** Accept him, but not to pass judgment on his opinions (v1). The eater must not regard the abstainer with contempt; the abstainer must not judge the eater — "for God has accepted him" (v3). Who are you to judge another man's servant? "He will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand" (v4).
- vv5–9 — **fully convinced, and for the Lord.** Days: "Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind" (v5). Whoever observes, eats or abstains does it "for the Lord" and gives thanks (v6). No one lives or dies for

himself; living or dying, "we are the Lord's" (vv7–8) — because Christ died and lived again to be Lord of dead and living (v9).

- vv10–12 — **the judgment seat.** Why judge? Why despise? "We will all stand before the judgment seat of God" (v10). Isaiah 45:23: every knee will bow (v11). "Each one of us will give an account of himself to God" (v12).
- vv13–18 — **don't trip your brother.** Stop judging one another; determine instead not to put a stumbling block in a brother's way (v13). Nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean to the man who thinks it is (v14). If food hurts him, you are no longer walking in love — don't destroy him for whom Christ died (v15). The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (v17).
- vv19–23 — **build up; act from faith.** Pursue peace and building up (v19). Don't tear down God's work for food (v20). It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother stumble (v21). Keep your faith as your own conviction before God (v22). He who doubts is condemned if he eats; "whatever is not from faith is sin" (v23).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95, counted in the text):

- **eat / eats / eating** ×14 — vv2 (2), 3 (4), 6 (3), 17, 20, 21, 23 (2). The quarrel's word.
- **Lord** ×10 — vv4, 6 (3), 8 (3), 9, 11 ("THE LORD"), 14. The chapter's answer.
- **God** ×10 — vv3, 6 (2), 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 20, 22.
- **judge / judgment** ×6 — "passing judgment" v1; judge vv3, 4, 10, 13; "judgment seat" v10. Plus condemn (v22) and condemned (v23).
- **live / lives / lived** ×6 (vv7, 8 ×3, 9, 11) and **die / died** ×6 (vv7, 8 ×3, 9, 15).
- **brother** ×5 — vv10 (2), 13, 15, 21.
- **faith** ×5 — vv1, 2, 22, 23 (2): the chapter opens and closes on it.
- **unclean** ×3 (all in v14); **food** ×3 (vv15 ×2, 20); **accept** ×3 (vv1, 3, 18 "acceptable"); **day** ×3 (vv5 ×2, 6).
- **contempt** ×2 (vv3, 10); **stumbl-** ×2 (vv13, 21); **convinced** ×2 (vv5, 14 — Paul's conviction and ours); **gives thanks** ×2 (v6).

Contrasts: the one who eats ⟷ the one who does not (vv2–3, 6). Contempt (the strong) ⟷ judging (the weak), v3 and again v10. One day above another ⟷ every day alike (v5). Live ⟷ die; dead ⟷ living (vv7–9). "Judge one another" ⟷ "determine this" (v13, the same Greek verb). Clean in itself ⟷ unclean to him who thinks it so (v14, v20). Eating and drinking ⟷ righteousness, peace, joy (v17). Build up ⟷ tear down (vv19–20). Fully convinced (v5) ⟷ he who doubts (v23).

Shape of the chapter: a welcome (1–4), a confession of whose we are (5–9), a courtroom (10–12), a warning about a brother's footing (13–18) and a rule for the conscience (19–23). It begins with "weak in faith" and ends with "not from faith."

Chapter theme (my words): In matters God has left open, the strong must not despise and the weak must not judge. Christ is Lord of both, each will answer for himself, and love will set down a liberty rather than ruin a brother Christ died for.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 14:23

"But ⚠he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and ⚠whatever is not from faith is sin."

FIGURE · A DECISION GRID FOR DISPUTABLE MATTERS



Start at the gate: only if Scripture leaves a matter open do the four questions of Romans 14 apply — and a single "stop" answer is enough to hold back.

Who are "the weak" and "the strong"? Not the careless and the careful. The weak is the stricter believer — the one who eats only vegetables (v2), probably to avoid meat from pagan sacrifice or to keep the food laws, and who still honors certain days (v5). Guzik: they "were weaker because of their legalistic attitudes and lack of love towards others." Sproul: they "did not understand the fullness of the biblical concept of Christian liberty." Henry: the Roman weak erred from weakness, not from the willfulness of the Galatian teachers who made such things necessary for salvation. Paul counts himself among the strong (15:1) — and gives the strong the heavier load.

What kind of matters? "Opinions" (v1, *dialogismoi*) — things Scripture neither commands nor forbids. Sproul's word is *adiaphora*, "that which has no inherent ethical bearing." This is the line that keeps Romans 14 from being misused. Guzik: rebuke belongs to "clear Scriptural principles"; doubtful things call for advice, never judgment — and conscience is never "an excuse for obviously sinful behavior." Sproul: "There is no occasion where it is okay for the weaker brother to be involved in adultery." Paul had settled drunkenness one verse earlier (13:13).

Alcohol — where this chapter speaks and where it doesn't. Wine is named in v21 as a disputable matter: a believer may be free to drink it. Drunkenness is not disputable (Eph 5:18; Gal 5:21). For a man in recovery, the first drink is not a question of liberty but of mastery: "I will not be mastered by anything" (1 Cor 6:12). Romans 14 then speaks to both men at the table. To the strong: "It is good not to … drink wine … by which your brother stumbles" (v21). Spurgeon's picture is the cliff at Dover — he could stand on the ledge, but not with his sons beside him; "Let us treat men as we would treat our sons." To the sober man: do not judge the brother who drinks without sin — "God has accepted him" (v3). Sproul guards the other edge: he faulted an institution for turning one trustee's abstinence into a rule, and a hostess who refused a cocktail with "We're Christians." Scruples are to be respected, not imposed.

The days (v5). Sproul: "Paul is not talking here about the Sabbath, but about certain holy days that were observed among the Jews." Henry: Jewish festivals, while all Christians kept the Lord's day. Guzik draws the wider lesson — Paul is "talking more about principles than specific issues." Colossians 2:16–17 is the parallel: feasts and Sabbaths are "a mere shadow … but the substance belongs to Christ."

"Fully convinced" (v5) and "for the Lord" (vv6–9). *Plērophoreisthō* — filled with assurance — each in his own mind. Henry: "First be persuaded that what you do is lawful, before you venture to do it." The test is not my preference but my Master: whoever eats or abstains does it for the Lord and gives thanks. Christ died and lived again to be Lord of dead and living (v9) — Henry: "Christ is the centre, in which all the lines of life and death do meet."

The judgment seat — of God or of Christ? (v10). NASB95 and SBLGNT read "of God"; the KJV's text reads "of Christ" (as in 2 Cor 5:10). Spurgeon: "Paul did not say 'Christ,' but 'God,' but by that word he meant the same person" — the passage is a testimony to Christ's deity. The teachers differ on what the seat is: Guzik, quoting Smith, reads the believers' *bema*, concerned "with a Christian's rewards and position in the kingdom, not with his salvation"; Spurgeon preaches one universal, personal, divine judgment of all men, saints and sinners, and closes with "you must either break or bow." All agree on the point Paul makes: each gives account of himself — Spurgeon adds, "We shall then have to give an account of our judgments of others."

What does "stumble" mean here? Not merely "annoy" or "offend." In this chapter the brother stumbles when your example draws him to do what his own conscience condemns — "he who doubts is condemned if he eats" (v23). That hurts him (v15) and can ruin him (v15, "destroy"). Guzik adds a limit: Paul "speaks about the stumbling of a sincere heart, not catering to the whims of someone's legalism" — Paul would not circumcise Titus under pressure (Gal 2:3–5).

Conscience (vv14, 22–23). Nothing is unclean in itself — Paul is sure of it "in the Lord Jesus" — yet to the man who thinks it unclean, it is. Sproul quotes Luther: "To act against conscience is neither right nor safe" — and adds that a clean conscience is not an infallible guide, for "Our consciences … can be seared." Henry on v22: the faith in view "is not meant of justifying faith" but of "a knowledge and persuasion of our Christian liberty in things disputed." "Whatever is not from faith is sin" (v23) — Guzik: "If we are troubled by something, it likely isn't *of faith* and likely *is sin* for us."

The kingdom (v17). Food and drink are real questions, but they are not what the kingdom is made of. Henry: "As to God, our great concern is righteousness"; "As to our brethren, it is peace"; "As to ourselves, it is joy in the Holy Ghost." Sproul: "The goal of the Christian life, beloved, is righteousness."

Text notes. v4: "the Lord is able" (SBLGNT *kyrios*, NASB95) — "God is able" in the KJV's text. v21: many later manuscripts (KJV) add "or is offended, or is made weak." After v23 many later manuscripts place the doxology of 16:25–27; NASB95 and KJV print it at the end of chapter 16.

Word study (Greek):

- **accept — *proslambanō* (G4355):** to take to oneself, welcome into one's company (vv1, 3; 15:7).
- **passing judgment — *diakrisis* (G1253):** a sifting, deciding — "not for disputes" (v1).
- **opinions — *dialogismos* (G1261):** reasonings, scruples (v1).
- **regard with contempt — *exoutheneō* (G1848):** to treat as nothing — the strong man's sin (vv3, 10).
- **judge — *krinō* (G2919):** to pass sentence — the weak man's sin (vv3, 4, 10, 13); "determine this" in v13 is the same verb.
- **stand — *stēkō* (G4739) / *histēmi* (G2476):** the servant stands, and the Lord makes him stand (v4).
- **fully convinced — *plērophoreō* (G4135):** fully assured, filled with conviction (v5).
- **be Lord — *kyrieuō* (G2961):** to rule as owner — Christ over dead and living (v9).
- **judgment seat — *bēma* (G968):** the magistrate's raised platform (v10).
- **give praise / confess — *exomologeō* (G1843):** to acknowledge openly (v11; Phil 2:11).
- **obstacle — *proskomma* (G4348):** a thing to strike the foot on (vv13, 20).
- **stumbling block — *skandalon* (G4625):** the trap-stick, a snare (v13).
- **unclean — *koinos* (G2839):** "common," not set apart (v14; Acts 10:14).
- **hurt — *lypeō* (G3076):** to grieve (v15). **destroy — *apollymi* (G622):** to ruin (v15).
- **kingdom — *basileia* (G932):** the reign of God (v17).
- **approved — *dokimos* (G1384):** tested and genuine (v18); **approves — *dokimazō* (G1381)** (v22).
- **pursue — *diōkō* (G1377):** to chase (v19). **building up — *oikodomē* (G3619)** (v19). **tear down — *katalyō* (G2647)** (v20).
- **stumbles — *proskoptō* (G4350):** strikes his foot (v21).
- **doubts — *diakrinomai* (G1252):** to waver, be divided in mind (v23). **is condemned — *katakrinō* (G2632)**, perfect tense (v23).
- **faith — *pistis* (G4102):** here, settled conviction before God (vv22–23).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The weak brother is the strict one** — and the strong carry the greater burden (15:1).
2. **Two temptations, two sins.** The strong despise; the weak judge (v3, v10).
3. **Romans 14 is for disputable matters, not clear sin.** Drunkenness was settled in 13:13.
4. **"Of God" or "of Christ"** (v10) — Spurgeon: the same Person.
5. **The teachers read the judgment seat differently** — Guzik the believers' bema; Spurgeon a universal judgment — but both say it ends our judging now.
6. **"Judge this rather"** (v13) — turn the verdict on your own path.

7. **To act against conscience is neither right nor safe** (Luther, in Sproul).
8. **The kingdom has three marks** — righteousness toward God, peace toward brethren, joy within (Henry).
9. **Love may set down what liberty may pick up** — Spurgeon on the cliff edge.
10. **Doubt is a stop sign** (v23).

Cross-references: Rom 13:13–14; 15:1–7 · 1 Cor 8:9–13; 10:23–33; 6:12 · Gal 2:3–5; 5:13, 19–21 · Col 2:16–17 · 2 Cor 5:10 · Eph 5:18 · Isa 45:23; Phil 2:10–11 · Mark 7:19; Acts 10:14

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 14:13

"Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this— not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way."

FIGURE · WHERE ROMANS 14 APPLIES

DISPUTABLE MATTERS Romans 14 applies — "opinions" (v. 1)	WHAT GOD HAS NAMED SIN Romans 14 does not apply — obey
• Meat from the idol market, or vegetables only (v. 2) • Keeping one day above another (v. 5) • Wine for a man who is free to drink it and stay sober (v. 21) • Today: diet, holidays, music styles, entertainment the Bible doesn't name	• Drunkenness — "do not get drunk with wine" (Eph 5:18; Rom 13:13) • Sexual immorality, idolatry, strife, envying (Gal 5:19–21) • Anything God's Word plainly forbids • Conscience is never "an excuse for obviously sinful behavior" (Guzik)

FOR THE MAN IN RECOVERY

The first drink is not a "liberty" question for him — "I will not be mastered by anything" (1 Cor 6:12).

The strong brother at his table puts the glass down: "It is good not to … drink wine" (v. 21).

And the sober man doesn't judge the brother who can drink: "God has accepted him" (v. 3).

Romans 14 governs the left column only; the right column was settled before the chapter began (13:13). Wine sits on the left for a man free to drink it — not for a man it has mastered.

Command to obey — "Accept the one who is weak in faith" (v1). I want to name the brothers I hold at arm's length over things the Bible leaves open — how they keep the Lord's day, what they eat, what music they play, whether they'll take a glass of wine at dinner. I'm told to receive them, not to cross-examine them.

Sin to confess — I have done both of verse 3. When I feel strong I roll my eyes at the stricter brother; when I feel strict I sit in judgment on the freer one. And sometimes I've dressed up a plain sin as "my liberty." Romans 14 doesn't cover that. Conscience is never an excuse for what God has named.

A word for the men I walk with in recovery — I won't treat the first drink as a "disputable matter" for a man whose life it has already mastered. "I will not be mastered by anything" (1 Cor 6:12). If I'm the strong brother at that table, verse 21 tells me what love does: the glass stays down, and I don't make a speech about it. And if I'm the sober man, verse 3 tells me not to set myself up as judge over the brother who can drink without sin. God has accepted him too. We'll both stand before the same seat.

Promise to trust — "He will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand" (v4). I don't have to hold my brother up by my rules, and I don't have to hold myself up by my record. Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's (v8).

Example to follow — Christ "died and lived again" (v9) — and He died for the brother I'm tempted to despise (v15). If He gave His life for that man, I can give up my steak dinner. Spurgeon would not stand on the cliff edge with his sons beside him; I can choose the safe ground for the sake of the men following me.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Which comes more naturally to you — despising the brother who is stricter than you, or judging the brother who is freer than you? Where did you last do it? *(14:3; 14:10)*
2. What is one matter you have treated as clear sin that Scripture actually leaves open — and one you have treated as "liberty" that Scripture actually names as sin? *(14:1; 13:13)*
3. "Each one of us will give an account of himself to God." How would it change your next conversation about a brother if you believed that literally? *(14:10–12)*
4. Is there something you are free to do that you should quietly stop doing because of a particular brother at your table? *(14:15; 14:21)*
5. For a man in recovery, is the first drink a "disputable matter"? What does verse 21 ask of the strong brother beside him — and what does verse 3 ask of the recovering man toward the brother who drinks? *(14:3; 14:21; 1 Cor 6:12)*
6. Where are you acting while doubting — doing something you have not settled before God? *(14:5; 14:22–23)*

Worship. Every knee will bow to Him, and every tongue will give praise to God (v11). I'd rather bow now, gladly, than argue with my brother now and bow later ashamed. The kingdom I belong to is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit — not a menu.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, You died and rose to be Lord of the living and the dead, and You are my Lord. Forgive me for despising the brothers who are stricter than me and judging the brothers who are freer. Teach me where Your Word is plain and where You have left me free, and give me the love to lay my freedom down for any man who could fall. Guard the men in recovery around me, and make me a safe place for them. Let nothing I do be done in doubt; let all of it be done for You, with thanks. Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 15

The God of Hope and the Road to Spain — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Christ did not please Himself, so the strong carry the weak and the church receives one another until Jew and Gentile praise God with one voice. The same Christ sends His gospel to the edge of the map, and the God of perseverance, hope and peace goes with those who carry it.

00 The Text

ROMANS 15 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.

2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.

3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME."

4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,

6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

8 For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers,

9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, "THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES, AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME."

10 Again he says, "REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE."

11 And again, "PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES, AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM."

12 Again Isaiah says, "THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE, AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES, IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE."

13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

14 And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.

15 But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God,

16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

17 Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God.

18 For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed,

19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

20 And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation;

21 but as it is written, "THEY WHO HAD NO NEWS OF HIM SHALL SEE, AND THEY WHO HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND."

22 For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you;

23 but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you

24 whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while—

25 but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints.

26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

27 Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.

28 Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain.

29 I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

30 Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,

31 that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints;

32 so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.

33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Marked in the text

- **v1** "we who are strong" — Time / place / contrast
- **v1** "bear the weaknesses of those without strength" — Command / instruction
- **v1** "not just please ourselves" — Sin / warning
- **v2** "please his neighbor for his good" — Command / instruction
- **v3** "even Christ did not please Himself" — God — His character & actions
- **v4** "perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures" — Promise / blessing
- **v4** "hope" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v5** "the God who gives perseverance and encouragement" — God — His character & actions
- **v6** "with one voice glorify the God and Father" — Command / instruction
- **v7** "accept one another" — Command / instruction
- **v7** "just as Christ also accepted us" — God — His character & actions
- **v8** "a servant to the circumcision" — God — His character & actions
- **v8** "to confirm the promises given to the fathers" — Promise / blessing
- **v9** "glorify God for His mercy" — God — His character & actions
- **v9** "Gentiles" — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v12** "THE ROOT OF JESSE" — Promise / blessing
- **v13** "the God of hope" — God — His character & actions
- **v13** "all joy and peace in believing" — Promise / blessing
- **v13** "the power of the Holy Spirit" — God — His character & actions
- **v16** "my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable" — Promise / blessing
- **v18** "what Christ has accomplished through me" — God — His character & actions
- **v19** "from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum" — Time / place / contrast

- **v20** “not where Christ was already named” — Time / place / contrast
- **v24** “whenever I go to Spain” — Time / place / contrast
- **v26** “a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem” — Promise / blessing
- **v27** “they are indebted to them” — Command / instruction
- **v29** “in the fullness of the blessing of Christ” — Promise / blessing
- **v30** “strive together with me in your prayers” — Command / instruction
- **v31** “those who are disobedient in Judea” — Sin / warning
- **v33** “the God of peace” — God — His character & actions

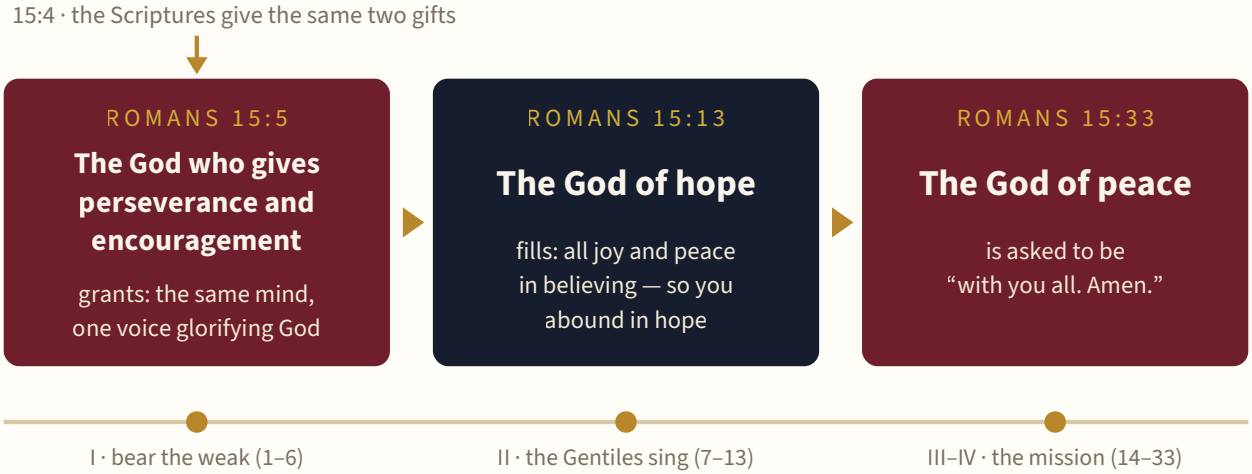
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 15:4

"For whatever was written in earlier times was ☆ written for our instruction, so that through ☆ perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have ⟲ hope."

FIGURE · THREE NAMES FOR GOD IN ONE CHAPTER



Each movement ends in a prayer that names God by what the church needs: perseverance and encouragement for the quarrel at the table, hope for Jew and Gentile together, peace for an apostle walking into danger.

Setting. Paul is finishing the strong-and-weak section that began at 14:1 ("Now accept the one who is weak in faith") and then opening the letter's farewell. He writes from Corinth, near the end of his third journey (Acts 20:2–3), with a collection from Macedonia and Achaia in hand for the poor saints in Jerusalem (vv25–26). He has never been to Rome. He wants to come, and then go on to Spain.

Structure:

- vv1–6 — **the strong bear the weak:** we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves (v1); please your neighbor for his good, to his edification (v2); "even Christ did not please Himself" — Psalm 69:9 (v3); the Scriptures were written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and encouragement we might have hope (v4); prayer to the God who gives perseverance and encouragement for one mind and one voice (vv5–6).
- vv7–13 — **accept one another; the Gentiles sing:** accept one another as Christ accepted us, to the glory of God (v7); Christ became a servant to the circumcision to confirm the promises to the fathers, and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy (vv8–9a); four Old Testament quotations — Psalm 18:49, Deuteronomy 32:43, Psalm 117:1, Isaiah 11:10 (vv9b–12); prayer to the God of hope (v13).

- vv14–21 — **a priest of the gospel:** "I am convinced that you are full of goodness" (v14); I wrote boldly to remind you, because of grace (v15); a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable (v16); I boast only in what Christ has accomplished through me, by word and deed, signs and wonders, the Spirit's power (vv17–19a); from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel (v19b); my aim — not where Christ was already named — Isaiah 52:15 (vv20–21).
- vv22–33 — **the road west:** this is why I have been prevented from coming (v22); now no more room here; on my way to Spain I will see you (vv23–24); but first Jerusalem, with the contribution from Macedonia and Achaia (vv25–27); then by way of you to Spain (vv28–29); strive together with me in prayer — rescue in Judea, acceptance by the saints, a joyful arrival (vv30–32); "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen." (v33).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95): "Gentiles" ×10 — vv9 (twice), 10, 11, 12 (twice), 16 (twice), 18, 27; "Christ" ×12 — vv3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 29, 30; "God" ×12 — vv5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 30, 32, 33; "hope" ×5 — vv4, 12, 13 (twice), 24; "please / pleased" ×5 — vv1, 2, 3, 26, 27; "written" ×6 — vv3, 4 (twice), 9, 15, 21 ("as it is written" ×3 — vv3, 9, 21); "Spirit" ×4 — vv13, 16, 19, 30; "Jerusalem" ×4 — vv19, 25, 26, 31; "accept / accepted / acceptable" ×4 — vv7 (twice), 16, 31; "servant / serving / service / minister" ×6 — vv8, 16 (twice), 25, 27, 31; "saints" ×3 — vv25, 26, 31; "power" ×3 — vv13, 19 (twice); "perseverance" and "encouragement" ×2 each — vv4, 5; "Spain" ×2 — vv24, 28.

Contrasts: pleasing ourselves (v1) ⟷ Christ did not please Himself (v3). The strong ⟷ those without strength (v1). The circumcision (v8) ⟷ the Gentiles (v9). Truth of God for Israel (v8) ⟷ mercy for the Gentiles (v9). Where Christ was already named ⟷ those who had no news of Him (vv20–21). Spiritual things ⟷ material things (v27). The disobedient in Judea ⟷ the saints in Jerusalem (v31). Paul's plan (Jerusalem → Rome → Spain) ⟷ what happened (Jerusalem → arrest → Rome in chains, Acts 21–28).

Shape of the chapter: two movements of teaching that each end in a prayer-wish (vv5–6, v13), then two movements of travel that end in a request for prayer and a benediction (vv30–33). Three names for God mark the stops: the God who gives perseverance and encouragement (v5), the God of hope (v13), the God of peace (v33). The circle widens — one weak brother, one church of Jew and Gentile, one apostle's field from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and finally Spain.

Chapter theme (my words): Because Christ did not please Himself, I carry the weak and receive my brother, and Jew and Gentile praise God together. The same gospel pushes out to people who have never heard, carried by men who need each other's prayers and trust God with the road.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 15:16

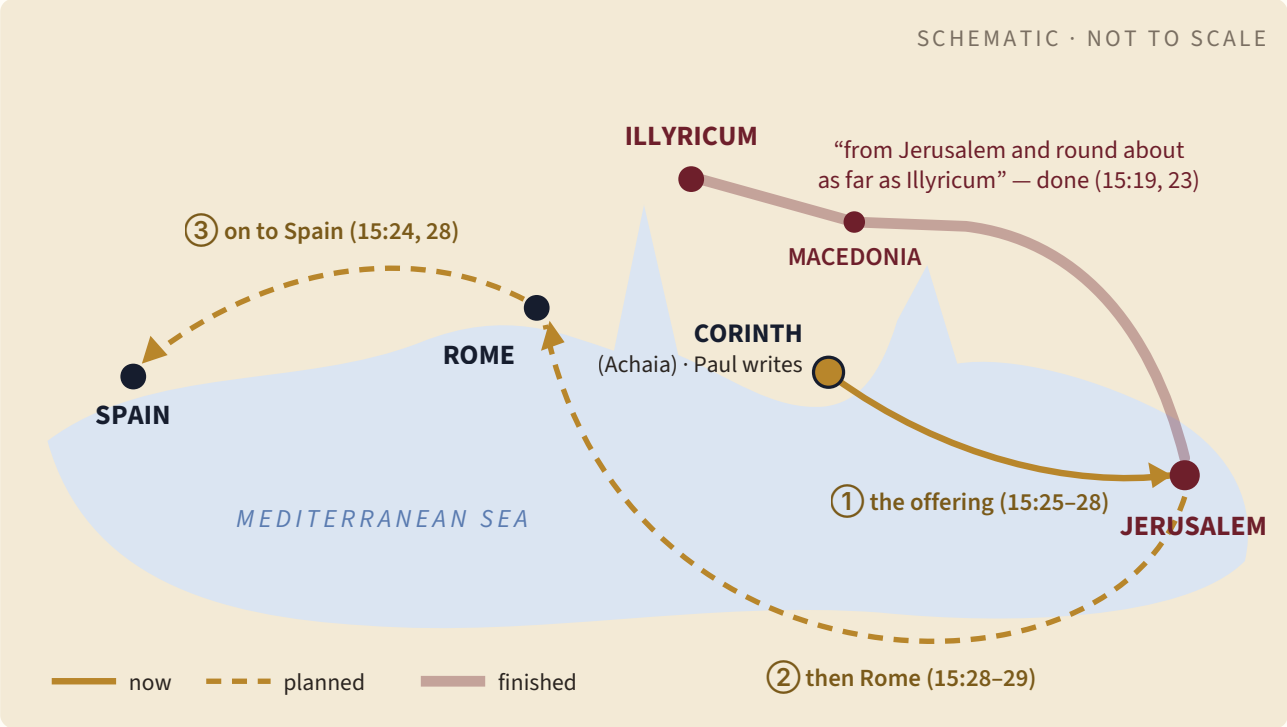
"to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit."

FIGURE · FOUR WITNESSES: THE GENTILES PRAISE GOD (15:9–12)



Paul calls witnesses from every part of the Hebrew Bible — the Writings, the Law, the Writings again, the Prophets — and the chain ends on the word "hope," which verse 13 turns into a prayer.

FIGURE · PAUL'S ROAD WEST — SCHEMATIC MAP (15:19–29)



Read the solid line first: from Corinth Paul goes east to Jerusalem with the offering; only then the dashed road to Rome and Spain. The shaded arc is the work he calls finished. In the event he reached Rome in chains (Acts 21–28).

Who are "the strong" and "the weak"? Paul counts himself among the strong (v1, "we who are strong") — those whose faith lets them eat anything and treat every day alike (14:2, 5); the weak are believers whose conscience still binds them to food laws and holy days. Guzik: the call is not merely to tolerate them but to bear them *up* and help them grow strong — without letting the weakest conscience set the agenda. Sproul sets v2 beside Galatians 1:10: man-pleasing that compromises the gospel is a vice; pleasing a neighbor for his good is a virtue.

Why Psalm 69? Paul proves that Christ did not please Himself by quoting a psalm of the righteous sufferer — "the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me" (Ps 69:9). The first half of that verse, "zeal for Your house has consumed me," is what the disciples remembered when Jesus cleansed the temple (John 2:17). Sproul reads the psalm as messianic: the insults aimed at God landed on Christ. Henry: "The self-denial of our Lord Jesus is the best argument against the selfishness of Christians."

Why the Old Testament still matters (v4). "Whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction." Spurgeon: "The Old Testament is not outworn; apostles learned from it." The same two gifts — perseverance and encouragement — come "of the Scriptures" (v4) and from God (v5). Henry's picture: the Scripture is the conduit-pipe, God is the fountain-head.

Christ the servant of the circumcision (vv8–9). Christ came first as a servant (*diakonos*) to Israel, to prove God true and confirm the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the second purpose was that the Gentiles would glorify God for mercy. Sproul: the Gentiles' salvation does not cancel God's word to Israel but confirms it. Spurgeon: "Let us never forget that he came to those whom we are apt to forget." Henry: by sending Jewish believers to their own Scriptures, Paul "labours to qualify their dislike of the Gentiles."

The four witnesses (vv9–12). Paul quotes the Writings (Ps 18:49 = 2 Sam 22:50; Ps 117:1), the Law (Deut 32:43) and the Prophets (Isa 11:10). The progression: Messiah praises God among the nations; the nations rejoice with Israel; all the peoples praise; the nations hope in the Root of Jesse. Isaiah 11:10 is quoted from the Greek Old Testament ("in Him the nations will hope"; the Hebrew says the nations "will resort to" Him). The last word is hope, and v13 prays to "the God of hope."

"Ministering as a priest" (v16). Paul uses temple words — *leitourgos*, *hierourgeō*, *prosphora* — but the altar is the gospel and the offering is the converted Gentiles, sanctified by the Spirit. Sproul and Spurgeon both stress what Paul does not say: the New Testament never makes a minister a sacrificing priest, because Christ's sacrifice is finished. Henry: "now the Gentiles are made priests unto God."

Illyricum and "fully preached" (v19). Illyricum was the Roman province on the east shore of the Adriatic (roughly modern Albania to Croatia). Acts never records Paul there; he may have reached its edge while in Macedonia (Acts 20:1–2). "Fully preached" means the gospel is planted across that arc, not that every person has heard. (Guzik: "Illyricum is modern Yugoslavia and Albania.")

Did Paul reach Spain? — the teachers differ. Guzik: "we have reason to believe that Paul did in fact make it to Spain." Sproul: "Whether Paul ever got to Spain, we do not know." Henry: it is not certain, and "many of the best expositors think he did not." A late-first-century letter from Rome (1 Clement 5) says Paul reached the farthest limits of the west — tradition, not Scripture. What Scripture does say: he reached Rome, in chains, and preached there "unhindered" for two years (Acts 28:30–31).

The collection (vv25–28). The gift is called *koinōnia*, fellowship. The Gentiles owe it because they shared Israel's spiritual blessings — Sproul: they knew they were "the wild olive branch that was grafted into the root of Israel" (11:17–18). Paul delivered it (Acts 24:17, "to bring alms to my nation").

Were Paul's prayers answered (vv30–32)? He asked three things: rescue from the disobedient in Judea, acceptance of his service by the saints, and a joyful arrival in Rome. Acts 21–28: the brethren in Jerusalem received him gladly (21:17), he was rescued from a mob and a murder plot (21:30–32; 23:12–24), and he reached Rome — as a prisoner. Spurgeon: the first two were granted and the third came differently; "pray for a blessing, and leave the way of its coming to the good Lord who knoweth all things." Guzik: "answered, though not in the manner they expected."

Word study (Greek):

- **bear — *bastazō* (G941):** to lift and carry a load; the verb of carrying the cross (John 19:17) and of Galatians 6:2.
- **please — *areskō* (G700):** to please, to seek another's approval or good; "Christ did not please Himself" (v3).
- **edification — *oikodomē* (G3619):** building up, the work of a builder.
- **perseverance — *hypomonē* (G5281):** endurance under a load; vv4, 5.
- **encouragement — *paraklēsis* (G3874):** strengthening by one called alongside; vv4, 5.
- **with one accord — *homothymadon* (G3661):** with one passion; ten times in Acts, here only outside it.
- **accept — *proslambanō* (G4355):** to take to oneself, welcome into home and friendship; 14:1, 3; 15:7 twice.
- **servant — *diakonos* (G1249):** table-servant; Christ the servant of the circumcision (v8).
- **confirm — *bebaioō* (G950):** to make firm, ratify (v8).
- **root — *rhiza* (G4491):** the Root of Jesse, Messiah from David's line (v12; Rev 5:5; 22:16).
- **hope — *elpis* / *elpizō* (G1680 / G1679):** confident expectation; the last word of v12, the theme of v13.
- **minister — *leitourgos* (G3011):** a public servant in sacred service (v16; 13:6; Heb 8:2).

- **ministering as a priest — *hierourgeō* (G2418):** to perform sacred rites; only here in the NT.
- **offering — *prosphora* (G4376):** what is brought to the altar; here the Gentiles themselves.
- **fully preached — *plēroō* (G4137):** to fill, fulfill — "fulfilled the gospel."
- **Illyricum — *Illyrikon* (G2437):** the Adriatic province; named only here.
- **aspired — *philotimeomai* (G5389):** to love honor, make it one's ambition (Rom 15:20; 2 Cor 5:9; 1 Thess 4:11).
- **contribution — *koinōnia* (G2842):** fellowship, partnership, sharing.
- **minister (in material things) — *leitourgeō* (G3008):** the verb of sacred service, used of the Gentiles' gift (v27).
- **put my seal — *sphragizō* (G4972):** to seal, authenticate; Paul certifies the gift (v28).
- **strive together — *synagōnizomai* (G4865):** to contend alongside; only here; root of "agony."

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The strong carry, not just tolerate.** *Bastazō* is a shoulder word — the cross, the burden, the weak brother.
2. **"Even Christ did not please Himself."** A quarrel about food is answered with Psalm 69 and the cross.
3. **Two gifts, two sources.** Perseverance and encouragement come from the Scriptures (v4) and from God (v5) — the pipe and the fountain.
4. **A mob's word made holy.** *Homothymadon* describes the praying church and the mobs of Acts; Paul asks for one accord in worship.
5. **Receiving a brother is worship.** Sproul: "When I receive you, I am not just being kind to you. … I am glorifying God."
6. **The whole Old Testament votes.** Law, Prophets and Writings call the Gentiles to praise, and the chain ends on "hope."
7. **Peace is joy resting.** Spurgeon: "Peace is joy resting, and joy is peace dancing."
8. **A priest whose altar is the gospel.** The only offering in v16 is people sanctified by the Spirit.
9. **A gift is fellowship you can count.** The collection is *koinōnia*, and the Gentiles' giving is *leitourgeō* — sacred service.
10. **The prayer was answered by another road.** Paul came to Rome in joy — and in chains.

Cross-references: Ps 18:49; 69:9; 117:1; 2 Sam 22:50; Deut 32:43; Isa 11:1, 10; 49:6; 52:15; John 2:17; 14:16; 19:17; Acts 19:21; 20:1–3; 21:17–36; 23:12–24; 24:17; 28:30–31; Rom 1:10–16; 11:17–18; 12:1; 14:1–23; 16:1, 20, 23; 1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 5:9; 8:9, 20–21; 9:12–13; Gal 2:10; 6:2; Phil 2:5–7; Heb 8:2.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 15:7

"Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God."

Command to obey — "Bear the weaknesses of those without strength." I am not called to put up with the weak brother; I am called to put him on my shoulders. There is a man in our group whose struggle wears me out. This week I will call him, sit with him and carry part of his load instead of waiting for him to get stronger first. Strength that only serves itself is not Christian strength.

Sin to confess — pleasing myself. "Even Christ did not please Himself." I confess how much of my day is arranged around my comfort, my preferences, my way of doing things — even in ministry. Christ took the reproaches meant for God. I can take an inconvenience meant for my brother.

Command to obey — "Accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us." Christ did not receive me because I was perfect. He received me as a stranger, an enemy, a prodigal. So I cannot set a higher bar for the men I disciple — the man fresh out of prison, the man on his third try at sobriety, the brother whose politics or past make me uneasy — than Christ set for me.

Promise to trust — "the God of hope." The quotations end on hope and the prayer starts there: God fills with joy and peace "in believing," and I abound in hope "by the power of the Holy Spirit." Not by working, not by feeling. For the men I serve, hope is often the first thing addiction and prison take away. This verse says God gives it back, and that He gives it in overflowing measure.

Example to follow — Paul's ambition and Paul's prayer request. Paul had a holy ambition to go where Christ was not named, and he was humble enough to ask strangers to wrestle in prayer for him. I want both: a heart for the man who has never really heard, and the humility to say to my brothers, "Pray for me — I'm walking into something hard."

Trust to practice — leave the road to God. Paul asked to come to Rome in joy. He came in chains — and preached there unhindered for two years. God answered, by a road Paul would not have picked. I am praying about things in my own life right now; I will pray specifically, like Paul, and leave the way of the answer to God.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Who is the "weak" brother in your life right now — the man whose conscience, habits or struggles make him hard to carry? What would it look like this week to bear him up rather than just put up with him? (15:1–2; Gal 6:2) *Bastazō is a shoulder word: Christ carried the cross, and we carry each other's loads.*
2. Paul answers a quarrel over food with the cross: "even Christ did not please Himself." Where are you insisting on your own liberty, preference or comfort in a way Christ never would? (15:3; Ps 69:9; Phil 2:5–7) *Henry: His whole life was a self-denying, self-displeasing life.*

3. Verse 4 says the Old Testament was written for our instruction so that we might have hope. What Old Testament passage has given you perseverance or encouragement in a hard season? (15:4–5) *The Scriptures are the conduit-pipe; God is the fountain-head.*
4. "Accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us." How did Christ accept you — and what does that standard say about the brother you are slow to accept? (15:7; 14:1) *Christ did not receive us because we were perfect.*
5. Paul made his ambition to preach where Christ was not named. Who around you — at work, on your street, on the yard, in your family — has never really heard? (15:20–21; Isa 52:15) *Philotimeomai: a holy love of honor, aimed at the unreached.*
6. Paul asked a church he had never met to "strive together" with him in prayer, and God answered by a road he would not have chosen. What are you praying for that you need to leave "the way of its coming" to God? (15:30–32; Acts 28:30–31) *Spurgeon: pray for a blessing, and leave the way of its coming to the good Lord.*

Worship. Four voices from the Law, the Prophets and the Writings, and one song: the nations praise the God of Israel for His mercy. I was one of those Gentiles with "no news of Him." Someone carried the gospel west until it reached me. Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles — and let all the peoples praise Him.

Prayer. God who gives perseverance and encouragement — give me strong shoulders and a soft heart for the weak. Lord Jesus, You did not please Yourself; take the selfishness out of my strength. God of hope, fill me and the men I walk with with all joy and peace in believing, until we overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Give me Paul's ambition for those who have never heard, and his humility to ask for prayer. And God of peace, be with us all. Amen.

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SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 16

The Names, the Warning, and the Glory — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Paul ends his greatest letter with a list of names, a warning, and a doxology, because the gospel he has explained is lived out by real people in real houses. God gives His church a courier, a family, a warning against smooth talkers, a promise that Satan will be crushed under its feet — and all the glory goes to Him.

00 The Text

ROMANS 16 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea;

2 that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

4 who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;

5 also greet the church that is in their house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.

6 Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.

7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.

9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

10 Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.

11 Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those of the household of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.

12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.

13 Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine.

14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them.

15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the

teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

21 Timothy my fellow worker greets you, and so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

22 I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.

23 Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.

24 [The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.]

25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,

26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith;

27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

Marked in the text

- **v1** “servant of the church” — Promise / blessing
- **v1** “Cenchrea” — Time / place / contrast
- **v2** “receive her in the Lord” — Command / instruction
- **v2** “a helper of many” — Promise / blessing
- **v4** “risked their own necks” — Promise / blessing
- **v5** “the church that is in their house” — Time / place / contrast
- **v5** “first convert to Christ from Asia” — Time / place / contrast
- **v7** “my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners” — Time / place / contrast
- **v7** “outstanding among the apostles” — Promise / blessing
- **v13** “a choice man in the Lord” — Promise / blessing
- **v16** “Greet one another with a holy kiss” — Command / instruction
- **v17** “keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances” — Sin / warning
- **v17** “turn away from them” — Command / instruction
- **v18** “their own appetites” — Sin / warning
- **v18** “smooth and flattering speech” — Sin / warning
- **v19** “wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil” — Command / instruction
- **v20** “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet” — God — His character & actions
- **v22** “who write this letter” — Time / place / contrast
- **v23** “host to me and to the whole church” — Promise / blessing
- **v23** “the city treasurer” — Time / place / contrast
- **v25** “Him who is able to establish you” — God — His character & actions
- **v25** “my gospel” — Promise / blessing
- **v25** “the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past” — Time / place / contrast
- **v26** “but now is manifested” — Time / place / contrast
- **v26** “obedience of faith” — Command / instruction
- **v26** “all the nations” — Time / place / contrast
- **v27** “the only wise God” — God — His character & actions
- **v6** “Greet” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v8** “in the Lord” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v6** “worked hard” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v20** “grace of our Lord Jesus” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 16:3–4

"Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;"

FIGURE · WHO'S WHO IN ROME (16:3–15)

Prisca & Aquila vv. 3–5
fellow workers · risked their necks · house church

Epaenetus v. 5
first convert, Asia

Mary v. 6
worked hard for you

Andronicus & Junias* v. 7
kinsmen · fellow prisoners · in Christ before me

Ampliatus v. 8
beloved in the Lord

Urbanus v. 9
fellow worker

Stachys v. 9
my beloved

Apelles v. 10
approved in Christ

Herodion v. 11
my kinsman

Tryphaena v. 12
worker in the Lord

Tryphosa v. 12
worker in the Lord

Persis v. 12
worked hard in the Lord

Rufus v. 13
a choice man

his mother v. 13
"and mine"

Household of Aristobulus v. 10
the house is greeted, not the man

Household of Narcissus v. 11
"those … who are in the Lord"

A GATHERED CIRCLE · V. 14
Asyncritus · Phlegon · Hermes
Patrobas · Hermas
+ "the brethren with them"

A GATHERED CIRCLE · V. 15
Philologus · Julia · Nereus
his sister · Olympas
+ "all the saints who are with them"

woman · man · couple / pair · household · * NASB95 "Junias"; KJV "Junia" — see 16:7

24 named + 2 unnamed women = 26 greeted · 2 households · 3 house circles · plus Phoebe

Every chip is a real person in the order Paul greets them; notice how many are women, how many "worked hard," and that the church met in houses and circles, not a building.

Setting. Paul is writing from Corinth (Gaius is his host, v. 23; Erastus is the city treasurer), probably during his three months in Greece before taking the Gentile churches' gift to Jerusalem (15:25). Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchrea — Corinth's eastern port — is carrying the letter to Rome (vv. 1–2). Paul has never been to Rome (1:13; 15:22), but he knows two dozen believers there by name.

Structure:

- vv1–2 — **the courier commended:** Phoebe, "our sister," "a servant of the church," "a helper of many, and of myself as well." Receive her in the Lord; help her in whatever she needs.
- vv3–16 — **the roll call in Rome:** seventeen "Greet" commands. Prisca and Aquila and the church in their house; Epaenetus; Mary; Andronicus and Junias; Ampliatus, Urbanus, Stachys, Apelles; the household of Aristobulus; Herodion; the household of Narcissus; Tryphaena and Tryphosa; Persis; Rufus and his mother; two circles of five (vv. 14, 15). "Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you" (v. 16).
- vv17–20 — **the last warning:** keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching you learned, and turn away from them (v. 17). They serve their own appetites and deceive the unsuspecting with smooth and flattering speech (v. 18). Your obedience is known everywhere — be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil (v. 19). The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet; grace be with you (v. 20).
- vv21–24 — **greetings from Corinth:** Timothy, Lucius, Jason, Sosipater (v. 21); Tertius, who wrote the letter (v. 22); Gaius, Erastus, Quartus (v. 23). Verse 24 stands in brackets in the NASB95 (see Interpretation).
- vv25–27 — **the doxology:** to Him who is able to establish you according to Paul's gospel, the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages, now manifested and made known by the Scriptures of the prophets to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith — to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

The people, counted (vv3–15). Twenty-four people greeted by name, plus two unnamed women (Rufus's mother, Nereus's sister) — twenty-six people. Two households are greeted without their heads (Aristobulus, Narcissus). Five groups in all: the church in Prisca and Aquila's house, the two households, and the two circles "with them" (vv. 14–15). Women greeted: Prisca, Mary, Junia (if feminine), Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus's mother, Julia, Nereus's sister — with Phoebe, ten women in the chapter. "Kinsmen" (fellow Jews): Andronicus, Junias, Herodion (vv. 7, 11), and Lucius, Jason, Sosipater (v. 21). Eight send greetings from Corinth (vv. 21–23).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- "greet" — **22** times (vv. 3, 5 ×2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 ×2, 11 ×2, 12 ×2, 13, 14, 15, 16 ×2, 21, 22, 23 ×2): 17 commands in vv. 3–16, then 5 greetings sent.
- "in the Lord" — **7** (vv. 2, 8, 11, 12 ×2, 13, 22); "in Christ" — **4** (vv. 3, 7, 9, 10). Eleven times Paul locates a person by their union with Christ.
- "work" words ("workers," "worked hard," "worker") — **6** (vv. 3, 6, 9, 12 ×2, 21); "worked hard" ×2 (vv. 6, 12).
- "beloved" — **4** (vv. 5, 8, 9, 12); "fellow" — **4** (fellow workers v. 3, fellow prisoners v. 7, fellow worker vv. 9, 21); "kinsman/kinsmen" — **3** (vv. 7, 11, 21).
- "church/churches" — **5** (vv. 1, 4, 5, 16, 23); "grace" — **2** (vv. 20, 24); "obedience" — **2** (vv. 19, 26); "wise" — **2** (vv. 19, 27); "Amen" — **2** (vv. 24, 27).

Contrasts: "slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites" (v. 18) ⟷ "fellow workers in Christ Jesus" (v. 3). Smooth and flattering speech (v. 18) ⟷ "the preaching of Jesus Christ" (v. 25). Wise in good ⟷ innocent in evil (v. 19). The God of *peace* (v. 20) ⟷ *crush* Satan — peace comes by victory. Kept secret for long ages ⟷ "but now is manifested" (vv. 25–26). Clever talkers (v. 18) ⟷ "the only wise God" (v. 27).

Shape of the chapter: a commendation (1–2), a roll call (3–16), a warning with a promise (17–20), a signature page from Corinth (21–24), a doxology (25–27). The doxology repeats the letter's opening: gospel, prophets, Jesus Christ, obedience of faith, all the nations (1:1–5 ⟷ 16:25–27).

Chapter theme (my words): The gospel of Romans is lived by people with names — servants, couples, households, prisoners, scribes and hosts. Guard that family from smooth-talking dividers, stand on the crushed serpent, and give the glory to the only wise God through Jesus Christ.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 16:25–26

"Now to △ Him who is able to establish you according to ☆ my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of ◷ the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to ▤ obedience of faith;"

FIGURE · THE DOXOLOGY CLOSES THE DOOR THE LETTER OPENED

ROMANS 1:1–5 · THE DOOR		ROMANS 16:25–27 · THE CLOSE
"set apart for the gospel of God" 1:1	GOSPEL	"according to my gospel" 16:25
"promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures" · 1:2	PROPHETS	"by the Scriptures of the prophets" 16:26
"concerning His Son … Jesus Christ our Lord" · 1:3–4	JESUS CHRIST	"the preaching of Jesus Christ … through Jesus Christ" · 16:25, 27
"to bring about the obedience of faith" · 1:5	OBEDIENCE OF FAITH	"leading to obedience of faith" 16:26
"among all the Gentiles" 1:5	ALL THE NATIONS	"made known to all the nations" 16:26

"Gentiles" (1:5) and "nations" (16:26) are one Greek word, ethnē — the letter ends where it began.

Read across each row: the five themes of Paul's first five verses return in his last three, so the whole letter sits between two statements of the same gospel.

Why end Romans with a list of names? Guzik, quoting Morris: Romans "was a letter to real people and, as far as we can see, ordinary people; it was not written to professional theologians." Thirteen of the twenty-four names also turn up in inscriptions connected with the emperor's household in Rome (Guzik) — slaves and freedmen among them. Spurgeon reads the list as a roll of honor graded by service, not rank. The list is also the proof of chapters 14–15: Jew and Gentile, slave and free, men and women, greeting one another as family.

Phoebe — servant or deacon? *Diakonos* (v. 1) is both the ordinary word "servant" and the word for the office of deacon. Guzik: "a female deacon in the church, either by formal recognition or through her general service." Sproul: the term itself carries no built-in description of church office, yet "The Greek indicates one who holds a more specific office of important assistance to the Apostolic ministry." Henry: "a servant by office, a stated servant," serving in charity and hospitality rather than preaching. The teachers agree she was recognized and trusted; they differ on how formal that was. Her other title, *prostatis* (v. 2), is a patron — someone who stood before others to protect and provide — and Paul asks Rome to stand beside her as she stood beside him.

Andronicus and Junias (v. 7). Three questions. *Man or woman?* The Greek accusative *Iounian* is feminine (Junia) with one accent and masculine (Junias) with another; the Textus Receptus, Tischendorf, Westcott-Hort, Nestle (1904), the Byzantine text and the SBLGNT print the feminine accent, though a number of twentieth-century critical editions printed the masculine. NASB95 reads "Junias," KJV "Junia." Sproul: "Junia could be a man or a woman, depending on how you render the Greek there." *Among the apostles, or known to them?* "Outstanding among the apostles" can mean counted among the wider circle of sent missionaries, or well known to the apostles. Guzik allows the first but adds, "If there ever were women recognized as apostles … this is the strongest Scriptural evidence. It isn't very strong." Sproul holds that no woman held the office of Apostle. *What is certain:* they were Jews, fellow prisoners with Paul, and in Christ before him.

The house churches. "The church that is in their house" (v. 5; 1 Cor 16:19). Sproul: "there were no other places to meet." Guzik: "Each house church probably had its own 'pastor.'" Henry: "a church in a house is no such absurd thing as some make it to be." Rome's church was a network of homes and circles — at least five in this chapter.

Households with an empty chair. The households of Aristobulus and Narcissus are greeted; the men are not. Spurgeon: "Where are you, Aristobulus?" — a believing household with an unbelieving head. Henry: "some good servants … even in the family of a wicked man." Grace reached the servants' quarters first.

Rufus — choice, or chosen? *Eklektos* (v. 13) means both. NASB95 "a choice man," KJV "chosen." Spurgeon: the verse cannot be about his election, "since all the rest were chosen too." Henry holds both: "a choice Christian, whose gifts and graces evinced that he was eternally chosen." Mark 15:21 names Simon of Cyrene as "the father of Alexander and Rufus"; Sproul reads that as Mark honoring members known to the church; Guzik: possible, but "Rufus was a common name."

The holy kiss (v. 16). Sproul: "it is a custom, not a principle" — the command is the warmth of family greeting, holy and sincere (Henry: chaste, not Judas's). For us it may be a handshake or an embrace; it must not be cold.

The dividers (vv. 17–18). Not those who teach doctrine — Sproul: "Paul does not say to avoid doctrine." They are those who cause dissensions and stumbling blocks "contrary to the teaching which you learned." They serve their own *koilia*, belly — appetite rules them — and they work by *chrēstologia* and *eulogia*, plausible kindness and flattering blessing, on the *akakoi*, the guileless. Two commands: watch them (*skopein*), and turn away (*ekklinete*). Spurgeon: false doctrine tolerated "knowingly and wittingly" spreads like plague in a bale of goods.

Wise in good, innocent in evil (v. 19). *Akeraios*, "unmixed." Sproul: "Do not be pros in wickedness; be amateurs in your sin." Guzik: "It is of far more use to know the good than it is to know the evil." The cure for counterfeit is knowing the genuine.

Crushing Satan (v. 20). Genesis 3:15 in Paul's mouth (Henry: "plainly alluding to the first promise"). God does the crushing; the church does the standing (Guzik). "Soon" — Sproul offers AD 70 as one possibility and leaves it open; Henry and Guzik look to the speedy, certain end of a conquered enemy (Rev 20:1–3). Spurgeon: Satan is tethered — "Dread not the foe, but bless God for the chain."

Verse 24 — the textual issue, honestly. The NASB95 sets v. 24 in brackets: "[The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.]" It repeats v. 20's blessing with "all" added. It is wanting in the oldest manuscripts and is omitted by the critical editors (Ellicott; Expositor's Greek Testament); the Byzantine text and the Textus Receptus include it, and so the KJV. The manuscripts also move the doxology (vv. 25–27): many later copies put it after 14:23 (Vincent; Expositor's Greek Testament). No doctrine is at stake — the same blessing stands in v. 20 in every text. Spurgeon preached a whole sermon on the KJV's v. 24 ("The Pastor's Parting Blessing"); Henry hears in the repeated blessing a Paul "loth to part."

The doxology (vv. 25–27). It reopens the letter's front door: gospel (1:1 / 16:25), prophets (1:2 / 16:26), Jesus Christ (1:3–4 / 16:25, 27), obedience of faith (1:5 / 16:26), all the nations (1:5 / 16:26). God is "able to establish you" (*stērixai* — the same verb as 1:11). The "mystery" (Guzik: "the whole plan of redemption through Jesus Christ") was kept in silence for ages and is now manifested. Sproul ties being established to justification by faith alone: "Without imputation there is no justification, and without justification by faith alone there is no gospel." Henry: "The obedience of faith is that obedience which is paid to the word of faith." The last word is God's wisdom — and the last word after that is *Amen*, from *emeth*, truth (Sproul).

Word study (Greek):

- **servant — *diakonos* (G1249):** servant, minister; also the church office of deacon.
- **helper — *prostatis* (G4368):** patron, protector; only here in the New Testament.
- **fellow workers — *synergos* (G4904):** co-laborer (vv. 3, 9, 21).
- **first convert — *aparchē* (G536):** firstfruits; "of Asia" in the critical text, "of Achaia" in the TR/KJV.
- **Junias / Junia — *Iounian* (G2458):** accent decides masculine or feminine.
- **kinsmen — *syngenēs* (G4773):** relatives; here fellow Jews.
- **fellow prisoners — *synaichmalōtos* (G4869):** fellow captives.
- **outstanding — *episēmos* (G1978):** marked, notable.
- **approved — *dokimos* (G1384):** tested and proven.
- **choice / chosen — *eklektos* (G1588):** elect; choice, excellent.
- **kiss — *philēma* (G5370):** the family greeting.
- **dissensions — *dichostasia* (G1370):** standing apart, divisions.
- **hindrances — *skandalon* (G4625):** stumbling blocks, traps.
- **appetites — *koilia* (G2836):** belly.
- **smooth speech — *chrēstologia* (G5542)** and **flattering speech — *eulogia* (G2129):** plausible talk and fine words.
- **unsuspecting — *akakos* (G172):** guileless, "un-evil."
- **innocent — *akeraios* (G185):** unmixed, pure.
- **crush — *syntribō* (G4937):** shatter; **soon — *tachos* (G5034):** quickly.
- **host — *xenos* (G3581):** stranger; host of strangers.
- **treasurer — *oikonomos* (G3623):** steward, civic manager.
- **establish — *stērizō* (G4741):** make firm.
- **mystery — *mystērion* (G3466); kept secret — *sigaō* (G4601):** kept in silence.
- **obedience — *hypakoē* (G5218)** of **faith — *pistis* (G4102):** only here and 1:5.
- **only — *monos* (G3441); wise — *sophos* (G4680).**

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The theology has faces** — twenty-six greeted, eight sending, one courier.
2. **Phoebe carried Romans** — the letter reached Rome in a servant's hands.
3. **A helper is helped** — *prostatis* and *parastēte*: stand beside the one who stood before many.
4. **Honor is measured by service** (Spurgeon) — note how many "worked hard."
5. **The church met in houses** — at least five circles in Rome.
6. **One accent, one debate** — Junia or Junias; the teachers weigh it differently.
7. **The households were mixed** — Aristobulus's house greeted, the man not.
8. **The dividers sound kind** — smooth words aimed at the guileless; be amateurs in evil.
9. **Genesis 3:15 comes to Rome** — God crushes; the church stands.
10. **The letter ends where it began** — 1:1–5 and 16:25–27 are bookends.

Cross-references: Gen 3:15; Matt 10:16; Mark 15:21; Luke 7:45; Acts 18:2, 18–26; 19:22; 20:4; 1 Cor 1:14; 16:19–21; 2 Cor 13:12; Eph 3:5–6; Col 4:18; 1 Thess 5:26; 2 Tim 4:19–20; Rom 1:1–5, 11; 11:25, 33; 15:24–33; Rev 20:1–3.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 16:19

"For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil."

Command to obey — "Receive her in the Lord … help her." Phoebe needed a welcome in a strange city, and Paul put his own name on the line for her. This week I want to be the man who receives the newcomer — the guy just out, the man fresh from treatment, the visitor nobody knows — and asks, "What do you need?" Then actually helps.

Command to obey — "Greet." Seventeen times. Paul knew people by name and said what they meant to him: "my beloved," "my fellow worker," "who risked their own necks for my life." I'll write my own Romans 16 — five names — and send at least two of them a message telling them plainly what God has done through them in my life.

Sin to confess — listening to smooth talk. "By their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting" (v. 18). I know that voice. It sounds kind; it serves its own appetite. Sometimes it is a person; sometimes it is the voice in my own head explaining why one more time won't hurt. I confess where I have given it a hearing, and I will do the two things Paul says: keep my eye on it, and turn away from it.

Sin to confess — knowing too much about evil. Paul wants me "innocent in what is evil." I don't need to be an expert in the thing that nearly destroyed me. Sproul's line is mine now: be an amateur in sin. I'll fill my mind with the genuine — the Word, worship, good men — instead of studying the counterfeit.

Promise to trust — "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." Not my fist — His. Not someday maybe — soon, and certain. The serpent was bruised on the head at the cross (Gen 3:15); I stand on a conquered enemy. When temptation comes, I will remember he is on a chain, and I will plant my feet.

Example to follow — the households. Aristobulus's household is greeted, but Aristobulus is not. Somewhere in Rome there were servants praying for a master who did not know Christ. I have family like that. I will pray for them by name, and I will live so that the gospel in my house is visible — "Brother, let not your sister go to heaven alone."

Example to follow — the ones who "worked hard." Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis. Their names are in Scripture because they labored, not because they were famous. The work nobody sees at our meetings — setting up chairs, driving a brother to court, sitting up with a man at 2 a.m. — is written down in heaven.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Phoebe was "a helper of many." Who has been a Phoebe to you — and whom are you standing beside this month? (16:1–2; Gal 6:10) *Paul asks the Romans to help the helper; service received becomes service owed.*
2. Paul knew two dozen people by name in a city he had never visited. Whose name would you put in your own Romans 16, and have you told them what they mean to you? (16:3–16) *Greeting someone by name is a spiritual act — seventeen times in fourteen verses.*

3. Aristobulus's household is greeted, but Aristobulus is not. Who in your family is still outside, and how are you praying for them? (16:10–11; 1 Pet 3:1) *"Pray unceasingly that your life-companions may be converted to God."*
4. Paul warns against "smooth and flattering speech" that deceives the unsuspecting. What smooth voice — a person, a feed, a habit's excuse — have you been giving a hearing it has not earned? (16:17–18) *Keep your eye on it, then turn away from it: both verbs are commands.*
5. Where do you need to be "innocent in what is evil" — an amateur rather than a pro — instead of an expert in it? (16:19; Matt 10:16) *The defense against counterfeit is to know the genuine: wise in what is good.*
6. "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." What fight are you trying to win with your own hands that God has promised to finish under your feet? (16:20; Gen 3:15) *God does the crushing; you do the standing — on a conquered enemy.*

Worship. Romans began with "the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets" and ends with that same gospel "made known to all the nations." Sixteen chapters of the deepest truth ever written, and it closes not with an argument but with praise: "to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen." I don't have to be clever. He is wise. I just have to say Amen — *it is true* — and mean it.

Prayer. God of peace, thank You for putting names in Your Word — servants and prisoners, mothers and scribes, men who worked hard and were never famous. Write my name among the faithful. Make me a helper of many. Give me eyes to see the smooth talkers and the courage to turn away. Keep me wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil. Crush Satan under my feet soon, as You promised. Establish me in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and let my life lead to the obedience of faith. To You, the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

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