

I. Romans 6 - The Mini Gospel

A. Problem

1. ***What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ²By no means!***

B. Principle -

1. ***How can we who died to sin still live in it?***

C. Power -

1. ***³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.***
2. Newness of life
3. 2 Cor 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation

D. Proof -

1. ***⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For he who has died is freed from sin. ⁸But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. ⁹For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹²Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. ¹³Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness. ¹⁴For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.***
2. Know = biblical knowing
3. Sin does not reign...v 12
4. Sin has no power ?
5. Can we testify? Can we say we know this?
6. 1 Peter 3:15 *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that is in you.*

E. Product

1. ***²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.***
2. I was dead but now I live
3. Eternal life
 - a. Fullness of life

- b. I am more alive to today than yesterday.
- c. He lives and so do I

F. Paradox

1. ***¹⁵What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to any one as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once yielded your members to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now yield your members to righteousness for sanctification. ²⁰When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹But then what return did you get from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. ²²But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life.***
2. To be free we must become “slaves” of righteousness.
3. John 8:34 *Jesus said, “Whoever sins is a slave to sin.”*
4. Catechism 1733 *The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just. The choice to disobey and do evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to “the slavery of sin.”*

II. Romans 7 - Flesh

A. Problems:

1. New Reality? Yes!

a. *¹Do you not know, brethren—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only during his life? ²Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies she is discharged from the law concerning the husband. ³Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress. ⁴Likewise, my brethren, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God. ⁵While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. ⁶But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.*

2. Was the Law bad? No!

a. *⁷What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the law, I should not have known sin. I should not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” ⁸But sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, wrought in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law sin lies dead. ⁹I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died; ¹⁰the very commandment which promised life proved to be death to me. ¹¹For sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and by it killed me. ¹²So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good. ¹³Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.*

3. What Chapter are you on? 8!

a. *¹⁴We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. ¹⁵I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷So then it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me. ¹⁸For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. ¹⁹For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me. ²¹So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies*

close at hand. ²²For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, ²³but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. ²⁴Wretched man that I am!

b. To every shocking claim of Romans 7, Romans 8 provides a rebuttal:

c. **I am carnal, sold into sin?**

(1) 8:2 *the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death*

(2) 8:9 *But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you*

(3) 8:12 We are debtors, not to the flesh...

d. **Nothing good dwells in me?**

(1) 8:9, 11 *the Spirit of God dwells in you*

e. **I am captive to the Law of sin?**

(1) 8:2 *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death.*

4. Is this really my state and my fate? No!

a. *Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.*

III. Romans 7:1-7 Introductory notes.

- A. Paul has been stressing the Christian's freedom from sin and death and also of his freedom from the Law. But note that the freedom wasn't a freedom that gave free reign to the flesh. Rather it was an action of Christ upon the soul that was so total that one could not even think of sinning. Thus the Law was no longer necessary since its demands were subsumed under the love that grace imparts.
- B. Nevertheless, Paul is evidently not entirely satisfied with his position of strongly dismissing the Law. His arguments pose some difficult questions to answer: How could something God-given, good, just and holy fail in its purpose and in the end actually foster sin rather than prevent it? What is the relation of Law to sin? and What is the Christian's relationship to the Law?
- C. Paul attempts an answer in this chapter.
 - 1. In 7:1-6 he re-asserts the Christian's freedom from the Law. Law binds only the living, but the Christian has died with Christ and is thus no longer bound by the Law. He also uses the example of a wife. Once her husband has died she is freed from any laws that bound her to him. This is the state of the Christian whose first spouse (the Law) has died. The Christian is no longer bound to the Law but is free to marry another (Christ).
 - 2. In 7:7-25 he discusses the relationship of the Law to Sin. He asserts the Law's basic goodness and shows how it is used by the forces of sin to dominate the man of flesh. Thus the problem is not with the Law it is with the man of the flesh. More will be said by way of introduction to this second section when we approach verse 7.

IV. Romans 7:1-6 Freedom from the Law

- A. ***Are you aware, Brothers (for I am speaking to people who know the Law), that the Law has jurisdiction over one so long as one lives?***
 - 1. ***brothers*** - this is the first time he has used this title since Rom 1:13.
 - 2. ***who know the Law*** - there are some who would remove the article (the) from the translation and thus render Paul's meaning to be law in general, rather than the Mosaic Law. But this seems to make Paul's argument loose much of its force. Thus he most likely means the Jewish (Mosaic) Law. This means that he is addressing a largely Jewish-Christian audience in this letter.
 - 3. ***the Law has jurisdiction*** - literally the Greek reads, "Lords it over him."
 - 4. ***while he lives*** - the law does not bind dead men. We do not haul corpses into court. We do not sentence dead men nor can we fine or punish them. The law and its force can bind and affect only the living. The point may seem obvious but it is sometimes easy to overlook the obvious!
- B. ***Thus a married woman is bound by Law to her husband; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law in respect to her husband. Consequently, while her husband is alive she will be called an adulteress if she consorts with another man. But if her husband dies she is freed from that law, and she is not an adulteress if she consorts with another man.***
 - 1. The background to this is quite strong. According to Mosaic Law the wife was considered the property of her husband. Thus the image of law is not just a customary or moral sense but an absolute legal prescription

according to written law.

2. ***law in respect to her husband*** - more literally this is rendered, the law of the husband and flows from that context of the wife as property.
 3. ***if she consorts with another man*** - more literally the Greek reads, if she belongs to another man. The expression is derived from Dt. 24:2 and Hosea 3:3. This rendering of the phrase helps us to see that the adulterous act described here is more than just an unchaste sexual union but is an actual joining with him in an on-going marital union. Such an act was obviously illegal.
 4. ***But if her husband dies*** - the freedom of the wife comes from the death of the husband and thus has nothing to do with divorce.
- C. ***In the same way, my brothers, you also were put to death to the law through the body of Christ, so that you might belong to another, to the one who was raised from the dead in order that we might bear fruit for God.***
1. ***In the same way*** - well not quite. In his analogy, Paul has the spouse die. But now, it is not the spouse who dies, but us who die in Christ Jesus.
 2. ***put to death...through the body of Christ*** - he recalls his teaching of Chapter 6 - 6:3 & 6:6. By baptism we are made one with the saving action of Christ. Thus we die because, through baptism, our history is made one with the history of Christ. Since he died, so did we. Since he rises to new life, we as members of the Body do the same.
 3. ***that you might belong to another*** - the second husband is Jesus Christ who is Kyrios (Lord) and who lords it over us now in freedom.
 4. ***bear fruit for God*** - since marriage is meant to be fruitful Paul continues his image. Clearly the fruit is good works and the life of grace but done out of love.
- D. ***For, when we were in the flesh, our sinful passions, awakened by the Law, worked in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are released from the Law, dead to what held us captive, so that we might serve in the newness of the Spirit and not under the obsolete letter.***
1. ***in the flesh*** - flesh, for Paul is a term that most often means human nature oriented to sin. It is life without grace. A life rooted in this world which is passing away. It is ultimately death-directed. Life in the "spirit" by contrast is that with a person which opens him to the life of God and grace. It sets his mind on the things that are above and brings forth, by the grace of God, the very life of God within him.
 2. ***sinful passions*** - in and of itself passion is not evil. The drives within us are good: eg. hunger, sexual passion etc. These are important and necessary parts of the human person. They become sinful when they are no longer under the control of right reason and prudence. The passions since the all have become quite unruly and are reigned in only with difficulty. The grace of God is given to restore and heal to us the lost integrity of the passions with the other parts of our human nature.
 3. ***our members*** - Paul does not just mean the body here. For Paul the human person had many parts, or members
 - a. *soma* - the physical body,

- b. *sarx* - flesh, blood etc.
 - c. *Psyche* - soul: the consciousness, intelligence and memory
 - d. *Nous* - the mind especially the rational intellect
 - e. *Kardia* - the heart (not the physical heart) but the seat of love and emotion
 - f. *pneuma* - the spirit. Yet not merely an esoteric sense of spirit. It is related to the intellect and will and is that part of man which opens him to the things of God.
4. ***awakened by the Law*** - the law, once it had forbidden things, tended to arouse these forbidden things and make them more appealing. This shows once again the twisted quality of man after the fall. That the Law forbids is not an evil thing. Our rebellious response is however evil. Due to the presence of sin in the "flesh" and the lack of grace, the Law thus tended to fuel this twisted state of affairs but the law is not to be blamed for it.
 5. ***to bear fruit for death*** - the phrase expresses the result, not the purpose. The passions were not destined to contribute to man's death as though this were their purpose, but they did so when assisted by the Law.
 6. ***released from the law...dead*** - as said above, the dead are not subject to the power of the Law. It cannot reach them, they cannot suffer its effects nor can they be subject to its penalties. Only their posterity who live can be subject to such things. Thus the Law for a dead man is quite obsolete.
 7. ***the spirit*** - the whole new life of grace won for us by Jesus Christ. It is not slavery to a written code but is a life of love and the generous responses prompted by that love. Grace is the power and life of God within us.

V. Romans 7:8-25 Introductory notes.

- A. Paul rather suddenly shifts to the first person (ego - I). This has posed a significant challenge to biblical interpreters down through the ages. Who is this "I" in Romans 7? The question is a significant one for it radically affects the interpretation of the passage and its meaning for the Christian life. There are several theories as to who this "I" might be.
 1. Some scholars have held that Paul speaks here of himself. Thus the "I" is the autobiographical "I" But there are many problems with this view. Most notably it conflicts with Paul's own stated experience with the Law as a pharisee. For example Phil 3:5ff *If anyone else thinks he can be confident in flesh, all the more can I. Circumcised on the eighth day, of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrew parentage, in observance of the law a Pharisee¹, in zeal I persecuted the Church, in righteousness based on the Law I was blameless.* See also Gal 1:13-14. The other problem with the autobiographical theory is that it would be a departure from Paul's basic model in this Letter which is a reflection on the phases of human history and how God has worked in them.
 2. Another related theory is that Paul speaks of his own experience, not as a pharisee, but since his conversion. This makes Romans 7 a portrait of the struggle of Paul as a Christian to live up to the demands of Christian

¹The pharisees scrupulously observed every tenet of the Law and were usually quite successful at it in their own minimalistic way.

discipleship and to reject sin fully. But then the question comes up, why has Paul been talking so much of the Old Law only to suddenly interject this meditation on the difficulties of Christian discipleship? Likewise, as we shall see, to take this interpretive position is to wrench chapter 7 from its role as a premise of Chapter 8. It is helpful at this point to read both 7 & 8 together and see how they are a thesis/antithesis. If Paul, in Chapter 7 is describing his own on-going experience, then what are we to make of chapter 8? Whose experience is that? Would this interpretation not reduce Paul to saying, "I am a wreck and live in the flesh even though Jesus died to save us from all that. You brethren however, are in the Spirit and must not live in the flesh." In effect it would reduce Paul to holding his readers to a higher standard than he himself was able to live. It would be a "Do as I say, not as I do" situation. Granted this interpretation is most appealing to the average Christian who can probably relate well to what Paul describes. This probably accounts for the popularity of this interpretation. Nevertheless, despite this interpretation's appealing quality, the real question is, is this what Paul means? For the reasons stated above, it seems not. However, numerous biblical interpreters will vigorously defend this view.²

3. A third and most likely explanation is that the "I" is a stylistic figure used by Paul to describe a human individual before justification.
 - a. More specifically the stylistic "I" is Adam. He is Adam at two levels:
 - (1) Adam himself. This takes place in verses 7-13 when Paul uses the past tense. It is also evident by allusions to the Genesis story. For example Paul has Adam say *Sin...deceived me* which echoes Eve's words, *The serpent deceived me* (Gen 3:13). Likewise Paul has Adam say, *Then I died* which echoes Genesis again, *From that tree you shall not eat; the moment you eat from it, you are surely doomed to die.* (Gen 2:17)
 - (2) Adam as realized in all his descendants before the coming of grace. This takes place in verses 14-25 when Paul shifts to the present tense. He then describes the struggle of the pious person trying to keep the Law. Yet this person is not a Christian. The person is not in the spirit but is in the flesh. Thus he is a descendant of Adam but has not received grace by the justification that comes through faith.
 - b. Paul, then, especially dramatizes in an intimate and personal way the experience common to those faced with the Mosaic Law which commanded but gave no help in observing its precepts. But note that the struggle he describes is not a Christian struggle. The

²It should not be overlooked that some important Saints took this view, St. Augustine and St. Thomas among them. Thus the theory is not lightly dismissed here nor should it be in any context. Nevertheless, the theory just not does seem to be the best to explain Paul in this student's estimation.

struggle he describes in 7 is a struggle between the mind and the law. This is not a Christian struggle. There is a Christian struggle and it is the struggle between the flesh and the spirit. This Christian struggle he describes in Chapter 8. This is not to deny that Christians will recognize in themselves some of what Paul describes. But this shows how they have departed from or never fully embraced the normative Christian life. More will be said of this point below.

- c. This theory (that I = Adam) fits in well with Paul's present discussion of the law and does not reduce Chapter 7 to a digression. The theory also fits in well with Paul's overall approach in this letter wherein he surveys human history (as he has done already in this letter)³ through the example of this stylistic "I" as a history without Christ (Chapter 7) and with Christ (Chapter 8). Without Christ "I" am a wreck and filled with contrary drives. With Christ and by his grace *the righteous decree of the Law is fulfilled in us* (Rom 8:4). This interpretation also provides an significant organizational key for us dividing the material nicely as follows⁴
- (1) Ego ("I") before the promulgation of the Law (7:7, 9a)
 - (2) Ego ("I") under the Law (7:8-24)
 - (3) Ego ("I") freed from the Law in Christ (7:25-8:29)

- B. Here is a brief survey of some of the controversy surround this chapter. The arguments are quite ancient and will not likely be resolved here.
- C. It is well to counsel this caution however if one is to take the view that Paul describes the average Christian life by describing his own struggle. The caution is that we not take this as a Magna Carta for Christian sloth. The trap is this: "Struggling and falling short as regards the demands of Christian holiness is a normal thing. If even Paul had to struggle and be a wreck well then I guess its Ok for me to be that way." This is a dangerous philosophy. The normal Christian life is the heroic witness of the Saints: I can do al things in him who strengthens me! Christ did not die on the cross so that I could be the same old wreck I have always been. Christ did not die on the cross so that I could struggle unsuccessfully to overcome sin. He died to set me free. If Chapter 7 is consoling for Christians the danger is that this consolation becomes an occasion to rest in mediocrity. To declare that we can, by the grace of God be free from all sin and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God is scary and challenging. We like to cling to our sin and take the sting out of the demand that we be *perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect*. (Matt 5:48) Thus if a person wants to hold that Paul describes the average struggle of the Christian here, let him examine his motive for holding this theory be sure it is not to rest consoled by mediocrity. This is not to say that

³Recall how in Rom 1 & 2 he described both the pagan and the Jew, who knew the just precepts they must follow but they nevertheless did not follow. Thus Chapter 7 is a reprise of that theme. Grace gives the power to fulfill the law. Thus we are freed from it in the sense that God works it in us rather than having it all depend on our own steam.

⁴In this view, Chapter 6 serves as an overture to 7 & 8.

the theory cannot be held apart from this danger but let the danger be seen and avoided.

- D. Our interpretive key here does present us with the challenge of answering the following questions: If Christ died on the cross, why do most Christians struggle so? Are his death and resurrection ineffectual? Christians seem just as dominated by sin as any pagan; why? This ought to encourage us to some soul searching as to the obstacles we put up before grace to hinder its effects. Likewise, we are placed in the position of having to explain a teaching of the Church which might seem to be denied by our interpretive key. St. Thomas Aquinas states the teaching well so it is good to quote him. *In the state of corrupt nature man needs grace to heal his nature and enable him to avoid sin entirely. In this present life this healing is brought about in his mind [the spiritual part of man]: the carnal appetite is not completely healed. Hence the Apostle (Rom 7:25) says of the person healed by grace, "I serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin." In this state a person can avoid mortal sin...but he cannot avoid all venial sin, due to the corruption of his sensual appetite.*⁵ So then, the Church teaching about concupiscence is that this quality remains in us after baptism and will not, in this life ever be completely removed.
- E. By way of an answer we can and must affirm the Church teaching about the existence of concupiscence which afflicts us. Nevertheless, Paul seems to go far beyond ordinary concupiscence in his description. The portrait he paints is quite strong. Granted, the power of concupiscence can be quite strong in many individuals, but this power can be gradually put to death and its strong grip can be significantly lessened. The Council of Trent writes this, regarding concupiscence, *This Holy Synod, confesses and perceives that there remains in the baptized concupiscence of an inclination, although this is left to be wrestled with, it cannot harm those who do not consent, but manfully resist by the grace of Jesus Christ. Nay, indeed, he who shall have striven lawfully shall be crowned (II Tim 2:5)*⁶ Note that the council teaches that we can manfully resist by the power of Christ, but in his portrait Paul says, *I do that which I do not want to do*. Thus he describes something beyond inclination - he describes actual sin. Note too that he says, *I am carnal, sold in slavery to sin* (Romans 7:14). But compare this to Romans 6:17 *Although you were once slaves of sin, you have become obedient from the heart. Freed from sin you have become slaves of righteousness*. Paul thus seems to be discussing something far beyond an inclination to sin against which we freely struggle by grace. He is talking about in 7:7ff about a slavery in which freedom is not grasped. The portrait is one of futility and frustration. This is not what concupiscence is. Concupiscence is clearly a force within us that must be recognized and with which we must deal. Note how the Council states that it cannot harm those who do not consent to it. Thus our position is not to deny the reality of concupiscence but to declare that this is not Paul's primary focus and that he intends something far more than concupiscence here. Our position states that Paul is contrasting the life of grace (Chapt 8) to the life of the flesh (Chapt 7).
- F. It should be pointed out that many of the early Fathers of the Church held the to

⁵Summa Theologiae I-II q. 109, a. 8

⁶Trent: Decree on Original Sin, 5

the position that Chapter 7 described Adam and his descendants before grace. A partial list of these Fathers is: Theodore of Mospuestia, Ephraim the Syrian, Methodius, and Theodoret.

G. On to the text itself.

VI. Romans 7:7-25

A. ***What then shall we say, the Law is sin? Of course not! Yet I did not know sin except through the law and, I did not know what it is to covet except that the law said, "You shall not covet." But sin, finding an opportunity in the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetousness. Apart from the law, sin is dead. I once lived outside the Law, but when the commandment came, sin became alive;***

1. ***the law is sin?*** - Remember that Paul's point is not that the Law was sinful. Rather the flesh, with all the implications of that word, is sinful. The Law however tended to arouse sin because of the flesh and because it provided no grace itself to keep its very precepts. In this sense it acted as a tutor, instructing us as to our powerlessness and our need for God's saving love. As Augustine has said, *The Law was given that grace might be sought and grace was given that the Law might be fulfilled.* In this sense, the law taught a hard lesson by showing forth our inadequacy but it was a gift despite this hard lesson; most hard lessons are gifts in strange packages.
2. ***I did not know sin except through the law*** - the law instructed us in great detail as to the reality of sin and thus held us to a higher level of responsibility; just as is the case that an older child is held to a greater level of responsibility than a very young child due to his greater knowledge and maturity.
3. ***You must not covet*** - Paul uses this phrase to epitomize the whole of the Mosaic Law. It is a good summary of the whole Law since the essence of the Law teaches us not to subject ourselves to created things rather than the Creator.
4. ***Apart from law, sin is dead.*** We do well to recall Paul's world view. From Adam to Moses there was no Law, law from God that is. From Adam to Moses human beings did wrong but did not violate the precepts of God as Adam did. But with the coming of the Law and the clear command of God, wrongdoing became a flagrant revolt against God. Thus did the law provide the opportunity for sin although it was not its cause.
5. ***I once lived outside the Law*** - recall our discussion above. This line provides good evidence that Paul is not speaking of himself per se. He never lived outside the Law, being a Jew by birth. Thus the "I" here is more figurative than literal.

B. ***Then I died and the commandment that was for life turned out to be death for me. For sin, seizing and opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and through it put me to death.***

1. ***deceived me*** - this echoes the words Genesis, *The serpent deceived me* (Gen 3:13). Thus we see evidence for the case that this "I" is the historical

Adam. Paul makes a similar allusion in 2 Cor 11:3 and 1 Tim 2:14.

2. ***Then I died*** - this can get downright confusing since Paul, in chapter 6 spoke of death in reference to the fact that we died with Christ and through this death we died to the law. But here he speaks of the effect that the law, in combination with the flesh, had. The death is the result of the crushing obligation of the Law. Through the formal transgressions of the Law man was placed under the domination of death. As was said above this line is also a clue that the historical Adam is the "I" in this part of the passage. This is because this line is an allusion to Gen 2:17- *you will surely die*.
 3. ***the commandment that was for life*** - The Mosaic Law promised life to those who would observe it: *Keep then my statutes and decrees, for the man who carries them out will find life through them.*⁷
 4. ***put me to death*** - the Law itself did not kill. Rather, as said above, the flesh and sin did this. We must not overlook the fact that the devil often uses the good to corrupt us either by excess of the virtue or by detaching it from its normal place among other necessary virtues.
- C. ***So then the law is holy and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. Did the good, then, become death for me? Of course not! Sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin worked death in me through the good so that sin might become sinful beyond measure through the commandment.***
1. ***holy, righteousness, good*** - the Law is God-given and destined to give life to those who would obey. The law never commanded man to sin or do evil. In itself it was good.
 2. ***the good become death for me...of course not!*** - Again Paul indignantly rejects the notion that the God-given Law was the direct cause of man's death.
 3. ***[it was] Sin that it might be shown to be sin*** - The real culprit was sin which was the direct cause of man's death. He made the same point in 5:12 *through sin death...came to all* and in 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death...* Paul thus makes it clear that the Law was not the equivalent of sin.
 4. ***sinful beyond measure through the commandment*** - again the Devil can take what is good and work evil through it. For example, he can quote scripture (Matt 4:5-6) albeit out of context. This does not make scripture evil. Neither does the evil use of the commandment make the commandments evil. Thus we must cling to what is good but do so in a way that is under the guidance of prudence and the other virtues in concert with each other. There are indeed many traps for the pious. We must be aware of these and stay vigilant for the traps of the devil.
- D. ***We know that the law is spiritual that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal sold into slavery to sin.***
1. Note that Paul now shifts to the present tense from the past tense. Thus the "I" shifts from Adam as a historical person to Adam as realized in all his children. But note again, the "I" here is still a person before the grace of Jesus Christ has entered. Thus he is still an individual under the sway of the flesh in the old Adam not the New Adam, Jesus Christ. Thus "I" here

⁷Levit 18:5 cf also: Dt 4:1, 6:24.

is the Adam in every man and woman who has not yet entered the life of the spirit through the grace of Jesus Christ through faith and baptism.

2. ***the Law is spiritual*** - again Paul insists that the Law, in itself is good. It is spiritual (*pneumatikos*), it is from God and of the realm of God. The problem is not the Law which is spiritual. The problem is the flesh.
3. ***I am carnal, sold into slavery to sin.*** - This is a critical clue to the fact that Paul is not talking about himself or any Christian redeemed by Jesus Christ. To say that *I am carnal and sold into slavery to sin* is impossible. To declare this of a Christian and contradicts precisely what Paul says earlier in chapter 6: *We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin.* (6:6) And again, *Sin is not to have any power over you...* (6:14a) And again, *Freed from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness.* (6:18) And again, *Now that you have been freed from sin and become slaves of God...* (6:22). The view that holds Paul is describing a Christian here in our present verse (7:14b) has to answer for the fact that it seems to have Paul directly contradict himself and render Chapter 6 meaningless and/or a joke. Thus it seems clear that Paul cannot possibly be speaking of himself or of any Christian here. Rather he speaks of an individual in the flesh who has not yet come under the power grace given by Jesus Christ.

E. Important notes

1. In the section which is to follow note that the words "spiritual" and "spirit" never appear - not even once. Paul seems to carefully avoid using the term. In a couple of places he does draw a comparison between the flesh and some other part of man. Still he does not use the contrasting word "spirit." Rather he uses some other term such as "my inner self" and "my mind." This is further evidence for our position that Paul has radically set chapter 7 apart and intends here, not a description of the normal Christian life (which is spiritual) but describes the life of a person under the power of law which is fleshly.
2. Note too that most Christians will be able to resonate with what Paul is about to describe. Nevertheless, this still does not mean that Paul is describing the normal Christian life. If we do experience what Paul describes here we ought to readily admit that it is not the normal Christian life. Rather it is a part of us that still needs the healing power of grace. It is thus an unredeemed part of our personality which still needs Christ's saving grace. The best thing for us to do if we recognize some of what is described is to admit that it is not normal for a Christian; it is abnormal. Who can we say has lived the normal Christian life? Who presents to us what is the norm for our existence? Jesus Christ himself does. He was tempted, yet never sinned. There is absolutely no evidence in scripture that he ever experienced the radical confusion about to be described by Paul. Thus he himself shows us the normal Christian life. By extension we see in the mature lives of the saints the normative Christian life. They embraced and received within themselves the power to become the

children of God and live the normal Christian life - that is the life Christ intends for us. By way of analogy, if I catch the flu, I perceive that my usual strength and health are diminished. I am not experiencing the normal condition of my life. True enough, most people experience influenza from time to time but it is clearly not the normal human life; it is abnormal. Thus, when a Christian finds himself resonating with Paul's description here let him recognize a common pattern but an illness nonetheless. Let him recognize the abnormality of his condition and go to Christ, the divine physician.

F. ***What I do, I do not understand. For I do not do what I want, but what I hate. Now if I do what I do not want I concur that the Law is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin who dwells in me. For I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh. The willing is ready at hand, but doing the good is not. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells in me. So, then, I discover the principle that when I want to do right, evil is at hand. For I take delight in the Law of God, in my inner self, but I see in my members another principle at war with the law of my mind, taking me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Miserable one that I am! Who will save me from this mortal body?***

1. Note that the pronoun "I" occurs 21 times in this short passage. The pronouns "me" or "my" occurs 10 times. The passage is almost schizophrenic. The emphatic "I" and "me" shows well a person in the flesh. This person depends on himself; there is not a mention of the Spirit or of God even once. A person in the flesh sees the keeping of the Law as personal achievement rather than submission to God. The struggle is between the mind and the Law; knowing what is to be done and measuring up. As said above, this is not the Christian struggle. The Christian struggle is between flesh and spirit; between achievement and submission. The Christian is not called to keep the Law, he is called to fulfil it by the love and grace of God within. What is described here is the dilemma of the moral man but outside of grace. As Paul will spell out in Chapter 8: the flesh cannot keep the Law (8:3). But see how different the use of "I" here is from Paul's classic line *I live, no, not I, Christ living in me.* (Gal 2:20)
2. ***What I do, I do not understand*** - there is the frustrating puzzle going to the very depths of his being that a man sees. It results from the gulf between his reason dominated desire and his actual performance. The result is frustration, confusion, and cover-up.
3. ***For I do not do what I want, but what I hate.*** - The man's moral aspirations and his performance are not integrated or coordinated.
4. ***I concur that the Law is good.*** - There is not a total wickedness here. At least the man can acknowledge the excellence and binding quality of the Law. What Paul seems to say is that, although I don't do what I should, at least I agree with the Law. That's at least something good.
5. ***So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin who dwells in me.***- this recalls the enslaved condition described in 14 I am carnal, sold into slavery to sin.

This is not to absolve the sinner from his guilt but it does recall the enslaving quality of sin as our Lord declares, *Whoever sins is a slave of sin.* (John 8:34) This slavery may mean that there is a diminishing of the man's guilt for each individual act. Nevertheless, observing this whole inner conflict he has an obligation to seek the freedom that is offered by Jesus Christ. As Paul stated in the overture to this section (Chapter 6): *Therefore sin must not reign over your mortal bodies so that you obey their desires.*(6:12) Perhaps by way of analogy we can see that the alcoholic may have a lessened responsibility for each individual act he does under the influence. Nevertheless, he has a strong obligation to seek freedom from his addiction through treatment, thus he is not absolved from all guilt in any sense.

a. note again how problematic the position is that Paul is describing the normal Christian experience. How can we reconcile that position with the things said in Chapter 6? e.g. *...although you were once slaves of sin, you have become obedient from the heart to the pattern of teaching to which you were entrusted.* (6:17) Likewise, looking ahead to Chapter 8 Paul writes, *...the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed you from the law of sin and death.*(8:2). Only a slave to sin can say, "It is not I who do it but sin who dwells in me." But we are not called to be slaves to sin.

6. ***For I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh.*** - The qualification, "in my flesh" is important. For Paul sees the problem is not with the person considered in his totality. Rather the problem is "the flesh." Recall what we have said before regarding this term "flesh." Flesh is not muscles and bones etc. It is the attitude which roots me in this world and has me depend on my own powers rather than to focus on God and be submitted to his authority and grace. The flesh seeks personal aggrandizement and exultation; the spirit seeks God and his glory. The flesh focuses on "my achievement;" the spirit focuses on submission to God and thanks for his grace. Clearly there is some good in every person. Otherwise God could not build upon anything. Thus he creates man as good and gives him good qualities such as an intellect and a will. Every person is said to have a *capax Dei* a capacity for God. There dwells in every person therefore a principle which is essentially good and which draws him to good. Note too how Paul described in 7:16 another good aspect of each human person: his conscience- *I concur that the Law is good.* Lastly, note that the man here described does experience conflict within himself and this also proves that some good does dwell in him. If he were all evil then he would experience no displeasure at the presence of evil. All of this reflection may seem a bit of an academic digression but it is important to make this reflection since it is all too easy for us to write some people off as having no hope of ever seeing conversion. Granted, even the most fundamental sources of good within a person can become seriously marred by sin. Nevertheless, there can still be some good upon which God can build. Even a broken clock is right twice a day.

7. ***The willing is ready at hand, but doing the good is not*** - the man here described is not so evil that his conscience has been submerged. He does will to do good. This helps us to see once again that the man described is essentially a moral man but he is also a natural man, not a graced man. The flesh cannot keep the law and certainly cannot fulfill it. Thus grace is necessary. We must have Jesus and his grace to fulfill the law. And thus he says, Apart from me you can do nothing John 15:5.
8. ***I discover the principle that when I want to do right, evil is at hand***- it is more than an event that occurs once in a while. Rather, it is a principle, it is the way things generally are. Thus, although he seems to repeat himself here, he actually adds this new point, that the portrait is not just a "bad day" scenario, it is a principle of life.
9. ***For I take delight in the Law of God***- again, he seems to repeat himself but he adds the stronger point here. Before he agreed to the Law, now he delights in it.
10. ***in my inner self***- as was stated above, as Paul uses this phrase it seems to be carefully selected. Notice he is very careful not to say "spirit" because that's a Christian. He speaks of the natural part of man called the *nous* (mind). This is clear from the verses that follow. The phrase "inner man" is rare in Paul. It is used in only two other places in Paul: 2 Cor. 4:16, and Ephesians 3:16.
11. In the next few verses Paul also plays on the nuances of the word Law (*nomos*). Up until now in this chapter Law has meant the Mosaic Law. Now he will use these phrases:
 - a. ***law in my members*** - our translation uses the word "principle," probably to avoid confusion. But Paul uses the word *nomou* (law). But this law is not the mosaic Law which does not exist in our bodies. Rather what Paul means here is that there is a law, a certain principle of action at work in my very self. And this "law" is opposed to the Law of God.
 - b. ***law of my mind*** - again notice how careful Paul is not to use the word "spirit." He uses *Nous* - reason or mind. Here the "law" of the mind in that principle or capacity within me by which I can recognize the good. For example, everybody recognizes that it is better to save life than to murder, it is better to feed someone than to starve them to death. Everyone recognizes the better course in these examples unless some deep corruption has set in. Thus there is a law within our mind. We call this the conscience. But notice that Paul's basic point here is that appreciation of it is not the same as carrying it out. This is because of the divided "I"
 - c. ***law of sin*** - Sin too works according to its principle. Sin leads to sin and grows like a cancer. It has its own nature and thus has a law, or principle of action.
12. Thus there are four uses of Law in this one section! (Whew!)
 - a. Law of God
 - b. Law in my members

- c. Law of my mind
 - d. Law of sin
13. ***taking me captive to the law of sin***-again this cannot be said of a Christian who really lives as a Christian. *How can we who died to sin live in it?...For a dead person has been absolved from sin...Consequently you must think of yourselves as being dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus.* (6:2,7,11) Yet again, then here is more evidence that 7 describes not the Christian, but the man of the flesh.
 14. ***Miserable one that I am! Who will save me from this mortal body?*** The word miserable pretty much sums up the state of this man of divided Ego. Then Paul poses a question that is a rhetorical one. The answer is obvious: Jesus. Thus he immediately issues his thanks: ***Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*** If the answer is still not obvious then Paul gives the direct answer to the question "who will save me?" in 8:2 *The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed you from the law of sin and death.* Note then how we depart chapter 7. The problem was described, but the solution is given. This is the last reason why it seems impossible that Paul could be describing the normal, on-going Christian life in Chapter 7. If he were, how can we understand his conclusion here? Also, how can we understand chapter 8?
 - G. Thus it seems clear that Paul does not describe the Christian in Chapter 7. He describes the man of the flesh who strives to moral but, lacking grace is reduced to utter frustration and confusion.
 - H. If one wishes to dispute our interpretive key⁸ here let him answer the manifold question we have raised about his view. It seems unlikely that he can and this is why the interpretive key here is presented as the most likely solution to the question, "Who is the 'I' of Romans Chapter 7?"
 - I. On to Chapter 8 which describes the Christian life and the Christian struggle which is not between mind and law, it is between flesh and spirit.

⁸i.e. that 7 described the natural man outside of grace, but not the Christian.

VII. Romans Chapter 8 Introductory Notes

A. Part one - Rebuttal Outlined -

1. Principle -

a. *¹There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

2. Power -

a. *²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. ³For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

3. Portrait

a. *⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness.*

4. Promise

a. *¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you.*

5. Prescription -

a. *¹²So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—¹³for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.*

B. Outline Part Two PERSPECTIVES

1. Paternity -

a. *¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in*

order that we may also be glorified with him.

2. Proper Order -

- a. *¹⁸I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; ²⁰for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; ²¹because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; ²³and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*

3. Prayer -

- a. *²⁶Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

4. Protection -

- a. *²⁸We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.*

5. Purpose -

- a. *²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.*

6. Prevailing Power

- a. *³¹What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? ³³Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; ³⁴who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us? ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, "For*

thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.³⁸For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- C. In Romans Chapter 5:1-11 Paul announced that the justified man was empowered to live a new life as the result of God's love shown in the liberating act of Jesus Christ by his death and resurrection. This liberating act produces in man not only a status of uprightness before God but also freedom - freedom from sin, death and the Law.
- D. Chapter 8 begins by answering the question of Romans 7:24, *Miserable one that I am! Who will save me from this mortal body?* The answer is that Christ Jesus has freed from enslavement and made it possible for us to live According to the Spirit.
- E. The chapter may be divided as follows
 - 1. The description of how the Christian is dominated by the life in the Spirit, not in the flesh (8:1-13).
 - 2. Due to this gift of the Spirit the Christian is a child of God, born anew and destined for glory in God's presence (8:14-30).
 - 3. The magnificence of this divine plan of salvation not only for man but for all creation. This contemplation leads to a hymn of praise for almighty God (8:31-39).
- F. It will be noted that in Chapter 7 the first person pronoun (I or me) occurred 31 times and the word spirit never occurred, not even once. In this Chapter however the word spirit occurs 21 times. This is an important signal as to the radical shift that has taken place between 7 and 8 and serves to further our case that 7 and 8 are thesis/antithesis. 7 is life in the flesh. 8 is Life in the Spirit
- G. It should be noticed that the word "spirit" is sometimes capitalized, sometimes not. This is because Paul sometimes speaks of the Holy Spirit, other times he means our spirit. For example, see verse 16: *The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.* Precisely to which spirit Paul refers is usually clear from the context but there is some guesswork in certain places as we shall see.
- H. To another extent we can see how Chapter 8 is the fulfillment of a theme announced in the first Chapter, *I am not ashamed of the Gospel, it is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe* (Rom 1:18). In this Chapter that power will be described most eloquently.
- I. On to the text.

VIII. Romans 8:1-39 Textual Commentary

- A. ***Hence, now, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has freed you from the law of sin and death. For what the law, weakened by the flesh, was powerless to do, this God has done: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for the sake of sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the righteous decree of the law might be fulfilled in us who live not according to the flesh but according to the spirit.***
 - 1. *Now* - this is the eschatological now. It is not a word in passing but is

emphatic: NOW as radically opposed to before or previously. Thus, in entering Chapter 8 we are entering a whole new territory as compared to Chapter 7. This Now is the newness ushered in by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

2. ***no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*** - this does not mean that the Christian will never face judgment. See our discussion on Romans Chapter 2 to see the essence of the judgement that will be faced by all. What Paul refers to here is the curse that came from old dispensation. Cursed were all who failed to keep its precepts: *Cursed be he who fails to fulfill any of the provisions of this law! And all the people shall answer, Amen!* (Dt 27:26). He makes a similar point in Gal 3:10. Thus Paul's point is that those who are in Christ Jesus have died to the Law and have passed from its curses.
3. the Law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus -
 - a. here Paul uses the word Law but he really means, "principle." The spirit of life in Christ Jesus has given us a new principle or mode of being. In effect what Paul is doing is a word play in Greek; *nomos* can mean law and it can mean principle just like the word "law" can also have many shades of. Recall too how Paul drew on several meanings of the word law (*nomos*) in 7:22-23. In fact he used the word in four different sense there.
 - b. This new principle that Paul discusses is the grace that flows from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This grace gives the Christian the vitality that the old Law could never give.
 - c. Note too that "spirit" is not capitalized here. This is because it is not the Holy Spirit to which Paul refers. Rather, this is the descriptive result of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit confers upon the baptized Christian the "spirit of life."
4. ***For what the law, weakened by the flesh, was powerless to do-*** Paul simply repeats what he has developed at more length previously. Law could command but not empower. This was all the more so due to the weakness of the flesh.
5. ***this God has done:*** this phrase is not actually in the Greek but is added by our translators (and by many others) to clear up an ambiguity or uncompleted sentence. The sentence in the Greek literally reads: *For the Law, being powerless, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh.* The technical name for the grammatical difficulty in this sentence is *anacoluthon*. This word describes the incoherence within a sentence that results from a shift by the writer from one point to another or from one construction to another. The reader is left to supply the missing logic which is usually implicit. This is what our translators have done.
6. ***God...sending his own Son*** -
 - a. the phrase "his own Son" is emphatic and shows forth the divine origins of the plan of salvation and, in particular, the divinity of

the Son and his pre-existence. That the Son was sent means he went forth from a place he was already existing - the Father's side. Thus, he pre-existed his earthly mission. That he is God's own Son precludes any notion of adoption or symbolic sonship.

- b. That God sent his own Son ought to assist us in not making light of Sin. It is noteworthy that when the Father observed my sin and my general state it was not enough for him merely to send a prophet. He sent his own, only begotten Son. The modern world bids us to declare, "I'm Ok." Really? Then why did God look at me and see my situation as so desperate that he sent his Son? Apparently I'm not really OK. I need God after all.

7. ***in the likeness of sinful flesh*** - this little phrase provokes quite a lot of reflection for it is highly nuanced. There is a delicate balance in understanding how Christ was like us and how he was unlike us. Both of these concepts are brought together by the word "likeness" (*homoioima*) We do well to look at both sides of the question

- a. In one sense we can say that Christ Jesus took upon himself the fullness of our human condition. (It must be emphasized that he never sinned (cf Heb 4:15 & 2 Cor 5:21)). He assumed a human nature and entered a world both of which had been adversely affected by original sin. Because of original sin the world which had been a garden paradise was not a theater of death and suffering. Children were brought forth in pain and food and sustenance were obtain only by the sweat of the brow. The world was hostile: earthquakes, floods, disease and the like. Death entered the world through sin. Likewise, the human being was prey to all of this and ultimately succumbed to it by death. Christ, in assuming human nature, accepted all of this and faced it squarely. He thirsted, had hunger, knew physical hardships, experienced natural phenomena, suffered injustice, and ultimately accepted death. We see by this reflection how he shared in the effects sin had wrought, though he himself never sinned
- b. In another sense we must see how Christ was unlike us. Scripture says he is like us in all things except sin. The little phrase "except sin" is a mouthful because sin significantly disfigures us. Original sin had a strongly negative effect on or human nature causing concupiscence to come alive. This has strongly inclined us to sin and crippled (though not totally disabled) the reason and intellect which are supposed to have sovereignty in the human person. Frequently however, the passions and desires hold sway and incline the person to sin, confusion, and inconsistency. However, since Christ was preserved from Original Sin and never committed sin, this disfigurement was not present in Christ. He was clear of the effects of concupiscence, irrational and sinful desire, and confusion. In a strong sense this very much sets him apart from the rest of men. Thus to say Christ never sinned, is no mere pious line.

It also goes a long way to describe what manner of man he was.

- c. Thus, Paul's phrase here is delicately worded. Christ came in the likeness of sin. He did not come in sin, or enter in sin or in any way embrace sin. To be like something is not the same as to be that same something. He was especially in the likeness of sin insofar as he accepted its external effects: pain, suffering, disorder of the natural world, and finally death. Likewise, because he was seen to be of human estate and all humans were said to be "in sin," he, by taking that likeness to himself, is identified with that group and seems to share in the sin though, in fact he does not. In particular he did not receive the internal effects of sin: concupiscence, inner confusion, unruly passions and the like. Rather, his psyche was always under the full sway of his rightly ordered and clear intellect. he was not internally disfigured in any way. In effect then, likeness expresses an identity that is not a full identity in certain important matters.
8. ***For the sake of sin - peri hamartias*** i.e. to deal with sin, to conquer it, and expiate it. Therefore Jesus entered the realm of sin to deal with it on its own turf and bring judgement and defeat upon it. Though he accept the external consequences of sin, and ultimately its greatest effect (death) he destroyed it by using it against itself and overcoming it. By dying he destroyed death.
9. ***he condemned sin in the flesh*** - there is some debate about the exact meaning Paul intends here:
 - a. it could mean that Christ, who took on flesh, condemned sin.
 - b. it could be an echo back to 6:6 *our old self was crucified with him so that our sinful body might be done away with that we might no longer be in slavery to sin*. Thus the phrase would be understood: Christ condemned sin which was [in] the flesh. Recall here our earlier definitions of flesh as more than body tissues and bone. This makes the most sense given the context here. Remember Paul has just shown the Man in the flesh and shown what a disaster he is. Now he says, Christ condemned sin in the flesh.
 - c. But as has been the case with many of these ambiguous phrases it could well be that Paul intends both meanings.
10. ***so that the righteous decree of the law-*** despite Paul's rather strong insistence on the inability of the flesh to keep the law, still the law had a just claim on humanity. Remember too his basic point, it is not the Law that is bad, it is that the flesh, weakened by sin, is unable to fulfill the law.
11. ***might be fulfilled-***
 - a. notice the passive voice. The fulfillment of the Law is not human achievement, it is submission to the work of God.
 - b. Christians are not called to keep the law, they are called to fulfill it by the grace of God. Keeping the Law means observing its

precepts in a narrow, legal sense. Fulfilling the Law means seeing its inner meaning and striving to keep all its implications. This is a work of the Holy Spirit calling us to love which does not ask, "What's the least I can do?" Love asks, "What more can I do?" See how our Lord sets forth fulfillment of the Law in Matt 5-7, The Sermon on the Mount.

12. ***in us who live not according to the flesh but according to the spirit-***

- a. Here is an important line that helps us to see that chapter 8 is set apart from chapter 7. Compare this to 7:14 *I am carnal, sold into slavery to sin.*
- b. The Greek *me kata sarka peripateo* here is rendered more literally, *who are walking not according to the flesh.* The Greek participle (walking) coupled with the negative *me* gives a conditional sense to the clause which might be understood as "provided we walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit. This is another answer to some protestants who see the Christian life as a one-time act of faith that bestows a quality "believer" upon the individual. The Greek here implies that the Christian life is not something that flows automatically from an act of faith and baptism; on-going cooperation with the Holy Spirit is required.
- c. spirit is not capitalized here again because it does not seem that Paul refers to the Holy Spirit per se. He seems rather to be referring to that part of us that is spiritual as opposed to fleshly. The flesh, in the negative sense that Paul uses it here is that part of me that orients me to the earth and to my own inadequate efforts. The spirit is that part of me that turns to God and leans on him. It is this sense of the word spirit that Paul seems to mean here

B. ***For those who live according to the flesh are concerned with the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit with the things of the spirit. The concern of the flesh is death, but the concern of the spirit is life and peace. For the concern of the flesh is hostility to God; it does not submit to the law of God, nor can it; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; on the contrary you are in the spirit if only the Spirit of God dwells in you.***

1. Paul now begins to detail more clearly the difference between flesh and spirit.
2. ***For those who live according to the flesh are concerned with the things of the flesh-*** recall the Pauline meaning of the word flesh. In the context here we can see that it essentially means a self-centered interested wherein the person says, "I am concerned with myself, how I appear, etc." Thus, what is critical to the person of the flesh is self-exultation. Even when he keeps the Law the person approaches it as personal achievement rather than submission to God. The Greek here (*hoi kata sarka ontes*) literally means "those who are according to the flesh." The word *ontes* is related to our word ontology which refers to the very being of a person. Paul does

not therefore describe an accidental quality of a person but rather refers to that which takes place at the very core of their being.

3. ***but those who live according to the spirit with the things of the spirit***
4. this refers to the baptized who are open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit because they are in Christ Jesus. However, Paul does not say that every baptized person fits this description as he will qualify it in verse 9: ...if only the Spirit of God dwells in you. Thus, as said above we must cooperate with the Holy Spirit and be truly submitted to him.
5. ***The concern of the flesh is death*** - left to himself and his own self reliance, man can do nothing but bring about his own death, spiritually and physically. This fact is quite evident today in our culture of death. In most ways we are the ultimate paragons of self-reliance. We depend on our science, our technology; we glory in our achievements which are many. Yet, death is surprisingly evident in this culture. Abortion, contraception and euthanasia are all examples of our distaste for life that is not on our terms. Suicide is also astonishingly evident. In fact, suicide (take note Dr. Kevorkian) is the ultimate act of those in the flesh. What it says in effect is, "I will not be submitted to God or anyone else. I am the Lord of my life. I decide to live or die." This is self-centered to the ultimate. Our culture is flesh-crazed. Everything from sex to drugs to materialism to hedonism shows this. But see how this situation sets up happiness and pleasure as the only things that are really valuable. When these are not in evidence death is the preferred alternative. This shows how *the concern of the flesh is death*.
6. ***but the concern of the spirit is life and peace***- the Christian seeks to live, not just for now but for eternity. This vision of eternity provides perspective which provides peace. Because he sees the finishing line and the glory that waits there he is able to endure and live bravely. Suicide and other death-directed solutions (e.g. alcohol, drugs, and other unhealthy diversions) are not needed for the Spirit gives peace. They are seen for the cowardly acts that they are. Likewise, because he is zealous to live, he seeks to please God and this too provides peace and joy in this life (cf John 15:11). Lastly, the Christian does not just cherish life for himself but delights in the gift of life in others. Thus the Christian delights to see new life and welcomes it. Those in the flesh speak of "over-population" and are embarrassed or scared at large families etc.
7. ***For the concern of the flesh is hostility to God***- because the flesh seeks self-control any authority is resented. God is clearly an authority and thus the flesh rebels against him for this very reason. The flesh says, "I am in control, nobody tells me what to do." Likewise, the preoccupation with this world creates a contempt for the world to come (the kingdom of heaven). James 4:4 says Whoever wants to make himself a lover of this world makes himself an enemy of God. Why? because God has told us that this world is passing away. Those who choose this world for their focus thus see God as a thief who will destroy and take away their work.

They are thus hostile to his work and his very being seeing him as a rival and a thief.

8. ***it does not submit to the law of God-*** remember the essence of the flesh is achievement not submission. Those in the spirit are submitted to the will and work of God. Those in the flesh seek control and see their good works as an achievement rather than a gift. Therefore, even if they keep the law, those in the flesh are not submitted to God since they claim to do it rather than to see how God does it in them.
9. ***nor can it-*** that those in the flesh are not submitted to God is not an accident that could be rectified if the fleshly person just understood a little better. The flesh cannot, by definition, be submitted to God. It must be put to death and replaced by the spirit.
10. ***those who are in the flesh cannot please God-*** this is axiomatic. Since the flesh is hostile to the promptings of God and rebels against "not being in control" the flesh will never be submitted to God and will thus never be pleasing to God. Note that this does not just apply to the evidently wicked such as murderers. It can apply to the so-called pious as well. Recall the parable of our Lord wherein two men went to pray, the pharisee and the publican. One (the pharisee) praised himself and his achievement in keeping the law. The publican however confessed his total dependance on the mercy of God. The publican went away justified, the pharisee did not. Why? because the pharisee was in the flesh, the publican was submitted to the Spirit and was thus in the spirit. Remember too how in Chapter 7 the personal pronouns "I" and "me" were used so excessively. The pharisee and the "I" of Romans 7 are essentially self-reliant, self-centered fleshy men. They were not submitted to God even though both might have considered themselves pious and respectful of God. In fact they were deluded. It is quite possible for many to fall into the trap of the pious: namely, to keep the law in such a way that we build up our own egos and keep God "under control." Those in the trap of the pious say, "I'll do something nice for God so he'll have to do something nice for me." What's wrong with this? It takes God out of the role as savior and puts me there. This is the flesh, "I am in control, my salvation is in my hands, I can achieve it." If this is the case then who needs Jesus? All those who consider themselves pious must consider the possibility that they see their holiness as achievement rather than submission to God's work. If this is the case, God is not pleased. He never is pleased by self-exultation. Thus such a person must repent and beg for an awareness of holiness as God's gift to us.
11. ***But you are not in the flesh-*** at least we better not be. The point is rhetorical although it ought to be factual. It could almost be understood as "But you are not in the flesh!...right?...?" A true Christian is not in the flesh. It is impossible for Jesus Christ to die on the cross and still have me be in the flesh. How can we who died with Christ still live in the flesh. *Our old self was crucified with him (6:6)*

12. ***on the contrary you are in the spirit if only the Spirit of God dwells in you.-***
- a. the first occurrence of the word "spirit" is not capitalized. Commentators are not in complete agreement however. Some think it is a reference to the Holy Spirit and should thus be capitalized. Others, including our translators think it refers to the human complex. The view that capitalize it here seem more on target especially when linked to the second half of the phrase that definitely speaks of the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of God).
 - b. Notice to the causative principle. If we are in the Spirit it is because it is a work of God. We are in the Spirit provided that the Spirit of God dwells in us.
 - c. Frequent confession is important for this indwelling of the Holy Spirit to be effective. A person in mortal sin is not said to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Likewise, baptism is critical to this point since, once again, the Holy Spirit does not dwell in the unregenerate. Baptism makes one a temple of the Holy Spirit.
 - d. To be a spiritual person is to be submitted fully to God. It is to be open to God in such a manner that is not legalistic per se but is one of love. It is the disposition by which we cry out "Abba" Paul will develop this in the verses to come so we'll leave it til then.
 - e. Finally, note how to be "in the spirit" is not an automatic fact for the Christian. Paul says in effect, you are in the Spirit provided the Holy Spirit dwells in you. This point was made above. The "once saved, always saved" school of thought needs to recall that there must be cooperation with the Holy Spirit. By serious sin the Holy Spirit will depart and then the person is no longer "in the Spirit"

C. ***Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit that dwells in you. Consequently brothers, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.***

1. ***Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him-*** to belong to Christ one must have his Holy Spirit. One must be in the Spirit. This is the difference between religious studies and faith. One can know all about Christ, his life and teaching and even agree to these teachings. But without the gift of faith and the indwelling spirit it is only a work of the flesh. Such a person could have the same relation to Bhudda. Faith is more than knowledge about God, it is an intimate, personal relationship with him in love. Religious study and knowledge thereof is a human work and a work of flesh. Faith is a work of God and is submission to God. Faith is a work of the Spirit. Without faith it is impossible to please God.

2. ***although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive because of righteousness-*** Paul essentially brings forth an analogy here. In the natural order, the difference between a live body and a corpse is that the human spirit has departed. The same is true in the spiritual order. Our Spirit is alive because of the justification we have received by faith. This justification means that the Spirit of God gives life to our death-directed body. Remember, for Paul, "Body" means more than the physical part of a person. It means, in this context, the whole person. Thus the person was dead because of sin but is given life because of the Spirit of God received by justification.
3. ***If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you-***
 - a. first Paul traces the origins of the resurrection to the Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead. Paul refers here to Jesus' human nature. As God, Jesus had the power to raise up his human nature. The resurrection was a work of God; hence, Jesus, in his divinity, participates in that work. Yet, as to his human nature, this action of resurrection was received from the Holy Spirit. But this work does not exclude Jesus (in his divinity) in any way. Every act of the Holy Spirit includes both Father and Son since the Holy Spirit is the principle of Love between them.
 - b. ***the one*** - sadly the feminist demand for inclusive language has muddled this text. The phrase is better rendered "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead..." This makes it clear that Paul refers to the Father who accomplishes the work by the Holy Spirit.
4. ***the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also-*** notice the future tense "will give life" This points to the second coming of Jesus. When we die, our soul goes before the Lord for judgment. The mortal body (this time Paul means the physical part of our existence) lies in the earth. But at the Last Day the Trumpet shall sound and the bodies of the dead will rise incorruptible to be rejoined to their souls. Thus the whole person will share in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Paul will revisit this theme later in this chapter (v. 23). There he states that although we have received the firstfruits of the Spirit, we also groan as we await the redemption of our bodies. We'll deal more with it then
 - a. again, "the one" here is "He," that is, the Father.
5. ***through his Spirit that dwells in you*** - The indwelling of the Spirit is the living force behind the vitality of the Christian Life. See Ez 37:14ff for an Old Testament prophecy of this state. Also compare this verse to Rom 7:17 - there Paul said "sin dwells in me." Now he says "his Spirit dwells in you." Again, note the new state of affairs. This is not the same man described in 7. It is the new man redeemed by Jesus Christ.

IX. Romans 9-11 Overview and Summary⁹

A. **Paul's lament about his fellow Jews (9:1-5)**

1. Paul at times in this letter has been strong in his condemnation of the hardness of heart in many of his fellow Jews. He has had strong words for this as we have seen. The charge could be made that Paul is angry and has lost any respect or care for his fellow Jews and now glibly mocks them. In these first verses Paul swears this is not the case. He swears that his sorrow at the present state of affairs is real, not contrived. He further recalls the basic respect that is due Israel because of the promises given it and the fact that the Messiah has come forth from Israel.

B. **Despite the regrettable situation, Israel's failure to believe is not contrary to God's direction of history. (9:6-13)**

1. One might conclude that, since Israel largely failed to respond to the Messiah despite the prophecies and all the helps given to Israel, that God's word was ineffective and had failed in its purpose. Thus God has failed to achieve his purpose. Paul answers this by making a distinction: not all those from Israel are Israel (v. 6b). In effect Paul answers the claim by implicitly setting up the following logical steps:
 - a. You say God has failed in his promise because all Israel has not responded to the coming of the Messiah.
 - b. Well, who is a true Israelite?
 - c. Only when we have determined who is truly of Israel can we say, "Israel failed to accept the Messiah."
 - d. Thus again, Who is a truly of Israel? What does it mean to be truly of Israel? Only when we have answered these questions can say that "God has failed in his purpose."
2. To answer the implicit question, "Who is truly of Israel?" Paul returns to a theme he developed in Chapter 4 and speaks of how one is truly a descendant of Abraham. He declared there and reasserts here that one is a descendant of Abraham not by physical generation but by grace, through faith. Isaac was a child of the promise of God and was received by Abraham on account of his faith. Abraham had another son by physical generation (Ishmael) but he and his descendants are not of Israel despite their physical descendance. Paul thus recalls the fact here that Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. Only Isaac was the child of the promise and the fruit of faith. Ishmael, though Abraham's son by physical descent, was not the child of the promise or the fruit of faith. Neither he nor his descendants are of Israel though they are physically descendants of Abraham. Thus, for Jews to claim that physical descent from Abraham is enough to make them a true Israelite and an heir to the promises is

⁹Note that at his point in the course I had to make up for lost time. Thus we treated 9-11 in a rather cursory fashion. Perhaps this was well since, even in macrocosm, Paul's arguments are difficult to process. Later I need to add the more complete textual commentary. N.B. 9-11 were all covered in one class.

insufficient. It is not physical descent that matters, it is God's choice that matters. God chose Isaac, not Ishmael. Further, of *Isaac's* two sons, Jacob and Esau, God chose Jacob (despite the fact that Esau was the first born son). Esau's descendants (the Edomites) are not of Israel either. Thus again, physical descent alone is not sufficient to say "I am of Israel and I share in the promises and if the promises pass *me* by, then God's word failed." Therefore it is faith, and not physical descent alone that makes one to be truly of Israel. Paul is explicit in chapter 10 that the faith of which he speaks is faith in Jesus Christ. The true Israel therefore does accept the Messiah who is Jesus. But note that Paul is not finished with his argument here. More is to come.

C. **In fact, God's sovereign freedom can use even indocility to foster his purposes.** (9:14-23)

1. These verses have had a great bearing on the question of predestination and were very formative for the flawed Calvinist notions of predestination. It is too complex to enter that debate here but simply note the fact for possible future discussions. The particular verse over which the Calvinists stumbled is verse 22: "Yet what if God...fashioned [those vases of wrath] for destruction?"
2. Paul says in this section that God foresaw Israel's stubbornness and indocility and makes use of it for his own ends. As he will develop shortly this end is to provide entry for the Gentiles into his saving plan. This use by God of human stubbornness to achieve his ends is prefigured in the story of Moses and Pharaoh (Ex 3:10-13:36). The more stubborn and obstinate Pharaoh became the greater God's glory was since, in the end Pharaoh bent to the will of God and Israel was led forth to freedom (salvation). Had Pharaoh been weak-willed the manifestation of the glory would have been far less evident and the saving act less memorable. Now the obstinate Jews play the role of Pharaoh. The more stubborn they are the more persistent God is and this persistence overflows into the saving work directed to the Gentiles. In the end, the real Israelite will bend and God's glory will be seen for what it is. God foresees every human obstacle and uses it to further his plan. He is never hindered by feeble human obstacles.
3. Paul next draws on the image of God as a potter (cf Jer 18:3-6; Is 29:16; Is 45:9; Is 64:7). He does this to counter the possible objection "that it seems strange that God would act in such a way as to allow the weaknesses of others to be the salvation of others and the manifestation of his glory." In effect Paul draws upon the image of the potter and asks the classic question associated with that image, "Who are you, O creature, to question the ways of God? How can the pot say to the potter why did you make me thus?" Thus the fact that Israel has reacted poorly to God's mode of salvation in no way argues that God has somehow lost control of things. The whole objection presumes that the creature can have knowledge of the way God ought to act. Paul rejects the premise of the argument altogether. The bottom line is this, God is sovereign and he is working his purpose

out. No curve ball that any human being throws can keep God from hitting a home run.

D. Further, Israel's infidelity and the existence of a faithful remnant are nothing new. They are, in fact, prefigured in the Old Testament. (9:24-29)

1. Paul backs up the point he just made by showing how the fact that not all Israel would be saved was in fact prophesied by God. Thus, the large scale rejection of the Messiah by Israel is no surprise to God who had said through the prophet Isaiah that *even though the number of the Israelites be as the sands of the sea, only a remnant would be saved*. Likewise, through Hosea he declared that *Those who were not my people I shall call my people*. Hence, both the rejection of the Gospel by the majority of Israel and the going forth of grace and salvation to the gentiles were foretold in the Old Testament. Thus God does not act arbitrarily nor is he surprised or thwarted by Israel's rejection of the Gospel. We do well here to recall in addition to what Paul says here the prophecy of God to Abraham in Gen 18:8 All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in you.

E. If there has been a failure it is not on God's part it is Israel's failure.(9:30-33)

1. The problem with many of the Jews is that they had thought they could achieve uprightness by their deeds and by human power. As we have seen, this is the flesh. Those who are in the spirit however are submitted to God and see their uprightness not as achievement but as a gift. This uprightness is not achieved by human might but is grasped by the gift of faith which is the word of God. Paul's wording here is very delicate (especially in verse 33). Israel's mis-step was in some sense part of God's plan, but in reality is remains the fault of Israel. This is a delicate issue in terms of philosophy: the balance between God's sovereignty and man's freedom is precarious. The Calvinists, with their radical predestination theory fell off the high wire because they lost the balance.¹⁰
2. Paul then stitches together two quotes from Isaiah 28:16+8:14. The Old Testament imagery here is actually quite rich but there is not the time to develop it all here. In effect what Paul does is to state that Christ, the rock, will be a stumbling stone, or a test from God. Those who put their faith in him will not be put to shame as they build upon the solid rock and step up to glory by him. Those who do not put faith in him will trip over him and fall flat on their face. Paul will develop the theme further in Chapter 10.

¹⁰That God has foreknowledge of something, say a sin, does not mean he forces or even wants a person to do it. For example, God knew what Judas would do and even prophesied it. This did not mean God made Judas betray him. Judas is still responsible as the Lord says "Better he had never been born." How can we reconcile God's ultimate sovereignty and Lordship of history with human freedom? Ultimately we are faced here with a mystery beyond our comprehension, at least here on earth. But at least realized this: To foresee or have prior knowledge of events (as God does) does not make God the author of those events as though he was forcing someone to do something. The mystery here is also caught up in the act that God dwells in eternity which is not just "a long, long time," it is all times at once. Past, present, and future are all at once for God. This is totally beyond our experience and is thus a mystery.

- F. **Uprightness comes from Christ who is the fulfillment (end) of the Law.** (10:1-4)
1. Paul basically reiterates the point. Though his fellow Jews have zeal for God they are misinformed since they see uprightiness as their achievement rather than God's work. Only by being submitted to the uprightiness of God (rather than their own agenda) will they may be made upright through faith. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe (cf 1:16-17)
 2. Christ is the end of the Law. That is, he is the fulfillment of the law; the goal of the Law. The whole law points to him, prophesies him and is fulfilled perfectly by him. Paul is saddened to see his fellow Jews' failure to recognize God's real mode of granting uprightiness by submission through faith rather than personal achievement through deeds.
- G. **This new way of righteousness is open to all and is near at hand as scripture (O.T.) shows.** (10:5-13)
1. This is a complex passage with many allusions and direct references to the Old Testament. Yet Paul often puts a very different spin on them than their original context contained. For our purposes here let us merely see how what Paul says in effect is that the new way of justification through faith in Jesus is not some remote or unheard of teaching. This Gospel is proclaimed and near to all with ears to hear for the apostles have preached it loudly and clearly among the Jews: *The word is near to you, on your lips and in your heart, (that is the word of faith we preach)...* (v. 7). This phrase is from the Old Testament (Deut 30:14) and Paul uses it as a prophecy of the message of the Gospel. Thus God has proclaimed loudly what Israel needs to hear and no one can say "we never heard this."
 2. *If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in you heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* Many protestant use this as a proof text that all that is needed for salvation is a simple, one-time act of faith. And once saved...always saved. Yet, recall some of the points we made in this regard at the beginning of Part two of this course. Review those notes and see that to take this one line and make it the whole of Paul's doctrine of justification is an injustice because it ignores so many other things he has said. Paul, taken as a whole, does not envisage faith as a static or merely intellectual approval of the truth of the resurrection and Lordship of Jesus. Rather it is a dynamic, transformative power of grace within the believer who, by the very reception of faith, will fulfill the law. See too the future tense of the verb here: will be saved. Although one may argue that this is a "conditional future" attained merely by passing the if of the statement, it is not grammatically certain that this is the case. And it is far from evident that Paul means to say that the salvation received is irreversible and irrevocable.
- H. **But Israel has not responded to this preached word.** (10:14-21).
1. Again Paul asserts that the Gospel has been preached. Israel has heard the Gospel of Jesus and the justification that comes through faith in Him. The

fact that the Jews have heard and not believed makes it their error not God's. God has done all that he can to bring Israel to faith. He sent his Son in fulfillment of countless prophecies, who then sent the Apostles as heralds "to the ends of the earth." Israel has understood but remain in obstinacy. The fact that the Gentiles have heard and heeded the message is proof that the message has gone out and that it has been effectively preached. The obstinacy of Israel and refusal to heed the preached word is seen as a recognized pattern. Thus Paul quotes several passages of the difficulties Isaiah encountered.

2. Some have argued that Paul in verses 14-15 are Paul's justification for preaching to the Gentiles. This may be so but it seems out of context here or at least a secondary point. Besides, he has already justified the mission to the Gentiles back in chapter two and also, more recently, in 9:25 by quoting Hosea.

I. **Yet, Israel's hardening and failure to heed are partial, there is a faithful remnant. (11:1-10)**

1. Paul now announces that not all Israel will be lost. No, a remnant shall be saved. In one sense this has already happened since many of the Christians are in fact Jews: all the Apostles, the Blessed Mother, Paul himself, and many others. Paul is not content with this obviously and that is why he keeps the dialogue going with the Jews even as he preaches to the Gentiles. Some have heard though many have been obtuse and are hardened in their unbelief. Again, the remnant theology is nothing new. The Old Testament is replete with example of how the majority of Israel fell away and only a small number remained faithful. It started in the desert. Many never saw the promised land due to their infidelity. In the various exiles, many never returned by choice. Paul also quotes from 1 Kings 19:18, Psalm 69 and alludes to other places. Thus the fact of only a small remnant and the loss of the majority is sad but certainly not unprecedented.

J. **Israel's Disbelief is not necessarily permanent and is providential. (11:11-24)**

1. Paul now turns to the Gentiles and warns them not to be smug about the faithlessness of Israel. They must look with awe on how God has used the obstinacy of the Jews to very fruitfully bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. Likewise they must not forget that Judaism is the means by which God chose to effect his saving plan. Judaism is the root. Now, although some branches (i.e. many of the Jews) though not all have been lopped off, the Gentiles must not gloat or be filled with pride. They must have fear and vigilance lest they be lopped off too!¹¹
2. Paul then declares that the Jews who do not persist in their unbelief will be grafted back in (V. 23).

¹¹This insight (i.e. v. 23) is important for the "once-saved-always-saved" school to heed. This line and many other places show how Paul does not suggest that a one-time act of faith is all that is need for salvation. Rather, it is possible to be cut from the vine once grafted to it by faith. Faith must be a lived and dynamic reality. Again, see the introductory notes to part two of the these notes.

K. **In the end, "all" Israel will be saved showing forth the saving mystery of God's sovereign plan. (11:25-32)**

1. This can be a very difficult passage! At one level Paul seems to say that in the end, all Israel (without distinction) will be saved. Some have held that this is exactly what Paul means: that no matter what they do, all the children of Israel will be saved. Yet to hold this very literal view would be to directly contradict what Paul has just said: viz that a remnant would be saved and that some, *if they do not persist in their unbelief*, would be grafted back in. It would also directly contradict all that Paul has been saying throughout this Letter! How many times in Chapter 2-4 and in Chapter 9 has Paul said, in effect, "Don't show me your birthright, show me your faith. Recall Rom 2:11 "There is no partiality with God."
2. No, the best understanding is that, when Paul says, "All Israel" he means "True Israel" Recall the discussion of Chapter 9 and especially 9:6 *For they are not all Israel who are of Israel*. Thus, when they repent, God will show mercy to all who confess their sin of unbelief. In this sense, the Gentiles too, who have been grafted in by Faith are part of "all Israel," that is, "true Israel." Thus Paul's point, in the end the true Israel will be saved and this will all be a work of God's mercy. No one can say, "I did not need the mercy of God."

L. **Hymn of Praise to God's wisdom and mercy. (11:33-36)**

X. Romans 9 The Question of the Observant Jew.

- A. Concern - *¹I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit, ²that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen by race.*
- B. Call - *⁴They are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; ⁵to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ. God who is over all be blessed for ever. Amen*
- C. Continuity - *⁶But it is not as though the word of God had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, ⁷and not all are children of Abraham because they are his descendants; but "Through Isaac shall your descendants be named"¹². ⁸This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned as descendants. ⁹For this is what the promise said, "About this time I will return and Sarah shall have a son."¹³ ¹⁰And not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, ¹¹though they were not yet*

¹²Gen 21:12

¹³Gen 18:10

born and had done nothing either good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call, ¹²she was told, "The elder will serve the younger."¹⁴ ¹³As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."¹⁵

- D. Control - *⁴What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! ¹⁵For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."¹⁶ ¹⁶So it depends not upon man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy. ¹⁷For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "I have raised you up for the very purpose of showing my power in you, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth."¹⁷¹⁸So then he has mercy upon whomever he wills, and he hardens the heart of whomever he wills.¹⁹ You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" ²⁰But who are you, a man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me thus?" ¹⁸²¹Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for beauty and another for menial use?*
- E. Case - *²²What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath made for destruction, ²³in order to make known the riches of his glory for the vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? ²⁵As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'my beloved.'"¹⁹ ²⁶"And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"²⁰ ²⁷And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved; ²⁸for the Lord will execute his sentence upon the earth with rigor and dispatch."²¹ ²⁹And as Isaiah predicted, "If the Lord of hosts had not left us children, we would have fared like Sodom and been made like Gomorrah."²²*
- F. Central point - *³⁰What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, righteousness through faith; ³¹but that Israel who pursued the righteousness which is based on law did not succeed in fulfilling that law. ³²Why? Because they did not pursue it through faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³as it is written, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone that will make men stumble, a rock that will make them fall; and he who believes in him will not be put to*

14Gen 25:23

15Mal 1:3

16Ex 33:9

17Ex 9:16

18Is 29:16

19Hosea 2:25,1

20Hosea 11:25

21Is 10:22-23

22Is 1:9

shame."²³

XI. Romans 10 - The Path to Salvation

- A. Petition - ¹*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.*
- B. Problem - ²*I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened.* ³*For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.* ⁴*For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified.*
- C. Prescription - ⁵*Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on the law shall live by it.* ⁶*But the righteousness based on faith says, Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷or "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, on your lips and in your heart*²⁴ *(that is, the word of faith which we preach); ⁹because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* ¹⁰*For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.*
- D. Promise - ¹¹*The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame."*²⁵ ¹²*For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him.* ¹³*For, "every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."*²⁶
- E. Preachers - ¹⁴*But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? ¹⁵And how can men preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!" ²⁷¹⁶But they have not all obeyed the gospel; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" ²⁸¹⁷So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.*¹⁸ *But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have; for "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."*²⁹ ¹⁹*Again I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, "I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry."*³⁰²⁰ *Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me."*³¹ ²¹*But of Israel he says, "All day long*

24Deut 30:14

25Ps 37:19; Is 49:23

26Joel 3:5

27Is 52:7

28Is 53:1

29Psalm 19:4

30Dt 32:21

31Is 65:1

*I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.*³²

XII. Romans 11 - True Israel

- A. Remnant - *¹I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ²God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? ³“Lord, they have killed thy prophets, they have demolished thy altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.” ⁴But what is God’s reply to him? “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” ⁵So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. ⁶But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.*
- B. Reason - *⁷What then? Israel failed to obtain what it sought. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, ⁸as it is written, “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that should not see and ears that should not hear, down to this very day.” ⁹And David says, “Let their table become a snare and a trap, a pitfall and a retribution for them; ¹⁰let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their backs for ever.”*
- C. Result - *¹¹So I ask, have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means! But through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. ¹²Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! ¹³Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry ¹⁴in order to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. ¹⁵For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?*
- D. Reality - *¹⁶If the dough offered as first fruits is holy, so is the whole lump; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. ¹⁷But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the richness of the olive tree, ¹⁸do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you. ¹⁹You will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” ²⁰That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast only through faith. So do not become proud, but stand in awe. ²¹For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. ²²Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you too will be cut off. ²³And even the others, if they do not persist in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. ²⁴For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree.*
- E. Restatement - *²⁵Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand*

this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, ²⁶and so all Israel will be saved; as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”; ²⁷“and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.” ²⁸As regards the gospel they are enemies of God, for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. ²⁹For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable. ³⁰Just as you were once disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹so they have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may receive mercy. ³²For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all.

- F. Rejoicing - ³³*O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!*³ *“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”*³⁵ *“Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?”*³⁶ *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory for ever. Amen.*