

Romans
For Lovelsrael.org
Chapter 1
Part 1: Romans 1:1-10

This book of Romans is very significant, especially for believers. In it, Paul lays out many Biblical truths and theological doctrines. As believers, we need to understand these doctrines, so that we can walk in this world having a testimony before God that He is well pleased with. Many of Paul's points in this book are made from the perspective of Jewish culture, and much of Paul's emphasis is on the Old Testament Scripture (the Tanach – the Law, the Prophets and the Writings). There were many Jewish individuals living in Rome at the time of Paul. Historically, one of the things that was unique about this Jewish community was that they had their own style of prayer. Although the congregation of Believers in Rome did have some Gentiles in it, there was also a significant group of Jewish believers in it. Paul wanted the Jewish individuals within this congregation to understand the truth that God had revealed to him, in order that this truth would be shared throughout this congregation, throughout Rome and throughout the world.

Verse 1: *“Paul, a slave of Messiah Yeshua, called an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.”*

Slave: The word Paul uses here is a stronger word than ‘servant’ or ‘worker’. Paul saw himself as a slave. He understood the implications of redemption. Redemption is an accounting term. It involves a transfer, and for that transfer to take place a payment had to be made. Paul understood that he had been brought with the blood of Messiah, and, as such, he had a new status – that of being the slave of Messiah. On the one hand Paul knew that this covenant of forgiveness that he had entered into made him a son of God (i.e. he had an eternal inheritance), but on the other hand Paul also understood that by entering into this covenant he had also made a decision to submit to and to serve God.

Called an apostle: Paul is emphasizing (as he frequently does in many of his epistles) that he had a unique call upon his life - a call to be an apostle. This meant that he no longer desired to make his own decisions for his life, but that he had obediently subjected himself to the will and purposes of Messiah for it.

Set apart: This word is written in the passive. This means that Paul couldn't do this to himself – it was done for him. Paul didn't volunteer to be an apostle. God made him one. The term ‘set apart’ carries with it the idea of sanctification. Sanctification is always rooted in the purpose of God. Paul's life was set apart for God's purposes.

Gospel: The good news. This is a concept also found in the Old Testament and is related to not just any type of good news but specifically good news concerning redemption (Psalm 40:9, Psalm 96:2, Isaiah 52:7).

Verse 2: *“The One which has been proclaimed from beforehand by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures.”*

Proclaimed (promised) from beforehand: The gospel was not a new concept in the New Testament.

By His prophets: We need to understand, within the prophetic context of Scripture, the importance of the gospel of Messiah. Understanding this will lead to understanding what the expectations of God are for those whom He has redeemed.

Verse 3: *“Concerning His Son Messiah Yeshua our Lord, the One who has come from the seed of David, according to the flesh,”*

Messiah Yeshua our Lord: If we want to have a pleasing walk before God, wanting to do His will, then we are called to demonstrate that Yeshua is the Lord of our lives (that we submit to Him).

The seed of David: **Note 1:** There are two genealogies for Yeshua – one in Matthew 1:1-17 and the other in Luke 3:23-38. Many people claim that the genealogy in Luke is Mary’s family line, but there is no Biblical basis for this as that is not taught in Scripture.

Note 2: There is a very important prophecy in Jeremiah 22:28-30 concerning a very evil king in Judah called Jehoahaz. This prophecy states that none of this man’s descendants would ever sit upon the throne. This is highly important because that would seem to destroy the Messianic promise (1 Kings 9:5). The Bible teaches us that Yeshua was supernaturally conceived of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 7:14, Luke 1:31-35). He was conceived **without** human seed. In Jewish law, if a woman is in a covenantal relationship with a man (Mary was betrothed – legally married - and therefore in covenant with Joseph) than any children born to her are considered legally his - even if they are not biologically his. Because of Joseph’s family line, through King David, Yeshua is legally considered of the seed of David. Biologically, though, this is not the case. The fact that Yeshua was born to a virgin fulfils this prophecy in Jeremiah 22:28-30 biologically, yet it also ensured that the promise of the coming of the Messiah was not destroyed.

Note 3: Gentile believers are not Jewish. Biologically we do not descend from the seed of Abraham. However, legally (in God’s eyes), once we believe, we are of the seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:29). Legally Yeshua was of the house of David, just like every (Gentile) believer is part of the seed of Abraham – even though they are not of Jewish descent.

According to the flesh: This means according to a human way or in a natural way.

Verse 4: *“Who has been demonstrated the Son of God in power, according to the Holy Spirit, by the resurrection from the dead.”*

Demonstrated: Seen to be. This is a word that means to be cut out according to a pattern. Yeshua perfectly fulfilled the set of standards laid out for Him.

The Son of God: Speaking of Yeshua’s divinity.

Resurrection from the dead: Yeshua’s resurrection from the dead is vitally important to us as believers. It demonstrates to us that He is the Son of God, the firstborn of the dead (Colossians 1:18)

Verse 5: *“Through whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all the nations on behalf of His name.”*

Through whom: Referring to the Lord Messiah Yeshua.

Apostleship: We have all been sent out to do God’s will – to be a blessing to the nations. We may not all have a call to be an apostle, like Paul was, or we may not be sent forth like missionaries are, but, as believers, we are all called to represent God in this world.

Obedience to the faith: God’s purpose for our lives is that we demonstrate faithful obedience to Him.

His name: Jewish people speak about God as ‘HaShem’ – literally: The Name. Paul, referring to Yeshua by the ‘Name’, alludes to the divinity of Yeshua in this verse.

Verse 6: *“In whom also you are called by Messiah Yeshua.”*

You: Every believer.

Called: We all have a calling on our lives.

Verse 7: *“To all the ones being in Rome, the beloved of God, the ones who are called saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Messiah Yeshua.”*

To all the ones being in Rome: Paul formally addresses those whom he is writing this letter to.

Saints: Literally: Holy ones. Holiness is not so much just a state of being, but it also involves a will, a purpose, an objective, a designation. God has saved us and designated us to serve Him, to manifest His glory in the world.

The Lord: Paul emphasises the Lordship of Messiah. We need to do the same – in our speech as well as in our actions.

Verse 8: *“First, I want to give thanks to my God through Messiah Yeshua on behalf of all of you, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the world.”*

Your faith is being proclaimed: This congregation had a testimony that extended beyond their neighbourhood and city. Their reputation extended into the whole world. They had a faith that made a difference in the lives of others.

Verse 9: *“For my witness is God, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, as doing so without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.”*

Without ceasing: Without any type of hesitation, without any type of break.

Verse 10: *“And beseeching if somehow already that I will travel, by the will of God, to come unto you.”*

Somehow already: Paul wanted to travel to them very soon.

Come unto you: Paul had a great desire to be part of this congregation where the Spirit of God was moving. People in this congregation understood the Lordship of Messiah. People were walking in the Spirit.

Chapter 1

Part 2: Romans 1:11-17

God has saved us with a purpose – to carry out His will in our own lives, as well as to be an influence in the lives of others.

Verse 11: *“For I desired to see you, in order that some spiritual gift I could impart to you, for the strengthening of you.”*

Desired: The word used here alludes to a great desire. Paul was passionate about this.
Some spiritual gift I could impart to you: Paul wanted to have an influence in this city and among this congregation of believers. He wanted to see people grow. He wanted to help them to recognise God’s authority in their lives – in the decisions they made and in how they spoke.

Strengthening of you: This strengthening (becoming stronger and more mature) was as an outcome of God’s Spirit moving in their lives. Paul wanted this congregation to mature so that they could have a greater influence among the people in the city of Rome.

Verse 12: *“That is, that I may be mutually encouraged by your faith and also by mine.”*

Faith: Faith should not be stagnant. Faith needs to grow and change. It needs to get stronger and mature. It needs to become more knowledgeable and more useful to God.

Verse 13: *“I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, that many times I had a desire to come to you, but I was hindered until this present time, in order that I have some fruit also among you just as also among the remaining Gentiles.”*

Ignorant: Unknowing. Unaware.

Brethren: Paul is talking to the believers in this congregation.

I was hindered: When we are committed to God's will, we will experience hindrance from the enemy. When we are faithful to God it is inevitable that we will experience opposition.

That I have some fruit: This was the reason why Paul wanted to go to this congregation in Rome. Paul wanted to be an instrument to help others to produce fruit in their lives.

Fruit also among you just as also among the remaining Gentiles: Paul wanted to have influence over more and more people. Paul understood that as a Jew he had a call on his life to be a light unto the nations (Genesis 12:3), a source of illumination to Gentiles.

Verse 14: *“To the Greeks and the barbarians, those who are wise and those who are foolish, I am a debtor.”*

Greeks...barbarians: This verse is showing a contrast. In most people's minds the Greeks, although they were idol worshipers and far from the truth of God, were considered highly cultured. Barbarians, on the other hand, were seen as uncultured. It did not matter to Paul who the people were – cultured or uncultured – he wanted all men to embrace the truth. He wanted all men to experience salvation and justification.

I am a debtor: Paul was obligated to them. Paul considered himself one of the worst sinners among men (1 Timothy 1:15), yet God had graciously saved him through the blood of His Son. Paul understood that this act of grace was a free gift. We cannot repay God for what He has done, but receiving this gift does obligate us to be people who want others to see, experience and know that same forgiveness. It should cause us to want all people to enter into a new covenant relationship with God through the gospel which is for all humanity.

Verse 15: *“So that according to me readiness for you, the ones in Rome, to evangelise.”*

Readiness: Paul is prepared. God was working in his life to make him prepared, but he was also someone who did his part in getting himself ready to serve God. He had studied the Word; he was trained in it. He had learned the proper principles for correctly interpreting the Word of God.

Evangelise: To preach in order to reveal the gospel message.

Verse 16: *“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Messiah, for the power of God it is for salvation, for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”*

I am not ashamed: Paul taught the gospel boldly and without compromise - although there were reprisals for doing so (beatings, arrest etc). Paul was not silenced, he did not back down and nor did he move aside in the face of intense opposition.

The power of God it is: It is the gospel that brings us into contact with the power of God.

Salvation: Salvation can be understood in two ways. As believers we have an initial contact with salvation when we are born again. As we enter into that covenantal relationship with God, through Messiah Yeshua, our sins are forgiven, and we receive eternal life and are then considered “saved”. However, as believers we need to see salvation in another way too. In the life of a believer, salvation works its way into our lives daily. Philippians 2:12 reminds us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. This is not referring to the salvation that we receive when we are born again. This is referring to the salvation that has to do with victory – living in such a way as to overcome the enemy and his schemes. It is through the power of the gospel message that we can begin to live victoriously, that we can begin to live in God’s will. Part of salvation is living a victorious life.

For the Jew first: Historically, according to the Scripture, it was God’s plan that the gospel was first given to Israel (*for the Jew first*) before it went to Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Greek: The non-Jew, the Gentile.

Verse 17: *“For the righteousness of God in (it) is revealed from faith to faith; just as it has been written, ‘The righteous out of faith shall live.’”*

The righteousness of God: There is a relationship between the gospel and righteousness. When we are saved (and the only way to be saved is through the One to whom that gospel message points) it is going to bring righteousness to us. When we receive salvation, we are declared righteous in God’s sight, by His grace. This means that we have been eternally justified from all of our guilt and sinfulness (Romans 5:1).

In it: This would be better translated “in Him”. We find the righteousness of God in the One (“Him”) to whom this gospel message points, not in “it”.

From faith to faith: This means that when we operate out of faith (believing the revelation of God) it is going to lead us (grow, mature and strengthen us) into a greater faith. Faith works itself out to bring us into a stronger or a greater faith. This impacts how we live.

Been written: Paul backs up his teaching by basing it on the Scripture.

The righteous (just) out of faith shall live: Quoted from Habakkuk 2:4.

Out of faith: This does not mean that we leave out faith in our lives. It means that we live according to faith. Faith takes us out of where we were and it brings us into a more pleasing and powerful expression of faith in God, through Messiah Yeshua.

Chapter 1

Part 3: Romans 1:18-25

God reveals truth to all men (and women) so that they can make a right decision – the right decision being to submit to that truth. All people are without excuse. If we submit to God’s truth it brings a righteous change into our lives through the Holy Spirit.

Verse 18: *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, the truth by unrighteousness they suppress.”*

Wrath: The judgment of God.

All: There is no exception.

Ungodliness and unrighteousness: The gospel produces righteousness, godliness, within us. The rejection of that gospel produces just the opposite – unrighteousness and ungodliness.

The truth ... they suppress: It is not that they are ignorant or unknowing of what truth is. They know what the truth is, yet they choose to suppress it or have nothing to do with it. This word ‘suppress’ is the same word used in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 where it is translated “restrain”. Suppressing the truth doesn't mean that the truth is taken out of the way or removed. It simply means that its hands are tied (so to speak) and it cannot function in their lives due to the presence of unrighteousness.

Verse 19: *“Because the knowledge of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.”*

The knowledge of God: Knowing that God exists.

Them: Those who are ultimately going to receive the wrath of God.

God has shown it to them: God has put the knowledge that He exists into every human being.

Verse 20: *“For His invisible (attributes), from the creation of the world, by what is created, are understood and clearly seen, both His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”*

His invisible attributes: This is how God manifested Himself to them.

Invisible attributes: His unseen qualities. Although we cannot see Him with our eyes, we can understand His character.

The creation of the world: Because creation exists, we must logically conclude that there is a Creator. Things do not happen by random chance. The “saviour” for evolutionists is time. They have bought into the lie that anything can happen if given enough time. No matter how many times you throw words or letters into the air they will never come down as a perfectly ordered and alphabetical dictionary. It is impossible. Likewise, many people want us to believe that creation is simply a random act of nothingness that came into being. This too, is an impossibility. We see the order of God in His creation.

Godhead: His divinity. God is not created. He is not like us. He is superior, unique, greater.

They are without excuse: Those who are going to experience God’s wrath knew, inherently (through their conscience), that there is a God, but they did not respond properly to Him.

Verse 21: *“Because knowing the God they did not glorify (Him) as God, nor were they thankful, but they became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”*

The God: There is only one true God.

Futile in their thoughts: Their thinking had no significance. They thought in vain. They did not reason correctly. When we know God exists, but we reject this or are defiant toward Him then it begins a process in our lives whereby our thinking becomes warped and produces nothing of goodness or substance, nothing that God takes pleasure in.

Foolish hearts: Foolish thinking (Heart is related to thoughts – Proverbs 23:7)

Darkened: They receive no illumination or revelation. This is a spiritual principle. When we reject truth, our hearts change. When we constantly choose to reject truth, our hearts become hard (Like Pharaohs did at the time of the exodus). When our hearts are hard, we can no longer see things clearly anymore and we are easily deceived.

Verse 22: *“Professing to be wise, but they became foolish.”*

Note: Even in an unregenerated (sinful) state, God is able to communicate with us through our consciences. Don't believe the falsehood that because someone is not yet saved, they cannot understand anything regarding the Bible. Even unbelievers know that they should not steal etc. However, when we constantly reject God’s Word and we put it aside when He convicts us of something it will cause our consciences to become seared to such a degree that we begin to see things incorrectly and we can be easily manipulated by the enemy.

Verse 23: *“And they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of corruptible images of men, of birds, of four-legged creatures and things that creep.”*

Note: Instead of worshiping God they begin to worship men and created things. This does not happen overnight. This happens as a process. These people do not want to submit to and obey the Word of God, so they slowly go further and further away from truth until they arrive at this place of false worship.

Creep: Those things that crawl upon the earth (Genesis 1:26)

Verse 24: *“Therefore also the God delivered them over unto the desires of their hearts for that which is unclean, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonour their bodies among themselves.”*

God delivered them over: God rejected them.

Dishonour their bodies: They began to behave in a way that dishonoured their bodies. We were created in the image of God. This means that we are called to reflect the character of God - to behave like He would behave. Instead of behaving like God, these people begin to behave differently.

Verse 25: *“These having exchanged the truth of God for falsehood, that they had reverence now and they served creation instead of the Creator, who is blessed forever and ever. Amen.”*

Exchanged the truth: They had the truth. God had put it into them, but they had rejected this truth and swapped it out for a lie.

Reverence: A word of worship. Falsehood became the priority in their lives.

They served creation instead of the Creator: They put their emphasis upon that which is created rather than on the One who created it.

Blessed forever and ever: It is only through Yeshua, the Creator (Colossians 1:15-18), the Word, that we can have eternal life and hope.

Chapter 1

Part 4: Romans 1:26-32

Every individual makes choices. This includes their values, how they make decisions, what they hold to be true and what they reject. We are either going to be individuals who accept the Word of God as truth and allow it to form our judgments or values, or we are going to be people who follow the ways of the world instead. The world is in disagreement with the values, perspective or judgments of God. This Scripture is not politically correct in our culture today, but it is truth and, as such, we (as followers of Yeshua) need to embrace it and share it, in love, with others – those who are rebelling against God’s order. We want people to change their ways and be in God’s will – for that is the very best place for them to be. As believers, this is going to become a greater issue and is going to require a decision from us...are we going to embrace the standards of the world (what it calls good and acceptable), or are we going to remain faithful to not compromise the standards of God?

Verse 26: *“On account of this, the God delivered them over unto passions of dishonour. For also the females are going to exchange the natural use for that which is against nature.”*

This: This is defiant rebellion toward or rejection of the truth of God. God gives us truth so that we can reflect His glory, and so that we can be used by Him.

The God: The only true God.

Delivered them over unto passions of dishonour: When we reject God it is going to have an adverse effect within us. We are going to start desiring those things that lead to dishonour.

Natural use: Divine order of things that God has put together. God's plan was that a male and a female entered into a covenantal relationship together (Genesis 2:24-25). Intimacy was intended to be, within the marriage covenant, between one man and one woman. That is the natural order that God has given to us. If we reject this and are defiant toward God's standards in this regard it is going to have an adverse effect in our lives.

That which is against nature: Speaking of two women in an intimate relationship with each other.

Verse 27: *"Likewise also even the males, leaving the natural use of a female, they will be made to burn in their desire for one another, they are working out for themselves shame, the penalty, which is absolutely necessary, because of their error among themselves, they will receive."*

The natural use of a female: Referring to the intimacy or union between one man and one woman.

They will be made to burn: This is written in the passive voice. When people are defiant against the truth of God it is going to cause a change to happen in their lives.

One another: This verse is a clear reference to homosexuality. This is ungodly behaviour and is an abomination to God.

Working out: Producing. Causing.

Shame: Guilt before God. Shame is going to be punished by God. God does not delight in the punishment of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11), but He desires that all men repent (2 Peter 3:9).

We all struggle with sin, and we all need deliverance and help from the Holy Spirit to walk in a God pleasing way – embracing God's standards of morality for our lives.

The penalty: The punishment.

Absolutely necessary: It is their due. It is what they are owed.

They will receive: They are going to receive this punishment because it's necessary, according to God's standards of righteousness, for this error to be punished.

Verse 28: *"And just as they did not document that they have the knowledge of God, God delivered them over to a debased mind, and they are going to do those things which are not fitting."*

They did not document that they have the knowledge of God: God put this knowledge of Himself into every human being. These people, however, refuse to acknowledge God in either their speech or in their behaviour.

Debased mind: Because they refuse to acknowledge God, He gives them over to a mindset that is devoid of any knowledge of Him.

Not fitting: Improper. Inappropriate.

Verse 29: *“They are filled with all types of unrighteousness, immorality, wickedness, covetousness and evil activities, being full of jealousy, murder, strife, deceit, thinking of evil, gossips.”*

These are behaviours that are an outcome of rejecting God's knowledge and standards. This is applicable to all – male, female, Jew and Gentile.

Immorality: Usually referring to sexual immorality.

Full of jealousy: They're not going to know peace, happiness or joy. They are going to live in torment because they are thinking in a way that is harmful to themselves (and adverse to society in general).

Verse 30: *“Backbiting, haters of God, insolent, prideful, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,”*

Backbiting: Speaking against one another. Slanderous.

Haters of God: They do not want to submit to God's standards. They are in rebellion and in defiance toward God.

Insolent: They are uncaring toward others. This is rooted in selfishness.

Inventors of evil things: Embracing a lifestyle that is against the standards of God causes these people to go on a downward spiral. This kind of lifestyle manifests itself in all types of negative traits and activities, causing these people to move further and further away from the character and ways of God.

Disobedient to parents: They have a rebellious nature. They are against authority. They don't like anyone telling them what's right and what's wrong. This is the spirit of lawlessness.

Verse 31: *“Undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;”*

Undiscerning: They are foolish.

Untrustworthy: Someone who is unable to take on any obligations. They always want to be free of any responsibility.

Unloving: Heartless.

Unforgiving: They hold a grudge and are unwilling to seek reconciliation with others.

Verse 32: *“Who the righteousness of God having known but the things worthy of death they not only practice, but they also approve of those who are practicing them.”*

The righteousness of God having known: They are not in ignorance. They know. But they are defiant and rebellious.

The things: Referring to the things spoken about in the verses above.

Approve of those: They encourage others to practice these things worthy of death. When God's order is set aside it gives an opportunity for the enemy to come in and accomplish his purposes.

Chapter 2

Part 1: Romans 2:1-11

There is a difference between judging someone and simply evaluating their behaviour according to Biblical truth. When we want the best for someone, we can share the truth with them in love, without coming across as having a judgmental or condemning attitude toward them. When that person knows the truth, then they can make a positive change in their lives. A good example of this ability to evaluate would be the jury in a court case. They do not hand out the sentence or administer the punishment, but they are able to evaluate and feedback on a person's behaviour. It is acceptable, at times, to share with a fellow believer, that their behaviour is not in accordance with Scripture. If we find that our attitude and behaviour has changed toward someone (we think less of them, we want to treat them differently etc), because of what they have done, then we would not be the right person to share this information with them - as very quickly our attitude toward them can become condemning. Judgment for condemnation is reserved for God. It is out of our jurisdiction.

Verse 1: *"Therefore inexcusable are you, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another yourselves you are condemning; for the very same things you practice."*

Inexcusable: This is a strong word. In this context it means that we will not be excused or justified if we judge others. If we judge others, we ourselves are going to experience condemnation from God. Judging others is not a salvation issue, but it is a punishment issue, and those who judge are going to suffer loss as this is the kind of behaviour that God is not pleased with.

Man: Paul is not only speaking to males. This word simply means human being – male and female.

Whoever you are: All. Everyone. No exceptions.

Yourselves you are condemning: The measure we use against others is the measure that will be used against us (Matthew 7:1-2).

The very same things you practice: Often the flaws and sins we see in the lives of others are the very things that we ourselves battle with in our own lives. When we see sin in the lives of others it should cause us to take a look within ourselves to see if we are perhaps guilty of the same sin. If we find that we are guilty, it should serve as a time of repentance and change in our own lives. Sin in the lives of others can be a message to us of our need to change and repent.

Verse 2: *"But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth upon those that such things are practising."*

But: In contrast to. We are completely ill-equipped to judge others. We have no idea what is truly going on in the lives and thoughts of others.

The judgment of God is according to truth: God knows all things. We don't. Often the baggage in our own lives will cloud or obscure our judgment.

The judgment of God ... upon those that such things are practising: There is a debate among the scholars if this means that God is going to judge those who are practicing these wrong

things or if the judgment of God is going to be upon us if we practice these things i.e. judging others.

Verse 3: *“But consider this, O man, the one who is judging those who are practicing such things and are doing the same things, do you think that you will escape the judgment of God?”*

Do you think: Paul wants us to think carefully about this.

Do you think that you will escape the judgment of God?: The answer to this question is ‘no’. When we see others behaving wrongly, we must avoid having a negative attitude or behaviour toward them, but (after examining ourselves) in love and compassion, wanting the very best for them, we must quietly and gently approach them about their wrong behaviour that does not meet the standards of God.

Verse 4: *“Or do you think little of the richness of His kindness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the kindness of God for repentance you to lead.”*

Think little of: Despise. We might be quick to judge others because we think little of God’s kindness, bearing with others or His patience.

Kindness: Many of us struggle with this concept of being truly kind. We are called to be kind and the Holy Spirit will lead us to be kind to others, but in our flesh, we struggle with being kind to others. God, on the other hand, is rich in kindness.

Forbearance: To delay something. To put up with. To not respond immediately.

Longsuffering: Patience. Drawing out something slowly.

Not knowing: Against knowing.

The kindness of God for repentance you to lead: The kindness etc of God has a purpose. It produces fruit. It leads a person to repentance. God delays punishment. He does not delight in it. He acts slowly, allowing us time to fall under conviction so that we have enough time to be able to repent.

Verse 5: *“But according to your hard and unrepentant heart you are storing up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath when the righteous judgment of God is revealed.”*

Hard and unrepentant heart: Individuals who are quick to judge others usually have hard and unrepentant hearts. They often lack patience and kindness, and do not want the best for others.

Storing up for yourself wrath: We who have received mercy through Messiah Yeshua should be merciful. We who have received the grace of God need to extend the grace of God to others.

Day of wrath: There is a time set aside for judgment day. On this judgment day, those who are unrepentant and who have denied the gospel are going to be cast into eternal punishment.

Verse 6: *“Who ‘Will give to each one according to his deeds.’”*

Give to each one according to his deeds: This is another aspect of judgment day. It is not only a day for condemnation but is also the time for the handing out of rewards.

This verse is not speaking about salvation. It is not speaking about faith. Instead, it is speaking about what we, as believers, are going to gain (or lose) as a consequence of our behaviour while we were here on earth (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). All believers are going to appear before the judgment seat of Messiah (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Verse 7: *“On the one hand, to those enduring in good works, there is going to be glory, honour and immortality for those who are seeking eternal life.”*

Enduring in good works: Speaking about those who persevere in doing good works.

Immortality: Not able to be corrupted. They will experience no decay or wearing out. Everlasting life.

Eternal life: Kingdom life. Although this does mean life without end, it also speaks to a quality or character of life, even right now, that is related to the Kingdom of God. Eternal life doesn't only begin when we die. We should be living in this life from the moment that we believe. When we are enduring in good deeds it is because we are seeking this Kingdom experience in this age and not only for in the age to come.

Verse 8: *“But, on the other hand, to the ones who are selfish in their intent and disobedient to the truth, but obeying unrighteousness – anger and wrath.”*

Selfish: They do not love others as they love themselves. They are not concerned about the well-being of others.

Disobedient to the truth: They are not interested in the truth of God.

Verse 9: *“Tribulation and distress upon the soul of every man who is practising evil, first to the Jew and also to the Greek.”*

*Tribulation and distress upon the soul of **every** man who is practising evil:* God does not behave in one way to some and in another way to others. Those who practice evil are going to experience the wrath of God.

Evil: Doing that which is against the will of God.

Greek: Gentile

Verse 10: *“But glory, honour and peace to those who are working good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”*

But: In contrast to the above.

Good: Meaning in accordance with God's will. We should be individuals who want to do that which is good. This means we want to be people who submit to the will of God.

To the Jew first and also to the Greek: God's standards are not just for the Jewish people, but they are for all of humanity.

Verse 11: *“For there is no partiality with God.”*

Partiality: Favouritism.

Chapter 2

Part 2: Romans 2:12-16

Although much of the Biblical law is not in force today (due to no functional temple in Jerusalem – many of the laws in the Old Testament need a functioning temple if they are to be kept correctly) it does not mean that it is no longer relevant or that it is now insignificant. In the Torah (the first five books of Moses) there are 613 commandments. James 2:10 tells us (hypothetically) that if we stumble on only one of these laws (we keep all 612 but fail on only one) then we are guilty of all of them. As it stands today, it is impossible for a single person to keep all of the laws. The Torah is a unit – you either keep all of it, or, if you cannot do that, you become guilty of all of it. With the law it is either all or nothing. According to Judaism, because of the impossibility to keep the law they say the Torah is no longer in force. This however doesn't mean that we shouldn't study it or apply its principles to our lives. Paul tells us that we are no longer under the law. This means that the law is not an instrument of judgment for us. As believers we have the Holy Spirit living within us. The Holy Spirit brings God's order into our lives. Romans 7:6 tells us that as believers – new creations - we are supposed to do the law in the newness of the Spirit. When we walk led by the Spirit we fulfil the righteousness (the purpose) of the law (Romans 8:4).

Verse 12: *“For as many without the law have sinned without the law also they perish. And as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law.”*

Many without the law: Referring to the Gentiles – those who did not have the law of God.

Perish: Sin brings death. Sin, very simply, is disobedience to the instructions or the commandments of God. God is the only One who gets to define what sin is.

Sinned in the law: Referring to the Jewish people - who did have the law of God. God does not show favouritism. All people, whether they have the law or whether they do not have it, will be judged.

Note: The law teaches us what the expectations are that God has for our lives – what we ought to do and what we ought not to do. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we need to apply these laws to our lives with spiritual maturity – we desire to live righteous lives.

Verse 13: *“For it is not the hearers of the law which are righteous from God, but the one who does the law will be justified.”*

Righteous from God: Righteousness is from God. The only way we can be righteous is if we receive righteousness from Him (Romans 4:6).

The one who does the law will be justified: There are two ways that we can be righteous in God's sight – by never violating the law i.e. doing all of the law correctly (only one person – Messiah Yeshua – has ever been able to manage this: 1 Peter 2:22) and the second way is through Messiah Yeshua.

Verse 14: *“For whenever a Gentile, not having the law but by nature these things of the law they do, these not having the law, to themselves they are a law.”*

Gentile: Someone from the nations i.e. not from the nation of Israel. A non-Jew.

Not having the law: God did not initially give the nations the law.

By nature these things of the law they do: These who naturally (it is in their nature) are obedient to the will of God...despite the fact that they are unaware of God’s written laws.

To themselves they are a law: They practice a law among themselves. This law is prompted in them through their conscience.

Verse 15: *“Who manifest the work of the law written in their hearts, bearing witness together through their conscience, and among themselves the thoughts in regard to being guilty or being defended.”*

Who: This is written in the plural and is referring to this group of people.

Conscience: Everyone is born with a conscience. A conscience is like an inbuilt moral compass that God places within every single human being. Although a conscience does not give us a full degree of understanding in the natural, it is like a faint whisper within us of what is right or wrong. Although the conscience is good, and although the law written down is good...even better is the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit in our lives, as He can guide us into all truth – John 16:13.

Among themselves the thoughts in regard to being guilty or being defended: The conscience works in their lives to show them what is right and what is wrong. Although this is good, it is not the most excellent way of knowing right from wrong – relying on the Holy Spirit and not on the conscience would be the most excellent way. The Spirit of God speaks and guides us much better than the conscience.

Being defended: Not guilty.

Verse 16: *“In that day when God judges the secret things of men, according to my gospel, through Messiah Yeshua.”*

Note: In this world we might be able to manage through it with our conscience. People might call us honest, dependable etc. But the problem is that this is according to man’s standards and not according to Gods. The only way that anyone can stand in this day is if they have received the gospel of Messiah Yeshua.

That day: This is a specific day – the day that God is going to judge all men.

Secret things: Hidden things. The world can claim that a person is good, but God sees deeper into a person than just their outward behaviour.

My gospel: The gospel that Paul was sharing.

Chapter 2

Part 3: Romans 2:17-29

Each of us has been created by God. There are no second-class creations. God loves each of us and wants us all to be recipients of His love. God does not evaluate us according to our external appearance. Scripture very clearly tells us that He looks at the inner person – our hearts, at the very essence of who we are (1 Samuel 16:7).

Verse 17: *“If you are called a Jew, and you rely upon the law, and you boast in God,”*

Called a Jew: There is an assumption that one who is Jewish is going to understand and have an affinity towards the Torah.

Rely: Trust on. Depend on.

Boast in God: Praise and acknowledge that He is great and worthy to be praised.

Verse 18: *“And you know the will, and you document the excellent things, being instructed out of the law.”*

Know the will: In Romans 2:17 there is an emphasis on the law, which is then followed up (in this verse) with an emphasis on the will of God. It is through the law (through Scripture) that we can understand the will of God. It is only when we submit to the Word of God that we will be following the will of God.

Document: Prove

Excellent things: God, through His will, wants us to live in an excellent way before Him - in a way that manifests His Kingdom.

Instructed: Educated or taught.

Instructed out of the law: The Word of God (His law) instructs us on how we are to live in a way that is excellent and pleasing to God.

Verse 19: *“And if you have been persuaded by yourself that you are a guide for the blind, a light to the ones in darkness,”*

A guide for the blind, a light to the ones in darkness: These are individuals that have known the truth and they are walking according to it. They are helping, impacting and influencing others to also have a behaviour that is excellent and pleasing before God.

Verse 20: *“An instructor of foolish ones, and a teacher of infants, having the appearance and knowledge of the truth which is in the law.”*

Foolish ones: Those who do not know much. They do not have any background in the Word or commandments of God.

Infants: Those who are young (or immature) in the faith. They do not yet know the Word of God or the expectations He has of them.

The truth which is in the law: Paul links truth and law together. Truth is found in the law. We know what righteousness and unrighteousness is through the law.

It is only through the anointing of the Holy Spirit that we can behave in a way that manifests the righteousness (the righteous standards) of the law.

Verse 21: *“Therefore, the one who is teaching another yourself you do not teach. You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?”*

Teaching another: This is a good thing to do.

Yourself you do not teach: The good that we teach others is not only good for them to apply to their lives. This also needs to be applied to our own lives. We are not to place ourselves in a position over others, wanting to influence them, and instruct them on how to live etc without also acknowledging the truth of God and implementing it in our own lives. If we do not do this, then we are hypocrites.

Verse 22: *“The one who says, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ are you committing adultery? And the one who abhors idols, do you not steal from the temples?”*

Abhors: Loathes

The one who abhors idols: This is a good thing to do.

Steal from the temples: People usually get involved in idolatry due to selfishness. They believe that the idolatrous practices are going to benefit them in some way. Paul is saying here that these people hate the idolatrous practices, but they are willing to use idolatry to financially benefit themselves – eg selling the idols for profit etc

Verse 23: *“You who make your boast in the law, through transgressions of the law you dishonour God.”*

Boast in the law: They tell others how wonderful the law is, how necessary it is to obey God and to do His will, to be rich in good works etc.

Through transgressions of the law you dishonour God: These people know how to use religious language. They know the lingo and the jargon, but their actions and behaviour paint another picture. They do not put the Word of God into practice in their own lives. Those whose words do not match their actions dishonour God.

Verse 24: *“For ‘The name of God, through you, is being blasphemed among the nations,’ as it is written.”*

You: Romans 2:17 started off this section by speaking to the Jewish community. God set apart the Jewish community for a very specific call and purpose – to be a light to the nations, to influence the nations in the ways of God (Genesis 12:3). They had been given the truth of God and it was their responsibility to take this truth and share it with others, the nations, so that those in the nations could also live and behave in a way that brought about the promises and blessings of God in their lives. Not only were the people dishonouring God by transgressing the law, but they were also causing His name (character) to be blasphemed by those in the nations.

It is written: An indirect quote from Isaiah 52:5 and Ezekiel 36:22-23

Verse 25: *“For circumcision is profitable if the law one practices, but if you are a transgressor of the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.”*

Circumcision is profitable: Paul is not talking here about the physical act of circumcision being profitable, but about the message of circumcision being profitable. In Jewish law when the foreskin is removed it is not allowed to be thrown away or just simply disposed of. It needs to be buried. This teaches about the death of the flesh. Abraham (the man associated with faith) was the first one to whom the commandment of circumcision was given (Genesis 17:9-14). The law didn't exist when Abraham was given this commandment. This teaches us that it is not the works of the law that bring about the death of the flesh (our carnal natures), but it is when we walk in faith that we put to death the flesh.

Transgressor of the law: Neither obeying the law nor walking in the will of God.

Circumcision becomes uncircumcision: Keeping the law should be an act of faith for us. Abraham wasn't bound by the law (he predated it) but by faith he kept it. As believers, we aren't bound by the law either (we “postdate” it) but, like Abraham, by faith we need to keep it. If we do not keep it then our lives are not testifying of the message of circumcision, namely that the flesh dies according to faith. If we do not walk in obedience to God then, although we may be outwardly circumcised, that circumcision will have no benefit for us as it will not convey truth. It becomes simply a work, and not an act of faith. If we do not display the will of God in our lives, we become a stumbling block and an offense, bringing dishonour to God. If we do not change and repent, then any act of faith we may have had in the past is accounted for as uncircumcision.

Verse 26: *“Therefore, if an uncircumcised man the righteous requirements of the law he keeps, will not his uncircumcision be accounted as circumcision?”*

An uncircumcised man: A Gentile.

Righteous requirements of the law he keeps: Although he is a Gentile he is walking in the righteous ways of the law – not walking in the flesh but keeping the righteous requirements of the law by means of the Spirit of God.

Uncircumcision be accounted as circumcision: His righteous behaviour, his actions, are in line with the truth of God. Even though outwardly he is uncircumcised, God sees him as circumcised (walking by faith).

Accounted as circumcision: If a Gentile (an uncircumcised person) is sensitive to the Word of God, he listens to his conscience and he responds in obedience to the Word and purposes of God even though he is uncircumcised God is going to see him as circumcised – that is: a covenantal member of the family of God. Conversely, the Jewish individual (even though according to the letter and according to circumcision they are a covenant member) who is transgressing the Word and instructions of God is going to be rendered uncircumcised in God's eyes – one who is not a part of the covenant family of God. We need to see the importance of being an individual that surrenders to the instructions of God.

Verse 27: *“The one who is naturally uncircumcised in the flesh yet in a complete way fulfils the law, he will judge you, who even through the letters and through circumcision, are a transgressor of the law.”*

Naturally uncircumcised: In the natural he is uncircumcised.

Fulfils the law: Obeys God

Through the letters and through circumcision: They have documentation and physical proof that they are a child of God – Jewish. The name ‘Jew’ comes from ‘Yehuda’ – which means one who gives thanks (specifically to God), one who wants to lift up God’s name. If someone is biologically Jewish but they do not give thanks, praise or lift up the name of the Lord (ie not doing what God has called them to do) then he is not part of the family of God. God doesn’t look to the outward (to that physical sign of circumcision or documentation proving you are Jewish). Circumcision and documentation don’t impress God. He looks into the heart of man. Circumcision of the heart is through faith.

Verse 28: *“For it is not that which is manifested that makes one a Jew, nor in the outward manifestation in the flesh, circumcision.”*

Manifested: External. Seen.

Manifestation in the flesh, circumcision: An outward manifestation does not necessarily mirror an inner reality. Circumcised in the body, does not mean circumcised in the heart. A work done on the body does not mean faith in the heart (Genesis 15:6). Abraham’s actions weren’t accounted to him as righteousness. It was his FAITH that was accounted to him as righteousness!

Verse 29: *“It is the hidden things that make one Jewish, the circumcision of the heart, and the Spirit – not the letter – whose praise is not from men but from God.”*

Hidden: Those things that cannot be seen with our human eyes.

Praise is not from men: This one is not trying to impress man but living to please God.

Chapter 3

Part 1: Romans 3:1-8

Verse 1: *“Therefore, what is the advantage of being a Jew, or what is the benefit of circumcision?”*

Note: After reading Romans 2:26-29 (God counting Gentiles as circumcised if they obey Him, and counting Jews as uncircumcised if they disobey) some people state that being Jewish, therefore, has very little value or significance. Paul begins to address this issue.

Verse 2: *“Much according to every manner! For first they were entrusted with the oracles of God.”*

Much: Paul states here that being Jewish has great significance.

According to every manner: In every way, according to every manner of life.

Entrusted with the oracles: Paul begins to pinpoint all the things that God has done for the Jewish people and with the Jewish people.

Oracles: Speaks about the utterances of God (what God has said) to humanity. The Word of God was entrusted to the Jewish people, and, through them, it came to us – fully inspired and inerrant (2 Timothy 3:16).

Verse 3: *“For if certain ones were faithless does their unbelief render null and void the faithfulness of God?”*

Certain ones were faithless: Many Jewish people rejected the gospel and did not walk in faith. During those 40 years in the wilderness the kingdom was divided because of faithlessness (idolatry). Many people did not obey God and nor did they believe Him.

The faithfulness of God: God’s faithfulness does not depend on Israel or upon the Jewish people. God is always faithful (2 Timothy 2:13). Despite the unfaithfulness of the people, God, in His faithfulness, continued to use them to fulfil His plans and purposes.

Verse 4: *“May it never be! But God let Him be truthful and every man a liar. Just as it has been written: ‘That you be justified in Your words and victorious in Your Judgment.’”*

Truthful: God is always truthful. When we (as Old Testament Jewish people, or New Testament believers) disobey God and fail Him, it does not affect His holiness, righteousness or faithfulness.

It has been written: Quoted from Psalm 51:4

Victorious in Your Judgment: This is not talking about God being victorious when He pours out His judgment on this world, but rather about Him being judged or evaluated based upon His Word, according to what He has said. God is perfectly righteous and perfectly just. He will perfectly keep His Word.

Verse 5: *“But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what should we say? Is God unrighteous, the One who brings His wrath? I talk as a man.”*

Our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God: When a human being is unrighteous (disobedient or rebellious), God's Word (what He promises to do) and His actions toward that unrighteous behaviour manifests His faithfulness. He righteously does what He said He will do.

What should we say? Based on what has been said above: Can we call God unjust or unrighteous for punishing unrighteousness with His wrath? God has warned us that He is going to deal with human disobedience. When He does deal with disobedience it manifests His glory and His righteousness (eg. In Exodus, the disobedience of Pharaoh led to the manifestation of God's glory to the Egyptians as well as to the Israelites. Through Pharaoh's disobedience they learnt about the faithfulness of God to redeem His people). Some people erroneously and blasphemously believed (and believe) that because disobedience brought about a good outcome (it gives God the opportunity to show His righteousness) they should not in fact be punished for their disobedience but rewarded for it. This is not the case.

Verse 6: *“May it never be! Otherwise, how will God judge the world?”*

Note: If God rewarded disobedience (because it afforded Him an opportunity to manifest His faithfulness and righteousness) then He would never be able to punish wrong.

Verse 7: *“For if the truth of God is made manifest through my lie, for His glory, why is it that I am still as a sinner judged?”*

Lie: Falsehood

Why is it that I am still as a sinner judged: These people, who think that they should be rewarded for their evil deeds, are mocking God and those who speak about a sovereign God. Today, many people only want to believe that God is love. They take the view that to love means that someone always forgives, never punishes etc. God's definition of love is very different to the world's definition of love. He loves righteousness and, because He loves righteousness, He cannot love unrighteousness. In fact, He hates unrighteousness. He loves obedience. He hates disobedience. If people believe that God will never punish human beings for the evil that they have done this is a catalyst that will then motivate them to turn and to do whatever they want to do as they think they will not suffer any consequence for their actions.

Verse 8: *“Is it not just as we have been blasphemed and just as certain ones have said concerning us that we have said: ‘Let us do evil things so that good can come.’” In regard to these people the judgment of God is justified.”*

Blasphemed: Some Bibles will use the more moderate term: slandered. Literally, though, the word used by Paul here is blasphemed. This is a word usually associated with God, but here Paul uses it in regard to themselves – those who have the Spirit of God living within them, by means of the Holy Spirit.

Certain ones have said concerning us that we have said: They falsely accused Paul and those with him saying that Paul etc had said erroneous things which in fact Paul had not said.

Frequently, when we are speaking truth, people are not only going to disagree with us, but they are also going to falsely accuse us of saying things that we never said. Their motivation will be to discredit those who tell the truth.

Let us do evil things: This is what they accused Paul of saying. As believers, we never want to do evil things. God never moves anyone to do evil. For example, Judas was not serving God when he handed Yeshua over to be crucified. The Scripture tells us that satan entered into Judas (Luke 22:3). Judas had a love for money, and satan exploited that sinful tendency in the life of Judas in order to do something terrible. God never motivates us or causes us to do wrong, but He is free to use the terrible things as a means to manifest His glory. The person who does the evil things will experience the consequences of their sin, they will experience the wrath of God if they do not repent, even though God can use their evil to bring about good.

Do evil things so that good can come: Often, evil does not bring about anything that's good. God can certainly use evil situations for His good and for His glory (Romans 8:28), but many people can be harmed and suffer awful consequences because of someone's disobedience to God.

The judgment of God is justified: God will judge them for their blasphemy and false accusations.

Chapter 3

Part 2: Romans 3:9-20

There is not a multiplicity of ways to enter into the Kingdom of heaven. There is only one way for all of humanity to enter it (Jew and Gentile alike) – and that is through Messiah Yeshua. The Jewish people, although they are called the people of God, are not in some way exempt from receiving the gospel. The message of the gospel was given to Israel first – for their well-being and redemption, but then secondly it was given to them to take that message of redemption and share it with all the world.

Verse 9: *“What therefore? Are we better? Not at all! For we have previously stated that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.”*

What therefore: Paul asks a question. He wants us to give this some thought or consideration.

Are we better: Paul, being Jewish, is speaking about the Jewish community. He wants to know if they, based upon the fact that they are Jewish, think that they should get spiritual preference before God.

Previously stated: Paul has spoken or written about this at an earlier time.

Greeks: Gentiles

Under sin: ‘Under’ so frequently alludes to judgment. Jews and Gentiles alike (those who have not received the gospel) are going to receive judgment because of their sin.

Verse 10: *“Just as it has been written: ‘There is not one who is righteous. No! Not one.’*

It has been written: Paul frequently backs up what he is revealing by going back to the Old Testament Scripture. Here he quotes from Psalm 14:3.

Not one who is righteous: Not one individual in all of human history (except for Yeshua – the only begotten Son of God) has been righteous.

Verse 11: *“There is not one that understands. There is not one that is seeking God.”*

Note: See also Psalm 53:1-3

Seeking God: Pursuing God. People do not seek God because they are under the influence of sin. Sin (we were all born with that original sin) dominates us, so that we do not understand God and nor do we pursue Him.

Verse 12: *“All have turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good. No! Not one.”*

All: An inclusive word, meaning all of humanity.

Turned aside: Gone on a detour. Not going on the proper route or way. We have all deviated from that which is right or proper.

Corrupt: Rotten. Spoiled. In our sinful state, there is nothing of value or profitable within us.

Good: This is not the normal word for good but at its core this is a word for ‘grace’. No one is gracious or kind. In our unredeemed state none of us reflect the character of God.

Verse 13: *“Their throat is an open grave, their tongues speak deception. The venom of asps is under their lips.”*

Note: Quoted from Psalm 5:9 and Psalm 140:3. Here Paul is describing humanity from God’s perspective.

Open grave: An open grave is a dangerous place. It is easy to fall into. A grave is also associated with death, corruption, spiritual impurity.

Speak deception: They do not speak the truth.

Venom: Poison

Asps: Dangerous snakes.

Verse 14: *“Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”*

Note: See Psalm 10:7

Mouth is full of cursing: Israel was supposed to be an instrument of blessing. Believers are called to be a blessing to others, and not in instrument of cursing. They are not speaking in kindness to others.

Bitterness: Unhappy people are generally bitter people.

Verse 15: *“Swift are their feet to shed blood.”*

Note: Murder, and the increasing of the murder rate in our time, is an indication that humanity is becoming more and more corrupt.

Verse 16: *“Destruction and misery are in their ways.”*

Destruction: Calamity. Something that is a catastrophe from a Godly perspective.

Misery: Overwhelming sorrow. Left to ourselves, the influence of sin will lead us down the path of destruction and misery, intense suffering physically but also emotionally (Luke 13:28).

Verse 17: *“And the way of peace they did not know.”*

Note: See Isaiah 59:7-8

Peace: We experience peace when we are walking in obedience to God’s will. We cannot experience peace outside of God’s will. And we can never walk in God’s will unless we have been redeemed.

Verse 18: *“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*

No fear of God: They do not give God priority in their lives. He is not the centre of their lives.

Before their eyes: They do not have a Godly perspective, therefore they make the wrong decisions.

Verse 19: *“But we know that whatever the law says to the ones in the law it speaks in order that every mouth shall be closed, and under judgment has become all the world.”*

Whatever the law says: Paul is talking about the revelation of God’s Word.

The ones in the law: Those who are committed to the law.

It speaks in order that every mouth shall be closed: The law is not an instrument for redemption. It does not make us righteous. However, it does reveal to us what righteous is – what God’s expectations for us are. When we listen to what the law says it shuts us up as we know that we are not righteous, we fall short according to the standard of the law.

Judgment: Referring to the judgment of God.

All the world: Every human being – Jew or Gentile. Left to ourselves we are all heading toward the judgment of God.

Verse 20: *“Therefore, from the works of the law no flesh will be justified before Him. For through the law comes the knowledge of sin.”*

From the works of the law no flesh will be justified: The law was never given as an instrument of justification (righteousness). No amount of good deeds will qualify us before God as righteous.

No flesh: No human beings.

Through the law comes the knowledge of sin: This is the purpose of the law. Its first and primary purpose is to define righteousness, what the will of God is and what He expects/demands from us. God’s expectations of us are not negotiable. The law shows us that we cannot meet God’s expectations for our lives and that we are headed toward judgment and God’s displeasure. The law shows us that we need salvation. If we want to live in a way that pleases God, we need help.

Chapter 3

Part 3: Romans 3:21-31

One of the most important things that God has ever done is that He has justified those who receive the gospel. And that justification is forever, because of the sufficiency and perfection of Messiah's work. He was successful, and therefore we receive the eternal benefits.

Verse 21: *"But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been manifested, being testified by the Law and the Prophets."*

Now: In our present time, because of what Yeshua has done (His death, burial, and resurrection).

Apart from the law: Our salvation has nothing to do with keeping the law. It is found separated (apart) from the law.

The righteousness of God has been manifested: God's plan for justification – taking sinners like us and making us righteous – can be clearly seen.

The Law and the Prophets: This was a term that referred to the full scope of Scripture (in Paul's day it was a reference to what we call the Old Testament). The Bible, from beginning to end, has testified that we cannot find salvation in doing the works of the law. The law reveals that we need salvation, but this salvation (redemption) is found apart from the law – it is found by accepting the perfect sacrifice for our sins – Messiah Yeshua.

Verse 22: *"But the righteousness of God is through faith in Messiah Yeshua, for all and upon all who believe. For there is not any distinction."*

Faith in: Believing in

For all: This means that it is available and accessible for all of humanity. God's desire is that this message of forgiveness and redemption (His plan for salvation) is proclaimed throughout the world (Matthew 24:14, Matthew 28:19-20).

Believe: The way that we access this forgiveness, redemption and righteousness is through believing in, having faith in, Messiah Yeshua (1 John 1:9, Romans 10:9-10, Genesis 15:6 – Abraham, before the law was even given, reached the status of 'righteous' through faith/belief. He did not reach that status through doing the law – which at that stage did not even exist for another 400 years). However, do not make the error in thinking that because the law is not the instrument of salvation it needs to be set aside or has no relevance for us today. It still has importance and relevance. It still has a purpose in this day and age.

There is not any distinction: The gospel (the good news about what Yeshua has done for us) is the only plan for salvation for all of humanity – there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. All have sinned. All need salvation. All can only find this salvation and righteousness through Messiah Yeshua. The only way to be declared righteous by God is through faith.

Verse 23: *"For all have sinned and fall short of God's glory."*

All: Everyone, no distinction, it is for all humanity.

Fall short: To be inadequate, to lack.

Fall short of God's glory: We lack God's glory. There is a relationship between righteousness and glory. When we are behaving righteously, the glory of God is manifested.

Verse 24: *“One is justified freely, by His grace, through the redemption that is in Messiah Yeshua.”*

Justified: In Greek, ‘justified’ and ‘made righteous’ are the same word.

Freely: This word literally means ‘gift’.

Redemption: The word ‘blood’ should come to our minds when we speak about redemption. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness for our sins (Hebrews 9:22). There is no redemption without blood.

Verse 25: *“Whom God has set before as a propitiation, by means of faith, in His blood, for the demonstration of His righteousness, by means of the patience of God He passed over the sins that were previously committed.”*

By means of faith: We need to have faith in what Yeshua has done – dying on the cross and shedding His blood for us.

Demonstration: Manifestation. Showing. Revealing.

His patience: Forbearance. God is slow to anger. He restrains Himself. **For a season**, for a moment, God has suspended His anger so that people are given time to repent (2 Peter 3:9) and so that the gospel message can go forth through the world. This will not be the case forever though. There is coming a point where God will deal with sin once and for all.

Verse 26: *“To demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be shown to be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Yeshua.”*

Just: Yeshua is the One who is just. Not only is He just, but He is also able to justify those (make righteous those) who believe in Him and in His Word.

Verse 27: *“Therefore, where is the boasting? All of it has been shut out. Through which law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.”*

Where is the boasting: We have no boast. We did nothing to bring about our redemption. Messiah did it all.

Shut out: Done away with. Excluded. Removed. There is no place for boasting.

Law...of works: We cannot find redemption through the law of works (doing the right number of good deeds), through any doctrines or teachings.

The law of faith: We need to be people who believe and then demonstrate faith. Faith is simply an agreement with God. We did not play a role in our redemption or in our salvation by our faith. By faith we simply acknowledge what God has done through His Son.

Verse 28: *“We reckon therefore that man is justified by faith without the works of the law.”*

Reckon: Logically conclude.

Man: This could mean any human being – Jew or Gentile, male or female.

Justified: Declared righteous. This is written in the passive indicating that it is something done to us – we cannot do it for ourselves.

Without the works of the law: Righteous comes through faith alone. It is apart from or separated from the works of the law.

Verse 29: *“Is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also.”*

Is God the God of the Jews only: The Jews received the Scripture from God, but that does not mean that God is only for them.

God of the Gentiles: God created and loves the Gentiles too. His plan includes the Gentiles. He gave Israel a specific calling, but that calling was to be servants, servants that were to proclaim the message of the gospel to the nations.

Verse 30: *“Since therefore, there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised by faith,”*

Circumcised: Meaning the Jewish people.

Uncircumcised: The Gentiles.

By faith: Both Jews and Gentiles are justified (made righteous) through the same faith. There is no difference.

Verse 31: *“Therefore, has the law been rendered null and void through faith? May it never be! But rather, we establish the law.”*

Note: Many within Christianity disregard this verse today. Is this the reason why the church lacks the power and the perspective to know how to live righteously? Although we are not justified or made righteous by the works of the law, it does not mean that the law is no longer relevant for us. In fact, with the Holy Spirit living in us, He enables us to fulfil the righteous requirements of the law (Romans 8:4). We are not under the law – this means that we are not judged by the law ie we do not receive the punishment associated with the law (the wrath of God and eternal death). But, like Abraham (who predated the law) we are, led by the Holy Spirit, called to utilize the law by faith,

Has the law been rendered null and void: Has it been rendered powerless? Has it been dealt a deathblow? Does it no longer have any effect?

May it never be: Sometimes translated ‘God forbid!’.

We establish the law: We stand it up. Through faith, the commandments should have even greater relevance in our lives. We can now understand that they are the righteous standards of God – not as a means of salvation, but as a blessed way to live while here on earth. They reveal to us how to live in a way that is pleasing to God. Under the Holy Spirit's leadership, we can apply them to our lives - not based upon the letter of the law, but by the purpose, the righteousness, the heart, of the law. In our lives, in our behaviour, we want to demonstrate that we are living in a way that glorifies God. We want our lives to be a testimony to others.

Chapter 4

Part 1: Romans 4:1-12

Being justified (declared righteous) by faith was not something that originated in the New Testament. It is also, very much so, an Old Testament understanding. Genesis 15:6 very clearly teaches this: one is justified by faith (through the grace of God), and not by the works of the law (works of man).

Verse 1: *“Therefore, what shall we say: That Abraham, our father, was found according to the flesh?”*

What shall we say: We need to come to an agreement (be “on the same page”). We need to be assured that salvation is through faith and not through works.

Father: Abraham is called our father because he is an example for us. We are going to enter the family of God in the same way that Abraham entered it – through a covenant. Abraham entered into this covenant with God by faith. The purpose of this covenant was to change Abraham and to make him righteous in God’s sight.

Was found: This is an idiom. When people are separated from God, we call them “lost”. If this situation changes and they enter into a covenantal relationship with God, then they are considered “found” (Luke 15:4-7).

Found according to the flesh: Paul is asking if Abraham was in a covenantal relationship with God by works of the flesh – because of the things that Abraham had done.

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

Justified: Made righteous

Works: His behaviour

Not before God: Isaiah 64:6. No one is declared or made righteous through doing good works.

Verse 3: *“For what does the Scripture say? ‘But Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness.’”*

What does the Scripture say: Paul does not base his teachings on logic, on the rational mind, or on human wisdom or understanding. He consistently based his teachings on the Word of God, on Scripture (the Old Testament, the Tanakh). Here Paul quotes from Genesis 15:6.

But: This word shows a contrast. In contrast, to someone being justified by works of the flesh, Abraham believed God.

Believed God: Abraham said ‘yes’ to God. He had faith in God.

Credited: This is an accounting or business term which has legal implications. Abraham did what was legally acceptable to God – he believed God. That belief (far superior to works) was pleasing to God.

Verse 4: *“But to the one who works, the wage is not accounted to grace but as debt.”*

Works: Does labour.

Wage: The payment received for doing the work.

Grace: Grace is something that is unmerited. It is not something that we deserve. Grace, like a gift, is something that is freely given.

Debt: Those who go to work expect a pay check at the end of the week or the month. This pay is earned through work/labour. That payment is not a gift, it cannot be attributed to grace.

Verse 5: *“But to the one who does not work but believes upon the One who makes righteous the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.”*

The One: God. God the Son did the work for us. It is only through His work that the ungodly can be declared righteous.

Makes righteous: Justifies.

His faith is accounted for righteousness: This is a phrase that Paul is repeating, therefore emphasising.

Verse 6: *“Just as David describes the blessedness of the man whom God accounts for righteousness apart from works:”*

David: Paul now shows us that this was not an isolated principal only relevant to Abraham in the Old Testament. He, therefore, gives us another example from the writings of King David that teaches this same gospel truth.

Blessedness: The man who God counts as righteous (apart from works) is a blessed man (or woman).

Apart from (without) works: This righteousness comes to him not based upon works or upon anything that he has done. The truth of the matter is that we cannot do anything that is going to cause God (according to His standards of holiness) to say that we have managed to make ourselves righteous.

Verse 7: *“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered up.”*

Note: Quoted from Psalm 32:1

Lawless deeds: Sins. Violation of the commandments of God.

Covered up: Only God can cover up our sins. He is the only One who can give us grace – not holding us accountable for our lawless deeds when we repent of them, and instead giving us what we do not deserve. Grace brings about forgiveness, and that forgiveness puts us in a situation where we can enter into an eternal relationship with God.

Verse 8: *“Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not account his sins.”*

Note: Quoted from Psalm 32:2a

The Lord does not account his sin: We are all guilty of sin. We are indeed blessed when God does not count our sins against us or charge us for them.

When we are in a covenantal relationship with God, through Messiah, He covers up our sins, which means that we are no longer going to be judged for them.

Verse 9: *“Therefore this blessing is upon the circumcised or also upon the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.”*

Blessing: This is the fourth time that Paul has emphasised this word. Blessing comes as an outcome of what God has done (bringing us into His family by means of a covenant).

The circumcised or ... the uncircumcised: Is this blessing only for the Jews, or is it also available for the Gentiles?

For we say: Paul is, with authority, making a declarative statement.

Faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness: Abraham was blessed because of faith.

Was accounted: Written in the passive. Abraham could not do it for himself. It had to be done for him. Faith was the key that caused Abraham to be seen in God’s eyes as righteous.

Righteousness: This is the key outcome or reward.

Verse 10: *“How was he reckoned? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.”*

How was he reckoned: In what condition was he in? Was Abraham circumcised or uncircumcised when this righteousness was credited to him?

Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised: Abraham was not circumcised when God credited righteousness to him (Genesis 15:6). Abraham was declared righteous while he was uncircumcised. It was many years after this declaration that Abraham actually became circumcised (Genesis 17).

Verse 11: *“And he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness by faith while he was uncircumcised, for him to be the father of all the ones believing while they are uncircumcised for the accounting also to them for righteousness.”*

Sign of circumcision: Circumcision (like baptism) is a sign that conveys to the wider community the death of our flesh. This is what we want to experience. When we believe, by faith, it is followed by the death of the flesh, the death of our carnal nature. This means that we no longer want to walk in obedience to our bodies (what our bodies desire – that sinful nature within us, free from pain and suffering etc) but we want to walk in obedience to the Spirit. We want to see our sinful natures rendered powerless. We want those sinful natures to die. It is only through faith that our sinful nature can die. It is only after we have believed, through faith, that our works or our behaviours are altered.

Verse 12: *“And the father of the circumcised, to the ones not being circumcised only, but to the ones who walk in the steps of faith while being uncircumcised like our father Abraham.”*

The father of the circumcised, to the ones not being circumcised only: Abraham is the father of the uncircumcised who live by faith as well as the father of the circumcised who live by faith. Before Abraham was circumcised, he lived by faith. After Abraham was circumcised, he continued to walk by faith.

The common thread here is not circumcision or uncircumcision. The common thread binding these two groups together is walking in faith, being obedient to the call of Abraham – to be a blessing and a light to the nations.

Chapter 4

Part 2: Romans 4:13-25

Faith is believing in God's promises.

Verse 13: *“For not through law was the promise to Abraham and to his seed that he would be an heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith.”*

Not through law: God's promise does not become a reality through the works of the law.

The promise: This promise was that God was going to send a descendant of Abraham (Messiah Yeshua) to do the work of freely and graciously justifying us through the mercy of God – not through anything that we could do.

His seed: 'The seed of Abraham' is not referring to Abraham's physical descendants. Just being a biological descendant of Abraham does not secure this promise, but being his spiritual descendant does. A spiritual descendant of Abraham is someone who demonstrates the same kind of faith that Abraham had (Galatians 3:26-29).

An heir of the world: An inheritor in the Kingdom of God (not through works, but through a promise).

Righteousness of faith: Righteousness and faith (belief) are connected (Genesis 15:6). Righteousness comes through faith.

Verse 14: *“For if the ones that are heirs by the law, faith would be emptied out and the promise would be rendered null and void.”*

If: A hypothetical situation.

Heirs by the law: Inheriting the Kingdom of God through the works of the law. There was no way that Abraham could have been justified by the law or given this promise of inheritance because he was doing the works of the law – the law was only given about 400 years later.

Faith...emptied....promise...null and void: It is only through faith that we can take hold of the promises of God. It is only through faith that we can be declared righteous.

Verse 15: *“For the law produces wrath: but where there is no law there is no transgression.”*

Produces: Works out.

Where there is no law there is no transgression: When there is no law, we do not know how guilty we are. Even before the law was given, people died. God brought punishment upon them (through death – Romans 6:23) because they had violated His Word. Most of them were not listening to their God-given consciences, but instead were doing whatever they wanted to do. When the law was given, and applied, people realised that they were transgressors. This is the purpose of the law – to show people that they are sinners in need

of salvation. This realisation should convict us and prompt us to ask how we can experience forgiveness and salvation – neither of which is found in the law, but only through faith.

Verse 16: *“On account of this by faith in order that according to grace would be sure the promise to all the seed, not just the ones of the law alone but also to the ones from the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.”*

The ones of the law: The Jewish people.

The ones from the faith of Abraham: The Gentiles who, by faith, believe in the promises of God. The promises and blessings of God were never intended to be for the Jewish people alone (Genesis 12:3). God intended them to be spread abroad to all the families on the earth.

Verse 17: *“Just as it has been written: ‘A father of many nations I have made you’, before God whom he believed, that He could make alive the dead and calling the things not being as being wonderful.”*

It has been written: Paul backs up what he is teaching by using Scripture. Here he quotes from Genesis 17:5

I: God.

He believed: This is the key. Abraham believed in God. He believed in the revelation/Word of God.

Dead: Those who have sinned in their lives. I.e all humanity.

Calling the things not being as being wonderful: This talks about the very nature of God. God calls the things that are not as if they are. When God speaks, things become a reality. His spoken and written Word bring eternal change.

Verse 18: *“Who alongside hope and upon hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to that which is said: ‘Thus shall your seed be.’”*

Hope: It is only when we have faith that we are going to have hope. Hope is the expectation we have that the promises of God are going to be fulfilled.

Believed: Abraham believed God when God told him that he would be the father of many nations – despite all evidence to the contrary in the physical (Abraham was old, he had been married for a long time and he was childless).

Thus shall your seed be: Paul is quoting from Genesis 15:5. This verse in Genesis is set within the context of God showing Abraham the night sky. Billions of stars were in the sky, and God promised Abraham that his seed would be as numerous as those stars.

Verse 19: *“And not being weak of faith he did not consider his own body already being dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and also lifeless the womb of Sarah his wife.”*

Not being weak of faith: Abraham’s faith did not waver. He believed in the promises of God.

Did not consider: Abraham did not think about his body in the natural. He did not think about the fact that his body was nearly dead physically, nor did he think about Sarah’s womb being barren. He did not waver in his faith regarding the promise of God.

Verse 20: *“But for the promise of God he did not waver toward faithlessness but rather he strengthened himself in faith, giving glory to God.”*

He did not waver: He did not become doubtful or faithless (against faith).

Giving glory to God: Strength comes from faith. That strength or power, from being in God’s will, causes us to behave and speak in a way that gives God glory.

Verse 21: *“Thinking fully that what He had promised He was also able to do it.”*

Thinking fully: Thinking in a complete way. Having absolute assurance that the One who promised is able to deliver on His promises. Although Abraham was not strong physically, he was strong in faith.

Verse 22: *“Therefore also it was reckoned to him for righteousness.”*

See Genesis 15:6

Verse 23: *“It was not written through him alone that it was accredited to him.”*

Verse 24: *“But also through us. It shall be accounted to us who believe in Him who raised up Yeshua our Lord from the dead.”*

Us: The ones who believe.

Raised up Yeshua our Lord from the dead: The best example of God raising someone from the dead is Yeshua. Like Yeshua, Abraham (whose body was practically dead for all intents and purposes) also received life out of death. As believers we are going to have this same experience as Abraham – life out of death. We are dead in our trespasses and sin, but God can take us, who are spiritually dead, and make us alive in Messiah.

Verse 25: *“Who was delivered up on account of our transgressions and was raised because of our righteousness.”*

Delivered up on account of our transgressions: The law teaches us that we are sinners in need of redemption. Messiah died on account of these transgressions.

Raised because of our righteousness: Faith is believing in the death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua, confessing our sins, acknowledging that through Him is the only way that we can be righteous and through Him we can be recipients of the promises of God – not through works of the law, but through faith in Messiah.

Chapter 5

Part 1: Romans 5:1-11

Every believer has a hope of being brought into the Kingdom of God and experiencing God's presence for eternity. Every believer can know and experience the promises and blessings of God.

Verse 1: *"Therefore, having been justified out of faith, peace we have with God through our Lord Messiah Yeshua."*

Justified out of faith: When we, out of faith, receive the gospel, the consequence is that God justifies us – declares us righteous. This means that God deals with the problem of sin, perfectly forgiving us, from a Kingdom standpoint. As believers, God no longer sees the sin in our lives, but instead He sees the righteousness of His Son. This is an assurance we can have.

Peace: We experience peace as an outcome of being in God's will.

Through our Lord: We cannot experience peace through our own means.

Verse 2: *"Through whom also the access we have by faith into this grace in which we stand and boast in the hope of the glory of God."*

Through whom...access we have: Through Yeshua we have access to God the Father. This access puts us in contact with everything good, Godly and righteous – everything that is connected to the will of God. Those who have been justified want to see sin removed from their lives – not only the eternal consequence of sin, but the day by day empowerment to not have to live in sin while in this life. We are unable to justify ourselves. We need God's intervention. Likewise, we need access to God's provision to steer clear of sin in our lives. It is only when we have been justified by faith that we can have access to God's provision in order that we can serve Him faithfully, carrying out His purposes, desires and will in our lives.

Grace: This is the source of the provision we have from God. We have a narrow understanding of grace if we only think of it in regard to salvation. God's grace does save us. Through His grace we find forgiveness of our sins and reconciliation with God. But God's grace is not limited to salvation. God's grace also works in our lives to move us or compel us to do God's will (Titus 2:11-14). Those who are saved are interested in doing God's will, because they know that God's will is the best plan for their lives.

We stand: This word for 'stand' is written in the perfect. The moment we believed we stood before God in a manner in which God would receive us. That holds true for today and even into the future this is not going to change. When we stood, stand and will stand before God He sees us as righteous through His Son. This does not change. Grace is sufficient for all of eternity, and by this grace we stand.

Boast in the hope: We have confidence and assurance as we know the outcome of God's will. Godly hope is never based upon desires that originate from within a human being. Meaning this: Godly hope is not taking our own desires before God and asking Him to grant us our wishes. This is not an action or a behaviour associated with faith. Hope, a sure expectation, is connected to the promises of God.

The glory of God: There is an inherent relationship between the Kingdom of God and the manifestation of His glory. God's glory is seen in His Presence (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Verse 3: *“But not only (that), but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation endurance produces.”*

Not only: The implication is that there is more to it than what we have studied up to this point (namely: reconciliation, justification by faith, the grace of God and access to the provision of God etc)

Glory in tribulations: Those who have been reconciled to God (friends of God) become enemies with the world (James 4:4). Those who are enemies with the world are going to experience conflict or tribulations (Acts 14:22). Going through tribulation does not merit or earn us a place in the Kingdom of God. We cannot earn our salvation by going through tribulation. However, before the Kingdom of God is established, the church, those who believe, are going to experience a great persecution, tribulation.

Knowing: Not just knowing something theoretically or logically but knowing it experientially.

Endurance: Perseverance. An ability to continue walking in the will of God despite suffering for it (“Pushing through the pain”). Endurance is good.

Verse 4: *“And endurance, documentation, and documentation, hope.”*

Documentation : Many Bibles translate this word as ‘character’, but it is literally the word for documentation – having a testimony, having proof. As we endure faithfully, consistently walking in God's will - despite what we're experiencing – it documents or testifies of our faith in God.

Hope: When others see that we are persevering and walking faithfully with God through suffering, that we have a good testimony, it produces hope in them. It is a testimony to them that we are willing to suffer or to do whatever is necessary to arrive in that Kingdom of God. This endurance is a testimony to others about the wonderful plans that God has for the future – His Kingdom plans for His people.

Verse 5: *“Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”*

Does not disappoint: Hope is not something that is going to cause us to be ashamed. We know the character of God. He will deliver on what He has promised.

Holy Spirit: Isaiah 59: 20-21. The Messiah is the Redeemer. The outcome of redemption is an eternal, covenantal relationship with God. The evidence of this eternal covenant is the Spirit of God moving in our lives to bring about order and change. Everything in a believer's life that is good, Godly, righteous and pleasing to God is because of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Verse 6: *“For yet Messiah, us being weak, according to the time, on behalf of the ungodly He died.”*

Weak: This was the condition we were in when Messiah died for us. We were not strong in faith when Messiah did this for us. We were weak spiritually, unacceptable.

We were not examples of people who were well pleasing to God. There was nothing praiseworthy in our lives. We were not righteous, but rather ungodly.

The time: God's timing. The time or season that God had determined. This timing was seen and revealed by the prophets. Messiah came and He died at the right time, a discernible time, according to prophecy.

Ungodly: You and I.

Verse 7: *"For rarely on behalf of a righteous one someone would die; on behalf of a good one perhaps someone would dare to die."*

Rarely: Infrequently. Not common.

On behalf of a good one perhaps someone would dare to die: Someone might be willing to lay down his life or live sacrificially for a good person – but this would be very rare.

Verse 8: *"But God demonstrated His love for us because us being sinners Messiah on behalf of us died."*

God demonstrated His love for us: As believers, this is the example we have been called to follow. We need to demonstrate our love for others. The commandments teach us how to demonstrate love to others.

Us being sinners Messiah on behalf of us died: This is the gospel (good news) in a nutshell.

Verse 9: *"Therefore, much more rather, having been justified in His blood, being saved through Him from the wrath."*

Having been justified: Having been made righteous.

Blood: Blood has to do with redemption. It is only through death, the death of Messiah, that we experience redemption. We need to be humble enough, and wise enough, to confess that we have sinned, that we have fallen short of the glory of God, that we are in need and absolutely dependent upon God's mercy (needing to receive His grace through faith).

Being saved: Written in the passive. We cannot do this for ourselves. It is something that is done for us and something we receive. When we have faith in what Messiah has done (the work of shedding His blood) His blood redeems us and justifies us – it makes us righteous in God's sight.

Through Him: Through Messiah's work on the cross.

Wrath: This chapter makes it very clear that we are not safe from tribulation, earthly suffering or persecution (Romans 5:3). As children of God, we are called to boast, glory, rejoice in these trials (1 Peter 3:14, James 1:2-3). This verse makes it very clear, however, that when we believe, through Messiah, we are saved from the wrath of God (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

Verse 10: *"For if being enemies we have been reconciled to God, through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, being saved in His life."*

Saved in His life: Commentators say this is a reference to Messiah's resurrection. His death brought about reconciliation (a relationship) between man and God, but His resurrection brings about salvation (resurrection testifies to victory).

When we are reconciled to God (saved, in the primary sense of the word) He does not instantly remove us from this world and take us to be with Him. (For most of us) He leaves us in this world, as we need to demonstrate our salvation while we are still alive on this earth (Philippians 2:12). Victory over sin, through obedience to God, is the second purpose of salvation.

Verse 11: *“But not only (that), we boast in God through our Lord Messiah Yeshua, that through Him we have received reconciliation.”*

Not only (that): There is more!

We have received reconciliation: This is a foundational truth - we have been reconciled to God. We are His people. He has promised never to leave us nor forsake us. This is the good news of the gospel.

Chapter 5

Part 2: Romans 5:12-21

God is omniscient. This means that He knows all things. Even the wisest and cleverest human beings know virtually nothing compared to Him. Yet, in His Word He has laid out the plan of salvation perfectly. This plan, this gospel, can be understood by all.

Verse 12: *“On account of this, just as through one man sin into the world entered, and through sin, death, and thus for all men death passed upon whom all sinned.”*

One man: Referring to Adam.

Through sin death: Throughout the Bible we are taught that there is a relationship between sin and death. God never wanted man to experience death, nor the consequences that were brought into this world because of sin. Sin, and a sinful man, was not part of God’s will. But God, knowing all things, knew that if man was given free will he would misappropriate it and choose to walk in the wrong ways. Before man even sinned, God had a solution for sin – what we call today ‘the gospel’. Adam’s sin brought about death – all men die today, no one is exempt.

Verse 13: *“For until the law sin was in the world, but sin was not charged because the law was not given.”*

Law: Referring to a specific law that was given – the law of Moses.

Until the law: In the time preceding the law – for those people who lived and died before the law of Moses was given.

Sin was in the world: Before the law was given, sin was in the world. This means that it was not the law that brought sin into the world – the law is not the cause of sin. What the law does, though, is that it simply reveals sin, and it clarifies to us what sin is.

Sin was not charged (imputed or reckoned): This means that it was not acknowledged by human beings as sin. They did what was right in their own eyes. Even though they had a conscience, that conscience was overruled by the desires of the flesh.

Verse 14: *“But death ruled from Adam unto Moses, and even upon the ones who sinned, but did not sin in the likeness of the sin of Adam, who is a pattern of the One coming.”*

Adam: The first man, and the one through whom sin (and therefore, death) entered into this world.

Did not sin in the likeness of the sin of Adam: They did not sin in the same way that Adam had sinned (they did not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil), by they were still affected by sin – they sinned in other ways, and they also were all affected by death – they all died.

Pattern: Type, example. Just as one man (Adam) was the problem, so too is One Man the solution – Messiah Yeshua. One man brought about death, destruction and the wrath of God, but there's another Man (in the likeness of Adam – God in human flesh) who brings about life, order and a turning away of God's wrath.

Verse 15: *“But not as the transgression thus also the gift. For by one man's transgression many died. Much more the grace of God and the gift found in the grace of One Man, Messiah Yeshua, for the many is going to abound.”*

One man's transgression: Referring to the sin of Adam.

Many: The implication is “all”.

Much more: The transgression is not like the gift. The gift of God (His grace) is more powerful than transgression. It can compensate for, and defeat, transgression...much more.

Going to abound: God's grace is superior. It is powerful. It is going to overcome all the negative effects or unrighteous consequences of sin.

Verse 16: *“And not as through the sin of one the gift. For the judgment by one for condemnation, but the gift, by many transgressions, for righteousness.”*

Note: There are a lot of italicised words in this verse. These words have been added into the text in an attempt to make the choppy Greek less choppy and more fluid to read.

Gift: Paul is emphasising that in the same way grace is superior to the transgression so too is the gift of God unique and superior. This gift of God brings about reconciliation between man and God, and it is able to restore what sin destroyed.

The judgment by one: Referring to Adam. Judgment, and therefore condemnation, came into this world through Adam.

Condemnation: Sin brings judgment, which would have condemned us eternally if God had taken no action. So even though through that one man came about the transgressions of many the gift of God, through the grace of God, is different. It is superior and has a very different outcome. Sin brought about judgment, condemnation. But the gift of God brought about righteousness.

Verse 17: *“For by the transgression of one, death ruled through one over many, how much more so the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will rule in life through the One, Messiah Yeshua.”*

Note: One man (Adam) brought about disaster in this world through his sin (disease, war, sadness etc), but the righteous act of One Man, Yeshua, can bring about a change.

This does not mean that there is an end to sin and death in this world right now, but there is going to be a restoration and the perfect effects of Yeshua's gift, through the grace of God, will be seen in due time, and forever.

Rule: Reign

Verse 18: *“Therefore, as by one man's transgression to all men was for condemnation, thus also by One Man's righteous act for all men unto justification of life.”*

Transgression: That act of sin

Condemnation: Because of Adam's sin, we were heading for eternal condemnation.

One Man's righteous act: Referring to Yeshua going to the cross to die for humanity.

Justification: Righteousness. Our status or condition is changed through accepting what Yeshua did for us on the cross. Once we were condemned, now we are justified.

Life: This implies two things: we are going to live righteously in this life on earth, and we are going to experience eternal life (we experience eternity in the Kingdom of God – our Kingdom future).

Verse 19: *“For just as through one man's disobedience many were set down as sinners, thus also by the obedience of One Man they will be set down that the many will be righteous.”*

Many: This is talking about all of humanity.

Set down: A colloquium for a verdict. The verdict that they were sinners was established.

Obedience: Referring to the obedience Yeshua displayed when He went to the cross.

Many will be righteous: The verdict is that all those who believe will be made righteous.

Note: What we see here, over and over again in this Scripture, is that the faithfulness of the work of Messiah, rooted in the grace of God, produces righteousness in our lives. The moment we believe in Messiah – His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 10:9-10) – we are declared righteous forever. Nothing can change this. We enter into a covenant that God has the responsibility of keeping – not us (John 10:28-29). As a recipient of this covenant, the Holy Spirit enters into our lives and He, the Spirit of truth, is going to lead us into righteousness. He is going to help us to embrace the truth of God and live righteously. This is how we grow and mature. We are not saved by righteousness. We are saved by God's free gift – His grace. However, that gift works in our lives and moves us into the will of God and into obedience to the purposes of God. This outworking of grace in our lives manifests itself as righteousness.

Verse 20: *“But the law entered alongside in order that the transgression should abound. But where the sin abounded, grace abounded much more.”*

The law entered alongside in order that the transgression should abound: The law was given so that we could understand how sinful we are. The law did not come as an instrument of salvation, but it defines for us what is right and what is wrong. The law shows us God's standards or expectations for His people – not for salvation, but for righteous living. It is not our obedience that saves us, but His obedience (obedience even unto death on the cross).

Abounded much more: Overflowed exceedingly. Grace triumphs greatly. It is able to compensate and overcome any of the disobedience of the first man - the consequences of sin and condemnation.

Verse 21: *“Just as sin ruled in death thus also grace shall rule for righteousness to eternal life through Messiah Yeshua our Lord.”*

Note: The gospel is not a mystery and nor is it difficult to understand: one man brought about death, and one Man (Messiah Yeshua) solved the problem. When we accept what Yeshua has done for us, by faith, we can experience eternal forgiveness instead of eternal condemnation.

Chapter 6

Part 1: Romans 6:1-11

We come across the concept of baptism primarily in the New Testament. Many people wrongly think that it was John the Baptist who invented it, but this was not the case. Throughout the history of Judaism (Biblical Judaism, as recorded in the Old Testament) there are hints of baptism (ritual washings and cleansings) by the priests and Levites prior to serving God. Baptism, although a picture to us of Messiah's death, burial and resurrection, was also done in order to reflect a change of status – from that which was normal or common, to that which was set apart for a holy purpose (ie to serve God). Baptism, in a unique way, unites us (through faith) with the person and work of Messiah. Baptism sets us apart – no longer living to our own wants and desires, but living differently to the world – living in a way to please God, according to His plans and purposes.

Verse 1: *“Therefore, what shall we say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace should abound?”*

Continue in sin: Meaning: Live by its motivations or desires.

Verse 2: *“Certainly not! We have died to sin therefore how can we still live in it?”*

Certainly not!: This is a very strong answer. Many Bibles will translate it as “God forbid” or “May it never be.” We should never do anything motivated by sin, and nor should we, in any way, have any connection to sin. We, as believers, are called to live differently.

We have died to sin: Paul is talking to believers.

Can we still live: This is talking about our behaviour. We need to behave in a way that bears witness to our faith.

Verse 3: *“Or do you not know that we who have been baptized into Messiah Yeshua were baptised into His death?”*

Baptised into His death: Death and burial are some of the aspects of baptism. All sin leads to death. When a person stands in the water of baptism, they are publicly pronouncing that they are dead because of sin. When people are dead, we bury them. Messiah's death (that we have been baptised into) is also connected to sin – not His sin, but ours. He, who knew no sin, became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Verse 4: *“Therefore having been buried with Him through baptism into His death, that just as Messiah was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also in the newness of life should walk.”*

Raised: Written in the passive. Yeshua was completely surrendered to His Father's purpose. He had the power to raise Himself up, but He did not. God the Father raised Yeshua from the dead. The resurrection was God's stamp of approval and acceptance of what Yeshua had done. Yeshua's sacrifice has satisfied the wrath of His Father.

Raised from the dead: Resurrection is another aspect of baptism. Baptism doesn't only focus on death, but the glorious aspect of baptism is the resurrection. Coming out of the water signifies a new life. We are called to live differently. There is no sting in death (1 Corinthians 15:54-57). Sin did not have the victory. On the third day Yeshua conquered death (and, therefore, sin) by rising from the dead.

We: Fellow believers

Walk: Walking is a term used in Judaism to speak of lifestyle. There is also a play on words with these word in Hebrew – 'Halach' is to walk and 'Halacha' refers to Jewish law. We are called to live in a way that reflects the law of righteousness. This newness of life reflects the Kingdom of God. We are not only called to live in the newness of life – we are called to walk in it.

Verse 5: *"For since having been united with Him in the likeness of His death, even also the resurrection we have."*

Since: Many Bibles translate this word as 'if' but 'if' introduces doubt into a text. Paul is not raising a question. He is making a statement of affirmation.

Verse 6: *"This knowing, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin should be rendered powerless in order that no longer we should serve sin."*

Our old man: Our old, carnal, fleshly nature.

Him: Messiah

The body of sin: Our flesh.

Rendered powerless: Annulled. This word does not mean that it has been removed. While we are still in these bodies we are tempted, and we still struggle with sin. Sin, however, no longer has authority over us. We have the great potential to live obediently by the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. If we do not walk in faith, however, and if we do not utilize truth and submit to the leadership of the Holy Spirit there is going to be evidence of that old man still hanging around. Although he has been crucified and is dead, in times of disobedience we can resurrect and serve sin again.

Verse 7: *"For the one who has died has been justified from sin."*

The one who has died: Those of us who have received Messiah's death as payment for our sins.

Justified: Made righteous. This is not the word "freed" or "been set free from". It is literally the word for being rendered just or innocent. It is at this point that it is no longer possible for satan to accuse us of any wrongdoing or sin. All of our sin is done away with because of the power of the cross, the work of Messiah.

Justified from sin: Sin no longer has authority or power to condemn us anymore.

Unfortunately, we can still submit to sin (and we do at times) but we don't have to - it is a wrong choice which shows weakness and disobedience.

Verse 8: *“But since we have died with Messiah, we believe that also we shall live with Him.”*

Live with Him: Paul is not talking, here, about eternal life. He is talking about our behaviour in this life...our lifestyle in this world. Messiah’s life becomes our life. The way He lived should be how we want to live our lives. His will and ministry is now going to be lived out through our lives.

Verse 9: *“Knowing that Messiah, having been raised from the dead, no longer dies. Death no longer has dominion over Him.”*

Having been raised: Again, written in the passive.

No longer dies: When Yeshua rose from the dead the expectation was that He would never die again. This is the same expectation we have. Our bodies may die physically, but we will never die spiritually - meaning that we will never be separated from the love of God or His Kingdom promises. We have assurance and a perfect hope.

Death no longer has dominion over Him: Resurrection shows that Yeshua defeated death. We who believe that we have been united with Him in the likeness of His death also believe that we are together with Him through His resurrection. This, therefore, means that neither sin nor death have any power, lordship or dominion over us either.

Verse 10: *“For whom has died He has died to sin once and for all; but the One who lives, lives for God.”*

Whom has died: Still speaking about Yeshua.

Once and for all: This does not need to be repeated. Yeshua’s sacrifice was perfect eternally.

Note: Baptism has to do with being united with the things that Yeshua experienced. When we, by faith, enter into that New Covenant (saying ‘yes’ to the gospel) His experience becomes our experience. This is why we can have a wonderful assurance – God sees us as righteous because of the righteousness of His only begotten Son. Our sin was placed on Yeshua and His righteousness was placed upon us the moment we believed.

Verse 11: *“Thus also you reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive unto God in Messiah Yeshua our Lord.”*

Reckon: Consider or think of. This is the way we need to think.

Reckon yourselves: This is a command.

Alive unto God: The only way we can be alive to God is in or through Messiah Yeshua. Being IN Messiah means being in a new covenant relationship with Him. When we are alive to God it means that He now becomes the master of our lives. It is His will, His purposes, and His objectives which we become committed to.

Our Lord: Everything we do needs to be brought under the authority of Messiah Yeshua. We are called to submit to Him and to do everything for His glory.

Chapter 6

Part 2: Romans 6:12-23

Although we might not think of ourselves by this term, all of us are slaves. Either we are slaves to unrighteousness (which means that our master is the devil), or we are slaves to righteousness (and our Master is Messiah).

Verse 12: *“Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal body for the obedience to it of its desires.”*

Therefore: In light of what Paul has said in the previous verses: namely, being dead to sin and alive to God – in this new condition.

Rule: Be the king. Until we receive the gospel message we are in bondage to sin. With our own power, intellect, or knowledge we cannot change our situation – we are slaves to unrighteousness. As believers, children of God, we cannot let sin have lordship in our lives, we cannot live in obedience to sin and its desires.

Verse 13: *“And do not present your parts as weapons of unrighteousness to sin, but you have presented yourselves to God as from death now being alive, and your parts weapons of righteousness to God.”*

Present: Submit. Yield.

Your parts: Paul is talking about our body parts, our organs, our very beings etc.

Weapons: This is the literal word in Greek. By the choice of Paul’s words, he is teaching us that we are in a spiritual battle.

Unrighteousness to sin: There is a connection between unrighteousness and sin. And, ultimately, they both lead to eternal death – the eternal consequence of sin.

But: In contrast to what has just been said

You have presented yourselves to God: Paul is writing the book of Romans to believers in Rome. They have accepted the gospel, and, in this, way ‘presented themselves to God’. They are now different to non-believers. They are no longer slaves to sin. They no longer have any connection to the devil and have no need to obey him any longer.

As from death: This was their former condition. Previously they had been spiritually dead (and their behaviour had testified of death, as it was rooted in sin).

Sin...God: Paul uses parallelism between God and sin, righteousness and unrighteousness. Either we are going to serve sin, or we are going to serve God.

Verse 14: *“For sin has not rulership over you, for you are not under the law but under grace.”*

Rulership: Dominion, lordship. Sin should not reign over us, it should not be our master.

Under: This is a word that speaks of authority. We are no longer under the authority or the eternal condemnation/punishment of the law.

Under grace: The instrument that God uses to bring about change in our lives is His grace. Our human natures do not like being told what to do and so it is so easy to rebel when the law is laid down. However, grace doesn’t force us. Although it upholds the law, it doesn’t lay down the law. But grace persuades us. Grace changes our perspective.

Grace allows us to choose to obey the spirit of the law (the righteousness of the law, the purpose of the law) out of love rather than out of force. Through the grace of God, we can become a recipient of His love. Knowing God's love is going to cause us to want to demonstrate our new natures, our new conditions. We want to demonstrate our love for Him, and it is out of love that we keep His laws and not out of compulsion.

Verse 15: *“What therefore? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!”*

Not under law: As believers we are not under the authority, judgment or punishment of the law, but that does not mean that we should then have a desire to violate the law.

Under grace: Grace doesn't lead to disobedience; it leads to obedience. When Yeshua (the Word) became flesh, He embodied the law. He never transgressed, sinned, or violated the law as He had a character of righteousness. His Spirit in us, the Holy Spirit, leads us to behave in the same way that Yeshua did.

Verse 16: *“You do not know that to whom you present yourselves to a servant for obedience, you are slaves to whom you obey – whether to sin, death; or obedience to righteousness?”*

Whom you present yourselves to: What, whatever, or whomever you submit or yield to.

A servant for obedience: Whatever we present ourselves to we become a slave to that thing and we begin to obey it.

Sin, death: If we are slaves to sin then this will lead us to eternal death.

Obedience to righteousness: Obedience, to the things of God, leads to righteousness.

Verse 17: *“But thanks be to God because you were slaves of sin but you have obeyed from your heart that pattern of doctrine to which you were delivered.”*

You were slaves of sin but you have obeyed: There is a change, a transformation.

Obeyed from your heart: We have obeyed the gospel – God's plan for salvation. This change has led to a new heart condition. The only solution for sin is redemption.

Obeyed...that pattern of doctrine: When we believe, we become a living example (or pattern) of the new condition we are in because of salvation – we become an example of what Yeshua taught. Redemption leads to righteousness.

Doctrine: Teaching i.e. what the Word of God reveals.

Verse 18: *“But having been liberated from sin you have become slaves of righteousness.”*

Liberated: Written in the passive. This is not something we can do for ourselves. It has been done for us by Messiah on the cross.

Liberated from sin: We have been set free from the power and consequences of sin from an eternal perspective. The umbilical cord to sin, so to speak, has been severed and we are no longer connected to it.

Verse 19: *“I speak in a human way on account of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you have presented your parts as slaves to lawlessness unto lawlessness, thus now present your parts as slaves unto righteousness for sanctification.”*

Human way: Paul is speaking here like a man. From a human perspective.

The weakness of your flesh: Many believers (especially those who are new believers) are weak spiritually. They are still very much connected to the things of this world because of their lack of knowledge of spiritual things. They are like babes spiritually.

Presented your parts: Yielded your bodies and every part of yourselves. Paul has used this example a few times now. Repetition shows emphasis.

Lawlessness: Against the Torah (against the law).

Lawlessness unto lawlessness: Lawlessness leads to more lawlessness.

Thus now: There is a change

Sanctification: This is the goal or the objective of a believer. We desire to live holy and pleasing lives before God. Holiness is tied to the purposes of God.

Verse 20: *“For when you were slaves to sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.”*

Free in regard to righteousness: While they were slaves to sin, they had no connection with righteousness. They were separated or liberated from righteousness.

Verse 21: *“Therefore what fruit did you have then from the things that now you are ashamed of? For the end of those things is death.”*

What fruit did you have: Sinful behaviour does not produce good fruit. In fact, it produces shame.

The end of those things is death: Again, Paul reiterates that sin leads to death.

Verse 22: *“But now having been liberated from sin you become slaves to God; you have your fruit for sanctification, and the end, eternal life.”*

Have your fruit for sanctification: There is evidence in our lives of holiness. The fruit we are now producing no longer leads to shame.

The end: The end goal of this new condition that we are in.

Verse 23: *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Messiah Yeshua our Lord.”*

Gift: This gift of grace is free.

Eternal life: Kingdom life

In Messiah Yeshua: It is only found in a covenantal relationship with Him.

Lord: He is the One we serve. He is our Master and the One who now has authority over us. His will becomes our will. His thoughts our thoughts. His way our way. When this becomes our reality, we are going to know true joy and peace.

Chapter 7

Part 1: Romans 7:1-6

What role does the law of Moses play in our lives? Many believers will say that because we are New Testament believers the law is done away with and no longer has any relevance for us today. Is this accurate? Would the apostle Paul agree with such a statement? In this chapter Paul speaks a great deal about the law of Moses.

What we have already established in previous chapters is that salvation, the grace of God, is a free gift and it cannot be earned. Yeshua did the work and paid the price for our salvation. There is NOTHING we can do to earn salvation – no one is justified by the works of the law. The law is not an instrument for salvation. Salvation is not an outcome of works; it is an outcome of faith in the work of Messiah and what He did for us on the cross – Not our works, but His work. Through faith in what Yeshua has done for us is the only way that we will find forgiveness of our sins.

Verse 1: *“Or are you not knowing brethren – to the ones who know the law I am speaking – that the law rules over a man for as long as he is alive?”*

Or: A statement of two alternatives. Either we are going to believe in the free gift of God and know that eternal life is given to us by faith, and not by works, or we will be against believing this.

Not knowing: This word, when literally translated, means ‘against knowing’. It is not that the people are ignorant, but many are against knowing the truth of what the Word of God truly says.

Brethren: An inclusive term for both male and female believers, brothers and sisters.

The ones who know the law: Many of the believers who were in this congregation of Rome were Jewish believers. Therefore, they knew what the law said. Because they knew what the law said, Paul’s assumption was that they would understand what he was writing to them.

Rules over: Lords over or is the authority of.

Note: All of us are conceived in sin. We all have a problem in that we are stained with original sin. When we apply the law or truth of God to our lives (His expectations or standards) we fall short and are shown to be unrighteous sinners. Left to ourselves, with no help from God, we are going to experience condemnation or judgment.

The phrase ‘you are no longer under the law’ should not be taken to mean that the law no longer has relevance for us. It means that we are no longer going to be condemned by the law. It also means that the law no longer has authority over us. We have a new Master – our Lord and Saviour Messiah Yeshua.

Verse 2: *“For a married woman to her living husband is bound by the law, but if the man should die, she is free from the law of marriage.”*

A married woman: A married woman is a wife because of a covenant. Marriage is a covenant (Malachi 2:14). In the Old covenant, God spoke of Israel as His bride or wife (Isaiah 54:5-8, Jeremiah 2:2). In the New covenant, Messiah speaks of believers, the church, as His bride (Ephesians 5:22-33; Revelation 21:9).

In both the Old and the New Testament this is the framework that we are given to help us to understand this relationship, this covenant, that we have with God through Messiah.

Bound by the law: Legally she is in this covenant of marriage. She is obligated to this covenant from the minute this covenant is made.

The man: Her husband

If the man should die: The man's death is the only condition that can break this covenant. His death brings about a different condition for her – it changes her status.

Note: In the previous chapters in Romans, 'death' has been the central focus (baptism etc). We need to read this chapter in light of this context – death brings about a change, but resurrection brings about a better change (Romans 6:3-11).

Free from the law of marriage: Being free (and this freedom is conditional – it is only relevant if her husband dies) from this law is only applicable to this woman. Although there is an end to the (law of) marriage for this couple, the law of marriage is not affected in a general sense – the laws of marriage are still relevant, they are still in this world, today. Just because one man dies does not mean that marriage loses all significance or is rendered null and void for everyone. Messiah's death does not mean that the law loses significance and is rendered null and void for everyone. The law is still very relevant today.

Verse 3: *“Then, therefore, if her husband lives an adulteress she will be called if she should become to another man, but if the man dies, she is set free from that law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she has married another man.”*

She is set free from that law: When she is married, the law that governs the institution of marriage applies to her. When her husband dies, his death doesn't cancel out the institution of marriage but, for the time that she is unmarried, she is not bound to the law. However, as soon as she remarries, that law is once again applicable to her.

She is not an adulteress: The death of her husband frees her from judgment. If he has died, she can become the wife of another man without fear of being called an adulteress. Paul was writing to those who knew the law (Romans 7:1), so they would have perceived or properly understood the example that Paul was teaching them here – viz that when we have died to sin (our first master), we are no longer under the judgment of the law. The punishment for adultery was death. The punishment for sin is death.

Verse 4: *“So that, my brothers, also you have died to the law through the body of Messiah, that you can become to another – to the One who has been raised from the dead in order that we produce fruit to God.”*

Brothers: Brethren. Brothers and sisters. Believers.

You have died to the law through the body of Messiah: We are no longer susceptible to the judgment of the law (ie eternal death). When Messiah died upon the cross, we (as believers, by faith) have died with Him. Through the new covenant (of which baptism is a symbol) we are united with Messiah in His death (Romans 6:3). As such, through Messiah, we have already been punished, as He paid the penalty for our sin – the penalty being death. Messiah paid, but it was credited to our account. We are no longer candidates of God's eternal judgment – death has changed our status and freed us to be united to another Master.

You can become to another: Our old lord or master was the law. Having died to that, we are his no longer. The new Lord of our life is Messiah Yeshua (*the One who has been raised from the dead*), and we get all the benefits of being in this new covenant.

Raised from the dead: Again, written in the passive. God the Father raised Yeshua from the dead. The resurrection reveals God's power. When we are raised with Messiah (Romans 6:5) the Holy Spirit, with power, dwells within the believer forever. He enables us, with His power, to produce fruit to God.

Produce fruit to God: How do we know what God considers good fruit? We know this through the institution of the law. We know that the law doesn't save us, but it (like a marriage handbook) instructs us as to what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil. The law gives us a framework on how to produce good fruit – legitimate fruit.

Verse 5: *"For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sin, through the law, were raised in our members in order that we produced the fruit of death."*

The passions of sin, through the law, were raised: When we were in the flesh (in our previous condition: before we died to our first master – sin) the law aroused in us our sinful desires and rebellious natures.

Our members: Our bodies, our parts.

The fruit of death: Not good fruit.

Verse 6: *"But now, we have been set free from the law, having died to what bound us, so that we can serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter."*

But now: There has been a change...a change brought about by faith ie the receiving of the grace of God.

Set free from the law: Set free as far as the judgment or punishment of the law is concerned – the wife would no longer be considered an adulteress, punishable by death, if she marries another once her first husband dies (We are not set free from the institution of marriage. In much the same way, neither are we set free from the institution of the law).

Died to what bound us: The punishment of the law no longer traps us. Sin provided a loveless "marriage" for us. It trapped us within its bonds.

Newness of the Spirit: Through Messiah we enter into a new covenant ((Kingdom covenant) relationship with God. This new covenant brings about a new future for us, a Kingdom future or reality. We are called to live according to the truth of this Kingdom – that of righteousness.

Not in the oldness of the letter: In the oldness of the letter the law said "Do not murder" (Exodus 20:13). In the newness of the Spirit this law still exists, but Yeshua upped the ante on it...(Matthew 5:21-26). From Yeshua's perspective it was not only someone who physically murdered someone else that was guilty of transgressing this commandment. Yeshua stated that if a man even had hatred in his heart toward another then he was considered guilty of transgressing this same commandment. It is not a man's actions alone that make him guilty before God, but even his thoughts (This same concept can be applied to all the commandments – adultery the act, lust the thoughts etc). A man's thoughts show his intent. The 'spirit of the law' or the 'righteous requirement of the law' is referring to the intent of the law. As believers this is what we are called to fulfil (Romans 8:4)

Chapter 7

Part 2: Romans 7:7-14

Do we have a proper and Scripturally based understanding of the law of Moses? Many people do not. They think the Spirit leads in one way and the law in another. However, this is not the case. The Spirit and the law are not in conflict with one another (Romans 8:4).

Verse 7: *“Therefore, what shall we say. The law is sin? Never let it be! I would have not known sin except for the law. Covetousness I would not have known except for the law saying: ‘Thou shall not covet’.”*

What shall we say: Based upon what we have learned what should our conclusion be.

The law is sin: Paul is asking if this is the correct conclusion or the right understanding that we should reach regarding the law. As a New Testament believer, we want to get rid of anything having to do with sin. Does the law fall into that category?

Never let it be: Certainly not! A very strong word in the Greek meaning absolutely not or God forbid.

Would have not known sin except for the law: We are all born with a conscience and so can understand truth to a certain degree. But it is only through the law (God’s written Word), that we can know and understand the full impact of sin. The law teaches us what sin is. It teaches us that we are breaking the rules of God. It teaches us truth.

Verse 8: *“But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all types of coveting. For without the law sin is dead.”*

Sin, taking opportunity: The problem is NOT with the law or the commandment. The commandment is good. The law is Scriptural. It comes from God. Sin is the problem. Sin is an opportunist and will take any opportunity or foot in the door that it can get.

Sin... produced in me: Our fleshly natures are such that if God says something we rebel and want to do the opposite. When God says “Do not....” we say: “We will....” Sin utilizes that which is good to arouse in us our passions which are, by nature, against the truth of God.

Without the law sin is dead: Sin within us appeared to be dormant until that commandment came about. Why? Because sin is by nature defiant and rebellious and rears its head when told what to do or what not to do. God commanded Adam not to eat from the tree of knowledge. Before the command, if Adam had eaten of that tree, it wouldn’t have been charged to him as a sin (Romans 5:13). Although he wouldn’t have been eternally punished for it, there would have been (and were) earthly consequences. After the command it became sin. Yeshua, knowing the commandments, did not (unlike Adam) give in to sin. He obeyed...even to the point of death (Philippians 2:8)

Verse 9: *“I was alive without the law once, but the commandment came, and the sin came alive and I died.”*

The commandment came: When the commandment of “Thou shalt... and thou shalt not...” came into effect.

The sin came alive: The sinful desire was birthed within us.

Note: If a society was not governed by laws or standards of morality they could not be accused of rebellion (because there would be nothing to rebel against) but they would do whatever they felt was right in their own eyes. Although this behaviour might be sinful, they would not know that it was sinful because they would have nothing to measure it against – for them, there is no standard of behaviour that shows that they are falling short. For us the law is good. It revealed to us that we are sinful and has given us time to repent so that we do not have to face eternal death.

I died: Sin, alive in my life, brought death to me.

Verse 10: *“And the commandment was found in me for life, but it brought about death.”*

Was found in me: The commandment was given to me for the purpose of bringing about life in me.

It brought about death: Although this commandment was given to bring us life (spiritually we were dead and headed towards God’s judgment – the commandment was given in order to show us this) it showed us that we were sinners and were in fact dead (spiritually).

Verse 11: *“For sin, taking occasion through the commandment, deceived me and by it killed me.”*

Deceived me and ... killed me: The commandments show us our sinfulness. They show that we are heading for death if we don’t find forgiveness for our sins. The commandments proclaim the judgment of God upon us because we are transgressors. This is a good thing for the commandment to do but it can also be seen as a source of death because it pointed out our sinfulness.

Verse 12: *“So that the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.”*

So that: This is a term of conclusion.

Holy: Set apart for a purpose.

The commandment is holy and righteous and good: We must not think that the law is improper for us as believers. The law is NOT against faith.

Good: This means ‘in accordance with the will of God’.

Note: If we apply the law to our lives as unbelievers the outcome is death. It manifests our rebelliousness, and it will lead us into transgression. When we understand why the law is holy, righteous and good it is going to cause us to seek forgiveness through a Redeemer or Saviour.

Verse 13: *“Therefore has that which is good become death? Let it never be said! But the sin, in order that sin should be manifested through that which is good, unto me produced death in order that sin could be shown for being excessively sinful.”*

That which is good become death: Paul wants us to think about the purpose of the law. He wants us to reach a conclusion about the law. He is asking us if that which is good (ie the law) has become death to us. Should this be the way that we perceive the law?

Let it never be: Certainly Not. May God forbid.

Sin: Sin was in our lives. God gave us the law to reveal this sin to us.

That which is good: We must never think that the commandments are not good. The law is good, righteous and holy.

Produced death: The law showed up or manifested what was present within us (for example: like an Xray machine shows up our bones, so the law shows up our sin).

Shown for being excessively sinful: The law was given so that we could see that the sin living within us was excessively sinful and it is something that we need to absolutely deal with. If we do not know about the presence of sin in our lives then we do not know the power or hold that it has over us and, therefore, we will not deal with it correctly (viz to receive the gospel by faith – to invite, into our lives, the One who died on our behalf. Yeshua is the only One who can deal with our sin. Not us. We are simply the recipients of this magnificent work that He did for us, and we can only simply receive this free gift from Him by faith).

Verse 14: “For we know that **the law is spiritual**, but I am fleshly and sold under sin.”

We know: True believers know or understand the Word of God.

The law is spiritual: Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is teaching us that the law is of God. There is nothing problematic with the law. Paul has already told us that it is holy, righteous and good. The law is the truth of God. The law sets forth the righteous standards of God.

I am fleshly: The law is not the problem – we, sinful men and women - *sold under sin*, are. When the law is put into human flesh it brings about death (the consequence of God's judgment). This death is not only physical, but it is also spiritual – eternal death. As humans we have a choice. We can choose this eternal death and just carry on living in the way that we are living. OR we can choose life (Deuteronomy 30:19) – accepting what Messiah Yeshua did for us on the cross (John 3:16), and that God raised Him to life and gave Him victory over sin and death (Romans 10:9-10).

Sold under sin: This is our nature. BUT faith can bring about a great change or transformation to this carnal nature of ours. We do not need to be people who have sin ruling over our lives. Our problem is sin. Our solution is redemption. Redemption is a purchase – we have been brought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20. That price is the blood of Messiah). We are no longer our own, but we belong to God. As such, we are given victory – victory to walk in obedience to the truth of God.

Chapter 7

Part 3: Romans 7:15 -25

The exodus from Egypt is a pattern that can help us to understand the process of redemption. First the people were redeemed by the blood of the lamb. Then they came out of their bondage to Egypt. It was only after these two things had happened that God gave them His instructions or commandments. It is only after redemption (once a person has been redeemed) that a person has the opportunity to obey God. Redemption leads to obedience. Do we want to be people who obey God? Do we want to take His Word and apply it to our lives so that we can bear much fruit?

Verse 15: *“For what I do, I do not know. For what I want to do, this I do not practice. But what I hate this I do.”*

Note: In this verse Paul is writing about his previous condition - before coming to faith. He is reminding us of what we were like prior to receiving God's grace.

Do: Work out. To produce something in order to have a result or an outcome.

What I do I do not know: Paul did not understand why he could not do the things he wanted to do.

What I want to do, this I do not practice: There was a disconnect between what Paul wanted or intended to do and what in actuality he performed or did.

What I hate this I do: Prior to Paul's redemption (prior to him receiving the truth) there was an inability in his life to act in the way that he desired to act. His actions were in conflict with his desires or intentions.

Verse 16: *“But if then I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.”*

Note: Paul, as a Jewish individual, prior to coming to salvation, had (for much of his life) been taught and had studied the law, the commandments, of God. His desire was to keep these commandments, but when he examined himself, he found that he was not able to keep them. This caused a conflict or a tension within him. He agreed that the law of God was good, but, in his fleshly state (his carnal nature) he was unable to keep it.

Verse 17: *“But now, it is no longer I who work this out but sin which dwells in me.”*

Sin which dwells in me: Sin, in Paul's life, caused him to live in conflict with God's laws. Paul is leading us up to a right conclusion – he needed a change in his life. Sin was ruling in his life (not the desires that stemmed from his conscience). Paul, even in his pre salvation state, agreed that the law was good. He desired to put it into practice in his life, because it is the right or good thing to do, but he found that he could not because of the sin living within him. Paul wanted to do the right thing, but he was unable to do so.

Verse 18: *“For I know that does not dwell in me, in my flesh, good. For to will is present with me, but the working out of what is good I do not find.”*

Does not dwell in me, in my flesh, good: In our natural state (our flesh, our carnal natures) good does not live in us because sin does. Every human being (Jew or Gentile) is born with sin. This sin dominates our will and works out its own purposes in our lives. It gets the upper hand on us. Instead of living to obey God, we live to obey sin.

To will is present with me: Paul, in his fleshly state, had the capacity to desire, he had the will, to do good.

I do not find: Although Paul had the desire to do good (to follow the instructions of God), he found that he could not consistently do it.

Verse 19: *“For the good that I will, I do not do; but the evil I will not, that I practice.”*

Will: Desire.

The evil I will not, that I practice: Paul did not desire to do evil. The word evil does not necessarily mean something intrinsically bad or wicked. Evil, simply, is anything which is not God’s will, anything which is against God’s will. Although Paul wanted to do God’s will he found that he was living in conflict to it. He was rebellious and defiant to the will of God. When we do not do God's will we are practicing evil.

Verse 20: *“But if what I do not want I do, it is no longer I who am carrying it out but the sin that dwells in me.”*

Sin: This is the problem that dominates our lives before redemption. Many people do not want to acknowledge that we were conceived in sin and were born sinful (Psalm 51:5). This means that we are all in need of redemption. None of us were born spiritually fine and then something messed us up along the way. The Word of God tells us that we were all born into this world as sinful human beings – we were all out of order. Even creation itself was out of order – empty and void (Genesis 1:2). A change needed to happen. Change only happened when God spoke. When God’s Word came, the Spirit moved to bring about order into creation. It was only after this change had taken place that God said, “It is good” (Genesis 1:31). Creation is a picture of the change that needs to happen in our lives. It is only when we apply the Word of God to our lives (once we have believed in Yeshua by faith) that the Spirit can move to bring about a change in our lives and we can live in a way for God to say “It is good”.

Verse 21: *“I find therefore this law: that I desire to do good, but evil is present within me.”*

Evil is present within me: In Romans 7:17 and Romans 7:10 Paul writes that sin dwells in him. In this verse he gets more specific. Sin produces evil. In our natural states there is evil within us.

Verse 22: *“I delight with the law of God according to the inward man.”*

With: This is not the Greek work for ‘in’.

The inward man: Our conscience. God has placed within every human being a conscience. This conscience desires or delights in good.

Verse 23: *“But there is another law in my members that wars against the law of my mind, and has taken me captive to the law of sin which is in my members.”*

Members: Paul talking about his flesh or carnal nature.

Wars against the law of my mind: Unbelievers, in whom sin dwells, have a war going on between their carnal or fleshly natures and their God given consciences (their inner man). When an unbeliever encounters God Word, their inner man agrees with God, but they are unable to carry out obedience to God’s Word. Although the desire is there to do good, they have been taken captive by sin and so find that they cannot do the good they want to do.

Verse 24: *“What a wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”*

What a wretched man that I am: When a person, after knowing what the Bible teaches about God’s expectations of us are etc, reaches this conclusion, they are ready for salvation. They realise that they are wretched because they are in rebellion toward God – naturally choosing or defaulting to sin and not to obedience. This is the beauty of the law. The law reveals that we need to change but that we need help in order to be able to do this. We cannot do it on our own.

Deliver me: Rescue me

This body of death: Paul is talking about the spiritual consequence – eternal death.

Verse 25: *“I give thanks to God through Messiah Yeshua our Lord! Therefore, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”*

I give thanks to God: Paul was now talking about his current condition.

Messiah Yeshua our Lord: Yeshua redeems us and puts us in a position of victory (gives us the Holy Spirit) whereby we are then able to obey God.

With the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin: Paul concludes this chapter by implying that we have a choice to make – and only believers have the ability to choose rightly. Unbelievers automatically default to the second law mentioned here.

Prior to coming to faith, we really didn't have the power to do good. We were in bondage - just like the children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt. Although they wanted to serve God, they couldn't, as they were serving Pharaoh. In Egypt their spiritual condition got worse and worse. It was only through God's grace, loving kindness and His covenantal promises to the Israelites that caused God to move and to redeem them.

With the mind I myself serve the law of God: When we have the mind of Messiah (1 Corinthians 2:16), then we are empowered to say 'yes' to God and therefore able to serve the law of God.

With the flesh the law of sin: When we operate in the flesh then we will still be serving the law of sin.

Chapter 8

Part 1: Romans 8:1-6

This chapter is very foundational and is basic to our faith. We need to understand it, so that we can live with assurance - knowing that we belong to God and that we have a sure hope of entering into His Kingdom. The only way that we're going to be invited into the Kingdom of God is through, by faith, taking hold of what Messiah has done for us – laying His life down on the cross so that His blood could cleanse us from our sin.

Verse 1: *“Therefore now there is no condemnation for those who are in Messiah Yeshua, not according to the flesh walking but according to the Spirit.”*

Now: Now that we are in a covenantal relationship with God, through the Lord and Saviour, Messiah Yeshua, everything is different.

There is no condemnation: Everyone is going to be judged. Believers are judged for reward. Believers are not going to be rejected by God and nor are they going to experience condemnation or eternal punishment. Unbelievers will experience rejection as well as eternal punishment.

In Messiah Yeshua: IN Messiah Yeshua means being in a covenantal relationship with Him. If we are not in this covenantal relationship with Him, then we will be one of the ones condemned.

Not according to the flesh walking: Not walking (consistently or on a regular basis) according to our fleshly desires is evidence that we are in a relationship with Messiah. Although we fail and give in to sins at times this should not be the overarching testimony of our lives.

Walking...according to the Spirit: As believers and disciples of the Lord we need to have a behaviour that consistently shows that we are being led by the Spirit and not by our flesh.

Verse 2: *“For the law of the Spirit is life in Messiah Yeshua being made free from the law of sin and death.”*

Life in Messiah Yeshua: When we are in a covenantal relationship with Messiah, we experience life through the Holy Spirit.

Free from the law of sin: Paul makes this personal. He was personally set free when he entered into this covenantal relationship.

The law of sin and death: When we have not been redeemed by God’s grace then this is the law that is at work within us. In the Scripture, sin is always connected to death. When we operate according to the law of the Spirit the result is going to be life. When we operate according to the law of sin (or of the flesh) the result is going to be death.

Verse 3: *“For what the law was not able to do, being weak according to the flesh, God sent of Himself the Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and concerning sin He condemned the sin that is in the flesh.”*

Note: We learnt in chapter 7 that the law is good, righteous and holy. The problem is not with the law. God gave us the law and everything that God gives to us is good and perfect (James 1:17).

Being weak: This is written in the imperfect tense in the Greek. When something in Greek is written in the imperfect, we can anticipate a change that is coming. When we were in the flesh (in our unredeemed, carnal state) the law did not produce anything good in our lives because of our weaknesses. When we were unsaved, all the law could do for us was point out the fact that we are sinners and that we fall short of the standards of God.

God sent of Himself: There was a problem. We, being weak, could not sort out the problem of sin in our own lives, so God made a change to sort out this problem for us.

The Son in the likeness of sinful flesh: Although fully God, Yeshua came to earth as fully man. Like all of us, Yeshua had the potential to sin. But He never did (1 Peter 2:21 - 22). Yeshua was the perfect Lamb, and so was an acceptable sacrifice - able to take away the sins of the whole world (John 1:29).

He condemned the sin that is in the flesh: He did this by receiving the condemnation upon Himself. Being sinless, He did not deserve this condemnation -receiving the full punishment of transgressing the law – but He did it so that we would not have to receive this condemnation and so that we could be eternally free.

Verse 4: *“In order that the righteousness of the law should be fulfilled in us the ones who not according to the flesh walk but according to the Spirit.”*

Righteousness of the law: There is an inherent relationship between the law and righteousness. The law is not an instrument of righteousness (this means that it is not the law that makes us righteous), but when we apply it to our lives it shows us what righteousness and unrighteousness are.

Should be fulfilled: Written in the passive. This means we cannot do it by ourselves.

The law should be fulfilled in us: As believers we have a responsibility. This verse is not talking about being declared righteous when we believe (which we are) but is talking about walking or behaving righteously – living in a way that fulfils the righteous standard of the law.

Not according to the flesh walk but according to the Spirit: The only way we can walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh is through the new covenant. It is only through the new covenant that we can receive the Spirit (Isaiah 59:20-21). This new covenant is a covenant of redemption, ratified with the blood of Messiah. This gives us a sure hope or confidence to know that we are going to be eternal recipients of the promises of God.

Verse 5: *“For the ones being in the flesh the things of the flesh they think, but the ones according to the Spirit the things of the Spirit.”*

The things of the flesh they think: How are we thinking? Do we think according to the flesh/our carnal nature?

According to the Spirit the things of the Spirit: We want to have spiritual thoughts...thinking of spiritual things. When we are walking in the Spirit we begin to think according to God's order – we think according to the purposes or will of God.

Verse 6: *“For the thought of the flesh is death, but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace.”*

The thought (mind) of the flesh is death: When we live in the flesh, think in the flesh and do the things of the flesh the outcome is death.

Life and peace: This is what God wants for His people - a life that reflects the righteousness of God and manifests the glory of God. Peace is not dependent upon our circumstances in this world but is dependent upon the fact that we are in an eternal covenant with God.

Chapter 8

Part 2: Romans 8:7-14

When God created humanity, He gave each person a mind. There are two ways that we can think: either with a mind of flesh (sin) or with the mind of the Spirit. Our minds (thoughts) are so important because it is with the mind that we make our decisions. Sinful decisions lead to death, Spirit filled decisions lead to life.

Verse 7: *“Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for to the law of God it does not submit and nor is it able to.”*

Mind of the flesh: Related to sin, which is related to death. This is the mind that we are born with.

To the law of God it does not submit: If we have been taught that the law (of God) no longer has any relevance for our lives we have been taught a lie. Those who live according to the Spirit submit to the law of God.

Nor is it able to: The implication of this is that those who live according to the flesh cannot submit to the law of God. Conversely, those who live according to the Spirit can submit to the law of God.

Verse 8: *“But the ones being in the flesh they are not able to please God.”*

As already mentioned, people either have the mind of the flesh or the mind of the Spirit. Those who have the mind of the flesh cannot submit to the laws of God. It is only through faith in the gospel (receiving the grace of God) that we can be saved and experience the forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Messiah. Those who reject what Yeshua has done are not able to please God. They are unable to receive the Holy Spirit and, therefore, do not have the mind of the Spirit that helps them to live according to the laws of God.

Verse 9: *“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Messiah this one is not of Him.”*

You: Paul is talking to believers here.

If indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you: This is the litmus test so to speak. If the Spirit of God dwells in us then there is evidence that we have been born again, that we are a new creation, that we have been redeemed by God’s grace. In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit would come upon a person and anoint them for a task. The Spirit could then depart from that person. This was the Old Testament reality of the Holy Spirit. In the new covenant this has changed. In a new covenantal relationship with God, the Spirit of God will come upon us when we believe, and He will never depart. In this new covenant, God has promised that He will never leave us as orphans (John 14:15-20, Hebrews 13:5).

In the Old Covenant, sin caused the Holy Spirit to depart from a person (1 Samuel 16:14). In the New Covenant God has promised that He will forgive our sins and remember them no more (Hebrews 8:10-13).

Spirit of Messiah: Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit. These are different names for the same Spirit.

This one is not of Him: If there is no evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in a person's life then that person does not belong to God – he is not in a New Covenant relationship with God.

Verse 10: *“But if the Spirit is in you then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is alive for righteousness.”*

The body is dead because of sin: When the Spirit of Messiah is within us, we do not want to sin, and nor do we choose to sin. Although we do stumble and sin at times this is not our consistent behaviour. When Messiah is in us our desire to live righteously comes alive (resurrection power) within us.

Verse 11: *“But since the Spirit of the One who raised Yeshua from the dead dwells in you, He will give life to your mortal body through His Spirit who dwells in you.”*

Will give life to your mortal body: Previously we were making sinful decisions, but we can have a new beginning, a fresh start.

Verse 12: *“Therefore then brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh that we should live according to the flesh,”*

Brothers: Brethren. Fellow believers.

We are debtors: Yeshua redeemed us. He paid the price for us so that we could be redeemed from sin (Ephesians 1:14).

Not to the flesh: We do not owe the flesh anything.

Verse 13: *“For if according to the flesh you should live you are about to die; but if by the Spirit the deeds of the body you put to death, you will live.”*

About to die: If we live according to the flesh, according to our sinful natures, then we are going to experience eternal death – receive God's judgment. God told Adam and Eve that if they ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge they would surely die (Genesis 2:17). God was not talking about an immediate physical death (as borne out in the text) but about a death far worse – eternal separation from God. When Adam ate of the fruit he was cast out of the garden and no longer had intimacy or fellowship with God in the way that He had had in Eden. This is a picture of what is going to happen to those who sin and who do not repent – they will be cast out, barred from entering, the Kingdom of God. Instead, they will find themselves in a place of darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Note: We are either going to choose sin (which leads to death) or we are going to choose life – a Kingdom future. Choosing the latter will birth in us a desire to submit to the law of God – not according to the oldness of the letter but by the newness of the Spirit, in order to fulfil the righteous intent of the law. How do we know if we are living righteously?

By comparing our behaviour or deeds to what the Word of God reveals, specifically the commandments of God.

Verse 14: *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God these are the sons of God.”*

As many as: This is a broad term.

Led: This is a passive term. We cannot do this by ourselves. It is the Spirit of God that leads us.

Sons: This is not a biased or a sexist term in the Scripture. When Paul calls us “sons of God” he is not talking about gender. He is talking about an implication – how God sees us. Sons are servants. They serve their father. Those who are led by the Spirit are servants of God. Sons are heirs and receive an inheritance. Those who are led by the Spirit are going to be heirs of God – our (eternal) future is a wonderful future.

Chapter 8

Part 3: Romans 8:15-25

Verse 15: *“For you have not received a spirit of bondage again for fear but you have received the spirit of adoption through whom we cry out: “Abba, Father.”*

Have not received a spirit of bondage again for fear: As believers we can have an assurance of our salvation. We do not need to fear that we are going to be eternally separated from God. When we are saved, we have an assurance that God will keep His promises - viz that He will never leave us or forsake us etc. We do not need to fear.

Abba: This is not a Hebrew word but an Aramaic one that means ‘father’. It is not a word that means “daddy”, or a word that implies a more intimate relationship. Paul tells us that this word means Father. He said the Spirit causes us to cry “Abba” and then Paul interprets this Aramaic word for us by saying: “The Father”. The name “Father” is a word that shows respect. Acknowledging God as our Father honours and respects Him.

Verse 16: *“The same Spirit testifies together with our spirit that we are the children of God.”*

The same Spirit: The Holy Spirit. The same Spirit of God who had adopted us into His eternal family.

Spirit testifies: God does not lie. When He testifies or proclaims something we can have assurance that what He has said is true and does not change.

We are the children of God: If we are believers, the Spirit of God will assure us, and inwardly we will know that it is true, that we are children of God – eternally adopted.

Verse 17: *“But since children, we are heirs – heirs of God and also joint heirs with Messiah, if indeed we suffer together (with Him) in order that also we are going to be glorified together (with Him).”*

We suffer together... we are going to be glorified together: A child of God is united in faith with the Son of God – Yeshua.

In obedience to His Father's plan, Yeshua was willing to suffer because He knew what suffering was going to bring about eternally. Likewise, when we serve the living God, when we follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit, we at times are going to suffer. But we do not suffer alone – we suffer together with Him! If we suffer together with Him we are going to experience a change....we will also be glorified together with Him.

Verse 18: *“For I do not consider that the sufferings of this present time are worthy to be compared with the coming glory that shall be revealed in us.”*

The coming glory that shall be revealed in us: This is another promise that we have. Any suffering we go through on this earth cannot even be compared to the glory that is coming for us.

Verse 19: *“For the earnest expectation of creation eagerly waits for the revelation of the sons of God.”*

Earnest expectation of creation: Not only does God's redemption (through His Son Messiah Yeshua) affect the remnant of humanity, but it also brings about a transformation in God's creation. This world is going to be changed, transformed.

The revelation of the sons of God: This is what creation is waiting for. It has an expectation, a hope, and it is waiting for this hope to become a reality. There is a relationship between this transformation (this inheritance of the sons of God) and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Creation knows this, creation is waiting for this, and, when it happens, creation is going to rejoice (rocks cry out, trees of the field clap their hands).

Verse 20: *“For the futility of creation being subject, not willingly, but through the subjecting unto hope.”*

Subject: Creation itself was impacted by sin and it was subjected to the situation it found itself in.

Not willingly: The sin of Adam and Eve not only affected humanity, but it also affected creation. Creation didn't want this sin in the world. But because sin is here creation is also, in an unwilling way, subjected to it. This is why creation waits with eager expectation for this transformation, the Kingdom of God, to come.

Hope: Hope is very important for us to have, but also very important for creation to have. Hope is powerful. Hope gives endurance and perseverance through suffering because we know that a great reward is on the way. Creation knows this too.

Verse 21: *“Because also this same creation will be set free from the bondage of decay into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”*

Set free: A word of deliverance. Creation will be liberated.

Decay: This is a word related to the effects of sin and death. When sin is present it brings about decay. When Adam and Eve ate of that fruit in the garden of Eden they began the process of death, they began to age, they began to wear out.

Glorious liberty: This glorious freedom takes place among the children of God (Those who believe in Messiah Yeshua).

Children of God: Those who are in God's family.

Verse 22: *"For we know that all of creation groans and labours together until now."*

Groans and labours: This is creation's present condition. It is groaning because of the effects of sin in this world.

Until now: Even to this day creation is groaning and labouring – it is waiting for the wonderful, Kingdom change to happen.

Verse 23: *"But not only (creation), but we who have the first fruits of the Spirit also we ourselves groan, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies."*

Have the first fruits of the Spirit: This means that there is evidence of the Spirit of God working in our lives. The first fruits are like a downpayment, a guarantee of more to come. Another outpouring of the Holy Spirit can be expected in the lives of believers.

Waiting for the adoption...the redemption of our bodies: When we believe, we are called adopted (Romans 8:15). The full outcome of the adoption, though, is the redemption of our bodies (When a child is adopted into a family there is a verbal acknowledgement that that child is a part of the family. The paperwork comes later and affirms and legalises what has already taken place. The redemption of our bodies is like the paperwork – it affirms and legalises what has already happened).

The redemption of our bodies: This is going to happen at an event called "Our Blessed Hope" – the rapture. In the twinkling of an eye believers are going to be transformed (1 Corinthians 15:50-55). The spirits of believers who die, before the rapture takes place, will go into the presence of God (absent from the body, present with the Lord). Their bodies, however, are in the ground – decaying. It is at the time of the rapture that these bodies in the ground will be raised up and redeemed – become incorruptible. All believers, those dead or those alive, will experience this redemption of bodies at the same time. Not only are we going to receive our new bodies, but all of creation is going to enter into a new reality at that time – the Kingdom of God.

Verse 24: *"For to hope we have been saved, for hope being seen is not hope; for why does someone hope for what he sees?"*

Hope: Hope is an eager and sure expectation that God will fulfil His promises. It does not originate in our minds. Hope originates in the Word of God – in the promises of God. We insult God if we doubt His promises. We need to believe His promises in their entirety.

To hope we have been saved: God saved us so that we would have hope. When we have hope we have an expectation that God will fulfil His promises. Having this type of hope is going to impact how we live. Hope will change how we think. It will change our view of things. Hope will give us the ability to endure, to persevere, to press on because we know that all we have to endure here on Earth is trivial in comparison to the wonderful things that God has for us in His Kingdom.

Hope being seen is not hope: If we already see these things and know and experience them in their fullness we wouldn't have need for hope. Although we have not seen these things we have heard about them. This is so important because faith comes through hearing – not

through seeing! When we hear the promises of God, and we believe in them through faith, then we are able to endure through this world.

Verse 25: *“But since we do not see we hope, and eagerly wait for it with perseverance.”*

We do not see: This is our present condition. We haven't yet seen these things. We have heard about them, read about them and believed them, but we don't as yet possess them.

We hope, and eagerly wait for it with perseverance: Hope is powerful. When we live in hopeful expectation, believing what God has said – without doubting – we are going to be able to persevere.

Perseverance: Patience. Endurance.

Chapter 8

Part 4: Romans 8:26-30

Although the Holy Spirit has many objectives, in a general sense, He is about one main thing: bringing us into God's will, so that we can reflect God's order and purposes in our lives. When we obey God, our lives become a testimony to others of God's righteousness, God's glory and His faithfulness. In our flesh we can do nothing that is pleasing to God. It is only when we walk in the anointing of the Holy Spirit that we can be an effective vessel for God.

Verse 26: *“And likewise, the Spirit also helps us in our weaknesses for what to pray just as it is necessary as we do not know. The same Spirit intercedes on behalf of us with groanings that are unintelligible to us.”*

Note: In this verse Paul tells us about an area that we fall short in. We have an inadequacy or an inability to pray effectively. There are times in our lives when we simply do not know how to pray properly.

Helps: Assists. This word carries with it this implication: The Holy Spirit sees us struggling in our faith and what He does is brings us near to Himself. The Holy Spirit, although He is within us, has the ability to bring us closer to Himself in purpose and objective – which is to serve, glorify and honour God.

Weaknesses: Our inadequacies. Left to ourselves we are weak and frail. Left to ourselves we would not be able to do God's will. This is why God has given us the Holy Spirit. It is only with the help of the Holy Spirit that we can fulfil the purposes of God, be in the will of God and experience the blessings of God. Without the Spirit none of this would be a reality in our lives.

Helps us...to pray: Sometimes we are in a situation, or we have committed to praying about a situation that someone else is in, but the problem is that we just do not know how to or what to pray about. God knows this about us. The Holy Spirit wants to help us with this.

Necessary: This is a word which speaks about that which must be if the will of God is going to be manifested in those situations.

We do not know: In most circumstances we do not know what the will of God is, but the Spirit wants to help us with this.

Unintelligible to us: We don't understand what He is saying. There is a debate as to whether the Holy Spirit utters these groanings through our mouths (unintelligible words coming out

of our mouths) or whether He utters these groans independently of us. How He does it is not what is really important to us. What is important for us to know is that we don't know how to pray effectively, and so He intercedes for us, with these unintelligible groanings, in order to make our prayers more effective.

Verse 27: *“And the One who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, that according to God’s will He intercedes on behalf of the saints.”*

The One who searches the hearts: God the Father is the One who searches our hearts (Psalm 139:23, Jeremiah 17:10).

According to God’s will: Prayer originates in the heart of man, but disciples of Messiah have a desire to pray in a way that is pleasing to God (Luke 11:1-4, Matthew 6:5-13). The Holy Spirit, knowing what God’s will is, intercedes on our behalf for the will of God, for His purposes, to be realised in our lives.

Saints: The children of God, Believers. A saint is literally a holy one. Holy means being set apart for the purposes of God, being in submission to the will of God.

Verse 28: *“And we know that to those who love God all things together work for good, to the ones who according to God’s purpose have been called.”*

To those who love God all things together work for good: This promise is only relevant for those people who love God. How do we know if we love God? Yeshua answers that question for us in John 14:15-31. If we love God, we are going to want to apply His Word to our lives. This means that we will be committed students of the Word of God, because if we do not know His Word then we cannot demonstrate our love for Him.

All things together work for good: For those who love God, He can use everything in our lives for His purposes – ‘good’ means according to His will.

According to God’s purpose have been called: Not only do we need to love God, but, in order to experience this good, we also need to be those who have been called by God to fulfil His purposes. This means that we desire to obey and fulfil God’s will. We live to please God and not to please ourselves - our own plans, wants, desires etc.

Verse 29: *“Because those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”*

Note 1: Predestination is a theological term spoken of in the Bible. Many people who hear this word wrongly assume that God has predetermined who is going to go to heaven and therefore, by default, He has elected other people to go to hell. This is a false understanding of this word. God does not desire anyone to go to hell (2 Peter 3:9, Ezekiel 33:11, Ezekiel 18:23) and he certainly does not choose people to go there.

Note 2: The original word in the Biblical text for predestination means “to see beforehand”. For example: If a seamstress wants to sew a dress, she chooses the pattern and the material. Before the dress is even made, she has a pretty good idea in her head (based on the pattern and on the material) what her dress is going to look like when it is completed. It is important to note that the verses relating to predestination (Ephesians 1:4-5, Ephesians 1:11, Romans 8:29, Romans 8:30) all relate to those who are IN Messiah. Predestination is NOT applicable for unbelievers (who goes to hell and who doesn't) but should only be

applied to believers – those who are in Messiah. Messiah is the pattern. Those who are in Messiah are going to be patterned on Him, and when we reach completion, we are going to be like Him (1 John 3:2). This does not mean that we are going to be ‘gods’ or ‘divine’ but it means that we are going to have the mind of Messiah, the desires of Messiah and we are going to reflect the character of Messiah. This is what predestination is – being like Yeshua, patterned on Him.

He foreknew: God has perfect foreknowledge. Predestination does not happen by accident. God knows what the end goal is and how to get His people to reach that goal.

Predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son: Here we have the definition of predestination. It does not say that He predestined some for heaven and others for hell. Predestination (predetermination) has to do with believers being conformed into the image of Messiah Yeshua. Predestination is another promise that God has given to us, and a promise which He is going to keep – the promise is this: Those who are in a new covenant relationship with God, through Messiah Yeshua, are going to be conformed into the image (the reflection, the behaviour, the character) of God’s Son. This is our assured future and hope!

Note 3: In Ephesians 1:4 we are told that we are chosen IN Messiah. This choosing only happens once we are in Messiah. It does not say that we are chosen to be in Messiah. It is only once we are in Messiah that we are called a “chosen generation...a royal priesthood...etc” (1 Peter 2:9). What did God choose us for according to Ephesians 1:4? We are chosen to be holy (set apart for the purpose/will of God) and without blame before Him.

Verse 30: “*And whom He predestined these also He called; those that He called He justified; the ones that He justified these also He glorified.*”

Whom He predestined these also He called: Being called is one of the prerequisites in Romans 8:28 for all things working together for our good.

Called: God calls many but chooses few (Matthew 22:14). This call of God goes out to all people, but the response is based on free will. Only few respond to God’s broad call.

He justified: He made them righteous.

Glorified: This means that (when we are like Him) we are going to express, in a perfect state, the glory of God.

Predestined....called....justified...glorified: This is the process for those who are in Messiah.

Chapter 8

Part 5: Romans 8:31 - 39

We all need encouragement from time to time. One thing that gives us encouragement is assurance - knowing something for sure. When it comes to the promises of God, we can be assured that what He says He will do. This portion of Scripture assures us about God’s love for us, as well as assures us that nothing will be able to separate us from this love.

Verse 31: *“Therefore, what shall we say to these things? Since God is for us who is against us?”*

These things: Referring to the promises of God that Paul has just been speaking about – that we have been predestined to become like Messiah (righteous and holy). This transformation is only completed when we receive our new bodies – our incorruptible Kingdom bodies. This does not mean that we become divine. That is heresy. It simply means that we are going to agree with God (being faithful and obedient servants to God) and are going to reflect His glory (we do not have glory in and of ourselves).

Since: Many translators translate this word as “if”. “If” introduces doubt into a text.

God: Context bears out that this is referring to Father God (see Romans 8:32...He who did not spare His Son).

God is for us: God loves us (Romans 5:8) and, when we have been reconciled to Him through the blood of His Son, He desires to bless us.

Who is against us: We have become part of God’s family. We have become His adopted children. So, if God, our Father, is for us it really does not matter who is against us.

Verse 32: *“Who His own Son He did not withhold but on behalf of us all He delivered Him up, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”*

But: In contrast to withholding, God gave.

Us all: All who are in covenantal relationship with God. God gave His Son for all of the world (John 3:16), but the only ones who are going to be recipients of this free gift are those who receive it by faith.

With Him: This is a redemptive phrase. We are “with Him” because of the fact that He has redeemed us, forgiven us and done the work of reconciliation.

Freely give: Giving without limitation. This is the grace of God in action. He doesn’t hold back or withhold from us, but He is overflowing in His generosity toward us. We, as children of God, are called to be like Him – a generous people.

Verse 33: *“And who shall bring charges against the elect of God? God is the One who has justified.”*

And who shall bring charges against the elect of God?: No one can bring charges against us - except for God. But once we have entered into a new covenant with Him, He justifies us – He makes us righteous.

Elect: After we have entered into a covenantal relationship with God we are elected or chosen by faith.

Justified: He is the One who has made us righteous.

Verse 34: *“Who is the One who condemns? It is Messiah, the One who died, and also He has been raised, and also is at the right hand of God interceding on behalf of us.”*

Condemns: Literally: Judges down.

It is Messiah: God the Father is the ultimate Judge of judges and King of kings. However, in Daniel 7:13-14 when Yeshua comes before the Ancient of Days (Father God, God Almighty)

He inherits (Hebrews 1:2). This inheritance includes all matters of judgment (condemnation). Messiah is the One who has the authority now to condemn. *He has been raised*: The resurrection is one of the most important events in history (1 Corinthians 15:14).

Interceding on behalf of us: Yeshua takes our prayers and empowers them in order that His intercession (His prayers for us) has a glorious outcome for us.

Verse 35: *“Who will separate us from the love of Messiah? Tribulation or suffering? Persecution? Famine? Nakedness? Danger or sword?”*

Suffering: This is a word that speaks about pressure - something becoming very narrow and pressing against someone, afflicting them. We could also translate it as ‘affliction’.

Sword: This is a reference to war.

Note: None of these things can separate us from the love of God. This is an eternal promise which is not dependant on us. Once we enter into the new covenant relationship with God it becomes His responsibility (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) to hold onto us and never let us be plucked from His hand (John 10:28-30). Once we believe, we have eternal security. For a true believer, this eternal security does not motivate us to sin – we don’t go around thinking about how we can get away with things. Sometimes we do stumble and fail but this should grieve us and not bring us joy. Nothing good comes from sin.

Verse 36: *“Just as it has been written: “For Your sake we are being put to death all day and we are reckoned as sheep for the slaughter.”*

It has been written: That which has been written in the past (Biblically) is still relevant into the future. This is quoted from Psalm 44:22.

Verse 37: *“But in all these things we are more than conquerors through the One who loved us.”*

More (than conquerors): Beyond, in an overflowing manner. We are not just going to scrape through with a minor victory, but we are going to be more than victorious thanks to God’s workmanship in our lives.

The One who loved us: Referring to Messiah Yeshua.

Verse 38: *“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor the things present or the things that will be,”*

I am persuaded: This is the assurance that Paul had and that we, as believers, need to have. Nothing was going to change Paul’s mind about this.

Neither death nor life: It doesn’t matter if we live or if we die – God’s promises remain true.

Present: This word is written in the perfect tense. This means this is relevant and will hold true for the past, present and future.

Verse 39: *“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other thing of creation, is able to separate us from the love of God in Messiah Yeshua our Lord.”*

Note: Those who are saved can have an absolute assurance of this wonderful promise!

Chapter 9

Part 1: Romans 9:1-9

Israel, both the land and the people, are vital, foundational, in regard to the will and purposes of God. Israel is connected to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. It is only when Israel (the Jewish nation) is right with God that the establishment of God's Kingdom is going to take place – see Matthew 23:37-39.

Verse 1: *“Truth I speak in Messiah, I do not lie, bearing witness to me my conscience in the Holy Spirit.”*

Truth: Biblical truth is always related to the will of God. What Paul speaks about in this section involves the will of God.

I do not lie: Paul is very serious about what he's going to say.

Holy Spirit: It's of the utmost significance that Paul mentions the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that brings order into situations (Genesis 1). Through the Spirit of God and through the Word of God a God-pleasing change happened in creation. Creation became ordered so that it could reflect the purpose and will of God in this world. This is a picture of the change that the Holy Spirit brings about in our lives once we have believed.

Verse 2: *“For grief to me is great, and unceasing sorrow is in my heart.”*

Unceasing sorrow: Paul is in anguish. He had grief and was full of sorrow. This sorrow (which is a negative feeling) was unrelenting. It continued on and on. His heart was overwhelmed by this. Something caused him to feel this way.

Verse 3: *“For I could myself could wish that I could be cut off from Messiah on behalf of my brothers, my relatives according to the flesh.”*

Cut off: Separated from.

Cut off from Messiah: This was SO important to Paul that he would have been willing to forgo salvation and spend eternity in the pit of hell, with ongoing torment forever and forever, if the situation that was causing him grief would change.

My relatives according to the flesh: Paul is talking about his natural family – those who are literally and biologically his relatives. Paul was greatly concerned and full of sorrow because of his relatives (his fellow Jews).

Verse 4: *“Who are Israelites, to whom the adoption, and the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service, and the promises.”*

Israelites: The Jewish people. Paul was miserable and in anguish (both physically and spiritually) about the spiritual condition of Israel.

Note: In this verse Paul speaks about some of the great things that God gave to the Jewish people.

Adoption: They have been adopted as sons of God. They are heirs and have an inheritance.

Covenants: Referring to the various covenants that God made with Israel in the Old Testament.

The giving of the law: In this verse Paul mentions the benefits or advantages that God gave to Israel. The law is mentioned as one of these benefits. Paul is exalting in the fact that Israel was given the law first.

Service: Work

Promises: There is an inherent connection between the covenants and the promise.

Verse 5: “*Who the patriarchs, also from whom the Messiah (came), according to the flesh, being above all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.*”

The patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

From whom the Messiah (came): Yeshua (when He took on flesh) came as a descendant of the Jewish people. Yeshua is eternal. There was never a time when He did not exist. He was there long before Abraham, long before there was even a Jewish nation. But, in a planned way, according to prophecy, it was the will of the Sovereign God that when Messiah took on flesh, He would enter this world as a Jew.

Above all, the eternally blessed God: This is who the Son of God - Messiah Yeshua – is: He is above all and He is eternally God. He is divine.

Verse 6: “*But it is not that the Word of God has fallen. For not all the ones from Israel are Israel.*”

Fallen: Many Bibles translate this word as ‘failed’ or ‘rendered null and void’, but it literally means ‘to fall from’.

It is not that the Word of God has fallen: We are not to think in this way. Paul was grieved because the majority of the Jewish people had not believed in the gospel like he had. Only a small remnant of Jewish people had believed.

Israel: The term ‘Israel’ is a Kingdom term. When ‘Israel’ is mentioned in the Bible it has Kingdom ramifications, through which we can learn Kingdom principles. The word Israel is used twice in this sentence. In this passage we see two different Biblical definitions for the word ‘Israel’. In the first usage of the term ‘Israel’ in this verse Paul is referring to the Jewish people – the physical/natural descendants of Jacob (‘Israel’ can refer to the Jewish people or to the land of Israel). Paul is saying that not all of these natural descendants should be considered ‘Israel’ – ie: a Kingdom person (the second definition of the word ‘Israel’). This means that not every Jewish person is going to find themselves in the Kingdom of God. Those Jewish people who have not taken hold of the promises of Abraham, the faith of Abraham, are not considered the seed of Abraham. They do not share in the covenantal promises that God gave to Abraham.

Verse 7: “*All children are not the seed of Abraham, but ‘In Isaac shall be called to you the seed.’”*

In Isaac shall be called to you the seed: Quoted from Genesis 21:12

Isaac: Isaac was the child of promise. Isaac was supernaturally established by God (God did the work miraculously). Not all of Abraham’s children were included in the promise –

Ishmael was not the child of promise. It was only faith in the promise that would allow Ishmael and anyone else to be part of it. Just being a physical descendant of Abraham does not make one a seed of Abraham, a Kingdom people.

Verse 8: *“This is that not the children of the flesh are children of God, but the children of the promise are accounted for as the seed.”*

The children of the promise: God promised Abraham, whose body was as good as dead, that he would have a son and that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars (Genesis 15). Abraham believed God. All those who believe God, and believe in the promises of God, are counted as the seed of Abraham - spiritual children, Kingdom children.

Accounted for: Reckoned

Verse 9: *“For this is the word of promise: ‘According to the season I will come, and Sarah shall have a son.’”*

The word of promise: God made a Kingdom promise to Abraham and to Abraham’s seed. Being part of Abraham’s physical seed will not get us into the Kingdom of God. God’s promise did not have anything to do with the natural, but the promise of God had to do with the supernatural.

According to the season I will come, and Sarah shall have a son: Quoted from Genesis 18:10 and Genesis 18:14.

According to the season: At the right time – God’s timing.

I will come: God was going to move to fulfil His promise – to bring victory in the place of death.

Sarah: When a woman is mentioned in Scripture (this was also to be Abraham’s son, but Sarah receives the mention) the context of the passage becomes one of redemption. God promised a son. This promise is, ultimately, about God working in this world to bring about redemption - to extend His mercy, grace and forgiveness so that we can receive His wonderful promise, and that promise is ultimately of a Kingdom reality.

Sarah was old, barren and her womb was lifeless – dead (Romans 4:19). God did what no one else could do – He brought life to Sarah’s dead womb. Bringing life from death is a reference to resurrection. Resurrection is a word of victory, and it is a word that is related to the Kingdom (it has Kingdom implications).

A son: Isaac was born supernaturally to fulfil the Word of God, the plans of God. Yeshua, too, was born supernaturally, according to the promise (made by the God who doesn’t lie), to fulfil the will of God. When we believe this, and respond to the truth of God, we too will receive the promise. God desires to bless humanity. This is His nature or character. The promises He offers to us are available to all people. However, only those who respond to His promises, believe in them (by faith) and wisely apply them to their lives are going to receive them.

Chapter 9

Part 2: Romans 9:10-14

Verse 10: *“But not only this, but also Rebecca having conceived from one who was Isaac our father,”*

But not only: The promise of a son didn’t end with Abraham and Sarah. The promise moved into the next generations until the day arrived when the Son of the promise came - Yeshua the Messiah, the Redeemer. This promise was not only for one family, but it was a promise through which all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3).

Rebecca: Rebecca was Isaac’s wife.

Isaac our father: We normally think of Abraham as our father – Father Abraham. This term, used in relation to Isaac, teaches us that this promise went through to the next generation.

Verse 11: *“For not yet having been born, furthermore not having done anything whether good or evil in order that the election of God should remain from beforehand, not from works but from the One who calls.”*

Done: Performed actions or deeds.

Not having done anything whether good or evil: Before the twins (Jacob and Esau) were born (in utero) they had obviously not done any deeds – whether good or evil.

Election: This is a compound word in the Greek – this means it is made up of two Greek words. The first word means “from, or out of”. The primary root of this word means “one who speaks” The simplest understanding of this word is that it is a choice or a selection. When God speaks there is always an outcome (He moves or behaves in a way to fulfil His Word). God’s words matter. They change reality.

The election of God should remain from beforehand: God had a purpose. He gave the promise beforehand. Long before Abraham had a son God told Him (beforehand – Genesis 15) that he would have one. Long before Esau and Jacob were born God declared (beforehand – Genesis 25:22-24) that the older would serve the younger – God declared His purposes or promises before the reality came about.

Not from works: God’s promises are not made a reality by the works of man.

The One who calls: This calling is an invitation. God invites all of us to believe in His promises so that we can be recipients of His Kingdom blessing.

Verse 12: *“As it has been said to her, ‘The older one will serve the younger one.’”*

Her: A woman (referring to Rebecca here), taking a primary role in a Biblical text, gives the text a context of redemption. God is going to redeem those who believe in His promises – not based upon works, but based upon the One who calls. God spoke to Rebecca and revealed His purpose, prophetic truth, to her before the twins (Jacob and Esau) were born. God did not give this prophetic truth to her husband – Isaac.

The older one will serve the younger one: Quoted from Genesis 25:23

Verse 13: *“Just as it has been written: ‘Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.’”*

It has been written: God behaves or acts in light of His Word. What He has said, He does.

Jacob I have loved: God is speaking here.

Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated: Quoted from Malachi 1:2-3. God is Sovereign. This means that He is the absolute ruler. But God submits to Himself – to His standards of righteousness and holiness. There are things He cannot do – like lying or tempting anyone to sin. This does not mean that His sovereignty is limited. God’s character, His behaviour, toward humanity is not to just do whatever He wants – ie. He doesn’t choose to love some and hate others in a vacuum – just because He can or because He is all powerful. God doesn’t elect some and cast others out in hatred. This is not His character. This is not how He behaves toward us. There is a context to this hatred – as seen in Malachi. Esau was building up what God did not approve of. God told Esau that He would tear these things down. Esau’s defiant and rebellious response was that if God tore it down he would build it right back up. Esau did not want to submit to God. He did not want to follow God’s plan for His life (a plan that included him serving his younger brother Jacob). Jacob, on the other hand, followed hard after God. He desired the blessing of God in his life (Genesis 32:24-30). Jacob didn’t deceive Esau when it came to the birth right. Jacob legitimately purchased it, and Esau willingly sold it to him (Genesis 25:29-34). These boys were born into a wealthy family. There would have been food in the house. Esau, however, wanted what he wanted, and he wanted it immediately and on his terms. When Esau discovered that the birth right was not solely for him but that through it God wanted to bless humanity he wasn’t interested in it and the Bible says he ‘despised it’. This birth right was precious to God, but the things of God were not precious to Esau. Hebrews 12:16 reveals to us that Esau was an immoral and perverse man. When Esau was near death, he despised the things of God – wanting to satisfy his flesh or carnal nature with a single meal. When Jacob was near death, he rallied himself on his staff and he blessed his sons – the next generation.

Verse 14: *“Therefore what shall we say? Is there unrighteousness from God? Certainly not!”*

Some people teach that Jacob was a liar, a thief, a deceiver and a cheat but that God chose to love him, whereas Esau was the victim – soft, and kind and loving – but God chose to hate him. Although God is sovereign (and theoretically can do whatever He pleases) He always behaves according to His righteous character. God, before the twins were born (before they had done anything good or bad – ie this was not based on works but on the One who called), gave prophetic truth to Rebecca that the older (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob). This was truth based on God’s foreknowledge. God, knowing all things perfectly, knew the choices these men would make. Before we came into being, God knew the choices we were going to make. We need to be people who always choose to submit to God – to His plans and purposes.

Certainly not: God cannot do that which is unrighteous. He only behaves righteously, and He only does that which is holy, good and just. It is wrong for us to assume that God would ever do anything that is unrighteous - there is no unrighteousness with God.

Chapter 9

Part 3: Romans 9:15-23

Verse 15: *“For He says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy upon whom I will be merciful, and I will show compassion upon the one whom I will be compassionate upon.’”*

He: God.

I will have mercy...: Quoted from Exodus 33:19. This portion of Scripture (see Exodus 33:12-23) is very significant. It is read, in the synagogue, on the Sabbath day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, as well as on the Sabbath day for the Feast of Tabernacles. The context is that Moses is pleading with God for assistance and for blessing. The people had been brought out of the land of Egypt, but God had not shown Moses who the Messiah was (“Your Way”) who would lead the people into the Promised Land. Moses was confused. Messiah was not going to come to lead the people into the land of Israel, but He is going to come to lead His people into the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God did not begin when Israel entered into the Promised Land. This entering in was a paradigm, an example, to teach us about Messiah’s future work - what He was going to do the first time He came, and what He will complete when He returns the second time and establishes His Kingdom.

Mercy: Grace

I will show compassion upon the one whom I will be compassionate upon: Many people teach that because God is sovereign He simply chooses whom He wants to be merciful and compassionate towards. This is not what the Scripture is saying. Within the original context of this quote (ie Exodus 33:12-23) God places Moses in a very specific location – on the rock. It is only when Moses is standing upon the Rock that God reveals Himself to him. God doesn’t reveal His face to Moses, but only His back. This gives us a foretaste of something yet future. When we are in our glorified bodies, we are going to be able to literally be in the fullness of God’s Presence. Many commentators rightly point out that there is a relationship between that rock, that foundation, and Messiah. We can only experience the Kingdom of God if we are upon the right foundation – Messiah Yeshua. If Moses had been standing anywhere else, He would not have experienced the Presence of God in the way that he did. We are only shown mercy and compassion if we are in Messiah.

Verse 16: *“Therefore then it is not on the one who wills, nor upon the one who runs, but upon God who is merciful.”*

Wills: Desires. We are not going to experience the Presence, intimacy or promises of God simply because we want or desire it.

Nor upon the one who runs: Nor are we going to experience it if we work really hard for it.

Upon God who is merciful: What is foundational for us in experiencing God's Presence etc is to be recipients of God’s mercy, His grace. This mercy is not handed out haphazardly to whomever God chooses to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to. The gospel has gone out into all the world and God’s mercy is available for, and given to, EVERY human being that receives it – everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Verse 17: *“For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show My power in you, and that My Name might be declared in all the earth.’”*

For this very purpose...: Quoted from Exodus 9:16

I have raised you up: God chose Pharaoh (God’s gifts and calling are irrevocable) for his very prominent position as king in Egypt. God’s desire/purpose/intent was to use Pharaoh, in this position that God had given him, to declare God’s name in the earth and for God’s power to be shown through him. That God was going to use Pharaoh for this purpose (to show God’s power and for God’s Name to be declared to the whole world) was an absolute certainty. What was uncertain was whether Pharaoh was going to submit and participate obediently with God’s purpose. God then gave Pharaoh a commandment (Exodus 5:1). If Pharaoh had received this command and let the people go, he would have fulfilled what God had desired. God’s power and Name would have been manifested through Pharaoh (which was God’s intent), but Pharaoh would not have had to go through all the destruction that he did. Instead, Pharaoh would have received blessing. God does not need chaos and devastation for His Name and power to be manifested or declared in all the earth. Pharaoh, however, chose to rebel against God. God could have used Pharaoh’s obedience to fulfil His purpose, but instead God had to then use Pharaoh’s rebellion to fulfil that same purpose.

Verse 18: *“Therefore upon whom He wills He gives mercy or upon whom He wills He hardens.”*

Note: This is what is determined based on our response to God. If Pharaoh had been obedient, God would have shown him mercy (like He showed mercy to Moses). But because Pharaoh chose to rebel, he became a recipient of his heart being hardened. God does not harden hearts in a vacuum. In the account of the exodus God time and time again revealed Himself to Pharaoh. God’s authority and character were revealed to Pharaoh and Pharaoh (and his men) acknowledged it – Exodus 8:19, Exodus 9:27, Exodus 10:16. The problem with Pharaoh was that as soon as God removed the consequences of His judgments from him Pharaoh became defiant and again showed a lack of submission. Those who encounter the revelation of God, but they rebel against His truth and refuse to submit to it, the Biblical principle (spiritual law) is that God will harden their hearts. This applies to everyone – from kings to peasants. There is an adverse effect in rebelling against God’s revelation. Every person, based on their response to the revelation of God, is either going to be a recipient of God’s mercy or a recipient of a hard heart.

Verse 19: *“Therefore you say to me: ‘Why still does He find fault? For His purposes who can oppose?’”*

Why does He still find fault: God’s purpose was accomplished through Pharaoh (His Name was declared to the ends of the earth and His power was shown to all) so why is God still upset with Pharaoh? God is upset with Pharaoh because of Pharaoh’s rebellion. God’s purposes were not thwarted by Pharaoh’s rebellion, but they could have been accomplished through Pharaoh’s submission and obedience whereby Pharaoh would have then received mercy and blessing – been brought into the family of God.

Oppose: Resist. Go against. The will of God is going to be fulfilled whether we submit or whether we do not submit to Him. However, if we participate with Him in His purpose for

our lives we will be blessed. If we reject or stand in opposition to His purpose for our lives we will not be blessed but we will be judged, condemned and cursed.

Verse 20: *“Really, O man, that you will argue against God? Should that which was formed say to the One who formed, ‘Why did You form me thus?’”*

Argue: Answer against. Are we going to be someone who answers God in a negative way?

Formed: Made

Should that which was formed say to the One who formed, ‘Why did You form me thus’: The One who did the forming, or the making, is the One who has the authority and power. The one who is formed is in a submissive position.

Verse 21: *“Or does not the potter of the clay have authority from that same lump to make on the one hand a vessel of honour or on the other hand a vessel of dishonour?”*

From that same lump: This is not talking about dividing the clay into two separate pieces to make two different vessels. Everyone is either going to be a vessel of honour or a vessel of dishonour. Those who respond to the gospel and who are recipients of God’s mercy are going to be shaped into vessels of honour – vessels that can be used for God’s purpose and glory. Those who are rebellious and disobedient will be shaped into vessels of dishonour.

Verse 22: *“But God wanting to manifest wrath and to make known His power bears with much patience the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction.”*

Wants: Wills

Bears with much patience: God is patient or longsuffering as He is giving these people, who are headed toward destruction, time to repent and to change (2 Peter 3:9).

Vessels of wrath prepared for destruction: There comes a point when the time runs out. If these people who are walking on the path of destruction do not repent and submit to God, then God’s glory is going to be manifested through them by His wrath being revealed in them.

Verse 23: *“In order that He should make known the richness of His glory upon those vessels of mercy which He has prepared beforehand for glory.”*

Note: God, having foreknowledge, has always known which vessels (which people) would be vessels of glory and which would be vessels of dishonour and wrath. God always knew this, but God did not create them from the beginning to be either one or the other. That SAME lump of clay could go either way. Each person has been given a free will and each of us make our own decisions and choices – for which God cannot be blamed. Like Pharaoh, God has revealed Himself to each one of us – His power, His authority, His character, His righteousness. If we rebel against what God has revealed, our hearts will become harder and harder toward God. God has chosen only ONE WAY for mankind to experience His forgiveness and mercy. If we submit to this way that God has chosen – Messiah Yeshua – then after receiving His mercy we can participate in the purposes of God and experience His blessings and be recipients of His good promises.

Chapter 9

Part 4: Romans 9:24-33

God's character is directly related to His activity, His work, His purposes and His plan. The more we understand about the character of God the more we are going to understand how He behaves in this world. This is important. It is when we understand God's purposes and how and why He moves in this world that we can respond faithfully to Him - demonstrate obedience and live lives that are pleasing to Him, manifesting His glory.

Verse 24: *"Whom also He called us not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles."*

Us: Referring to believers – Jew and Gentile believers.

Called us not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles: This should not surprise us. When God revealed His redemptive covenant to Abraham it was His desire and purpose to bless all the families in the earth – not only the Jewish people (Genesis 12:3).

Verse 25: *"As He says also in Hosea: 'I call not My people, My people, and the ones not beloved, being beloved.'"*

Note: When Paul wrote something, having been inspired by the Holy Spirit, he frequently quoted from the Hebrew Bible, or Old Testament. He did this as a way of verifying or providing evidence that what he was revealing was not something new, something different or something in conflict with what was taught by the law and the prophets. On the contrary, Paul was in absolute agreement with what the prophets had revealed and taught.

He: Referring to God.

I call not My people, My people: Through Hosea (Hosea 2:23), God revealed His purpose for the nations, the Gentiles. It was not a surprise to the people when God spoke good things in regard to the Jewish people, His covenant people. But many people would have been surprised that God also purposed to and wanted to bless the nations. This verse in Hosea foreshadows God's redemptive family – His new covenant people.

Verse 26: *"And it will be in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people, there they will be called sons of the Living God.'"*

Note: This is quoted from Hosea 1:10 and is now speaking about the Jewish people. When Paul writes he tends to write down something which is a foreshadowing of what we should expect. Later on in his epistle he gives us greater revelation about what he has said previously. In this verse we should anticipate that there is a day coming when the world will understand that those who were cast off for a period of time (ie the Jewish people) are going to be brought back into the family of God. This is a sure expectation that we can have. Israel (the Jewish people) is going to be brought into the new covenant relationship. They are going to experience salvation and have a Kingdom hope and future.

It will be: This shows prophetic truth yet future.

You are not My people: God called Israel not His people because of their disobedience to Him.

Verse 27: *“Isaiah cries out on behalf of Israel: ‘If shall be the number of the sons of Israel as the sand upon the sea, the remnant will be saved.’”*

Isaiah: A different prophet with the same message.

Israel: The Jewish people.

If shall be the number...: Quoted from Isaiah 10:22

As the sand upon the sea: This is a large number of Jewish people.

The remnant: A small portion. This remnant is a specific group and number of people. They are not established by chance, but by God’s design.

Will be saved: Written in the passive. This salvation doesn’t happen because of something that they achieved or did. This salvation is done for them.

Verse 28: *“For the word will be completed swiftly and in righteousness upon the earth.”*

Note: Quoted from Isaiah 10:23

Word: Work. Referring to the purpose or plan of God. God is going to cause His plan to be accomplished, to come to an end, to be finished.

Swiftly: God Himself will do the redemptive work and He is going to do it quickly.

In righteousness: God is going to complete his work quickly and it is going to be completed in a righteous way.

Verse 29: *“Just as Isaiah said previously: ‘Except the Lord of hosts would have left a seed for us as Sodom we would have been, and as Gomorrah we would have been likened to.’”*

Except the Lord of hosts...: Quoted from Isaiah 1:9

Lord of hosts: This term speaks about God being omnipotent, all powerful. He is the One who commands the Heavenly armies. These armies can do whatever God commands them to do – they are without limitation. When this term appears in the Scripture it reminds and reassures us that what God has said He will do will get done.

Left a seed for us: We need to understand this in two ways: One way of understanding it is that there is going to be a remnant in Israel, but another way to understand it is that this seed is Messiah Himself. There is a relationship between the redemptive people of God (those Kingdom people) and the Redeemer Himself – Messiah Yeshua. It is through the work of the seed of Abraham – Messiah – that a remnant (Abraham’s seed by faith) will be saved and blessed in order to be a blessing to the whole world.

As Sodom we would have been, and as Gomorrah we would have been likened to: If God didn't complete His work swiftly, in its proper time, and for the purpose of righteousness then the result would have been comparable to Sodom and Gomorrah. Without God's activity, through Messiah, humanity, including Israel, would have been like Sodom and Gomorrah - judged and eternally destroyed.

Verse 30: *“Therefore what should we say? The Gentiles, the ones who did not pursue righteousness have obtained righteousness, even the righteousness of faith.”*

What should we say: In regard to all that Paul has said, what should our response be?

Note: As Paul was penning these words there was a phenomenon going on – the Gentiles were responding to the gospel in a disproportional way to the Jewish people.

This means that many more Gentiles were saying 'yes' to the gospel in comparison to Jewish people. Why was this happening?

Obtained righteousness: The Gentiles were not seeking righteousness (most of them were in idolatry) but when they heard the message of the gospel, when they heard God's gracious and merciful plan of redemption, they responded to it and thereby obtained righteousness.

Faith: Faith is related to believing - believing the promises of God.

Verse 31: *"But Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness."*

But: In contrast to the Gentiles.

Israel: The Jewish people.

Pursuing a law of righteousness: The Jewish people, on the whole, pursued the Torah (the law) for their own righteousness. However, keeping the law does not make us righteous. What the law does is reveals or defines what righteousness is. Righteousness can only be obtained through redemption. The Torah is not an instrument of redemption. When we study the Torah we learn the truth about redemption, but the Torah itself (the law) does not redeem us.

Verse 32: *"Why is that? Because not of faith, but as from the works of the law. For they stumbled upon the stumbling stone."*

Not of faith: Abraham became righteous because of faith – not because of the law (the law did not yet even exist in Abraham's day) – Genesis 15:6. Abraham believed in God. Now the Gentiles, at a disproportional level, were behaving like Abraham because they were believing in the covenantal promises of God through faith and not through deeds. But Israel, in a disproportional level, were not receiving righteousness because they were not operating out of faith but thought they could obtain the promises of God through their works. We are not declared righteous through doing enough good deeds. Being declared righteous comes from accepting the work of Messiah. When we do this by faith then His righteousness is imputed to us.

Verse 33: *"Just as it is written: 'Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, but everyone believing in Him will never be ashamed.'"*

It is written: The prophet Isaiah tells us who the stumbling stone is (Isaiah 8:13-15, Isaiah 28:16).

Zion: A Kingdom term.

A stumbling stone: This is how the world sees Yeshua. The world stumbles over this gospel message.

Rock of offense: This is speaking about the cross (Galatians 5:11). The rock of offense is Messiah crucified.

Everyone: Meaning both Jew and Gentile.

Everyone believing in Him will never be ashamed: This means that if we have accepted the rock of offense, we can have assurance that we will not be ashamed when we go before God on Judgment Day.

Chapter 10

Part 1: Romans 10:1-8

Verse 1: *“Brethren, the desire of my heart and the prayer to God on behalf of Israel is for salvation.”*

Brethren: An inclusive term referring to all believers – male and female.

The desire of my heart and the prayer: Paul's desire and diligent prayer is for Israel to be saved.

Israel: Paul is speaking about the land of Israel as well as the people of Israel. Israel is still relevant to God. It still has a significant part to play in God's plans.

Salvation: God is going to bring about Israel's salvation. Yeshua, in Matthew 23:37-39, was weeping over Jerusalem, desiring to gather her up as a mother hen gathers up her chicks. But Israel, at Yeshua's first coming, were, by and large, not willing to accept Him. Yeshua then prophesied and made a promise...Israel would not see Him again UNTIL they were willing to say: 'Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord'. This call is a petition, a reaching out to God in prayer, for Messiah. For this to become a reality, in order that people will pray this prayer, there has to be a spiritual change amongst the Jewish people. When that change happens, that prayer will be prayed, and (like Yeshua promised) Yeshua can come again for His second coming when He will destroy the enemies of God at that time – those who go up to war against Jerusalem. It is at that time that the Kingdom of God is going to be established. Paul prays for the salvation of Israel because he desires the Kingdom of God to be ushered in.

Verse 2: *“For I testify in regard to them that the zeal of God they have but not according to knowledge.”*

The zeal of God they have: There are many religious zealots. Having religious zeal is not the answer.

Not according to knowledge: There is a relationship between the revelation of God and knowledge. We can only have knowledge by means of the revelation of God – seeing things from God's perspective and not from our own. Although these Jewish people had a zeal for God that did not have a true revelation of God.

Verse 3: *“For being against knowing the righteousness of God their own righteousness they were seeking to establish, the righteousness of God they did not submit to.”*

Against knowing: It is not that they were ignorant or had a lack of knowledge. This word carries a degree of rebelliousness. They did not want to know the righteousness of God on God's terms, but they wanted righteousness on their own terms. Righteousness comes through faith (Genesis 15:6)

Their own righteousness they were seeking to establish: A righteousness based on their own perspectives and way of doing things. Righteousness, however, does not originate from man. Only God is righteous. It is only when the righteousness of the Son of God is given or imputed to us that we are righteous before God.

Note: There has always been a remnant of Israel who have accepted the gospel and who have responded to God's revelation, but, by and large, the majority have rejected it.

The righteousness of God they did not submit to: The righteousness of God is first revealed in the law of God. The law of God is not an instrument of righteousness (no flesh is justified by works of the law), but the law defines what righteousness and unrighteousness are. The law shows us that we are sinners that fall short of the standards of God. So it is also through the law that we realise we need help, we need a Saviour.

Verse 4: *“For Messiah is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”*

End: The word used here in the Greek means ‘the objective’ or the ‘goal’. Messiah did not come to scrap the law and make an end to it. The end goal of the law is righteousness. However, we cannot obtain righteousness by obeying the commandments. It is only through faith in Messiah that we are made righteous. It is Messiah who produces righteousness in us. He brought about an end to the judgement or condemnation of the law for those who believe in Him.

Verse 5: *“For Moses writes concerning the righteousness of the law, ‘The man having done these things will live in them.’”*

The man having done these things... Quoted from Leviticus 18:5

The man having done these things will live in them: The man who has lived righteously is a man who has lived in the commandments. Living in the commandments is the expectation of God. Righteous ones want to live according to the revelation of God's Word. Those who are righteous agree that it is good and proper to live their lives according to the commandments of God (John 14:15). The commandments are not the source of righteousness, but those who are (already) righteous agree that it is good to live according to the commandments.

Verse 6: *“But the righteousness of faith thus it says, ‘You should not say in your heart, ‘Who will go up to heaven?’ that is, to bring Messiah down.”*

The righteousness of faith: Faith is the means of righteousness.

You should not say in your heart: Quoted from Deuteronomy 30:12.

Note: In Deuteronomy 30:11-16 Moses gives two examples – the commandments are not far off from us – they are not in the heavens and nor are they beyond the sea.

Paul also gives us two examples in Romans 10:6-7 but he relates them to Messiah – the heavens, but also the abyss. Paul is writing about this whole concept of how one is made righteous. He wants to affirm that the law has a purpose. It teaches us about our unrighteousness, and this should drive us to faith in Messiah.

Who will go up to heaven: This question is asking this: Is it possible that someone could live so righteously that they could go to heaven....by their own deeds, so to speak?

To bring Messiah down: If a person could live so righteously on their own then this verse is saying that Messiah would be brought down. Here Paul is referring to the ascension. The ascension begun with the resurrection and continued for 40 days before Yeshua was taken into heaven. The resurrection and the ascension have a similar message: they show God the Father's acceptance of the work of His Son.

They were God's stamp of approval on what Yeshua had done. Paul is saying that if someone can achieve that right to go up to heaven then Messiah did not need to do the work that He did, as it was not necessary for Him to have been approved by God because there would have been a different way (another way) to go into the Presence of God. If someone can go up to heaven it means that Messiah's work was not necessary and therefore there would be no need for the ascension because it didn't really accomplish anything if we could do it on our own.

Verse 7: *"Or who will go down into the abyss? (that is, to bring Messiah up from the dead)."*

Note: Paul is saying the same thing as above (Romans 10:6), but in the opposite way.

Abyss: Hell

Go down into the abyss: When Yeshua died, He descended into hell (See Ephesians 4:8-10). What this verse is saying is this: If in the end we are all going to go to hell then why would Yeshua have gone to the cross? If we were all going to go to hell, then Messiah did not have to die. What Paul is simply saying is this: if anyone thinks that there is the means in and of themselves that they can go to heaven or, on the flip side, that everyone has to go to hell first (purgatory or Gehenna) in order to receive some form of punishment in order to make atonement for themselves before going to heaven then Yeshua's death and resurrection really served no true purpose.

Believing that we can get ourselves to heaven, or believing we can atone for our sins in purgatory/Gehenna etc do not display faith in what Messiah has done for us. Faith in ourselves (in our own deeds, our own works of the law) do not lead to a faith in Messiah – a faith that believes it was necessary for Him to die for our sins so that He could impute His righteousness to us. Righteousness comes through believing that justification only comes through accepting what Yeshua has done for us on the cross. He is the only One who can make atonement for us, and He is the only One through whom we can get into heaven and into the Presence of God.

Verse 8: *"But someone says: 'Near to you is the Word – in your mouth and in your heart'. This is the Word of faith which we proclaim.*

Near to you is the Word: This is quoted from Deuteronomy 30:14. The revelation we find in these words is this: the message of salvation is available to all, it is near to all.

Word: The proclamation (gospel) that produces a result.

Faith: Faith is emphasised. We are not saved through works of the law, but we are saved through faith in Messiah Yeshua.

Chapter 10

Part 2: Romans 10:9-14

In the Hebrew language, the word for 'faith' comes from the same root word as the word for 'truth'. Faith is not just believing anything, but it's believing the truth of God. When Paul uses the word 'faith' he is talking about truth – specifically the truth concerning the gospel.

Verse 9: *“Because if you confess with your mouth the Lord Yeshua, and you believe in your heart that God Him having raised from the dead you will be saved.”*

Confess with your mouth: Paul now begins to teach us about how we can properly respond to the gospel – the good news of how God has redeemed us from sin. The gospel focusses on the person of, and the work done by, the Lord Messiah Yeshua (who He is and what He did).

The word 'gospel' in Hebrew comes from the same root word as the word for 'flesh'. This is how God worked out redemption for us – being fully God, Yeshua took on human flesh (the incarnation) so that He could, as a spotless lamb, pay for and remove our sins from us. Believing (through faith) in Yeshua, and the work He has done for us is the ONLY way that we can find forgiveness for our sins and be declared righteous in the sight of God.

Lord: We need to also recognise that Yeshua is our Lord. He has authority over us. Part of faith is recognising His Lordship.

Heart: The heart, Scripturally, has to do with our thoughts. Confessing with our mouths and believing in our hearts means that we need to agree with what God has done. Believing involves submitting to and recognizing what Yeshua has done as truth.

God: This is referring to God the Father

Him: Referring to Messiah Yeshua.

God Him having raised: Yeshua, although He had the power to raise Himself from the dead, did not raise Himself. God the Father raised Him from the dead. Even in death Yeshua was completely submitted to His Father's will.

Raised from the dead: Referring to the resurrection.

Will be saved: This is written in the passive. This means that we cannot save ourselves, but it was God who responded to us (and He saved us) when we agreed with His truth.

Verse 10: *“For with the heart one believes for righteousness and with the mouth one confesses for salvation.”*

Righteousness...salvation: The emphasis of this verse is that there's a relationship between righteousness and salvation. Messiah, with His perfect righteousness, paid the price so that righteousness could be imputed to us. It is mediated to us not by works of the law but by faith. When we believe and confess, the outcome of His work of righteousness is our salvation. Once we are saved, by God's grace, we are going to be committed to living righteously.

Verse 11: *“For the Scripture says, ‘Everyone believing in Him will not be ashamed.’”*

The Scripture says: Quoted from Isaiah 28:16 (see 1 Peter 2:6)

Believing: We are not saved through good works but through believing in Messiah (once we are saved, however, we want to behave righteously – that is, to do good works).

Not be ashamed: A great benefit from the gospel is that we can be confident that, before God, we will not experience shame. Righteousness has nothing to do with us, but it has everything to do with the sufficiency and perfection of the work of Messiah - what He did. We have been declared righteous, as the righteousness of Messiah was imputed to us, credited to us, the moment that we believed. When God the Father looks at us (those who believe) He sees the righteousness of His Son.

Verse 12: *“For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. For the same Lord is of all, being rich for all who call upon Him.”*

There is no distinction: This promise of salvation and righteousness is available to ALL who believe – Jew or Gentile.

Greek: Referring to the Gentiles.

Verse 13: *“For all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

All who call...: Quoted from Joel 2:32

Call upon the name of the Lord: There is only one Name that we can call on in order to receive salvation – the name of the Lord Messiah Yeshua. This is the foundation of God's plan for salvation.

Verse 14: *“Therefore how will they call upon whom they have not believed? And how will they believe upon whom they have not heard? How will they hear without preaching?”*

How will they call...how will they believe: There is a problem. It is a necessity to call and to believe, but how can people do this if they have not heard about Yeshua? How can they respond to Him and believe on Him if they do not know about Him?

Preaching: Preaching is sincerely and accurately conveying the truth of God's Word, His revelation, to people. It is only when people come into contact with God's truth that they are able to respond to it and experience a newness of life. It does not matter who we are – if we know the gospel, we have been called to share it with others.

Chapter 10

Part 3: Romans 10:15-21

Verse 15: *“And how will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, ‘How beautiful the feet of the one who proclaims peace, who announces good news of the good things.’”*

They are sent: When God sends someone, He gives them authority. This authority is limited, in that it needs to be based upon the truth of Scripture. When men begin to speak from their own thoughts and imaginations it ceases to be preaching - in that the anointing of God's Spirit is not on it.

It is written: Quoted from Isaiah 52:7 and Nahum 1:15

Proclaims: This is the word for 'evangelising'. The foundational objective of preaching is to evangelize to others regarding God's plan of redemption – how peace is established between God and man.

Peace: This is a very significant word in the Scripture. When the Bible speaks about peace it's speaking about one thing: peace, Biblically speaking, is the fulfilment of God's will. We cannot fulfil God's will unless we are first redeemed. Redemption prepares us to become a servant of God so that we can do the will of God.

Good: This is a word which is also related to the will of God.

Good things: Those things which are in accordance with God's plans or purposes.

Verse 16: *"But not all have obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says. 'Lord, who has believed our report?'"*

Obeyed: Responded to. Obeying the gospel comes with an understanding that we want to turn away from sin. The Spirit leads us into truth, and therefore to living righteously – having a righteous behaviour.

Isaiah: Quoted from Isaiah 53:1

Believed our report: Our lives need to be lived as testimonies. Once we have heard the Word of God, we respond to it by obeying.

Verse 17: *"Therefore faith is from hearing, hearing the Word of God."*

Faith is from hearing: It is only when people have heard God's plan for redemption (from His Word) that their faith can be activated.

Verse 18: *"But I say, have they not heard? For to all the world went forth their voice, and into the ends of the world is their word."*

Have they not heard: Was this Israel's problem? Had they not heard of God's plan for redemption? This was not Israel's problem. They had heard it.

For to all the world...: Quoted from Psalm 19:4

To all the world went forth their voice: The foundation of the gospel has been proclaimed throughout history – even before the incarnation of Messiah.

Ends of the world: The outer places. The problem isn't a lack of knowledge. The problem is a rejection of the truth. This is true for Israel, but it is just as true for the Gentiles. Many in humanity are uninterested in the revelation/truth of God.

Verse 19: *"But I say not that Israel did not know. For Moses said, 'I have provoked you by not a nation, unto this nation without understanding He is going to anger you.'"*

Moses said: Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 32:21.

I have provoked you by not a nation: Israel took great joy in the fact that God had made them into a people, and they wanted to think that God and His message was exclusive to them. The people in the nations were scattered. They had different cultures, different identities etc. God took His message of redemption and with it He penetrated the different communities. By this He showed that the gospel was not exclusive to one people but was available to all.

Ultimately God's Kingdom people are from every tribe, every nation and every language. God's message of redemption crosses cultural divisions. God, not keeping His Word exclusive, provoked the Jewish people.

Unto this nation without understanding He is going to anger you: The Jewish people are going to see that even those without special understanding, or spiritual unity, can have peace, joy, power and the ability to be set free from the bondage of this world. Instead of being happy about this, though, it is going to anger them.

Verse 20: *"And Isaiah very boldly says, 'I have been found by the ones not seeking me. I have been manifested to the ones who are not asking for me.'"*

Isaiah ... says: Quoted from Isaiah 65:1

I have been found: Isaiah was quoting God.

Not asking: Not enquiring

Note: Israel had a zeal, but it was not a zeal according to knowledge. They zealously did good works, but it left them frustrated. It did not bring about the change that they were seeking. The nations, on the other hand, did not have the Scripture given to them. They did not have any understanding about the things of God. They were not seeking God and nor were they enquiring about Him. However, when the truth of God (with power) was proclaimed to them they found God, as He was manifested to them.

Verse 21: *"But to Israel He says. 'All day long I have stretched out my hands to a people who are disobedient and speaking contrary.'"*

All day long I have stretched out my hands: God has never rejected Israel or replaced them with another people.

Disobedient: They did not want to submit to the truth found in the Scripture.

Speaking contrary: Not only did they reject what the Scripture said but they also spoke against the truth of God.

Chapter 11

Part 1: Romans 11:1-10

It is so important to realize that God is going to be faithful to Israel. As God shows His absolute faithfulness to His Old Covenant people, it will be an encouragement to us and give us assurance that He will keep His covenantal promises to us. In the same way that God extended mercy to the nations He is going to extend mercy to Israel.

Verse 1: *“Therefore I say, has God cast away His people? Let it never be! For I also am an Israelite, from the seed of Abraham and the tribe of Benjamin.”*

Has God cast away His people: It is not a possibility. God will not replace them (supersessionism or replacement theology is a false doctrine). God will not cast away His Old covenant people. God is faithful to His covenants. There has always been a remnant of Jewish believers.

Verse 2: *“God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know in Elijah the Scripture says, as he pleads with God about Israel, saying,”*

Has not cast away: He has not replaced or removed them.

Foreknew: God is omniscient. He perfectly knows all things. He has always known all things. There was never a time when He did not know everything. God, being sovereign, is free to use His foreknowledge to make decisions - acting or behaving in this world in a way to fulfil His purposes. The foreknowledge of God is foundational in the work of God, in the covenantal promises of God.

In Elijah: Paul references Elijah’s life. Very frequently Paul uses Scripture to confirm or to give Biblical evidence for what he’s revealing. The context of 1 Kings 19 is that Elijah was grieved. He looked at the situation in Israel and he was pleading with God because it looked as if Israel was moving toward hopelessness. Israel was moving toward spiritual destruction.

Verse 3: *“Lord, your prophets they have killed and your altars they have destroyed. I have been left alone and they are seeking my life.”*

Note: Quoted from 1 Kings 19:10 and 1 Kings 19:14

Your prophets they have killed: Those in Israel (particularly the leadership) were putting to death the true prophets of God. Their desire was to also kill Elijah.

Your altars they have destroyed: The places of worship that God had established had been torn down. Anything that was of God was being acted against by the people of God. Idolatry was penetrating and dominating the children of Israel in the days of Elijah. From Elijah’s perspective the situation was desperate.

Verse 4: *“But what does the Divine oracle give as a response? ‘I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’”*

The Divine oracle: Referring to God and His Words – a heavenly response or perspective about the spiritually desperate situation in Israel.

I have reserved...: Quoted from 1 Kings 19:18

Reserved: Referring to the remnant. God reserved this remnant (a proportionally small number of people in comparison to all of those who lived in Israel at the time) in order that His purposes would be fulfilled through them. God knew that these men would be willing participants in His plan.

Seven: The number seven Biblically is a number related to holiness. Holiness is always connected to the purpose of God.

Men who have not bowed: These men were faithful to God and to His purposes.

Baal: A pagan god

Verse 5: *“Therefore thus also now, in this present season, a remnant according to the election of grace there is.”*

This present season: Speaking about Paul's time (but it is still holding true for our time).

There is a remnant: From a human perspective, things may not look encouraging, but God's got everything under control.

Election (the choice) of grace: This means: There is a remnant, because they have chosen grace – it is by grace that we have been saved. Once we have been saved, we become a part of this remnant. This ‘election of grace’ is ONLY relevant for those who are in Messiah. Only those who are IN Messiah are predestined – predestined to be like Him.

There is: γέγονεν This word appears in some very key passages. It means ‘that which is, and that which will be.’ It is a state of being that has eternal implications. This choice that we make, which comes through grace, has eternal consequences.

Verse 6: *“But if by grace it is no longer from works, since grace would no longer be grace. But if it is of works, then it would no longer be by grace, since the work would no longer be work.”*

No longer from works: This election, choice, did not come about because we worked hard enough or long enough.

By grace: If we could obtain salvation by works then the Scripture would be incorrect when it tells us that we are saved by grace. If we could obtain salvation by works then there would no longer be a need for grace. Since salvation is by grace it cannot be by works.

Verse 7: *“What therefore? Israel has not obtained what it seeks, but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were hardened.”*

Israel has not obtained what it seeks: This was not due to a lack of knowledge. This revelation of the gospel (being saved by faith and not by works) had gone out to Israel through the prophets and even through Moses. Israel did not obtain what they sought because they rejected God's plan. They said ‘No’ to the truth of God. This is a spiritual principle/law: when people say ‘No’ to God’s truth they become spiritually hard, dull and insensitive. The more they reject God’s revelation the harder and harder they become and the more stubborn they are toward the things of God.

Verse 8: *“Just as it has been written, ‘He gave to them a spirit of slumber, eyes that did not see and ears that did not hear until this day.’”*

It has been written: Quoted from Deuteronomy 29:4 and Isaiah 29:10

He gave to them a spirit of slumber: Israel encountered the truth of God. They saw the power and glory of God manifested in Egypt, but they rejected what God had done – murmuring and grumbling against God and His servants (Moses etc). As a result of their rejection of God they became dull and insensitive (slumbering) toward Him.

Verse 9: *“As David says, ‘Let their tables become a snare and a trap, also for a stumbling block and a recompense for them.’”*

David says: Quoted from Psalm 69:22-23

Their tables: Tables of idolatry.

Snare and a trap: Their idolatry is going to be a snare and a trap for them.

Stumbling block: This word can also mean ‘offense’. What they are doing is offensive to God. They are offended by truth, and they stumble over it.

Recompense: This is a word that confirms the spiritual law spoken about above. When people say ‘No’ to God’s truth there is an outcome – they pay for this rejection by hardened hearts and eyes that are too dull to see and ears that are too deaf to hear.

Verse 10: *“And therefore their eyes were darkened that they did not see, and their backs forever were bent down.”*

Backs forever were bent down: An idiom meaning that they were humiliated. Those who reject the truth of God are going to suffer humiliation.

Chapter 11

Part 2: Romans 11:11-15

Do we have the right prophetic expectations concerning Israel – both the land of Israel as well as the Jewish people? When we look at prophecy, we can be assured that God is going to move mightily in the last days and He is going to bring a remnant (specifically one third of the Jewish people – Zechariah 13:8-9, Malachi 3:3) to faith. This means that they will receive the gospel. Without a remnant of Israel, the Kingdom is not going to begin (Matthew 23:37-39).

Verse 11: *“Therefore I say, have they stumbled in order that they should fall? May it never be! Through their transgression has come about salvation of the nations, to provoke them to jealousy.”*

Stumbled in order that they should fall: Paul is asking this question: has Israel stumbled in such a way that they have fallen away from God’s purposes and are no longer His covenant people? Has God cast them off forever and replaced them with other nations or peoples?

May it never be!: Certainly not! God forbid! The answer to Paul’s question is that this is not a possibility. Although the Jewish people on the whole have stumbled it does not mean that

they have fallen away from God's purposes for them. Part of God's purpose for Israel was that they would be a blessing to the nations/families of the world (Genesis 12:3). God's purpose for Israel WILL be fulfilled through Israel. There is no question about this. The nations of the earth will be blessed through Israel. However, whether this blessing to the world comes through Israel's obedience or Israel's disobedience is their choice. If it comes through Israel's obedience, then not only would the nations be blessed, but Israel would also be blessed. If it comes through Israel's disobedience then the nations will still be blessed, but Israel will reap the consequences of her disobedience – like Pharaoh did for his. God did not cast Pharaoh aside. He continued to use Pharaoh for His purpose. God's greatness was seen in the life of Pharaoh - through Pharaoh's destruction.

Through their transgression has come about salvation of the nations: Israel's disobedience and rejection of the gospel, this message of salvation, has led to the gospel going forth into many of the nations in the world where many people have received it.

Provoke them: God wants to use this blessing of salvation, that has come to the nations, as a means to provoke Israel to jealousy. He wants them to desire the same relationship with God that the nations are enjoying. He wants them to desire to have His glory manifested through them in the same way that His glory is manifest in the lives of believers.

Verse 12: *“But since their transgression is the richness of the world, and their failure wealth to the nations, how much more their fullness?”*

Their transgression is the richness of the world: Israel's rejection of the gospel message (the truth about what Messiah has done) has enriched the world. Israel's rejection, their stumble, did not thwart God's plan. It did not bring an end the purposes of God. God was able to continue with His purposes, but Israel has not been blessed. Israel, in her disobedience has suffered greatly.

Their failure: Their loss.

How much more their fullness: Paul anticipates or expects that the Jewish nation will one day accept the gospel message and be brought into the fullness of God through it. Prophetically we know that there is going to be a time when Israel, albeit through great suffering, is going to be made right with God.

Verse 13: *“For to you, the nations, I say, as much as I am an apostle to the nations, I glorify my ministry.”*

I glorify my ministry: Paul knows that Israel has been called to be a blessing to the nations. Paul is rejoicing that God has called him to be a part of fulfilling that call by sending him as an apostle to the nations (Acts 9:15).

Verse 14: *“If somehow I might provoke my flesh and save a portion from them.”*

If somehow I might provoke my flesh: Paul wanted to minister to the nations so that he could be used as an instrument to provoke his own people (the Jewish people) to jealousy.

My flesh: Here Paul is talking about his kindred, his relatives.

Save a portion from them: Paul's desire was to be used by God so that through Paul a portion of the Jewish people might also know salvation. Although Paul had been called as an apostle to the nations, he had a soft spot in his heart for the Jewish people.

Verse 15: *“For if the casting away of them brought about reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be? Will it not be life from the dead?”*

The casting away of them: This is momentary. It is a temporary setting aside. When the children of Israel (the Jewish people) were not faithful to God, He sent them into exile – He cast them away from Himself BUT for a limited period of time.

Their acceptance: Their restoration.

Life from the dead: Resurrection. Resurrection alludes to victory and is related to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. When the remnant of Israel comes to faith, we should expect the Kingdom of God to be established.

Chapter 11

Part 3: Romans 11:16-24

There are two harvests in Israel – the spring harvest and the autumn/fall harvest. Both harvests are celebrated with festivals. The festival for the spring harvest is called Shavuot or Pentecost. The festival celebrated in autumn is called Sukkot– the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles. Together with Passover, these festivals are a compulsory time for all the males to appear before the Lord in the place of His choosing (Deuteronomy 16:16). The day after the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins. It is at the end of this feast, on the first day of the week after the Sabbath, that the Feast of Firstfruits is celebrated (Leviticus 16). On this day of Firstfruits, those who had wheat or barley fields would go out and harvest what was known as the first fruit of their harvest. This “fruit” (was then presented to the Lord by a priest waving it above his head. This firstfruit symbolised victory. The prayer of the farmer at this time would be that the rest of his harvest would be like the firstfruit of it. This day of firstfruits would mark the beginning of the harvest period. This spring harvest was a seven-week period of time (50 days), after which the Festival of Shavuot/Pentecost would be celebrated.

Yeshua, in 1 Corinthians 15:20, is called the firstfruit of those who have risen from the dead. We, as believers, are going to be like Messiah – victorious over sin and death. Messiah is the firstfruit of the harvest. He is holy, righteous and good. We are the rest of the harvest – being transformed into the likeness of Messiah (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Verse 16: *“But since the firstfruit is holy, also the lump. And since the root is holy, also the branches.”*

The firstfruit is holy: Messiah is the firstfruit and He is holy.

Lump: The batch. When a loaf of bread is made out of the grain of the firstfruit, other grain (which was not part of the firstfruit sheaf) is also added to the dough mixture before it is baked. This added grain is considered to be holy because of the condition of the firstfruit.

Root: Paul is using parallelism. This root (the foundation of a plant) is comparable to the firstfruit.

Branches: The branches are considered holy because they are supported and nourished by the root which is holy.

Note: With these two examples Paul is reminding us that we, the people of God's Kingdom, are going to be holy like Messiah is holy – not because of anything we have done but because, by believing in Him, we have thrown ourselves into the same “mix” as Him.

Verse 17: *“But since certain ones of the branches were broken off but you being from a wild olive tree were grafted in among them, joint participants of the root and the fatness of the olive tree you have become.”*

Note: The olive tree represents the Kingdom of God. Messiah is the foundation of it (the root). Being the first One resurrected, He is also the firstfruit of it. The branches are the inhabitants, the people, of the Kingdom of God. It is only through the gospel (the message of the Kingdom) that we can become inhabitants (“branches”) of it. God expects the inhabitants of His Kingdom to be holy and righteous – like Messiah.

Certain ones of the branches: Referring to a portion of the branches – not all of them.

Broken off: This does not mean that they lost their salvation. To lose it would mean that they had had it in the first place – which they did not. Within this context this is talking about some of the Jewish people who rejected the gospel – they rejected Messiah. As a result, they are not considered a part of this olive tree, God's Kingdom – see Romans 9:6.

You: Referring to the Gentiles.

A wild olive tree: Two olive trees are alluded to in this passage – a cultivated olive tree which represents the Kingdom of God, and a wild olive tree that represents the kingdoms of this world.

Them: Referring to the remnant of the Jewish people.

Root: The nourishment

Joint participants of the root and the fatness: What Non-Jewish believers receive is the same as what Jewish believers receive. We all have the same Kingdom experience and Kingdom hope.

Verse 18: *“Do not boast against the branches. And if you boast (remember that) you do not support the root, but the root supports you.”*

Do not boast against the branches: Boasting against others is offensive to Messiah. Boasting in this context is being critical toward God and the work He is doing.

The root: Referring to Messiah.

Verse 19: *“Therefore you say, ‘The branches were broken off in order that I be grafted in.’”*

Verse 20: *“Fine. By unbelief they were broken off, but you by faith stand. Do not be high-minded, but rather fear.”*

Fine: Paul is agreeing with the statement made in verse 19. He agrees that this is part of God's order.

By unbelief they were broken off: The primary message of this passage is not about how we are saved. Those who are broken off are broken off because of unbelief. This means that they were never saved (therefore could not have lost their salvation because they never had it in the first place) – because salvation is through faith. What Paul is talking about here is this: the gospel went forth to the Old Covenant people. Although they had been prepared to

believe (the law, the prophets etc were given to prepare the people to believe in the gospel message), and had been called to believe, the hardness of their hearts caused them to stumble over the message.

Stand: This word is written in the perfect tense. The perfect tense indicates that this was something true in the past, it holds true for now and it will continue to hold true for the future. This is a verb that speaks about the assurance of our salvation. Once we have been saved, we are always going to be saved.

Fear: Give God priority. Respond to His Word. Don't operate in pride.

Verse 21: *“For since God did not spare the natural branches, nor will He spare you.”*

Note: God is not a respecter of persons. How He treats one He'll treat the other. If people behave in the same way, they'll get the same outcome.

Verse 22: *“Therefore behold the goodness and the severity of God. Upon those who have fallen, severity; but upon you the goodness of God since you remain in the kindness, otherwise also you will be broken off.”*

Behold: Understand

Goodness (kindness) and the severity: This is how God operates - exceeding kindness or in severity (referring to His wrath).

Those who have fallen: They have fallen because of unbelief.

You: Paul is referring to the Gentile believers.

You will be broken off: Again, this is not talking about salvation, but about the message of the gospel going forth. The gospel went out mightily, at the beginning, to the nation of Israel but, because of unbelief, the gospel then went to the nations. A time is coming when this time of the gospel going to the Gentiles comes to an end (Luke 21:24 – the Gentiles are going to become more and more hostile to the gospel) and God will once more turn back to Israel to complete His work.

Verse 23: *“But also they, if they do not continue in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able again to graft them in.”*

Verse 24: *“For you from the natural wild olive tree were cut off and, contrary to nature, were grafted into a good, cultured olive tree. How much more so these ones, according to nature, will be grafted into their own olive tree?”*

Natural wild olive tree: Paul likens the Gentiles (those who are of the world, idolaters) to having come from a wild olive tree. This wild, unruly, disordered tree is a picture of our natural (worldly/human) state.

According to nature: They were naturally part of that good olive tree

Their own olive tree: Paul tells us in Romans 3:1-2 that there is an advantage to being born a Jew. They have been given the Word of God and through this Word (which many are trained by from a young age) they have a connection to the Kingdom of God.

Note: This verse shows us Paul's anticipation and expectation that there is going to be a mighty move of God in the last days, through the gospel, to bring His old Covenant people into a New Covenant relationship with Himself.

Chapter 11

Part 4: Romans 11:25-36

God, in a unique way, called the Jewish people into a covenant with Himself. They were chosen by God for the purpose of being used as a blessing to the nations (Genesis 12:3). God's purposes never change. No matter what, the Jewish people were going to fulfil His purpose, the question was how were they going to do it? Through their obedience or through their disobedience? It was, sadly, through their transgression (their disobedience) that the gospel went forth into the world, with the result that the nations WERE/ARE blessed with many non-Jews (Gentiles) coming to faith in Messiah.

As believers we need to be aware of another one of God's unchanging purposes, and this purpose relates to the end time Jewish people. Prophetically God has revealed to us that in the last days, before His Kingdom is established on earth, a remnant of the Jewish people is going to be brought to faith in Messiah.

Verse 25: *"For I do not want you, brethren, to be against knowing this mystery, that you are not thinkers from yourselves, that the hardness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles have entered in."*

Brethren: Paul is speaking to all believers, but here especially he is speaking to those who are not of Jewish descent.

Against knowing: This is not the word for ignorant. These people are not unaware of this, God has revealed it to them, but they chose to wilfully go against God's Word in this matter. This is a word that has a degree of rebellion attached to it.

Not thinkers from yourselves: To understand this mystery, we cannot rely on our own understanding. If we rely upon our own thought processes to try to figure out this mystery it will lead to us being against knowing it. Why? Because all truth has to be received by revelation. God does not want us to be wise in our own understanding but to rely upon His revelation, His Word.

In part: Partially. Down through the ages, there has always been a remnant of Jewish believers. A part of them have always responded to the gospel.

In part...until: These words reveal to us that we need to anticipate a time to come when the gospel will no longer be met with hardened Jewish hearts, but their hearts will be responsive to the gospel, and they will recognise Yeshua as their Messiah (Zechariah 12).

The fullness of the Gentiles have entered in: This is the event that is going to trigger a spiritual change in the Jewish people. When all the Gentiles who are going to enter into the Kingdom of God have entered into (been grafted into) the Kingdom then a change is going to come about for the Jewish people.

Verse 26: *"And thus all Israel will be saved. Just as it has been written: 'The Redeemer will come out of Zion and will turn away the ungodliness from Jacob.'"*

All Israel will be saved: This is not referring to every single Jewish person receiving salvation. Paul has already given us a definition of who is included in Israel in Romans 9:6-7 – not all Jewish people are of Israel, but all Kingdom people make up Israel. These Kingdom people are comprised of both Jewish and Gentile believers.

From God's perspective Israel is made up of Kingdom people – there will be both a Jewish component and a Gentile component in the Kingdom of God. When that Gentile component reaches its fullness then God is going to turn to Israel (that Jewish component) to bring that remnant to salvation. Once that Jewish component reaches its fullness then all of Israel will be considered as being saved. All the Kingdom people are saved by the same means - by the gospel.

It has been written: The New Testament authors relied heavily on the Old Testament writings to support what they taught. In order to understand the New Testament, we need to understand the Old, as there is a close relationship between the Old and New Testaments. Paul quotes here from Isaiah 59:20.

Redeemer: God's work of redemption was done on Passover. Messiah Yeshua, the perfect Lamb of God, was crucified at Passover (the Passover in Egypt – Exodus 12 – foreshadows Yeshua's work of redemption on the cross).

Out of Zion: The Old Testament understanding of this (according to Isaiah 59:20) was that the Redeemer would come 'to' Zion (which He does – inward focus). The New Testament revelation of it is that the Redeemer comes 'out of' Zion. This places an emphasis on the fact that the Redeemer (Messiah Yeshua) comes out of Kingdom purpose – outward focus. He comes to fulfil a Kingdom plan. Yeshua does come to Zion, but for the purpose of the Kingdom.

Ungodliness: Every aspect of sin that is against the righteousness of God is going to be dealt with by Messiah Yeshua and His work of redemption.

Jacob: A reference to the Jewish people.

Note: At the second coming of Messiah, He is going to, primarily, do three things:

1. Deliver Israel (the Jewish people) physically from their enemies. He is going to bring judgment upon their enemies – who are also God's enemies.
2. He is going to deliver them spiritually from all forms of ungodliness, sin, transgression or iniquity.
3. He's going to establish His Kingdom on earth.

Verse 27: “*And this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.*”

This is My covenant with them: God is going to fulfil His covenantal obligations to the Jewish people. God is faithful to His covenant.

When I take away their sins: A time is coming when God, in a mighty way, is going to take away their sins. Yeshua has already done the work for this on the cross (2000years ago). However, until we receive this work there is no merit for it or no effectiveness of it in our lives - until we have received it by faith. This verse is revealing to us that we should expect a time to come when a large remnant of Jewish people (one -third of the Jewish people, according to Zechariah 13:8-9) will come to faith in Messiah and have their sins taken away (Zechariah 13:1-2).

Verse 28: “*On one hand according to the gospel they are enemies on account of you, but on the other hand in regard to election they are beloved on account of the fathers.*”

According to the gospel they are enemies: Not all of the Jewish people but the majority of them were against (were enemies of, rejected) the message of the gospel.

Election: Election and predestination have nothing to do with who goes to heaven or who goes to hell. They are simply choices that God has made in regard to His purposes. He chose Esau (elected or predestined Esau) to serve his younger brother Jacob (Genesis 25:23). He chose Pharaoh (elected him) to be the instrument that magnified His Name (Exodus 9:16). He has chosen us believers (predestined us) to be like Messiah (Ephesians 1:4-5). Similarly, in His Sovereignty, He chose (elected) the Jewish people to be a blessing, to serve, the nations (Genesis 12:3).

Fathers: The patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God is going to be faithful to the promises He made to the patriarchs, and He is going to work to fulfil His covenant promises as He does not violate His Word.

Verse 29: *“Irrevocable are the gifts and the calling of God.”*

Irrevocable: This means they will NOT change, as God does not change. God called Israel for a purpose. He equipped them, gave them gifts (primarily His Word) and abilities that they would be able to use to accomplish His purpose. Even though they have gone through a long period of disobedience and rebellion (they have been faithless) God will remain faithful to His Word and He will bring a remnant of the Jewish people to faith in the last days.

Verse 30: *“For just as you once were disobedient to God but now you are recipients of mercy for this disobedience.”*

You: Paul is speaking to the Gentiles in a general sense. Just as there has always been a remnant of Jewish believers so too has there been a remnant of faith filled Gentiles (Rahab, Ruth etc).

Once: In the past

Were disobedient to God: Gentiles, generally, had pagan religions and worshipped idols.

You are recipients of mercy for this disobedience: God paid the price, and He forgave the iniquity of the nation’s when they ceased being disobedient and received the gospel.

Verse 31: *“Thus also they were disobedient for your mercy in order also that they should receive mercy.”*

They were disobedient for your mercy: Their disobedience brought the gospel, the means of mercy, to the world.

Note: The Gentiles were disobedient, but God gave them mercy. In the last days God is going to do the same thing for the Jewish people – like the Gentiles they have been disobedient to God, but He is going to extend His mercy toward them.

Verse 32: *“For God has laid together all people for disobedience so that He may have mercy on them all.”*

Laid together all people for disobedience: God knew that all of mankind would be turned over to disobedience. It did not catch God by surprise. In His wisdom He had a plan. He sent His Son into the world so that all, in the end, would have the opportunity to receive mercy.

Verse 33: *“Oh the depths of His richness of the wisdom and knowledge of God! For unsearchable are His judgments and incomprehensible are His ways.”*

Richness: Wealth

The depths of His richness: Paul is praising God regarding His plan that He has put into place – giving mercy to all people, Jew and Gentile.

Unsearchable: We cannot understand God’s judgments. They are glorious.

Incomprehensible: God is beyond us.

Verse 34: *“For who knows the mind of the Lord, and who is His counsellor?”*

Who is His counsellor: We cannot counsel God. We have to simply accept what His Word reveals.

Verse 35: *“Or who has given previously to Him that He should repay him?”*

Who has given previously to Him: There has never been a time when God needed something that a human being had to supply for Him. God is not a debtor. He does not owe anyone anything.

Verse 36: *“Because from Him and through Him and for Him is all things. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”*

From Him and through Him and for Him is all things: God is supreme.

To Him be the glory: Everyone who receives the gospel will want to glorify God. They realise that everything they possess is received from Him, to be used for His glory.

Chapter 12

Part 1: Romans 12:1-5

Those who have accepted Messiah (i.e. every believer) will be in the Kingdom of God. God does not judge believers as to which of them will go to heaven or which to hell. When we believe we can have an assurance of our salvation and can know with certainty that we will be with God in His Kingdom. However, what God does judge a believer for is for what type of experience they are going to have in the Kingdom of God (Once we have been declared 'righteous' – because of what Messiah has done and not because of what we have done - it is necessary for us to behave righteously). The Bible makes it very clear that not every believer is going to have the same type of Kingdom experience. Being 'great' in this Kingdom comes from serving God (Matthew 20:26, Matthew 18:4) – by faithfully doing what God has called us to do.

Verse 1: *“Therefore I exhort you, brethren, by the compassion of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.”*

Therefore: This is a word that demands that we remember what Paul has just revealed. In Romans 11:36 Paul concluded by reminding us that all the glory needs to go to God. We, therefore, need to live lives that glorify God so that we can be well pleasing to Him.

I exhort you: This is a strong word of encouragement. This word lets us know that this is an important issue that Paul is writing about.

Brethren: Paul is exhorting believers (brothers and sisters in the faith) to do this. By addressing them as 'brethren' Paul reveals to us that they have already been saved. This is how believers need to live post salvation (we do not live like this to obtain salvation – we are already saved).

The compassion of God: God looks on us and has compassion on us. 'Compassion' is a word of action. It causes the One who is compassionate to do something. God looked at our spiritual condition and saw that we were lost and separated from Him, so He made a plan to change our eternity. Every time that Yeshua was moved by compassion, He usually did something (healed someone, fed them, He moved to alleviate their pain or suffering etc – Matthew 14:14, Matthew 15:32 etc). The outcome of compassion is that people are moved to praise and glorify God.

Present your bodies: This is a word of sacrifice or of offering. We need to present our lives to God. Our lives need to be lived in a sacrificial way.

Holy: Holiness is always connected to the purposes of God. We need to live in such a way that we are moved to do the purposes of God.

Well pleasing: We need to live lives that God is exceedingly pleased with.

Reasonable service: To live in this way should be logical (reasonable) to us.

Verse 2: *“And do not be conformed to this age, but rather be transformed by the renewed mind, in order that you should document what is the good, well pleasing and perfect will of God.”*

Do not be: Paul has told us how we are to live and now he tells us how we are not to live.

This age: This represents the world and the culture of the world. We are not to live like or be influenced by those who live in the world.

Transformed: This word in Greek is where we get the English word 'metamorphosis' from. When we are saved, we undergo a change.

Renewed: This same word is found in Titus 3:5. We are told in this verse in Titus that this renewing doesn't happen because of our works of righteousness (we cannot renew our own minds), but this renewal (new identity) comes through Messiah's righteous work on the cross – according to His work of mercy/compassion. When we are saved, IN Messiah, we receive the Holy Spirit and He is the One who brings about regeneration and renewal in our lives. We cannot do this for ourselves. Our minds are not improved when we come to Messiah, but the Holy Spirit alters them, He completely changes them (a metamorphosis takes place – we become a new creation). It is only with this new mind that transformation can occur in a believer's life.

You should document: This is why we need a new mind. This is the purpose. We are given evidence or proof that we are new creations.

Perfect will: When our minds are changed, we persevere until the complete and perfect will of God is fulfilled in our lives. This is what we are interested in.

Verse 3: *“For I say, by the grace of the One who gave to me, to everyone among you, do not think beyond what it is necessary to think, but be sober minded, as God has proportioned each a portion of faith.”*

Do not think beyond what it is necessary to think: With the new minds that we have been given in Messiah we ought not to think beyond what is necessary (eg emphasising dreams we have had etc)

Be sober minded: According to the measure of faith that we have been given, we need to think appropriately and according to the truth/revelation of God so that we are able to complete the call that we've received from Him.

Verse 4: *“For just as in one body we have many members, but the many members do not all have the same function.”*

Note: We need to find out what God has called us, individually, to do, as we are not all called to do the exact same thing. That call, and its fulfilment, will be related to or based upon the faith that God has given to us.

Verse 5: *“Thus the many are one body in Messiah, and individually members of one another.”*

The many: There are many people, many parts, in the body of Messiah.

One body: Referring to the congregation of the redeemed, the church.

Individually members of one another: In the body of Messiah (in the church) there are many members. We do not all have the same function. God has not given us all the same call, and nor has He given us each the same measure of faith. However, we do have something in common. We are all called to serve each other for the betterment of the entire body. We are all called to be a blessing to each other, assisting one another.

Chapter 12

Part 2: Romans 12:6-13

Paul admonishes all believers to not be conformed to this world, but to be transformed. This transformation prepares us to serve God. It is also through utilising the spiritual gifts that God has given us that we can accomplish His purposes. The moment we believe, the Holy Spirit enters into us. Because of His presence, every believer is given at least one (and sometimes multiple) spiritual gift. Sometimes the Holy Spirit can equip us with a gift specific to a time or season that we are in.

Verse 6: *“Having gifts according to the grace given to us, a variety. Whether prophecy – according to the portion of faith.”*

According to the grace: It is only when we receive the grace of God that the Holy Spirit will enter our lives and bring spiritual gifts into them. There is a relationship between the grace of God and spiritual gifts. It is through grace that we are saved, but it is also through grace that we go through regeneration – become a new creation (Titus 2:11-13).

Given to us: Paul is speaking to all believers.

A variety: Referring to the variety of gifts that can be found within the body of believers. This variety of gifts totally equips or fully prepares the body of believers, worldwide, to carry out God’s will.

Prophecy: In much of Paul’s writings, he emphasises prophecy. Prophecy relates to the truth of God. Prophecy is a catalyst for bringing things into the order of God.

Prophecy...faith: There is a connection between prophecy and faith. Although prophecy does have a degree of revealing the future attached to it, it was used primarily (as we see in the Old Testament) to point out those things in the lives of the people that were displeasing to God. This revelation of the truth of God in people’s lives was a call for them to change, to repent (spiritual renewal). Prophecy was a catalyst in turning people back to the ways of God, embracing the truth of God and doing the will of God.

Verse 7: *“Doing ministry, in ministering. He who teaches, in teaching.”*

Doing ministry: This is a very general gift and can manifest itself in a variety of ways. Doing ministry involves helping others, being a blessing to them, and having an impact on them so that they can be placed in positions whereby they are equipped and enabled to fulfil the purposes of God.

Ministering: When we believe we have a spiritual gift we should not wait around for a specific event before we begin to utilise it. We need to begin to utilise it as quickly as possible because as we begin to utilise it the anointing and the releasing of that gift is going to be manifested.

He who teaches, in teaching: Those who are called to teach will find that as they begin to teach the anointing is going to be manifested.

Verse 8: *“He who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, in generosity; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”*

Exhortation: Encouraging others, influencing others, to be committed to the things of God.
Gives: Some people have the gift of giving (time, finances, resources etc). This gift needs to be administered in generosity. It is often as people give generously that God supplies more to them so that they are able to accomplish greater things through generosity.

He who leads, with diligence: Those who lead need to do so with diligence. When they are diligent in their position of leadership this gift of leadership will grow and they will be empowered with what is necessary to make them good leaders.

Shows mercy: Extending mercy to others (forgiving them) is a spiritual gift. When we forgive others freely, generously, cheerfully etc this is going to impact others and cause them to also want to be people who forgive. God has forgiven us so much. This spurs us on to also forgive others.

Verse 9: *“Love without hypocrisy. Abhor evil. Cling to what is good.”*

Love without hypocrisy: Our love needs to be sincere and unconditional. We do not love others simply for what we can get out of them. When we love others we move towards the will of God, as the foundation of the law of God is love. Therefore, when we love (God, and then others) we are committed to righteousness.

Abhor evil: Hate that which is against the will of God. We should not get involved in or pay any attention to the things which are against God’s will.

Cling: Stick to. Be committed to.

Good: That which is related to God’s will.

Verse 10: *“For the loving of one another to do lovingly and naturally, esteeming with honour one another, giving preference to one another.”*

Naturally: Many people have identified this as the kind of a love that one has for one’s family members. This love is untaught. It is inherent, because of the family relationship. For the believer, because we are filled with the Holy Spirit, this should be the same type of love we have not only for the family but also for those who are outside the family.

Esteeming: This is a word of value. We should recognise the value in other people. We are all a creation of God so when we are unkind or dishonour someone then we are dishonouring one that God has created, one that Messiah died for and loves.

Verse 11: *“In diligence not lagging, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.”*

Diligence: When we are serving God, ministering, we must serve in such a way that it does not appear to be bothersome or irksome to us.

Not lagging, fervent in spirit: When we carry out the will of God, we need to show a total commitment to it. We should not be people who drag our feet to do the will of God, but, with the Holy Spirit living within us, we need to be excitedly committed to doing God’s will.

Serving the Lord: Everything we do should be done as unto the Lord. This is the mindset that we need to have. When we minister to others, bless others, give to others, forgive others etc we need to be of the mindset that we are doing it for the Lord’s sake.

Verse 12: “*With hope, rejoicing. Patient in tribulation. Continuing steadfastly in prayer.*”

Hope, rejoicing: Hope causes us to rejoice.

Patient: Endure

Continuing steadfastly in prayer: Pray in a consistent way. We need to be committed to prayer.

Verse 13: “*Participate in the needs of the saints, you pursue loving foreigners.*”

Participate in the needs of the saints: Share with those fellow believers who are in need.

Pursue: This is a word of intensity.

Foreigners: There are two ways to understand this word. Foreigners could be people who are unknown to us (strangers) or they can be people who come from other countries. Many people are displaced today, and we need to pursue and love them in a sincere way.

Chapter 12

Part 3: Romans 12:14-21

Verse 14: “*Bless those who persecute you; You bless and do not curse.*”

Bless those who persecute you: In the natural, in our immaturity, when we are not walking by the Spirit, when someone persecutes us, we want to respond to them in kind. We want to inflict pain on those who persecute us so that we can also see them suffer. This behaviour, however, doesn't solve the problem but often causes the situation to become even worse. When we become believers, we are supposed to grow in our faith and not act in immaturity. We are called to live differently.

Curse: This is not talking about putting a spell on others. Cursing in the Bible means to speak unkindly, negatively or in an adverse way about others. We are not given the freedom to speak unkind words against those who cause us trouble.

Verse 15: “*Rejoice with the ones rejoicing, and weep with those who weep.*”

Rejoice with the ones rejoicing: Paul is giving us some New Covenant commandments here. Often when people are experiencing success our insecurity and pride can get in the way and make us feel depressed that we aren't the ones who are experiencing this success etc. Paul cautions us to not do this as this is inappropriate behaviour for a believer. When others are experiencing success, we need to be glad for them, rejoice with them.

Weep with those who weep: When others are going through difficult times and are saddened, we need to empathize with them.

Verse 16: *“In the same way for one another think. Do not be thinking in a haughty manner, but with the humble ones associate. Do not be thinking in your own opinion.”*

Note: At all times, and in every situation, we need to behave in a spiritually appropriate way. This means behaving in a way that will bring about the Spirit's presence and activity into a situation.

In the same way for one another think: We need to think in the same way that people are thinking so that we can act appropriately toward them. If they are rejoicing, we need to rejoice with them. If they are weeping, we need to weep with them etc. We need to see things from the perspective of other people so that we can understand their pain, hurt, misfortune etc. In order to minister to others effectively we need to have empathy. We are called to be a blessing to others and if we cannot empathize with someone, we will not be a blessing to them.

Haughty manner: In a prideful way. Being proud always has to do with self. When we have an opportunity to minister to others (to assist, encourage, teach them etc) we must not allow pride to get in the way.

The humble ones: Those who are lowly. Those in society who the world sees as in a “lower class”, those of a lower situation. Those who do not necessarily possess much in the way of assets or influence. Lowly people are easily dominated or exploited.

Do not be thinking in your own opinion: Proverbs 3:5. We can only effectively minister to others through God's revelation – through His truth.

Verse 17: *“Do not repay evil for evil. Provide good before all people.”*

Do not repay evil for evil: When someone is unkind to us our natural response is to lash back at them. We, however, need to remember that we are new creations and must behave as such.

Provide good before all people: We need to provide good to people from God's perspective. We want to influence people and not manipulate them.

Verse 18: *“If possible, as much as it is dependent upon you, with all men live peaceably.”*

Live peaceably: Avoid conflict. This, however, does not mean that we compromise truth.

Verse 19: *“Not making vengeance of yourselves, beloved, but give a place for wrath; for it is written, ‘To Me is vengeance, for I will recompense,’ says the Lord.”*

Not making vengeance: We are not God and must not take matters into our own hands. Vengeance is not about us being defended but is for the purpose of producing righteousness out of a situation.

It is written: Quoted from Deuteronomy 32:35

Recompense: Pay back.

Verse 20: *“Therefore, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If thirsty, give drink to him. For doing this you place fiery coals upon his head.”*

Therefore, if your enemy is hungry...: Quoted from Proverbs 25:21-22. When we behave in this way toward our enemies it is with the hope that their behaviour will change and that our enemies will be brought into submission to the will of God.

Verse 21: *“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome with good the evil.”*

Do not be overcome by evil: We must not allow evil to dominate us.

Chapter 13

Part 1: Romans 13:1-8

It is the will of God that every believer submits to the government - regardless of which government it is. However, although submitting to the government is the ideal, it is not always possible. In the Bible, there are many examples of Godly individuals who did not submit to their governments. This was due to the government's decrees conflicting with the Word and truth of God. As we draw closer to the last days, many governments are going to become increasingly hostile to the truth of God. There will be greater conflict between what the Word of God commands us to do and what governments order us to do. The believing community need to be aware of this so that we can be prepared to suffer and get ourselves ready to be persecuted.

Verse 1: *“And every soul to the higher authorities let him submit. For there is no authority except from God, and these authorities, being under God, have been appointed.”*

Every soul: Every human being.

Higher authorities: Referring to the governments.

Submit: When we submit to the (general) authorities who are over us it is honouring to God. No authority is perfect, but when a government is enforcing that which is good then it is our responsibility to ensure that we are in submission to it.

Verse 2: *“So whoever resists the authority the ordinance of God he has resisted; and those who resist, upon themselves judgment they will receive.”*

Note: This is the principle: God establishes governments. It is His will for us to generally submit to these authorities as they are servants of God, executing justice.

Judgment they will receive: Those who rebel, and resist authority, bring judgment upon themselves.

Verse 3: *“For rulers they are not a fear to good works but to evil ones. Do you desire not to fear the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from it.”*

They are not a fear to good works but to evil ones: Paul is talking about governments who punish evil (punish that which is against the will of God) and reward or praise that which is good (that which is according to the will of God). These kinds of governments (those who punish evil and reward good) are the ones that we are absolutely required to submit to.

Praise from it: Meaning: If we do not want to fear the authorities and we do good then we will receive praise from this kind of government.

Verse 4: *“For a servant of God is he to you for the good. But if the evil you do be afraid; for he not in vain the sword carries; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.”*

Verse 5: *“Therefore it is a necessity to submit, not only on account of wrath but also on account of conscience.”*

Not only on account of wrath: We don’t only submit out of a fear of punishment.

On account of conscience: God has given each individual a conscience. Through that conscience God speaks to us. Through the conscience, generally speaking, we learn what is right and what is wrong. The indwelling Holy Spirit is far superior to our consciences, but for those who have not yet come to faith the conscience is a good starting point for agreeing with God.

Verse 6: *“For on account of this also taxes you pay, for servants of God are they continually attending to this very thing.”*

Taxes you pay: We have a financial obligation to our governments.

Servants of God are they: Paul is not talking about any government, but he is speaking specifically about those governments that consistently reward good and punish evil – those governments that are not in conflict with God’s Word. These governments protect people, support justice, etc. We are not called to submit to governments that are hostile to God – those governments that punish good and reward evil. These kinds of governments we are called to stand against (example: Daniel etc). We are not called to submit to ungodly governmental decrees, but we are called to remain faithful to God.

Verse 7: *“Therefore you pay all of what you owe: taxes to whom taxes are due, tribute to whom tribute is due, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.”*

Note: This verse makes it very clear that we should not be a debtor to anyone. We need to humbly, obediently and submissively render to others what they deserve.

Verse 8: *“Nothing to no one you should owe except for loving one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.”*

Loving one another: Leviticus 19:18 (see also Galatians 5:13-14). Throughout the Scripture this is the foundational commandment that God gives to us. When we love God, we demonstrate this love by loving our neighbours.

Chapter 13

Part 2: Romans 13:9-14

When we are led by the Spirit we are going to live righteously. This means that we are going to live in such a way as to bring glory and honour to God.

Verse 9: *“For the law: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness against another,’ and ‘Do not covet’. If someone has an additional commandment, in this they are complete: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’”*

Bear false witness: Tell lies about.

Note: This verse again reveals to us how foundational the law is.

Verse 10: *“Loving a neighbour does not produce evil, therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.”*

Love: Referring to the love that God has given us. If all the commandments had to be broken down into their most essential ‘ingredient’ it would be found that love would be the motivating factor behind every command.

Verse 11: *“And this: knowing the time. That the hour from sleep we have been raised up; for now nearer is our salvation than when we first believed.”*

This: Referring to the primary matter, referring to what is most important (in this context Paul is referring to this primary matter as being the transition from this world into the establishment of the Kingdom of God).

Knowing the time: We need to have discernment about the time or the season that we are in, and, prophetically, the season that we are approaching. Knowing the time that we are in should cause us to think and behave differently.

We have been raised up: The time of sleeping is over. There are two possibilities for believers in this regard: we are either going to be asleep to the signs of the seasons that we are approaching, or we are going to be watching for them. We have been called to watch, to be ready, and to be found faithful in these last days.

Our salvation: There are two ways that we can understand salvation:

1. Salvation can be understood as the forgiveness of our sins and of us being justified by faith before God (being reconciled to God).
2. Many of the writers in the New Testament speak of salvation not in the above sense alone but they speak of it in terms of victory, in terms of deliverance – being saved or delivered from our enemies in this world.

Verse 12: *“The night is being cut off, but the day has drawn near. Let us lay aside therefore the works of darkness, but rather we shall clothe ourselves with the weapons of light.”*

Night is being cut off, but the day has drawn near: There is a time of transition coming. It is a transition that involves the darkness of this world giving way to light. Light is synonymous with the Kingdom of God (Zechariah 14:6-7).

Lay aside...the works of darkness: We are not to do the works of darkness.

Weapons: A good study of this word will reveal that Paul is not speaking about armour here, but about weapons.

Weapons of light: Kingdom weapons. These weapons include living righteously, not submitting to the antichrist and the spirit of lawlessness etc. It is living righteously that manifests the glory of God.

Verse 13: *“As in the day, let us walk properly; not in debauchery and drunkenness, not with sexual immorality or sensualness, not in strife nor jealousy.”*

Walk properly: This means that we need to live according to the truth of God.

Debauchery: This is improper behaviour. It is behaviour that is riotous.

Note: The behaviours that Paul lists here are inappropriate or improper behaviours. It is never appropriate for us to give in to these behaviours.

Verse 14: *“But put on the Lord Messiah Yeshua and make no provision for the flesh and its desires.”*

Put on (clothe yourself with) the Lord Messiah Yeshua: Although as believers we are called to demonstrate that Yeshua is Lord of our lives everyday it becomes especially important for us to do so in the last days. In the last days it is our final opportunity to demonstrate that we belong to God, to bear witness to others, to have a God-pleasing testimony.

Make no provision: We are to give no forethought to our fleshly or physical needs (ie: we are not to make decisions based upon our flesh or our physical well-being). If we make decisions based on our flesh, we are going to miss out on the truth of righteous living. When we submit to our flesh, we are serving the wrong lord or master.

Chapter 14

Part 1: Romans 14:1-12

We should not condemn those who are fellow believers, or those who are outside the body of believers. Our desire should be that all people might receive the truth and be welcomed into the Kingdom of God. In this chapter Paul is NOT dealing with Kashrut or the kosher laws (dietary laws in the Old Testament regarding food). He is dealing with an entirely different matter – the issue of whether it is permissible to eat meat or not. In this chapter Paul also deals with the observance of certain (extrabiblical/traditional) days. Neither of these issues should lead to us condemning or judging the stance that other people take on these issues.

Verse 1: *“But the one being weak with faith you receive, and do not judge disputable things.”*

Disputable things: We are not called to argue or dispute things based upon a desire to put others out of the fellowship, or in order to reject or condemn them. We do need to deal with disputable things, but not for the purpose of condemning others or banishing them from the local congregation.

Verse 2: *“On the one hand one believes to eat all things, but on the other hand the one being weak only vegetables he eats.”*

Eat all things: No one disputed that fruit and vegetables were acceptable. The debate was specifically about meat. Based on the Word of God, eating meat is permissible (Genesis 9:3-4).

Only vegetables: This would include fruit.

Verse 3: *“The one who eats (meat) the one that does not eat let him not despise, and the one who does not eat the one eating let him not judge, for God has received him.”*

Let him not: Written in the form of a command. There was an argument between these two different groups of people. Both groups were basing their view upon Scripture, but the one group’s interpretation or conclusion (according to Paul) was incorrect. Nevertheless, Paul instructed both groups not to despise or condemn each other.

God has received him: Both of these groups of people have received the gospel by faith. One group happens to be weaker in the faith than the other group, but God (because of their faith and not according to what they eat or don’t eat) has received both groups of people.

Verse 4: *“Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own lord he stands or falls. And he will be made to stand, because God is able to make him stand.”*

Another’s servant: Both of the groups mentioned above are servants of Messiah. He is the only one who can judge if His servant is doing the right or the wrong thing.

Lord: Master

Stands or falls: It is the master of the servant that renders judgment on his servant. Fellow servants do not have the permission or authority to make this call.

God is able to make him stand: Although some people are weak in the faith, God is able to uphold them and establish them. He is able to grow and mature people. He is able to complete the work that He has started in the lives of people (Philippians 1:6)

Verse 5: *“On one hand the one judges a day beyond a day. On the other day some judge every day to be the same - each one in his own mind being fully convinced.”*

Note: Paul begins to talk about another issue in this verse. This is not a verse dealing with the Sabbath Day or the Biblical festivals but is related to extrabiblical dates that were set, traditional days etc (eg: Christmas or Thanksgiving, May day etc)

Judges a day beyond a day: This person observes a specific day differently to another day. They place more importance on certain days than on other days. Paul is exploring the thought of whether or not it is permissible to celebrate or acknowledge these extrabiblical or traditional/cultural days.

In his own mind being fully convinced: Paul is saying that this is a matter of conscience. If we are led, based upon our own consciences, that a day is different and should be celebrated etc then there is no harm in celebrating this day.

Verse 6: *“The one who observes the day to the Lord he observes, and the one who does not observe the day to the Lord he does not observe. The one who eats to the Lord he eats for he gives thanks to God, and the one who does not eat to the Lord he does not eat. Also he gives thanks to God.”*

Observes: Literally the word for ‘thinks’.

Note: In both situations – whether in eating or in observing traditional days – these groups of people make their decisions based on their faith (whether strong or weak) or their commitment to God. Both groups of people have a desire to honour God in how they behave. The objective of both sets of people is to give thanks to God. These kinds of disputes should not cause division in the body of believers.

Verse 7: *“For none of us to himself lives, and no one to himself should die.”*

None of us to himself lives: This is a foundational principle. We do not live unto ourselves, but we should all be living unto the Lord. Because we are committed to the Lord we should also be concerned about other individuals.

No one to himself should die: Whether we live or whether we die everything of ours should be offered up to God. We are called to live sacrificially.

Verse 8: *“For if also we live to the Lord we live, if also we die to the Lord we die. Therefore if also we live if also we die of the Lord’s we are.”*

For if also we live to the Lord we live, if also we die to the Lord we die: This is the objective of those who have faith. Everything that we have belongs to the Lord and we should give thanks to Him for it all.

Of the Lord’s we are: We belong to Him. This speaks about the eternal hope that we have.

Verse 9: *“For to this Messiah died, rose and also lived, in order that also the dead and the alive He should lord over.”*

This: Paul is speaking about a primary thing/thought here.

Messiah died, rose (was resurrected) and also lived: Messiah did this all for us. Everything that He did was for the betterment, the salvation, of humanity. He did things based upon our well-being – according to the standards and will of God.

Lord over: Rule over. This is the mindset that we need to have – Yeshua is our Lord (He is the One we need to submit to), and He rules over us. Every decision we make should be based on what is pleasing and correct before God.

Verse 10: *“But why do you judge your brother? Why do you despise your brother? For all must appear before the judgment seat of Messiah.”*

Brother: A fellow believer

Why do you despise your brother: When we have a judgmental or a condemning attitude towards fellow believers Paul is revealing to us that we in fact are despising them. This is not what we should be doing, as this is not the position of faith. When we have faith, we are called to love our brothers – not despise them.

All must appear: All are going to stand before

Judgment seat of Messiah: As believers, the judgement we will receive, when we stand before Messiah, will be a judgment of rewards. These disputed things, these matters of conscience, are not for us to judge or condemn. Ultimately Messiah is the One who is going to make a declaration of judgment regarding them - as to whether they were appropriate views to hold or not. We will suffer a loss of reward for those things which we did inappropriately, but for those things that we did that are considered appropriate we will be blessed.

Verse 11: *“For it has been written: ‘As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.’”*

It has been written: Isaiah 45:23

Every tongue shall confess: Everyone is going to have to make a confession – not to one another, but to God.

To God: This is another important verse that reveals to us the divinity of Messiah.

Verse 12: *“Therefore each of us, concerning himself, an account he will give to God.”*

Each of us: Every believer

An account: Every one of us is going to have to give an account of what we have thought, said, and did. The good news is this: Based upon the gospel, that judgment does not determine where we are going to spend eternity - heaven or hell. Although we may suffer a loss of rewards (1 Corinthians 3:15) our eternal future remains secure.

Chapter 14

Part 2: Romans 14:13-23

The Bible reveals to us that we have freedom and liberty in Messiah. We need to use this freedom and liberty to walk in love and not use it to adversely affect others. We are not to use our liberty to destroy someone else who is weak in the faith.

Verse 13: *“Therefore no longer one another we judge, but rather this you are to judge: not to be a stumbling block to a brother or an offense.”*

This you are to judge: We need to judge or evaluate ourselves – we need to take stock of our behaviour.

Not to be a stumbling block to a brother or an offense: As much as it depends on us, we should not use our freedom and liberty to become a hinderance to the growth of our fellow believers. Just because we can do something does not mean that we should. We need to be able to exercise restraint. We need to be patient with others.

Verse 14: *“I know and am convinced in the Lord Yeshua that nothing is common through itself, except to the one who reckons something to be common to that one it is indeed common.”*

In the Lord: When we are IN the Lord it means that we are submitting to His Lordship and are committed to the same things that He is committed to (ie seeing people come to salvation, seeing people grow and mature and become stronger in the Lord).

Common: This is not the word for unclean. ‘Common’ means something which is rejected by God. For example, although God created all animals, he did not use all of them for the sacrifice at the temple. These animals were considered common, inappropriate or rejected for temple sacrifice. These common animals, although not used for sacrifice, still had a purpose and a function and they could still be used to glorify God (eg The donkey and colt on which Yeshua rode into Jerusalem). What Paul is alluding to in this verse is that under the Lordship of Messiah Yeshua we are going to have discernment and are going to understand the purpose of things and how to utilize all things so that ultimately everything can be used for the glory of God.

To the one who reckons something to be common, to that one it is indeed common: Paul does not set aside or demean conscience or personal conviction. In some situations, for a variety of reasons, a person may feel that something is unacceptable and cannot be used for the purposes of God. Although Paul feels that everything can be used for the purposes of God, he gives grace to those who feel that some things cannot.

Verse 15: *“But if on account of food your brother is grieved, no longer according to love you walk. Not for your food the one destroy on behalf of whom Messiah died.”*

On account of food: We need to eat, but we don't need to eat all things. If we are strong in the faith, it doesn't mean that we should partake of something just because it is permissible to do so. We need to constantly evaluate ourselves so that we are not a stumbling block or offense to weaker believers.

On account of food your brother is grieved: The implication is that this person has eaten this food despite knowing that it was offensive to a weaker brother. If a fellow believer is going to be grieved because we have eaten meat (or something else) yet, knowing this, we eat it anyway then we have eaten it in a way that is not showing love toward that brother.

According to love you walk: We have been called to walk according to love.

Not for your food the one destroy on behalf of whom Messiah died: We must not allow what we eat to be a stumbling block to others or adversely affect their faith. If we know something is offensive to someone, and if we walk in love, then we will not partake of that particular food. We do not want to be those who destroy the faith of others, but we want to be those who edify and build up other people. We want to always be a Godly influence.

Verse 16: “*Therefore do not let be blasphemed your goodness.*”

Note: This verse is emphasizing our testimony. We want to do that which is good. We want to have a Godly testimony - one that is pleasing to God and one which is affirmed by all the body of believers.

Blasphemed your goodness: It is good to have spiritual maturity and know that eating certain things is permissible. However, we must not let that which is good become blasphemy. If we go ahead and just do whatever we feel/know is right, it has the potential to adversely affect others and cause them to speak in a negative way about us. We need to make sure that we always have a positive testimony before the body of believers – we always need to ensure that we are above reproach – even if that means we need to curb our own freedom and liberty.

Verse 17: “*For the Kingdom of God is not food and drink, but rather it is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*”

The Kingdom of God is not food and drink: Food and drink should not be what is important to us. We need to concern ourselves with the Kingdom of God – practicing righteousness, loving others, etc.

Peace: Related to the fulfilment of God’s will.

Joy: When we are living righteously and are walking in peace (in the fulfilment of the will of God) we are going to have joy in the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is mentioned here because it is He who brings us into God's order. It is when we are in God’s order that we can be a blessing to others.

Verse 18: “*For in these things one serves Messiah, acceptable to God and approved by men.*”

In these things one serves Messiah: When our mindset is that we want to live righteously, and want to fulfil the will of God, then we are going to be considered as those who serve Messiah. What is more important to us? Being faithful in serving God or having the freedom to eat and drink certain things? Love demands that we set aside these issues of food and drink. There are many things that we can eat that would not be a stumbling block to others.

Verse 19: *“Therefore the things of peace we pursue, and the things that are edifying to one another.”*

The things of peace we pursue: We want to do the things that bring unity between ourselves and others. We want to be people who maintain peace and who are an edifying influence on others.

Verse 20: *“Not on account of food that you shall destroy the work of God. On one hand all things are clean, but evil for the man who eats with offense.”*

The work of God: God is working in the lives of individuals. We must do nothing to interrupt or destroy this work.

All things are clean: All things are clean IN Messiah, in this freedom that we have. We need to remember the context of these verses though. Paul is not trying to rewrite the laws of God. He is not saying that the things once unacceptable out of Messiah are now made acceptable in Messiah. When we are IN Messiah we are not given a license to sin. In this passage, Paul has been talking about disputed things, about things which have no clear Biblical reference.

Evil: It is against God’s will to be a stumbling block to others on account of what we eat.

Verse 21: *“It is good not to eat meat nor to drink wine, nor do anything in which to cause your brother to stumble or be offended or be made weak.”*

It is good not to eat meat: In that time, in that culture, for those early believers who were young and weak in the faith, eating meat was causing problems.

Drink wine: We have the freedom to eat meat and drink wine. But we do not have the freedom to do so if we are in the presence of others who would be offended or harmed by our actions. Eating meat and drinking wine are a matter of conscience. If we are convicted by these things, then we should not do them. If, however, we are not convicted, then as long as it is not adversely affecting others (or is within the security of our own homes) then we are at liberty to eat meat and drink wine.

Verse 22: *“You have faith. According to yourself you have it, but before God. Happy is the one who does not condemn himself in what he has approved.”*

According to yourself you have it, but before God: If, according to our conscience and being led in Messiah (ie based on His Word), we think that something is acceptable and permissible then we can partake of it. However, if it regards something that others may consider disputable, we need to partake of it at home – not publicly. We should never be a stumbling block to others.

Happy: Blessed

Condemn himself in what he has approved: Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he has approved, or by what he has convinced himself is permissible.

Verse 23: *“But the one who is doubting is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.”*

The one who is doubting is condemned if he eats: This one was not fully convinced that what he was about to eat or do was wrong but nevertheless he ate (or did) it anyway. If he ate or did something out of doubt (not understanding the liberty that he has) then he was not exercising faith. This is not a good place for him to be in.

Whatever is not from faith is sin: When we do something (whether permissible to do so or not) that is not motivated by faith (ie we are doing it out of doubt or not according to truth) then we are sinning. Faith is related to truth, and truth is found in God’s Word.

Chapter 15

Part 1: Romans 15:1-13

Verse 1: *“And we the ones who are able ought to bear with the weaknesses of the ones who are incapable and **not** ourselves we are to please.”*

The ones who are able ... the ones who are incapable: In this verse, Paul talks about two groups of people. In English these words are often translated as people who are strong and people who are weak. However, in the original, these words have more to do with those who are capable (they can do something) and those who are incapable of something. They are words that are related to spiritual maturity.

Bear with the weaknesses: To be able to bear with the weaknesses of others we need to have the right perspective. We need to be able to think clearly and properly. To bear with others means that we need to support and assist them. As much as we can, we need to make up what is lacking with them.

The ones who are incapable: There are people in the congregations who are incapable, who lack something. This lack is not due to rebellion or because they don't love God. This lack is due to spiritual immaturity – they still need to grow. These people need to be edified, so instead of pushing them aside or scolding them, for not being able to do what needs to be done, we're called to put up with their inadequacies - and not just put up with their inadequacies, but we need to assist them, to use the situations they find themselves in to help them to grow and mature, so that in the end they can meet the objectives that God wants them to fulfil.

***Not** ourselves we are to please:* Our goal should not be about fulfilling our own needs or about getting what we want. Part of God's goal for our lives is that we assist others and help them to grow.

Verse 2: *“For each one of us the neighbour let him please, for the good to edification.”*

The neighbour let him please: The foundation of the law, its primary message, is to love our neighbour as ourselves (Galatians 5:14). God has not saved us for us to live to please ourselves. It is not about us. God desires us to do things in light of the needs of our neighbour (our fellow human beings).

Good: 'Good' is related to the will of God. We want to behave in a way that brings about the fulfilment of the will of God in the lives of others.

To edification: We need to be concerned about being an edifying influence in the lives of others so that the will of God can be accomplished in their lives, and so that they grow in maturity and in capability.

Verse 3: *“For even the Messiah not Himself He pleased, but rather just as it has been written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on Me.’”*

Messiah: When Yeshua is spoken of it is usually in one of two ways: either it is emphasized that He is the Son of God (His divinity), or it is emphasised that He is the Son of man (His humanity). When the emphasis is placed on His humanity it reveals the perfect example for us to follow.

Not Himself He pleased: Yeshua did not come to earth to please Himself.

It has been written: Messiah's purpose was to fulfil the Word of God. We, too, should be concerned about fulfilling the Word of God – living in a way that is right and pleasing before God, so that we can fulfil the will of God. This is quoted from Psalm 69:9

The reproaches ...fell on Me: Messiah took the reproaches that we were meant to receive, He took our shame.

Verse 4: *“For whatever has been written before has been written for our instruction, that we, through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.”*

Whatever has been written: The context of this is that it has been written in the Scripture.

Patience: Endurance

Comfort: Encouragement

Hope: Hope is a Kingdom word. It is in the Kingdom that our hopes will be realised. It is in the Kingdom that we are going to receive the promises and blessings of God. Having hope causes us to be encouraged, it causes us to endure.

Verse 5: *“But the God of patience and comfort will give to you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Messiah Yeshua.”*

Like-minded: We are called to think as Messiah thinks and to persevere and overcome the things of this world like He did.

Verse 6: *“That you may with similar desire and with one mouth glorify God and the Father of our Lord Messiah Yeshua.”*

Similar desire: Like passion

Glorify God: This is our objective or goal. No matter what we get or don't get, what we lose or what we gain our purpose should always be that in all things we glorify God.

Verse 7: *“Therefore you receive one another, just as also Messiah received us, for the glory of God.”*

The glory of God: There is a relationship between the will of God being fulfilled and the glory of God. Messiah came to this world for a purpose – to reconcile sinful humanity with a holy God. Messiah did that work perfectly, and God attested to that perfect work by raising Him from the dead. When we are reconciled to God, we have unity between ourselves and God, but also between ourselves and those who are also reconciled to Him.

Verse 8: *“But I say Messiah Yeshua having become a servant of the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to certify the promises of the fathers.”*

The circumcision: Referring to the Jewish people. On Yeshua's first visit to earth, He came to serve the Jewish people.

The fathers: Referring to the Patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God promised Abraham that from his loins would come a Son of promise.

When Yeshua, the seed of Abraham, was born God's Words about a Son of promise were proved true. God's purpose, through the Jewish nation, was that they would be a blessing to the Gentiles (Genesis 12:3).

Verse 9: *"But the nations on behalf of mercy might glorify God, as it is written: 'For this reason I will confess You among the Gentiles, and Your name I will sing.'"*

Nations: Gentiles

Mercy: It is through the gospel message that we receive the mercy or grace of God. That gospel was released into this world by Jewish people.

It is written: Quoted from 2 Samuel 22:50 and Psalm 18:49

Confess You: Acknowledge You.

I will confess You among the Gentiles, and Your name I will sing: When David penned these words in the Old Testament, they were prophetic words. They are words that declared that God was going to be praised - not only among the Jewish people, but also among those in the nations.

Verse 10: *"And again he says, 'Rejoice O Nations with His people!'"*

Again he says: Quoted from Deuteronomy 32:43

Rejoice O Nations with His people: God's objective is to be glorified by all of humanity – Jews and Gentiles.

Verse 11: *"And again: 'Praise the Lord, all the nations! And praise Him all the people!'"*

Again: Quoted from Psalm 117:1

Praise the Lord: God wants all people, everywhere, to praise, worship and glorify Him. It is only through Messiah that this has become possible for mankind.

Verse 12: *"And again, Isaiah says: 'The root of Jesse there will be, this is the One I will raise up as a ruler over all nations. In Him the Gentiles shall hope.'"*

Isaiah says: Quoted from Isaiah 11:10

The root of Jesse: A reference to Messiah.

Raise up: Another reference to resurrection (and the Kingdom).

A ruler over all nations: Yeshua is going to rule on this earth during the Millennial reign of Messiah. His rule on this earth has not yet begun.

Hope: This hope is not only offered to Jewish people, but also to those who are in the nations. Messiah came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24), because He does everything according to God's plan. God's order is that the gospel goes first to the Jewish people and then to the Gentiles. This is the same order that Paul followed throughout the book of Acts (Romans 1:16 – Acts 13:14, 42; Acts 14:1; Acts 17:1-2 etc).

Verse 13: *“But the God of hope among those who are believing, for you to abound in hope in the power of the Holy Spirit.”*

God of hope: In Romans 15:5 Paul called God the ‘God of perseverance and comfort.’ Now he calls Him the ‘God of hope’. Perseverance and comfort bring hope. When we have hope (hope in the blessings and promises of God) it changes the way that we live. When we have hope, we live in a way that glorifies God.

The Holy Spirit: Mention of the Holy Spirit should always remind us of the order of God. He is the One who brings order into our lives. When we hope for the Kingdom things (not the things of this world) the ministry of the Holy Spirit is released in our lives. He anoints us and equips us to carry out the will of God. When we carry out the will of God, we live lives that glorify God.

Chapter 15

Part 2: Romans 15:14-21

Verse 14: *“But being convinced my brethren also I myself concerning you that you yourselves are full of goodness, having been filled with all knowledge, able also to one another admonish.”*

Also I myself: Paul is convinced about this and he is emphatic about it.

You: Referring to this congregation in Rome.

Full of goodness: Paul is convinced that these individuals, like him, are committed to the will of God – ie loving their neighbour as they love themselves.

Filled with all knowledge: The Holy Spirit fills us with all the knowledge (the truth, Biblical revelation or insight) that we need so that we are able to obey God and carry out His will. Disobedience never has an excuse.

Admonish: We are called to influence others or help them to bring about a change in their lives whereby the order of God is maintained, and the will/purposes of God are accomplished. Paul was convinced that this congregation in Rome were fully equipped to be an influence on others.

Verse 15: *“But being bolder than normal I have written to you brethren in parts, as reminding you on account of the grace that was given to me by God.”*

Brethren: Fellow believers - both male and female.

The grace that was given to me: Paul was excited and passionate about the call upon his life. Grace equips us to obey the call of God (Titus 2:12).

Verse 16: *“For me to be a servant of Messiah Yeshua unto the nations, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be well pleasing, sanctified in the Holy Spirit.”*

Me to be a servant of Messiah Yeshua unto the nations: Paul personifies Israel. God supernaturally called the Jewish nation to be a blessing and a light to the Gentiles (Genesis

12:3). 'Being a light to the Gentiles' means that the Jewish nation was called to give the nations the revelation and truth of God. When we live obedient to God's truth we are blessed.

Ministering: A sacred (priestly) service. Paul was called to administer in the house of God.

The gospel: The gospel is good news – specifically about redemption. Atonement was a temporary covering over the sin. The sin was still present however, although atonement allowed for the judgment of that sin to be postponed or delayed. Atonement was a short-term solution to the problem of sin. Redemption is superior to atonement. Redemption is not a covering over of a person's sin. It is a complete removal of them. Redemption doesn't delay God's judgment - it removes the need for God's judgment! This is why the gospel is the good news!

Sanctified in the Holy Spirit: If we are going to do anything pleasing to God we must be led by the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is foundational for everything that honours or glorifies God.

Verse 17: *"Therefore I have rejoicing in Messiah Yeshua in regard to the things that pertain to God."*

Rejoicing: Boasting

The things that pertain to God: Paul is not wrapped up in the things of this world, but he is Kingdom minded.

Verse 18: *"For I am not going to be so bold to say the things that are being except what Messiah is working out through me to make the Gentiles obedient in word and deed."*

Make the Gentiles obedient: The nations are obeying God.

Obedient in word and deed: Obedience is not legalism. Legalism is when we have to do something to be saved or to maintain our salvation.

Verse 19: *"In mighty signs and wonders in the power of the Holy Spirit, so that from Jerusalem and the regions around unto Illyricum I have fulfilled the gospel of Messiah."*

Illyricum: Today this is the Balkan states - former Yugoslavia and its surrounds. Paul ministered throughout Asia Minor, Europe and the Balkan states of today.

Verse 20: *"But thus I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Messiah was named, that not on someone else's foundation I should build."*

Made it my aim: This was Paul's ambition or aspiration – to preach the gospel. He was committed to this, as it had value and significance for him.

Verse 21: *"But just as it has been written, 'To whom it has not been proclaimed they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand.'"*

It has been written: Quoted from Isaiah 52:15

Has not been proclaimed: The work of Messiah had not been proclaimed to the Gentiles, so Paul was making it known to them. Paul wanted to be a source of revelation for the Gentiles.

Chapter 15

Part 3: Romans 15:22-33

Paul was deeply concerned for those whom he was sent to. If we are going to be effective in serving God, we must love the people that we are called to minister to. Paul encountered a lot of opposition in his ministry as many did not want him to successfully carry out the will of God. Like Paul, we need to be individuals that persevere and overcome when we face opposition from the enemy. The enemy does not want us to carry out the purposes of God – he does not want us to show love, commitment, or concern for others.

Verse 22: *“Therefore also being hindered many times from coming to you.”*

Being hindered many times: Paul had a great desire to go to Rome, but he had as yet (at the time he penned the book of Romans) been unable to fulfil that desire. It was a matter of timing.

Verse 23: *“But now no longer having place in these regions and having great desire to come to you for many years.”*

No longer having place in these regions: Paul had done ministry throughout these regions and had fully evangelised them (Romans 15:19). Paul was sensing that the time was nearing for him to eventually be able to go to Rome to minister to the congregation there. He had desired for many years to go to Rome in order to do this.

Verse 24: *“And whenever I come into Spain, I will come unto you. For I hope to pass through (these areas) to see you and by you being equipped if you first partially that I would be fulfilled.”*

I hope to pass through: On the way to Spain Paul hoped to pass through Rome. Rome was a necessary stopping point to regather supplies etc for the remainder of the journey to Spain.
If you first partially that I would be fulfilled: An awkward expression, but what Paul is saying is that there was a physical reason for them stopping there – they needed to restock their supplies – but this reason was only a small part of Paul’s reason. Although Paul needed the physical supplies, he was more concerned about being spiritually, inwardly, equipped by them. He wanted to spend time with them so that he could be encouraged and edified by seeing them and having fellowship with them, ministering to them etc. Paul was hoping for this to be a time of renewal for him. Paul knew that by ministering to others it would have a positive impact on himself – renewing him spiritually, and therefore empowering him to be an even more effective servant to others.

Verse 25: *“But now I am going into Jerusalem to minister to the saints.”*

Israel and Jewish individuals were always at the foremost of Paul's thoughts. Although he was called primarily as an apostle to the Gentiles this did not stop Paul from understanding his obligation – ‘to the Jew’ first (Romans 1:16). There should always be an emphasis on sharing the gospel with the Jewish people.

Verse 26: *“For it seemed good to those in Macedonia and Achaia that they should make a contribution for the poor ones of the saints in Jerusalem.”*

It seemed good: They thought about this thoroughly and reached the conclusion that this thing that they wanted to do seemed to fall within the will of God.

Make a contribution for the poor ones of the saints: Those in Macedonia and Achaia were burdened for the saints who were battling poverty in Jerusalem.

Verse 27: *“For it seemed good to them, and they were obligated to them. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.”*

They were obligated to them: The Gentiles in these regions of Macedonia and Achaia had a sense of obligation to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem.

Their duty is also to minister to them in material things: The Gentiles had received spiritual wealth from the Jews (through Jewish individuals like Paul etc) so the Gentiles wanted to contribute and help those who were suffering financially (materially).

Verse 28: *“Therefore this after fulfilling and sealing to them this fruit, I will depart unto you into Spain.”*

This: Paul is referring to this financial contribution, that was entrusted to him for those in Jerusalem,

Fruit: Fruit is a product, an outcome, that shows that growth has taken place. The Jewish believers had ministered spiritually to the Gentiles. God’s revelation, His Word and His gospel had come to the Gentiles through Jewish people. This had produced spiritual fruit in the lives of the Gentiles. From this fruit the Gentiles, as they walked in spiritual truth, desired to be a physical (financial) blessing back to the Jewish believers.

Verse 29: *“But I know that when I come to you, in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Messiah I will come.”*

In the fullness of blessing: Paul was going to them in order to be a blessing to them.

The fullness of the blessing of the gospel: The blessing of the gospel is not only for salvation, but in its fullness, it has great power to make much change in the lives of people. The gospel transforms us. Here we see a connection between the gospel and blessing. The full blessing of the gospel is that we get to participate in what God is doing. We get to share a role in the purposes, the will and the work of God. When we are committed to doing the will of God, and when we are participating in the purposes of God, it is going to give us joy, contentment

and that peace that passes all understanding. When we are faithful to the Word of God, the result in our lives is great spiritual satisfaction.

Verse 30: *“But I encourage you, brethren, through our Lord Messiah Yeshua and through the love of the Spirit that you strive together with me in prayers on behalf of me to God.”*

Brethren: Fellow believers

Through our Lord...through the ... Spirit: When we recognize the Lordship of Messiah in our lives it brings about the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

The love of the Spirit: If we are going to be faithful servants of God, we need to love those that we are ministering to. In the natural we do not have a love that can love others as we love ourselves. This kind of love (a love that desires to bless others, to be an assistance to them, to help them overcome the enemy etc) is only received as an outcome of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who works in our lives to give us a true and sincere love for others.

Strive: This is a word of effort. It has within it the concept of persevering, enduring, overcoming.

Prayers on behalf of me: Paul was encouraging these believers to pray for him.

Verse 31: *“In order that I be delivered from the ones who refuse to be convinced in Judea, and in order that my ministry which is in Jerusalem should be well pleasing to the saints.”*

Note: We do not have to guess what Paul wanted the people to pray for in regard to himself. In this verse he shares with them his two prayer requests.

Refuse to be convinced: These people encountered the truth of the New Covenant, but they refused to believe and rejected that it was revelation from God. Their rejection led to them being in opposition to what Paul was doing.

Judea: Another term for Israel and the regions around Jerusalem. This is where the Pharisees and the leaders of Judaism were based. They refused to be convinced by the truth of God's revelation and were antagonistic towards Paul.

Ministry: Service.

Well pleasing: Paul wanted to have an effective ministry to the saints in Jerusalem.

Verse 32: *“So that with joy I should come to you through the will of God, and be refreshed by you.”*

Come to you through the will of God: Paul desired to be used by God, according to the will of God, so that he could accomplish the purposes of God.

Refreshed by you: Paul was hoping to be encouraged by them, spiritually equipped, so that he would be refreshed to keep on doing the work of God.

Verse 33: *“Now the God of peace be with all of you. Amen.”*

Peace: Peace is not simply the absence of violence or conflict – a place which is tranquil and quiet. Biblically, peace is related to the fulfilment of God's will. This is what Paul was committed to. He was committed to the will of God being fulfilled in his life and, through his life and ministry, that the will of God would be fulfilled in the lives of others as well.

The God of peace: God works in order that His will should be fulfilled in our lives.

Peace be with all of you: This is Paul's utmost desire - that these individuals in Rome would also be used as servants of the Living God, doing that which was according to the will of God. Through their service, Paul desired that the God of peace would be with them. Paul wanted God to work in their lives to empower and equip them so that His will could be fulfilled and so that they could be receipts of His peace (Philippians 4:7).

Chapter 16

Part 1: Romans 16:1-16

In this chapter Paul deals with the issue of whether it is acceptable or not for women to have teaching responsibilities (specifically the gospel) over men (example: a woman pastor over a congregation etc).

Verse 1: *“I commend to you Phoebe, our sister, who serves in the congregation in Cenchrea.”*

Commend: Literally ‘to stand with’.

Phoebe: Phoebe was a woman who was used by God. She was a servant or a minister of God. However, nothing in this passage reveals that she was the leader, a teacher, or a preacher in a local congregation, a local church. What Paul does commend her for is her assistance to many people.

1. Take note of 1 Corinthians 14:33-35. This does not mean that women were not allowed to converse with one another or that they could not praise God within the congregation. Within the context this means that she could not speak in the midst of the congregation in an argumentative (inquiring) kind of way. In those days and in that culture a church service was not held like it is today – with one person standing before the people and delivering a message. In that day the service involved several people questioning, debating, arguing etc. This all needed to be done within the order of God and women were to be silent observers of this process. If they had a question, they had to either ask their husbands when they got home or, if they were unmarried, they could ask the question of someone who was in authority over them. She was not to present her opinions and arguments in a public way as it could lead to disorder, hard feelings etc.
2. See also 1 Timothy 2:11-15. Here Paul instructs Timothy to not allow women to usurp a man. This means that they were not allowed to challenge God’s positioning of a man in a leadership role within a congregation. This is not limited to Paul’s time or culture. The facts about Adam and Eve remain consistent through all of time. It is as true today as it was when Timothy was leading his congregation.
 - Man was created first. The woman was the one deceived in the garden of Eden – not the man. It is for these two reasons that God, to maintain the order that He desires in a congregation, set this commandment of a woman being silent in a congregation in place. This is one of the consequences of the fall – a woman is not to teach over men. This (the fall in Eden) is the Biblical reason for God stating that He didn’t permit women to teach over men.

Serves: Women should serve and minister to God within the boundaries that He has set for them. There are a large variety of things that women can do within a local congregation – preaching or teaching over men in this formal setting falls outside of the boundary that God has set. ‘I do not permit’ (1 Timothy 2:12) reveals to us that this issue is not debateable. It is not a grey area in the Bible and therefore is not open to interpretation.

Cenchrea: This is where Phoebe primarily served, but she also had a ministry that went beyond her local congregation.

Verse 2: *“In order that she you receive in the Lord, and you do so worthily of the saints, and that you help her in whatever she has need; for also she has been an extension to many, and to me myself.”*

Worthily: In a proper way

Worthily of the saints: These believers were instructed to receive Phoebe in the way that saints (fellow believers) were meant to be received.

Reasonable: Sound or proper

Help her in whatever she has need: The believers were instructed to assist Phoebe if she had a need, as she was instrumental in assisting, and being a blessing to, the congregations.

Extension: She added to what was lacking.

To me myself: Phoebe had not only assisted the congregations, but she has also been of assistance to Paul.

Verse 3: *“Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow servants in Messiah Yeshua.”*

Priscilla and Aquila: Acts 18:18, Acts 18:24-28, 1 Corinthians 16:19. Aquila and Priscilla were a husband-and-wife team who served God together and who ministered together. At times they travelled alongside Paul in order to further his ministry and to play a part in the purposes of God. Paul was greatly blessed by this couple.

Verse 4: *“Who on behalf of my soul their own throats they have laid forth, to whom not only I give thanks, but all the congregations of the Gentiles.”*

Their own throats they have laid forth: Priscilla and Aquila sacrificed for Paul. They were willing to risk their lives in order to further God's call on Paul's life and ministry.

The congregations of the Gentiles: The congregations that were outside of Israel.

Verse 5: *“Likewise greet the congregation that is also in their home. Greet Epänetus, my beloved, who is the first of Achaia for Messiah.”*

Congregation: The local assembly

My beloved: This was a term of endearment at that time. Paul lifted up this man as a special friend.

The first of Achaia: Epänetus was probably the first believer in Achaia.

Verse 6: *“Greet Mary, who has worked much for us.”*

Mary: Literally ‘Miriam’.

Verse 7: *“Greet Andronicus and Julian, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are noteworthy among the apostles, who also were in Messiah before me.”*

My kinsmen: They were fellow Jews.

Who also were in Messiah before me: These two men came to faith before Paul did.

Verse 8: *“Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord.”*

This was another one of Paul’s close friends.

Verse 9: *“Greet Urbanus, our fellow servant in Messiah, and Stachys, my beloved.”*

Paul is lifting up these individuals who have been a blessing to him. These people have helped Paul and have served together with Paul.

Verse 10: *“Greet Apelles, proven in Messiah. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.”*

Proven in Messiah: Apelles had a powerful testimony.

Verse 11: *“Greet Herodian, my kinsman. Greet also the ones from the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.”*

Herodian: Another Jewish individual.

Verse 12: *“Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have laboured in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who laboured much in the Lord.”*

Verse 13: *“Greet Rufus, the chosen one in the Lord, and his mother and mine.”*

His mother and mine: Paul had a close relationship with Rufus’s mother. She was like a mother to Paul.

Verse 14: *“Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them.”*

Verse 15: *Greet as well Philologus and Julian, Nereus and his brother, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.”*

Verse 16: *“Greet one another with a holy kiss. Greet all the congregations in Messiah.”*

Note: Paul has laid out a very important truth for us in this closing chapter: we should be respectful and acknowledge the fellow servants that God uses. We need to greet them, welcome them, help them, assist them in doing the work of God.

Chapter 16

Part 2: Romans 16:17-27

Verse 17: *“But I exhort you brethren, to watch out for divisions and scandals. There are those who are contrary to the teaching which you have been taught, avoid them.”*

Exhort: Paul is encouraging these believers to do the right and proper things in the eyes of the Lord. To exhort means to strongly encourage, to urge, to put pressure on them to do the right thing. Staying obedient to Scripture positions and equips us to do the right things.

Watch out: To pay attention to – oftentimes to that which is threatening to us. This is a word that encourages us to exercise caution.

Scandals: Where there are scandals there is shame or embarrassment. When the Word of God is not the authority in our lives, when we don't approach Scripture as the truth of God, to obey it, then the outcome will be division, and division brings about scandalous activity. Obedience to God's Word brings purity, holiness, and the goodness of God into our lives.

Avoid them: Their desire is to turn us away from the truth of God.

Verse 18: *“For such ones our Lord Messiah Yeshua they do not serve but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the naive.”*

Yeshua they do not serve: If we deny the truth/Word of God then we cannot serve Messiah as Lord. It's only through the Word of God that we can understand His Lordship over us.

Smooth words: The words that they utter seem so kind and gracious. But these words are a front for deceit.

Naïve: Those who really do not think there is evil in this world.

Verse 19: *“For your obedience has arrived to all. I rejoice over you; I want you to be wise in regard to the good things, but innocent concerning that which is evil.”*

Your obedience: Paul is talking about the obedience of this congregation in Rome.

Arrived to all: This congregation has a good reputation with others in regard to their obedience to the Word of God.

Wise: Paul wanted them to have understanding of the will of God.

Evil: That which is against God's will, opposed to God's Word.

Verse 20: *“And the God of peace will crush satan, quickly, under your feet. The grace of our Lord Messiah Yeshua be with you. Amen.”*

Peace: Related to the fulfilment of God's will. When we do God's will (that which is good) then we are going to experience peace.

Crush: In Paul's day this was a word that meant to make a road by crushing down rock so that people could pass over it in a chariot etc.

Crush satan, quickly: God makes peace by crushing satan, and He makes this change with speed. God crushing, destroying, satan under our feet is dependant upon us submitting to His Word.

Verse 21: *“Timothy he greets you, the one who is my fellow worker. Also Luke, Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen, also greet you.”*

Note: In this verse we are introduced to a different author - Tertius. He was Paul’s scribe, and here he wants to add a few comments of his own. Paul would have approved and agreed with this. Despite the fact that it wasn’t written by Paul it is obviously still Scriptural and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit.

My kinsmen: These men were of the same descent as Tertius.

Verse 22: *“And I Tertius I greet you, the writer of this epistle, in the Lord.”*

The writer of this epistle: Paul, fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, spoke the words of this epistle and Tertius, his scribe, wrote all the words down as Paul dictated them to him.

Verse 23: *“Gaius, my host, greets you. He is the one who also is a host of all the congregations. Erastus greets you – the manager of the city, and Quartus, a brother.”*

A host of all the congregations: Gaius was a very hospitable individual.

The manager of the city: Erastus played a very important role within the city.

Verse 24: *“The grace of our Lord Messiah Yeshua be with all of you. Amen.”*

Verse 25: *“But to Him who is able to make you strong according to my gospel, and the preaching of Messiah Yeshua, according to the revealing of the mystery that has been hidden since the ancient times.”*

Note: This is the start of the benediction that ends off the book of Romans.

My gospel: Paul frequently referred to the gospel in these terms (2 Timothy 2:8, Romans 2:16). Paul was referring to the gospel that he had received directly from Messiah Yeshua.

The preaching of Messiah Yeshua: The focus of the gospel, the real gospel, is about the preaching of Messiah Yeshua (revealing His personhood, who He is as the Son of God, His work as the Redeemer etc).

The mystery: This mystery was in regard to Messiah crucified – a suffering Messiah. This mystery is that God would become human flesh in order to do the work of redemption.

Verse 26: *“But now being manifest through the prophetic Scriptures according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith, to all nations having been made known.”*

Manifest through the prophetic Scriptures: When we look at the prophetic Scriptures, we see that they point to a suffering Messiah. We can learn a lot about the person and work of Messiah through prophecy.

Obedience to the faith: God (like with the covenant He made with Abraham) brings things into order by faith. Faith is responding to the truth of God. It is faith that brings about obedience in our lives.

Verse 27: *“To the only wise God, through Messiah Yeshua, be the glory forever. Amen.”*

Note: This book of Romans concludes with a statement of praise.

To the only wise God: God is the only One who is perfectly wise. If we truly believe this, then we are going to listen to God. He is the One who knows what we need, and He communicates this to us through His perfect, inerrant, Word.