

ROMANS

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

ANDREW M. DAVIS

WITH JOEL W. HARFORD

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Books By Dr. Andrew M. Davis

- An Infinite Journey: Growing Toward Christlikeness, 2014.
- Revitalize: Biblical Keys to Helping Your Church Come Alive Again, 2017.
- Exalting Jesus in Isaiah, 2017.

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Preface to the Reader

One of the most important elements of a healthy Christian life is regular study of God's word. The Psalmist writes in Psalm 19:7-8 that *"The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."* I yearn for Christians to reap the rich benefits of scripture study, and to grow in the knowledge and love of God's word through directly engaging with the biblical text. This is why I have chosen to publish bible study questions instead of commentaries. There are many valuable commentaries to help aid your study of scripture, and I recommend using them. For guidance on commentaries visit www.bestcommentaries.com.

However, the focus of this book is to engage you, the reader, and to challenge you to answer relevant questions based on the scripture.

I have in mind three types of users for this book: First, group bible studies. Most of these questions were written for my weekly men's bible study. I recommend that the leader use this resource to prepare beforehand, reading all the questions and picking only five to seven for discussion. Twenty questions would certainly be a lot of material to discuss! For the bible study, each participant could have a copy to follow along. Second, sermon preparation. Asking questions of the text can be very helpful for understanding the flow and point of a passage of scripture. Third, personal bible study. Again, you can gain valuable insights by asking questions of the text.

My hope for these bible study questions is that they would encourage and facilitate Christians' gathering together to study God's word. One day, as Habakkuk 2:14 says, *"the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."* Critical to this prophecy in Habakkuk is our *knowing* about the Glory of God, and this is best achieved through the study of the bible. So let's do our part!

I challenge you, reader, to ask some friends, colleagues, classmates, or fellow church members to join you for a bible study. Ask God to open your eyes to understand the scripture (Psalm 119:18), and step out in faith to spread the knowledge of the Glory of God. May this book enrich your study of God's living and active word (Hebrews 4:12), and may the Lord Jesus Christ bless your bible studies!

Summary of Romans

Romans is the clearest and most expansive exposition of the gospel in the whole of scripture. It was written by the apostle Paul to the church in Rome, which likely consisted of gentile Christians, but certainly included some Jewish believers as well.

In his introductory greeting, Paul explains that the gospel he preaches was promised by God the Father in the Holy Scriptures, and it concerns the resurrected Son of God, Jesus Christ. Paul says he is not at all ashamed of the gospel, because the gospel is the power of God for salvation, to everyone who believes.

Paul begins by establishing the desperate need for human redemption by detailing the astonishing degradation of man and the universality of sin. As men and women set their hearts on sinful depravity, God gives them over to their sin and mankind sinks into more depravity. One would think that the Jewish nation who received the law of God would fare better than the Gentile pagans, but those who received the law have proved that they cannot keep it. Paul makes the devastating claim that both Jews and Greeks are under condemnation for violently breaking the laws of God. Paul goes so far as to say that there is not a single righteous person on earth, and all deserve to die and face condemnation.

Yet in the midst of the worst possible news, Paul explains the great redemption worked by Jesus Christ. God the Father put his Son Jesus Christ forward as an atoning sacrifice to take away people's sins and to appease God's wrath. Rather than issue a guilty verdict to all mankind, God imparts his righteousness, the righteousness of Christ, to anyone who looks to Jesus in faith. This method of God's "crediting" righteousness by faith is actually the same way that Abraham the patriarch was saved. Contrary to what many think, righteousness only comes by faith in Christ, not by physical genealogy nor by keeping the law.

The importance of good works flow from this glorious gospel. Some may think that righteousness based on faith would induce Christians to sin even more. Yet Paul rejects this logic. Those who have true faith in Christ have "died" with Christ, and no longer live for sinful passions, but are actually slaves to Jesus. In spite of this, the Christian is a conflicted person, desiring to do right and please God, yet simultaneously struggling with sin. Therefore Paul declares the joyous truth, that those who are in Christ Jesus will experience no condemnation for their sins.

Paul also explains why the vast majority of Jews have rejected the gospel. The heart of the reason lies in God's sovereign election of those he will save, and those he will reject. Yet God has incredible plans for Israel, for before the ages are closed, there will be a massive redemption for Israel.

In response to the mercy of the gospel, Christians are to offer their lives in living sacrifice to God. This should manifest in service through the church, love for others, submission to authority and thoughtfulness toward other Christians.

THE GOSPEL: THE POWER OF GOD FOR SALVATION

ROMANS 1:1-17

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What do these verses teach us about Paul's calling as an apostle?
2. What do you learn here about Paul's motivations in ministry, and about how he makes decisions?
3. What does this passage teach us about the gospel of Jesus Christ?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PAUL'S GREETING (VV. 1-7)

1. Paul identifies himself as a "servant" or "slave" of Christ Jesus. What does this mean? How does it relate to Matthew 20:27? How does Paul's attitude challenge you in your service to Christ? (1)
2. What does Paul say about his calling? An apostle is literally a "sent one," a messenger sent with the authority to proclaim a message. How was Paul "called"? How is Christ's sovereignty displayed in Paul's call? How was he "set apart" for the gospel? See also Jeremiah 1:4-5 and Galatians 1:15. (1)
3. Why is it important that this gospel of Jesus Christ was promised beforehand in the Scriptures? How important is the OT for Paul's gospel presentation? How important was the OT to Jesus in His life and ministry? See Luke 24:25-27, 32, 44-45. In light of this, should we study the OT more? (2)
4. Paul says that the Son of God is truly at the center of the gospel. Some claim that "Jesus *is* the gospel." Do you agree? If so, how is Jesus the gospel? (3)
5. What does verse 3 teach us about Jesus? How can you get the doctrine of the incarnation from verse 3 alone? Why is that fact that He was descended from David so vital to the gospel? (3)
6. Verse 4 emphasizes the essential power of the resurrection in proclaiming to the world the deity of Christ. How does the resurrection prove that Jesus is God? What was the Holy Spirit's role in Christ's resurrection? (4)
7. What is the significance of the title "Lord" in verse 4? (4)
8. What is the grounds of Paul's office as an apostle according to verse 5? To what is Paul calling all nations? What is "the obedience of faith"? See Romans 16:26. What is the relationship between faith and obedience? (5)
9. How is Paul's general calling and ministry as apostle to the Gentiles (see Romans 11:13) applied directly to the Romans in verse 6? What does it mean to "belong to Jesus Christ"? (6)
10. What does verse 7 teach us about our status in Christ? What does it mean to you personally to be "loved by God"? What does it mean to be called to be a "saint"? What is the significance of this for us in our role in the world? (7)

PAUL'S LONGING TO VISIT ROME (vv. 8-17)

11. What does Paul thank God for in verse 8? What is the significance of their faith being proclaimed all over the world? What is strategic about Rome? (8)
12. How do you think verse 8 would have been an encouragement to the church in Rome? (8)
13. Why do you think Paul talks so much to these churches about how much he prays for them? How is Paul's prayer life for other churches and other Christians a challenge to us? (9)
14. Paul speaks of serving God with "his spirit." What does this mean to you? (9)
15. What longing does Paul express in verse 10-11? Why is it important to Paul that the Roman Christians know how much he wants to visit them? (10-11)
16. How will the Romans be strengthened by the spiritual gift from Paul? (11)
17. How does verse 12 give a delightful balance and reciprocity to verse 11? How does it humble us to realize that even the great apostle Paul felt he had something to receive from average Christians? (12)
18. Verse 13 continues the idea that Paul really wants to visit the Romans. What reason does he give for this desire? (13)
19. Paul speaks of an "obligation" or "debt" in verses 14-15. What is that debt? To whom did Paul owe it? How did Paul discharge it? Do we have the same debt? (14-15)
20. Romans 1:16-17 is the theme of Romans. What is that theme? (16-17)
21. Why are we tempted to be ashamed of the gospel? How does the world and Satan work to increase shame feelings? But see Mark 8:38. (16)
22. Why is Paul *not* ashamed of the gospel? How is the gospel "the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes"? (16)
23. How is the gospel still powerful in the life of someone who has been a Christian for years? Do older, mature Christians still need the power of the gospel in their lives? (16)
24. What is the significance of "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"? (16)
25. What does verse 17 teach about the "righteousness of God"? How does the gospel "reveal" this righteousness? What does it mean that it is "from faith for faith"? What does the Habakkuk 2:4 contribute to this concept? (17)

III. SUMMARY:

The Apostle Paul greets the church at Rome, expressing his own call as an apostle, his love and prayers for them, and his desire to impart a spiritual gift to strengthen them. He then speaks of his obligation to preach the gospel, which he calls the "power of God for the salvation" of everyone who believes. He asserts that the gospel testifies to the righteousness of God for saving sinners.

THE WRATH OF GOD REVEALED

ROMANS 1:18-25

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this section teach us about the wrath of God?
2. What insights does this section give us about how creation reveals the attributes of God?
3. What do you learn here about idolatry, and why it is such a great sin?
4. What is the significance of the expression “God gave them up...”?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

NO EXCUSE: NATURE REVEALS GOD THE CREATOR (VV. 18-20)

1. What is the relationship between verses 16-17 and verse 18? Note that both use the word “revealed.” How do you relate these ideas? How is the wrath of God being revealed on earth? (18)
2. Against what is the wrath of God revealed? (18)
3. What does it mean that men “by their unrighteousness suppress the truth”? What does it mean to “suppress” something? How does our wickedness suppress truth? (18)
4. How does verse 19 help explain the suppressing of truth? It begins with the word “For,” meaning that this verse connects to the previous one. (19)
5. What is significant about the fact that God has shown himself to people? (19)
6. What does verse 20 teach about creation? What does God specifically reveal through physical creation? What are the limits of this revelation? For example, what *can* an aborigine in Australia learn about God by looking at the world, and what *can't* he learn? (20)
7. How does verse 20 help answer the question, “What about those who’ve never heard the gospel”? Though they have not heard the gospel, yet it says “they are without excuse.” Why are they “without excuse”? (20)

DEADLY EXCHANGE #1: GOD FOR IDOLS, TRUTH FOR LIES (VV. 21-25)

8. Verses 21-23 present one of the most significant statements in the Bible on the issue of the essence of human sin. How would you summarize this section? (21-23)
9. What is the significance of the concession, “Although they knew God”? Does this teach that every person has a certain understanding of God? (21)
10. What does it mean “They did not honor him as God”? (21)
11. Why is thanklessness such a big sin in verse 21? How then should thanksgiving characterize the Christian life? See Hebrews 12:28. How will it characterize our worship in heaven? See Revelation 4:9, 7:12, 11:17. (21)

12. What does it mean that they became futile in their thinking? Compare with Ephesians 4:17-18. What is the relationship between futile thinking and sinful living? (21)
13. What does it mean for a heart to become “darkened”? (21)
14. Who do you think Paul has in mind in verse 22? Who do you think claims to be wise, but actually are fools? See 1 Corinthians 1:18-20. (22)
15. Verse 23 speaks of a horrifying exchange. What was it? See Jeremiah 2:11-13 for more insight on this appalling exchange. (23)
16. How would you define idolatry? What is so horrible about idolatry? (23, 25)
17. Why do you think some people make physical images to worship? What is so damaging about this? Why do you think God forbids human beings making physical images of the invisible God for the purpose of worship? (23)
18. Genesis does say that we are in the “image” of God (Genesis 1:26); why then is it wrong for man to make an image of God in the form of a man to worship? (23)
19. What is the significance of the word “Therefore” in verse 24? How does it connect to verses 21-23? (24)
20. What is the punishment God gives man for his idolatry in verse 24-25? What does it mean “God gave them up”? Why is this the worst punishment God could give us here on earth? (24-25)
21. How does sexual immorality fit into verse 24? Why is sexual expression so connected with sinfulness? (24)
22. What does it mean that, in the lust of their hearts, they “dishonored” their bodies with one another? What does the word “dishonoring” mean? (24)
23. Verse 25 may be the best single verse definition of idolatry in the whole Bible. What does it teach? (25)
24. Some have taught that there are only two religions in the world: true Christianity (the worship of God through Christ by the power of the Spirit), and idolatry. Do you agree? If so, how does verse 25 assist this assertion?
25. What is the “truth about God” that people exchanged? What is “the lie”? (25)
26. How do you see people worshiping the creature rather than the Creator? (25)
27. Why do you think Paul adds the words “who is blessed forever! Amen.”?
28. How should verse 25 guard against idolatry in our lives? See 1 John 5:21. Do you think idolatry is a big threat for your soul as a Christian? (25)

III. SUMMARY:

The Apostle Paul begins to uncover the history of mankind with sin. He asserts that God’s wrath is displayed against all the wickedness of man who knew God but willfully chose to turn away from Him to worship and serve created things.

THE GREATEST EARTHLY JUDGMENT: GIVEN OVER TO SIN

ROMANS 1:26-32

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. This section speaks of God giving people over to sin. Why does He do this? Why is it such a great judgment from God?
2. What does this section teach about God's view of homosexuality? Why is this passage such a vital one on this issue in our present day and age?
3. What is the significance of a "debased mind"? How does it result in a depraved life?
4. What does the lengthy list of specific sin patterns teach you about the overall problem of sin? Is it interesting that murder is listed alongside gossip and disobedience to parents? What does this teach you about sin in general?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

DEADLY EXCHANGE #2: NATURAL RELATIONS FOR UNNATURAL (VV. 26-27)

1. Recap: what is the first "great exchange"? God for ____, Truth for ____? (23-25)
2. This section describes the second "Great Exchange." What is it? (26-27)
3. What is the connection between the first exchange and the second? How does verse 26 begin? (26)
4. What does it mean "God gave them up..."? How does He do this while not directly tempting people to sin? See James 1:13. (26)
5. What are "dishonorable passions" or as the NIV says "shameful lusts"? (26)
6. What are "natural relations" and what are relations "contrary to nature"? (26)
7. What sin does verse 27 describe? Is this a choice on the part of men? (27)
8. How would you answer someone that says that homosexuality is not a choice but is built into their genes? Do you think that some people actually do have physiological differences in their brains that make these kinds of lusts more powerful? If so, does that excuse them from guilt? (27)
9. What does Paul mean when he says "and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error"? (27)

A DEBASED MIND LEADS TO A DEPRAVED LIFE (VV. 28-32)

10. What judgment from God is described in verse 28? What causes the judgment? What does it mean that they did not "see fit to acknowledge God"? Why is that a very great sin? (28)
11. What is a "debased mind"? What is the relationship between a debased mind and a depraved life? (28)
12. What is the significance of the words "They were filled with all manner of..."? Compare it with Genesis 6:5 and Genesis 8:21. (29)

13. What do the many different forms of evil teach you about human sin? (29)
14. What is covetousness? Why does Paul in Colossians 3:5 call it idolatry?
15. Look at each of the remaining words in verse 29: “envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness.” How would you define each of them? How do they reveal the nature of sin? (29)
16. What is gossip? Why is it so evil? Why is it so common? What is the difference between gossip and slander? (29-30)
17. What does it mean to be a “hater of God”? Since Jesus said the first and greatest command is to love God with all your heart, how does this description show the depravity of sin? Why do people hate God? (30)
18. What is the common thread in the words “insolent, haughty, boastful”? What is insolence in particular? What does it mean to be haughty? Why do people boast? Compare this with Romans 3:27 and 1 Corinthians 1:29, 31. Why does God hate human boasting so much? (30)
19. What does it mean that they are “inventors of evil”? What is the significance of this use of inventiveness? Can you think of examples of how people have invented new ways of doing evil over the last century? (30)
20. Why is rebellion against parents listed here? Why is it such a key issue? Why is it generally so tolerated in our culture? What are its ramifications? Why should parents themselves take this more seriously than they do? (30)
21. Paul lists four words that are all negatives in the Greek: foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. What does this show about the effects of sin on the human heart? What does it teach you about God’s goal in sanctification and the redemption of the human heart? (31)
22. How do people know that these kinds of things deserve the death penalty from God? How do they have the sense that they deserve to die? How do they show it in their judgmental attitudes toward other sinners? See David’s statement to Nathan in 2 Samuel 12:5-6, “That man deserves to die...” (32)
23. How is it God’s “righteous decree” that those who do such things deserve to die? Why is it righteous? What is a decree? (32)
24. Although sinners *know* that such deeds deserve death, what do they do anyway? Why do they keep on doing these very things? How do they show approval to those who practice them?

III. SUMMARY:

Paul describes the second great exchange that human beings make—natural sexual relations for those that are contrary to nature—and says that God gave human beings over to a depraved mind to do what ought not to be done; from this depraved mind flows a river of specific forms of evil, one sin after another. It is a devastating look at the depravity of the human heart and of human lives.

HE WILL RENDER EACH ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS

ROMANS 2:1-11

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. According to this passage, what is so evil about passing judgment on others?
2. What does this passage teach you about the kindness and forbearance and patience of God? How do most sinners misunderstand these?
3. Talk about the terror of sinners “storing up wrath” day after day.
4. What is the significance of Paul’s assertion that, on Judgment Day, “He will render each according to his works”?
5. Does this passage teach salvation by works? If not, what does it teach?
6. What is the difference between being “assessed by works” and being “saved by works”?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

EXPOSING THE JUDGMENTAL SINNER (1-4)

1. What is the connection between this section and Romans 1:18-32? (1-4)
2. Paul again returns to the issue of “no excuse.” See also Romans 1:20. Who has no excuse this time? Why do they have no excuse? (1)
3. What does it mean to pass judgment on someone else? Why do you think sinners do this so much? How is it related to pride? How does it hinder a sinner from coming to Christ? (1)
4. In what way does a judgmental sinner actually end up passing judgment on himself? (1)
5. Have you ever caught yourself judging someone else for something that you do yourself? Describe such a time. (1)
6. What does verse 2 teach us about God’s judgment against sin? What does it mean that it is “rightly falls”? (2)
7. Why do you think Paul uses the expression “you, O man”? (3)
8. What human pattern is Paul seeking to expose and attack in verse 3? Why is it essential for him to address this issue in his presentation of the gospel? (3)
9. Why do you think people assume that God will judge other sinners for the very same sins they commit, but that they will escape the same judgment? (3)
10. What do we sinners presume on in verse 4? (4)
11. What is “the riches of his kindness, and forbearance, and patience”? How is God’s kindness, and forbearance, and patience toward rebellious sinners such a “rich” thing? How does He display this in daily life? (4)
12. How does consideration of the times where God brought instant judgment on sinners help us to appreciate God’s kindness, forbearance, and patience? (4)

13. Many leaders speak a lot about the need for “tolerance”. How is God’s tolerance (forbearance) different than what those people are speaking of? (4)
14. In verse 4, what is the purpose of God’s patience toward sinners? (4)
15. How does God’s kindness lead us toward repentance? (4)

***TWO WAYS TO LIVE: THE BASIS OF OUR ASSESSMENT ON JUDGMENT DAY
(vv. 5-11)***

16. How do sinners display “hard and impenitent hearts” day after day? What is the outcome of this continual heart condition, according to verse 5? (5)
17. What is the significance of the fact that Paul makes this wrath very personal: “you are storing up wrath for yourself”? How does meditation on this help Christians better to appreciate the value of Christ’s death on their behalf? (5)
18. When does God reveal that wrath sinners store up against themselves? How is it now concealed? (5)
19. How important is the statement “He will render each according to his works”? See Jeremiah 17:10, Psalm 62:12; John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:13, 22:12. How do you reconcile this with Ephesians 2:9, that we are saved *not* by works? (6)
20. How does Matthew 12:33 (judging a tree by its fruit) relate to verses 6-10?
21. How do verses 7-10 help explain verse 6, how God will judge each person according to his works? (7-10)
22. What does “by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality” mean? Does anyone do this? Whose glory and honor? How do we seek these things? (7)
23. How does verse 7 teach us how to live, and what to be ambitious for? (7)
24. How does verse 8 show an entirely different way to live? What does the person in verse 8 live for? What does it mean to be “self-seeking”? Contrast this with Jesus’ command in Matthew 16:24. (8)
25. What is the outcome for a person who is self-seeking, who rejects the truth and follows evil? (8)
26. What is the significance of “the Jew first and also the Greek”? (9)
27. How does verse 10 restate verse 7? What new information does it give? (10)
28. What does it mean “God shows no partiality”? How do you reconcile this with “the Jew first and also the Greek”? (11)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul attacks the self-righteous sinner who judges other sinners. He describes two ways to live, and how God will assess each person on Judgment Day. This passage teaches the basic lesson that God will give to each person according to what he has done. This passage does not teach “salvation by works” but rather expresses the reality that God will evaluate our faith and lives by our deeds.

THE FAILURE OF JEWS TO HONOR GOD

ROMANS 2:12-29

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How could this passage be used to address the issue of people in remote lands who have never heard the gospel?
2. How does this passage seek to destroy Jewish pride in possessing the Law?
3. What does Paul imply about the Jews' obedience to the Law in this section?
4. What is the significance of the statements, "no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly" and "a Jew is one inwardly... by the Spirit"?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

JUDGMENT BY FAIR STANDARD MEANS CONDEMNATION FOR ALL (VV. 12-16)

1. How does God's impartiality relate to how He will judge people? (11-12)
2. What does verse 12 teach about Judgment Day? Does verse 12 imply that people who have never heard of Christ will be okay on judgment day? (12)
3. What is the result of *both* sin apart from the law, and sin under the law? (12)
4. How does verse 13 destroy Jewish pride in merely possessing the Law of Moses? How does it relate to James 1:22. How does someone who merely listens to the word, but does not do what it says "deceives himself"? (13)
5. How are people "a law to themselves"? How would Gentiles "do what the law requires"? What kinds of laws do societies ignorant of God's laws keep? What kinds of laws do they not keep? (14)
6. What does verse 15 teach about the conscience? What is the conscience? What function does it play in the human heart? What are its limitations? (15)
7. What is the difference between the way the law is written on the hearts of unbelieving pagans and the way the Spirit writes God's laws on the hearts of people after conversion? See Hebrews 8:10. (15)
8. What does verse 16 teach about Judgment Day? What are the "secrets of men"? See Jeremiah 16:17, Job 24:13-16, Luke 12:2-3, Hebrews 4:13. (16)

BREAKING THE LAW MAKES IT OF NO HELP ON JUDGMENT DAY (VV. 17-24)

9. What is Paul's main point about the Jews in verses 17-24? Why is it important? Why might it be so offensive to them? (17-24)
10. What heart attitude does he uncover in verses 17-20? Why would this heart attitude be so offensive to God? (17-20)
11. What does it mean for a Jew to "rely on the Law"? Rely on it for what? (17)
12. Do some people "approve what is excellent" without actually living those excellent things themselves? How is this a different problem from those at the end of chapter 1 who approve of those who break the Law? See 1:32. (18)

13. What is wrong with being “a guide for the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children...”? What is the issue here? Why is this attitude so dangerous spiritually? (19-20)
14. Why does Paul ask, “You who teach others, do you not teach yourself?” (21)
15. Paul asks a series of questions that get at one specific root sin: hypocrisy. What is hypocrisy and why is it such a problem for the human race? (21-22)
16. Why would someone “say that one must not commit adultery” and then commit adultery? Have you seen any examples of this in the popular culture or current events over the last decade? (22)
17. How do Jews dishonor God when they break the Law? Is this also true of Christians when they break the Law? (23)
18. How does Jewish disobedience to the Law cause God’s name to be blasphemed among the Gentiles? How is this sadly the exact opposite of what God wanted to do through the Jews for the Gentiles? (24)

CIRCUMCISION HAS NO VALUE FOR DISOBEDIENT JEWS (VV. 25-29)

19. Why does circumcision only have value for those Jews who obey the Law? What value does circumcision have for those who obey the Law? (25)
20. If one disobeys the Law, what does Paul say is true of that Jewish man? How is a disobedient Jew like an uncircumcised Gentile? (25)
21. Read Luke 12:47-48. What does this passage teach about the Jewish man who knows the Law but does not obey it compared to the Gentile man who does not know the Law and does not obey it? (25-27)
22. How will Law-abiding Gentiles condemn non-Law-abiding Jews? Who is a Law-abiding Gentile? Could this be referring to the work of the Spirit on the heart of Gentiles? See Romans 8:1-4. (27)
23. What is revolutionary about Romans 2:28-29? How is it consistent with John the Baptist’s preaching to the religious leaders in Matthew 3:9? (28-29)
24. According 28-29, who is the “true Jew”? How do they get to be that way? Is it possible to be a “true Jew” without the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart? What is “circumcision of the heart”? (29)
25. What is “praise from God”? Should we seek it? See 1 Corinthians 4:5; John 12:43, Matthew 25:21. What does verse 29 imply about Jews who appear to keep the Law but really don’t? (29)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul attacks Jewish legalism and nationalistic pride by showing that Jews who do not keep the Law are no better than Gentiles who never heard the Law; and that Gentiles who do keep the Law are better than Jews who don’t. He also shows the role of the Holy Spirit in making someone a true Jew.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF SIN

ROMANS 3:1-20

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why is the doctrine of the universality of sin so vital for evangelism?
2. What is the significance of the fact that “There is no one who does good; not even one”?
3. Paul says that Jews and Gentiles are alike “under sin.” What does that mean?
4. What is the significance of the statement concerning all humanity, “There is no fear of God before their eyes”?
5. According to this section, what then is the purpose of the Law of God?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS AND ISRAEL (VV. 1-8)

This section is exceptionally difficult to understand. Paul’s main argument is that, despite Israel’s unfaithfulness to God, God will remain faithful to his promises to save Israel. Yet that same faithfulness to promises will also result in a faithful judgment of rebellious Jews as well.

1. Why does Paul discuss the benefits of being a Jew here? How does Romans 3:1 relate to the argument of the end of Romans 2? (1)
2. What benefit does Paul give for the Jews in verse 2? What are the “oracles of God”? How is this a benefit to the Jews? (2)
3. What argument does Paul make in verse 3? How could the Jews blame God if they did not keep the Law? How do some people seek to blame God if they do not believe the gospel? (3)
4. How does verse 4 show God’s independence from human behavior, opinion, or belief. What does verse 4 teach about the word of God versus man? (4)
5. What so-called “human way” does Paul bring up in verse 5? How does Paul refute it in verse 6? (5-6)
6. Verses 7-8 comprise, according to John Piper, the hardest passage in the whole book of Romans. What makes this passage so difficult? (7-8)
7. Why do you think God inspires difficult texts? Why does God also inspire simple, “milk” texts? What do each of these teach us about God? (7-8)
8. What do verses 7-8 teach? How were some people slandering Paul’s presentation of the gospel? What were they saying that Paul was teaching? How does Paul refute them? (7-8)

THE ABSOLUTE UNIVERSALITY OF SIN (VV. 9-18)

9. What is the significance the fact that Jews are no better off than Gentiles? (9)

10. What is significant about *both* Jews and Gentiles alike being “under sin”? (9)
11. The most potent of the list is verse 10. What does it assert? Why is it so devastating for us on Judgment Day? Why is righteousness so essential on Judgment Day? (10)
12. Why is a proper understanding of verse 10 essential to a right preaching of the gospel? (10)
13. What does Paul assert in verse 11? What does this mean? (11)
14. How does verse 11 connect with the so-called “seeker-sensitive” approach to church ministry? Are there truly any seekers? (11)
15. What have all “turned aside” from? Do you think it is harsh to say that lost people are “worthless”? How do you understand this word? (12)
16. Paul asserts that “no one does good, not even one.” This is an absolutely devastating verse for the natural man’s way of salvation. How do most sinners think they will be saved on Judgment Day? How does verse 12 destroy any hope of man saving himself? (12)
17. Does Paul’s statement that “no one does good, not even one” ring true in daily life? Don’t non-Christian firemen save babies from perishing in the flames? Isn’t that a “good deed”? How do you understand this? (12)
18. How does verse 12 relate to Jesus’ statement in Mark 10:18? (12)
19. What do verse 13-18 describe? Why do you think Paul especially focuses on the mouth area of the body? Why also a focus on the feet? (13-18)
20. What does verse 17 teach? How does it play itself out in families and among nations? Compare it with Isaiah 57:20-21. (17)
21. What is the significance of verse 18? Connect it with Proverbs 1:7. Connect it also with Matthew 10:28. (18)

NOT JUSTIFICATION BUT REVELATION OF SIN BY THE LAW (VV. 19-20)

22. What vital contribution do verses 19-20 make to our understanding of the purpose of the Law? (19-20)
23. What does it mean “So that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.”? How is this a picture of Judgment Day? (19)
24. Verse 20 is incredibly important. What does it teach? How could we use this in sharing the gospel with people? (20)
25. How does the Law make us conscious of our sin? (20)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul teaches the absolute universality of sin, Jews and Gentiles alike, in Romans 3:1-20. It is a summation of all that he has been saying since Romans 1:18. It is the key to the need for Christ. Without a thorough understanding of this theme, no one will feel their need for Christ.

THE GLOWING HEART OF THE GOSPEL

ROMANS 3:21-31

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think some commentators call Romans 3:21-26 “The glowing heart of the gospel”?
2. What do these verses teach about justification?
3. What is “propitiation”? Why is it essential to understanding the gospel?
4. Why was it so important for God to demonstrate His justice through Christ?
5. How does the true gospel eliminate human boasting?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH FAITH IN THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST (VV. 21-26)

1. What does 21 teach about the “righteousness of God”? (Also translated “*from* God”). Is Paul is talking about a righteousness given by God to sinners? (21)
2. How is this righteousness “apart from the law”? How do the Law and the Prophets testify to this righteousness? (21)
3. According to 3:22, how do sinners receive this righteousness from God? (22)
4. Why is it vital for sinners to have faith in Jesus and not only God? (22, 26)
5. What does Paul mean by saying “There is no distinction...”? (22-23, 27-31)
6. What is the significance of the statement, “For all have sinned...”? How does it agree with what Paul already taught in Romans 3:10-18? (23)
7. How does 3:23 explain what sin is? What is the relationship between sin and falling short of the glory of God? The Greek word translated “fall short” generally means “lack.” How do sinners “lack” the glory of God? (23)
8. How do you understand verse 23 in light of Romans 3:10-18? (23)
9. What is “justification”? What does verse 24 teach about how sinners are justified in the sight of God? (24)
10. What is the significance of the word “by his grace” or “as a gift” in verse 24? How does Isaiah 55:1 “without money” help explain it?
11. What does “by his grace” teach us about justification? What is “grace”? (24)
12. What is “redemption”? The word usually relates to rescuing one in distress or bondage by the payment of a price. What does this teach us about salvation? Paul speaks of us as having been “bought with a price.” See 1 Cor. 6:19-20, 7:23. How is the concept of redemption powerful in the Christian life? (24)
13. Verse 25 introduces the concept of “propitiation”; the turning away of the wrath of a deity by the offering of a costly sacrifice. Why is the concept of propitiation essential to the gospel? Does God have an active wrath against human sin? Remember Romans 1:18. How is that wrath addressed? (25)

14. What does “Whom God put forward as a propitiation...” mean? Hint: God the Father presented Christ to Himself to suffer under His own wrath! How do you understand this doctrine? How does this show the incredible courage of Jesus? How is this the most courageous act in human history? (25)
15. What does Jesus’ blood have to do with this, according to 25? See Hebrews 9:22. How does our faith in his blood relate to this propitiation? (25)
16. What does Paul refer to what he speaks of God’s forbearance passing over former sins? What is “forbearance”? How had God left sins unpunished? See 2 Samuel 12:13 for a prime example. (25)
17. Paul raises the issue of God’s justice in verses 25 and 26. What is significant about God being *both* just *and* the justifier of sinners. Why did God have to demonstrate his justice as he forgave sinners? How did he do this? (26)
18. Look across verses 21-26. How many times does Paul refer to faith or belief? How many times does he refer to Jesus (by name or pronouns)? Why such an emphasis on this theme: “faith in Jesus Christ”? (21-26)

EFFECTS OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (VV. 27-31)

19. What effect does a true understanding of the gospel themes depicted in 21-26 have on our pride? Why does Paul turn here to deal with human boasting? Why is God so zealous to crush human pride/boasting while saving us? (27)
20. How does justification by faith exclude boasting? How would any other grounds for salvation (love, patience, good deeds, kindness, sacrifice, courage, law-keeping) foster pride and boasting? How is justification by faith (trusting in God’s promises) particularly humbling to us?
21. Romans 3:28 is the verse that teaches justification by faith (alone) apart from the law more than any other single verse in the Bible. Why is this doctrine so important? Why must it be 100% by grace through faith, and not 99%? (28)
22. Why does Paul bring in the Gentiles in verse 29? How does salvation by faith apart from the law open salvation up equally to Jews and Gentiles? (29)
23. How does “God is one” prove that there is only one way of salvation? (30)
24. In what way does Paul still uphold the law? Why would he need to address this issue? How does this relate to verse 21, “although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it”? (31)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul gives the clearest and densest statement of the gospel: by faith in Jesus Christ (and his propitiation), sinners are redeemed, completely free from the wrath of God, justified and declared righteous. This salvation is free, offered to anyone who believes, whether Jew or non-Jew. Both are saved by Jesus Christ. This gospel both exalts God in his mercy and justice, and destroys the pride of man. And the gospel does not nullify the law, but rather upholds and fulfills it.

ABRAHAM AND DAVID JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

ROMANS 4:1-8

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Paul bring in Abraham and David at this point in Romans?
2. What does this vital passage teach about how Old Testament saints were justified from their sins?
3. What is the same about Abraham's experience of justification by faith and ours? What is different?
4. What does this passage teach about justification by works? Why does it lead to boasting?
5. How does David's Psalm 32 prove that he was justified by faith?
6. Why is this passage such good news?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

RIGHTEOUSNESS AS A GIFT, NOT EARNED WAGES (VV. 1-5)

1. What does Paul mean by the expression "What then shall we say..."? What question is Paul asking in verse 1? (1)
2. What does Paul hope to accomplish by mentioning Abraham, "our forefather" and his experience with God? (1)
3. Paul raises the issue of boasting, "If Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about." What is justification by works? Why does it inevitably lead to boasting? Why does God hate boasting so much? (2)
4. What does Paul mean, "but not before God"? (2)
5. Verse 3 stands as one of the great methodological questions Christians should always ask: "What does the Scripture say"? Why is this question so important for us every day? Why is it important leaders of a church? Why is it especially important as Paul uses it in resolving a doctrinal dispute? (3)
6. Why is Romans 4:3 (Genesis 15:6) an absolutely vital link in Paul's proof of justification by faith? What does 4:3 teach about Abraham's justification? (3)
7. Read Genesis 15 to get the background. What are the circumstances of this pronouncement God makes about Abraham?
8. What does it mean that "Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness"? What does "counted" (reckoned or credited) mean? Why is this essential to our salvation? (3)
9. How does this relate to 2 Corinthians 5:21, and the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness? (3)
10. Since all Abraham did was believe, without moving a muscle, what does this teach about altar calls and "the sinner's prayer"? (3)

11. What point does Paul make with verse 4? He brings up wages. Compare this verse with Romans 6:23. What are wages? Why will God never owe anyone salvation, or be in a position of obligation? See Romans 11:35. (4)
12. How does Paul contrast wages and “grace” or a “gift” in verse 4? (4)
13. Paul is so strong on “not working” in verse 5, that it seems he runs into contradiction with James 2:21-24. How do you resolve this tension? (5)
14. Paul uses a shocking word in verse 5, “ungodly,” in effect calling Abraham ungodly before his justification. How do you understand this word “ungodly” or “wicked” when it comes to Abraham before he was justified? (5)
15. If Abraham was actually ungodly before justification, what does that teach you about “good” people who are non-Christians? See again Rom 3:23! (5)
16. Paul again stresses the truth of justification: “his faith is counted as righteousness.” What does “counted” mean here? Note: salvation is to “the one who does *not work*, but *believes* in him who justifies the ungodly.” (5)

GOD IMPUTES RIGHTEOUSNESS, BY FAITH, AND COVERS OVER SIN (VV. 6-8)

17. Who does Paul next bring in to prove his point? Why David? (6)
18. How does David’s experience with Bathsheba and his subsequent forgiveness from God prove justification by faith? (6)
19. What does Paul say about David in verse 6? What does the word “blessing” mean? What does the word “counts” mean here? Hint: “Imputes.” Again, Paul underscores this is all “apart from works.” (6)
20. How does Psalm 32:1-2, which Paul cites here in verses 7-8 help prove justification of the ungodly simply by faith?
21. What is the significance of the word “covered” in verse 7? The Hebrew word for “atonement” means “covering.” How does God “cover over” our sins? Why is it in some sense impossible (consider God’s omniscience) for God to remove our sins entirely? Compare Romans 4:7 with Proverbs 28:13. How do sinners try to cover their own sins? How does God cover sins? (7)
22. How does the concept that forgiveness is covering help someone to forgive someone else who has hurt them deeply? (7)
23. Verse 8 speaks of something *not* counted. What is not counted against a justified person? (8)
24. Why is this the most blessed state a sinner can attain? (7-8)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul uses the experiences of Abraham and David to prove the doctrine of justification by faith alone. In addition, Paul connects the righteousness from God (which is imputed to a sinner by faith) to the covering over of lawless deeds and the forgiveness of sins.

CIRCUMCISION UNNECESSARY TO BE ABRAHAM'S OFFSPRING

ROMANS 4:9-16

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does this section continue Paul's argument from 4:1-8?
2. Why is it important to address the issue of circumcision?
3. If circumcision were required to be part of Abraham's family, what effect would that have on the ministry of the gospel among the Gentiles?
4. How are law and faith contrasted in this passage?
5. How does salvation by grace require that the promise come by faith, not law?
6. How does the concept of "guarantee" fit in to Paul's train of thought?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH, NOT CIRCUMCISION OR GENEALOGY (VV. 9-12)

1. Put Paul's question in verse 9 in your own words. What is the answer to Paul's question in verse 9? What is the "blessing"? (9)
2. How does Abraham's experience prove that one does not have to be circumcised in order to be justified before God? What is the key issue that Paul brings up from Abraham's experience that *proves* you don't have to be circumcised in order to be justified? (10)
3. Since Abraham was justified by God while he was still uncircumcised, why then would some Jewish Christians claim that the Gentiles had to be circumcised in order to be saved? See Acts 15:1, 5. In other words, why doesn't Paul's argument here convince them and settle it once for all? (10)
4. Why then was Abraham circumcised? Why did God command this? (11)
5. Read Genesis 17:13-14. What does God there say concerning circumcision? What was the penalty for any Jewish male who was not circumcised? How do you reconcile Genesis 17:13-14 with what Paul is teaching here?
6. What benefit was circumcision as the sign, the seal of Abraham's faith in Redemptive History? Why when Christ came was it no longer necessary to circumcise boys in order to be pleasing to God? (11)
7. Did circumcision make Abraham righteous before God? Did it add to his righteous standing before God? (11)
8. What conclusion does Paul draw from the fact that Abraham was justified by faith before he was circumcised? In what sense then was he like Gentile Christians? How then is he their "father"? (11)
9. Is Abraham the father of all Gentile Christians? Why is this important? (11)
10. Who else is Abraham the father of according to verse 12? Who does this refer to? Who does it exclude? (12)

11. What does it mean to walk in the footsteps of the faith of Abraham? How does a lifestyle of obedience serve as a “sign and seal” of the righteousness Christians have by faith? (12)

ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED BY FAITH SO HIS TRUE HEIRS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH (VV. 13-16)

12. What topic does Paul then seek to address in verses 13-16? What promise does Paul refer to in this passage? (13-16)
13. What does it mean that Abraham would be “heir of the world”? What will Abraham inherit? See Genesis 12:7, 13:14-17, 15:7. Did Abraham inherit it in his lifetime? See Acts 7:5; Hebrews 11:8, 13-16. What then was promised to Abraham? If he hasn’t received it yet, how will God keep His promise to Abraham? Did God make the promise to anyone else, or only to Abraham? Why then is it important for Gentiles to be children of Abraham? (13)
14. Who are the “adherents of the law”? Are they heirs of the promise to Abraham? If so, what would the result be according to Paul? (14)
15. If the promise comes by law, why is the promise worthless? Why does the law only bring wrath? (14-15)
16. How then are law and promise contrasted here? How do they reveal two very different ways of God dealing with man? (14-15)
17. What does Paul mean by “where there is no law, there is no transgression”? How is that logically true? How is it relevant to Paul’s argument here? (15)
18. Why do faith and promise go perfectly together? Why doesn’t law fit in at all in that union of faith and promise? Why does all of this (promise + faith) flow from grace? How does it end up in the word “guaranteed”? (16)
19. Why is it true that only if the promise comes by faith and the whole thing by grace are we guaranteed to receive what is promised? Why does law destroy any assurance, and remove and guarantee? (16)
20. Why does God want us to have assurance the promise is guaranteed? (16)
21. To whom is it guaranteed according to verse 16? What two categories of “Abraham’s offspring” does Paul have in mind here? (16)
22. How is Abraham the “father of us all”? Does he mean the whole human race, or only those who have faith in Christ? See Romans 9:7, Galatians 3:7. (16)
23. How is this passage comforting to you? How does it give assurance?

III. SUMMARY:

Paul, in defending the doctrine of justification by faith alone apart from works of law, addresses the topic of circumcision. He proves that, since Abraham was uncircumcised when he was justified and when he received the promise that he would inherit the world, Gentile Christians do not need to be circumcised, and that anyone and everyone who believes in Christ is a fellow-heir with Abraham.

THE NATURE OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH

ROMANS 4:16-25

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is the purpose of this section of Paul's argument?
2. Why is it important for us to understand the nature of Abraham's faith?
3. How does Abraham's faith concerning the birth of Isaac by Sarah display similar aspects to our faith in Christ for the salvation of our souls?
4. What does this section teach us about God's power?
5. How does Paul apply Abraham's example to us as Christians?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

FAITH IN THE GOD WHO GIVES LIFE TO THE DEAD (VV. 16-18)

1. What is the connection between faith, grace, and guarantee in verse 16? (16)
2. How are the Gentiles in view in verse 16? (16)
3. How is Abraham "the father of us all"? (16-17)
4. What promise is Paul referring to in verse 17, "I have made you the father of many nations"? Read it in context in Genesis 17:5. (17)
5. What is the significance of the statement that God is He who "gives life to the dead and calls into existence things that do not exist"? How was it true of Abraham concerning the birth of Isaac? How was it true concerning Abraham's faith at Mt. Moriah? See Genesis 22 and Hebrews 11:17-19. How does it relate to Ephesians 2:1-4 and 2 Corinthians 4:6 and the creation narrative of Genesis 1? (17)
6. In what way has God "called into existence things that do not exist" in your life personally? (17)
7. How would this idea (that God calls into existence things that do not exist) help you be bolder and trust God for more in prayer? (17)
8. What does "in hope he believed against hope" mean? Martyn Lloyd-Jones says "What that means is that there was really no hope whatsoever for this thing to happen, speaking in a natural sense; everything was against it. Consider the facts. One was Abraham's own body now dead when he was about a hundred years old, and secondly, the deadness of Sarah's womb. Was there any conceivable hope that Abraham and Sarah might have a child? There was none. It was impossible. Everything was against it—the course of life, the course of nature, everything. There was not a glimmer of hope in any respect..." Comment on this. (18)
9. How does the world use the word "hope"? How is Christian hope different than natural hope? (18)
10. What promise did Abraham have in mind? (18)

11. What is the connection between Abraham's believing of the promise, and the accomplishment of it? (18)

***FAITH RECEIVES GOD'S PROMISE, REGARDLESS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES
(VV. 19-25)***

12. What does verse 19 teach us about the nature of Abraham's faith? How did Abraham face certain facts about his condition and Sarah's? How did that give room for his faith to operate? How does faith actually feed on the obstacles and overcome them? Why is it that faith is actually diminished where the natural course of things makes something likely? (19)
13. What does verse 20 teach about Abraham's faith? What does it mean to "weaken in faith"? Perhaps an example of this is Peter's fear after beginning to walk on the water. What cause people to waver through unbelief? Conversely, it says that Abraham "grew strong in his faith." How is faith strengthened? What role does God have in strengthening existing faith? Do we strengthen our own faith? (20)
14. How does our faith give glory to God? (20)
15. What was Abraham fully convinced that God was able to do? How does that convincing happen? How does it glorify God? (21)
16. Conversely, how does unbelief regarding the promises of God dishonor God? (21)
17. What is the purpose of verse 22 in Paul's argument? (22)
18. Note that "counted to him as righteousness" is here not referring to the original giving of the promise in Genesis 15, but a later occasion in Genesis 17. What is the significance of that fact? (22)
19. How does Paul seek to apply Abraham's faith to the Roman Christians? (23-24)
20. What do verses 23-24 teach us about the purpose of the Genesis account? How does that account benefit us? (23-24)
21. What promise do Christians believe as opposed to the promise that Abraham believed? (24-25)
22. How does Paul conclude his argument? Why does he finish that way? (25)

III. SUMMARY:

The Apostle Paul describes the faith of Abraham as an example to all believers in Jesus Christ. Abraham believed and placed his confidence in God's ability to keep His promises, rather than look at his immediate circumstance of old age and doubt God's word. In the same way, righteousness is counted to those who trust in God and His God's word about Jesus Christ, who died and rose again.

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

ROMANS 5:1-11

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is Paul's purpose in Romans 5:1-11?
2. How do these verses work to give us assurance of salvation?
3. Why is assurance of salvation so important in the Christian life?
4. How does Paul use reason to accomplish assurance?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PEACE WITH GOD, ACCESS TO GOD (VV. 1-5)

1. What does it mean to have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"? How does it relate to Colossians 1:21-22 and John 20:19-20? (1)
2. How is "peace with God" related but a little different from the "peace of God which passes all understanding" which Paul refers to in Philippians 4:7? (1)
3. What is "access by faith"? Was the average believer welcomed to access God before Christ came? See Leviticus 16:2, Exodus 3:5, Exodus 19:12. What about now? See Matthew 27:51, Ephesians 2:18, and Hebrews 10:19-20. How valuable is this "access by faith" into the presence of God? (1)
4. What is this "grace in which we stand"? How are we presently and constantly standing by grace? Do we as Christians need fresh grace flowing toward us constantly? If so, why? Compare with 1 John 1:7. (2)
5. How is this a mark of our justification, to "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God"? What is hope? What does it mean to rejoice in hope? (2)
6. What is "the hope of the glory of God"? Two options: rejoicing in the spiritual certainty that someday, 1) we will see God's radiant glory; 2) we will be glorious ourselves with a glory that comes from God. Which of these two do you think Paul is meaning here. (2)
7. What is the next mark of justification and assurance that Paul mentions? What does it mean to rejoice in our sufferings? How is rejoicing in sufferings a distinctively Christian thing to do? See Matthew 5:11-12, James 1:2-4. What reason does Paul give for rejoicing in suffering? How does suffering produce perseverance? See James 1:2-4. How does perseverance produce proven character? How does character produce hope? (3-4)
8. Why does our hope not disappoint us? How is Christian hope different than worldly hope? (5)
9. What does Paul say of God's love in verse 5? What does this mean? What is the nature of that experience of love? How does it relate to Romans 8:16? (5)
10. How is this related to the Holy Spirit's ministry as a "seal" guaranteeing our salvation? See 2 Corinthians 1:22 and Ephesians 1:13. (5)

11. How do the three levels of assurance in Romans 5:1-11 (see summary) relate to each other in order to give believers assurance of salvation?

ENEMIES JUSTIFIED BY CHRIST'S BLOOD, JUSTIFIED SAVED BY HIS LIFE (vv. 6-11)

12. How do verses 6-8 add to Paul's argument on assurance? What is Paul laboring to prove here? How is it a reasoning process, using the "much more" language? (6-8)
13. Why was Christ's death at the "right time"? The right time for what? (6)
14. How were we "weak"? How were we "ungodly"? (6)
15. What does Christ's death for us when we were ungodly prove about the nature of His love for us and His grace toward us? (6)
16. What does verse 7 add to Paul's argument? Why is it true that very rarely would anyone die for a righteous man? (7)
17. How is the cross the greatest demonstration of the love of God for us that there could ever be? What specifically gracious aspect of God's love for us in Christ does Paul highlight in verse 8? (8)
18. Paul adds a new phrase in verse 9: "justified by his blood." How does the blood of Christ justify us? (9)
19. What is the logic of Paul's "how much more" argument here? How does Paul contrast us as justified and us as being saved in the future? What is the difference between past justification and future salvation? (9)
20. Saved from what? In what way is there a yet future salvation from God's wrath? See 1 Thessalonians 1:10. (9)
21. What logical argument does Paul use in verse 10 to prove his assertion of verse 9? (10)
22. How were we God's enemies? What did God do for His enemies in verse 10?
23. What is the weight of the "much more" argument of verse 10? Which is easier: to reconcile an enemy by the death of the Son, or to save a friend by the life of the Son? (10)
24. How are we saved by Christ's life? See Romans 4:25, and Hebrews 7:25! (10)
25. How does verse 11 finish this glorious chain of assurance? (11)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul labors to give the Roman Christians an unbreakable chain of assurance based on Christ's finished work on the cross and His ongoing work for us as our Savior. This chain may be broken into three forms of assurance: 1) reasoned out in the mind based on the word of God; 2) worked out in the life by a changed character; 3) poured out in the heart by the Holy Spirit. The logic of assurance is powerful: if a dead Jesus justified you when you were an enemy, how much more will a living Savior finish the work of salvation now that you are a friend.

ORIGINAL SIN AND ULTIMATE GRACE

ROMANS 5:12-21

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does 12-21 teach about our spiritual relationship to Adam and his sin?
2. What does this passage teach us about sin and death?
3. What is the significance that all of us sinned when Adam sinned?
4. How does it relate to salvation in Christ?
5. What are the ramifications of denying the doctrine of original sin?
6. How is Adam like Christ according to this passage? How is Adam different?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

HOW SIN AND DEATH ENTERED THE WORLD THROUGH ADAM (VV. 12-14)

1. How does this section (Romans 5:12-21) connect with the previous one?
2. What do the words “just as” imply? In other words, when we use the words “just as” what are we usually doing verbally? (12)
3. How did sin enter the world through one man? (12)
4. What does this teach about Adam? Why doesn’t Paul say that sin entered the world through one woman? Or through one man *and* one woman? (12)
5. What is the connection between sin and death in verse 12? (12)
6. What is the logic of “and death spread to all men, because all sinned”? What does it mean that “death came to all men”? What does “because” mean? What does “all sinned” mean?
7. Note: Paul’s assertion “because all sinned” is the doctrine of original sin. It is very controversial, and yet so clearly taught here. Why would it be so controversial? Why would some people consider this unfair? (12)
8. What does verse 13 add? What situation is Paul addressing in verse 13? (13)
9. What does it mean that sin is not counted where there is no law? How do we relate this to Paul’s earlier teaching in Romans 2:12? (13)
10. What does verse 14 address? Why did people die before the Law of Moses came? Who especially died without having sinned as Adam did? (14)
11. What image comes into your mind when you think of the phrase “death reigned”? We’ll see it again at the end of the chapter. (14)
12. How is Adam a “type of the one to come”? (14)

ADAM AND CHRIST COMPARED (VV. 15-19)

13. How do verses 15-19 explain why believers are so confident despite the havoc wreaked by Adam’s rebellion and the death penalty that came by it? What is the source of our confidence according to verses 15-19? (15-19)

14. How do all sinners die in Adam? Just physical death? Or also spiritual? (15)
15. What is the “gift” of verse 15? (15)
16. How is the gift not like the trespass? (15-16)
17. How did many die by Adam’s trespass? (15)
18. How did God’s grace overflow to many through Christ? (15)
19. How are the results of Adam’s sin and Christ’s action different? (16)
20. What does verse 17 stress by using lavish language, like “abundance”? (17)
21. What two “reigns” are contrasted in verse 17? How did death reign? How do Christians reign in life through Jesus Christ? (17)
22. Why does Paul use the word “gift” so much in this section? What is the significance of this concept? (15-21)
23. How does verse 18 summarize Paul’s comparison between Adam and Christ? What is the “one act of righteousness” that Paul has in mind? (18)
24. How is Adam’s disobedience contrasted with Christ’s obedience? What “obedience” do you think Paul had in mind here? (19)
25. In what way are we “made righteous” through Christ’s obedience? (19)
26. Does this comparison teach universalism? Since every single person sinned in Adam, is (as some say) every single person is saved in Christ? How does Paul guard against this misunderstanding by his choice of words? (19)

LAW AND GRACE COMPARED (VV. 20-21)

27. Some people might think that the Law of Moses came into the world to restrain the sin of Adam. But what does Paul say in verse 20? How do you understand this? How do more Laws from God increase the trespass? (20)
28. What joyful assertion does Paul make in verse 20? Why is this such good news? Why does grace conquer sin, even great sin? How is the grace of God in Christ vastly greater than any human being’s sin? Analogy: Pacific Ocean’s ability to quench a match, torch, bonfire, enflamed skyscraper. (20)
29. How are sin and grace compared in verse 21? How was sin like a tyrannical emperor, “reigning” in death? How is grace like a loving benevolent emperor, reigning through righteousness to bring eternal life?

III. SUMMARY:

In this controversial passage, the Apostle Paul asserts the doctrine of original sin, by which the entire human race sinned and died in Adam. It also sets up a parallel between Adam’s sin and the obedience of Christ, showing the similarities and differences between the first Adam and the Second—Christ. The many died in the one man, Adam, and the many are made alive in the one man, Christ. But Christ’s gift is infinitely greater than the trespass of the one man.

SANCTIFICATION: DEAD TO SIN, ALIVE TO GOD IN CHRIST JESUS

ROMANS 6:1-14

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why do some people believe that the doctrine of justification by faith apart from works of the law means we can sin as much as we want with no worries? How does Romans 6 refute that false understanding?
2. What does this section teach us about our relationship with Christ in His death and resurrection?
3. What are the implications of our union with Christ on the way we live?
4. How does knowing that we died to sin help us in our constant battle with sin?
5. How do we consider ourselves dead to sin? Why is it vital that we do it?
6. What does it mean to “present our members to sin”? By contrast, what does it mean to “present our members as slaves to righteousness”?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

UNION WITH CHRIST MEANS DEATH TO SIN (VV. 1-4)

1. What misunderstanding of the doctrine of justification by faith does Paul address here? In other words, how does Romans 6:1 relate to Romans 5?
2. Why do some people persist in saying that this doctrine encourages sin? Why would some say, let us “continue in sin so that grace may abound”? (1)
3. How does Paul answer this grave misunderstanding of grace? (2)
4. What does Paul mean by saying we died to sin? When did we die to sin? (2)
5. What is the implication of our having died to sin according to verse 2? (2)
6. How does verse 3 support verse 2? In what sense did Christians die with Christ? How do you understand our spiritual union with Christ? (3)
7. What do you learn in verses 3-4 about the symbolism of baptism? Did you understand this when you were baptized? Seeing that baptism is an identification with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection, do you see how important it is to get baptized only *after* you become a Christian? (3-4)
8. How are believers united with Christ in His death *and* His resurrection? (3-4)
9. What does it mean that Christ was raised “by the glory of the Father”? (4)
10. What is walking in “newness of life”? How does this ethical outcome of union with Christ refute the misunderstanding Paul is seeking to address? (4)

LIVING THE RESURRECTED LIFE (VV. 5-11)

11. Why is it true that, if we have been united with Christ in His death, we will certainly be united in His resurrection? What difference will this understanding make in our battle against sin? (5)

12. Verse 6 is one of the most important and misunderstood verses in Romans. What does it mean that “the old self” (KJV “old man”) was crucified with him (Christ)? According to Paul, what is the result of this? What is the “body of sin”? What does it mean that the “body of sin” might be “brought to nothing”? How does that relate to us no longer being slaves to sin? (6)
13. What does verse 7 add to Paul’s argument? How does the fact that we died with Christ help us not to sin? (7)
14. How does Paul build on verse 7 in verses 8-10? How are we like Christ in His resurrection? What is the significance of the fact that death no longer has any dominion over Christ? (8-10)
15. How is our present life in the sinful body like Christ’s present life in His resurrected body? Is this fact surprising to you? (10)
16. What does it mean to “consider ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus”? What does this mean? The word “consider” is the same Greek word as “reckon” or “counted”, like in Romans 4:3. How would “considering” yourself dead to sin help you resist specific temptations? (11)

DO NOT PRESENT YOUR BODY TO SIN (VV. 12-14)

17. What does Paul command in verse 12? How does this relate to verse 11? (12)
18. Why does Paul call our bodies “mortal bodies”? How do Christians sometimes act as though sin reigns in their mortal bodies? (12)
19. Romans 6:13 is a very significant practical teaching on sanctification. What does Paul prohibit? What does Paul command? How is sanctification both a negative work and a positive one? Why do these necessarily go together? (13)
20. The idea of “present” is to “put at the disposal” of a commanding officer. How do we put the members/parts of our body in the service of sin? How are we supposed to put them in the service of God? Why does Paul say that we must first present ourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life *and then* present the members/parts of our bodies in service to Him as instruments of righteousness? Why is this order important? (13)
21. What final statement does Paul make in verse 14? What is the significance of this statement that sin shall not be our master? What does it mean that we are not under law but under grace? How is grace like a master? (14)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul applies the doctrine of justification by faith alone to the ongoing battle we all have with indwelling sin. He teaches that, because of our spiritual union with Christ we are dead to sin and alive to God. Based on this, we are to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God, and we are to stop presenting the members of our bodies to sin, but rather are to present ourselves to God as new creatures and to present our bodily members to Him as weapons of righteousness.

CANNOT SERVE TWO MASTERS: PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION THROUGH OBEDIENCE

ROMANS 6:15-23

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main point of this section, Romans 6:15-23?
2. I titled this section “Cannot Serve Two Masters: Progressive Sanctification through Obedience.” What does that mean? How does this section teach this?
3. If we are truly set free from law and sin, why then do we “obey” sin? How can we break this cycle?
4. What is a “habit”? How does this section teach the power of habits, both good and bad, for the ongoing Christian life?
5. What does it mean to be a “slave to God”?
6. What is the connection with our personal holiness and our future in heaven?
7. How does verse 23 encourage you?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

OUR OBEDIENCE PROVES WHO OUR MASTER IS (vv. 15-19)

1. How does verse 15 fit into the previous section (Romans 6:1-14)? (15)
2. How does verse 15 show the incredible stubbornness of indwelling sin? In other words, how could an improper understanding of our freedom from the law actually (perversely) lead to more sin in the daily life of a Christian? (15)
3. What is the significance of Paul’s vigorous “By no means!” or “God forbid!”? How should this teach us to respond to temptations? (15)
4. What common knowledge about slavery does Paul employ here? Read Matthew 6:24. Picture one slave standing still, listening to two men calling on him to obey. Paul says the one he actually obeys is his master. How does this reasoning fit into our struggle against sin? (16)
5. What two competing masters does Paul present in verse 16? What two outcomes of service to these two masters does Paul contrast in verse 16? How does this thinking help us to overcome temptation? (16)
6. How does “obedience” lead to righteousness? As believers, we received the gift of righteousness from God in Christ Jesus (Romans 1:17, 3:21-22). Is the righteousness that proceeds from obedience different from the righteousness imputed to us by faith in Christ? How do you put these together? (16)
7. How does verse 17 fit into Paul’s argument? He is calling to mind the past pattern of the obedience of the Roman Christians to the gospel, and uses that to prove that they have a new master, Jesus Christ. Comment on this. (17)
8. Verse 17 is an amazingly deep verse. If we strip away the middle clause and simplify its message, it basically says “Thank God you obeyed!” Why is this so

- surprising, to give credit to God for *our own* obedience? Talk about the theological implications of giving credit to God for our obedience. (17)
9. How does verse 17 speak of our emancipation from sin? (17)
 10. What is the significance of “obedience from the heart” in verse 17? (17)
 11. Verse 17 ends with a deep concept, that we were “committed” to doctrine: a “standard of teaching.” What is the “standard of teaching” to which we were entrusted? What does “committed” (delivered/entrusted) mean? (17)
 12. Why does Paul restate the change in our status in verse 18? Why is accepting this concept so vital for our fight against sin? (18)
 13. What “human terms” is Paul using here in Romans 6? Why does he say he needs to use “human terms” to teach our freedom from sin? (19)
 14. Verse 19 teaches the basics of progressive sanctification. What is the secret according to this verse? What does it mean to “present” the members of your body in slavery to righteousness? How are habits formed that lead to “more lawlessness”? Correspondingly, how are habits formed in “righteousness” that lead to sanctification? Why is this vital in the Christian life? (19)

PAUL’S APPEAL FOR HOLINESS (VV. 20-23)

15. How does he seek to reason us out of sinning? (20-23)
16. What is Paul’s point in verse 20? In what way is a non-Christian “free in regard to righteousness”? How is it really unfair that now that we belong to Christ, we don’t act as though we’re “set free from sin”? (20)
17. What are the “fruits” of sin? What answer does Paul assume here? How does the issue of shame factor in? Is there any sin at which a Christian can look back and say “Boy, I’m sure glad I did that, even though it was sin!”? If not, then what is Paul’s point in verse 21? (21)
18. What benefits are there to progressive growth in righteousness/holiness? (22)
19. What does Paul mean “and its end, eternal life”? Is Paul saying that only a lifestyle characterized by progressive obedience leading to holiness leads to heaven? Talk about that. (22)
20. How does verse 23 fit into the context? What are “wages”? How are wages contrasted with gift? How are life and death contrasted? How does verse 23 serve Paul’s overall purpose in Romans 6, namely that Christians should live lives of holiness based on our justification? (23)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul completes his appeal to Christians to live lives of progressive holiness based on obedience to Christ. He states in effect that we cannot serve two masters, and that we are slaves of the one we consistently obey. Romans 6:15-23 is the clearest section in the Bible on progressive sanctification.

FREEDOM FROM THE LAW'S TYRANNY

ROMANS 7:1-6

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it important for Paul to prove to the Roman church that his view of the Law is the right one? What were some of Paul's opponents saying Paul was teaching about the Law?
2. What is the relationship between this section (Romans 7:1-6) and Paul's assertion in Romans 5:20, "Now the law came to increase the trespass..."?
3. What is the relationship between this section and Romans 6:14-15?
4. Why is it important for Christians to understand their relationship to the Law of God? How is it possible to misunderstand that relationship? What are the effects of such a misunderstanding?
5. How does the rule of Law and the rule of sin relate in Paul's mind? How does the history of Israel prove that the Law only produces sin and not righteousness?
6. How does the death of Christ symbolize our death to the Law?
7. What new way of living does Paul describe here?
8. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says that, just as Romans 3-4 taught that it is impossible to be justified by law, Romans 6-7 teaches that it is impossible to be sanctified by Law as well. Comment on this observation.

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. What assertion does Paul make in verse 1? How is this obviously true? (1)
2. What does the word "binding" mean? How does the Law have binding authority over people? (1)
3. How does this train of thought (i.e. "the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives") relate to us in Christ? Hint: verse 4 makes this more plain. (1)
4. What analogy does Paul use in verses 2-3? How does this analogy make Paul's point about the authority of the Law over believers? (2-3)
5. What does Paul teach about the permanence of marriage in this analogy? What does he teach about the right to remarry? How does the death of one of the spouses change everything when it comes to the Law of Marriage? (2-3)
6. How does a widow's freedom in remarriage demonstrate the freedom Christians have from the authority of the Law? (2-3)
7. What connection does Paul make to the believer in verse 4? (4)

8. How does our spiritual connection to Christ's death free us from the Law? In what sense do we now "belong to another"? How does this pick up on the marriage analogy (death then freedom to marry) Paul just gave us? (4)
9. How is it helpful to us to meditate on our spiritual marriage to Christ? This is a powerful theme in the New Testament. Jesus called Himself the "Bridegroom" in Matthew 9:15. John the Baptist called himself the "friend of the bridegroom," and said in John 3:29 that the bride belongs to the bridegroom. How is this concept so powerful in our battle with sin? (4)
10. What does the phrase "that we may bear fruit for God" mean in this context? See Genesis 1:28 and Psalm 128:3. What is the "fruitfulness" of a wife in those contexts? (4)
11. How does freedom from the Law enable us to bear fruit for God? What kind of fruit do you think Paul has in mind here? (4)
12. What insights does verse 5 give us on how the Law operates on an unsaved person's heart? (5)
13. This is the first use of the word "flesh" in Romans. What is the significance of the word "flesh" in verse 5? The word is used three different ways in Scripture: 1) referring to the human race generally (Isaiah 40:5); 2) referring to physical life in the human body with no moral value either way (Galatians 2:20); 3) referring to the wicked drives of the human heart which result in sinful behavior: (Galatians 5:17). Which of these three does Paul mean in verse 5? (5)
14. What does it mean to be "in the flesh"? When someone is "in the flesh" what effect does the Law have on them? (5)
15. What was the fruit or outcome of such motions of the flesh? (5)
16. How have Christians been released from the Law? How did we die in order to be released? (6)
17. What positive description of the new life in Christ does Paul give in verse 6? What is contrasted with life in the flesh in verse 6? (6)
18. What does it mean to serve in the new way of the spirit and not the old way of the written code? (6)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul teaches the Roman Christians that our union with Christ has made a decisive break with the Law as a dominating force in our spiritual lives. We have once for all died to the Law as an authority and are now able to bear fruit for God in our new relationship with Christ—a relationship that is best described as a marriage. In this section, Paul has taught us that, just as the Law was powerless to justify us, it is also powerless to sanctify us as well.

DEATH DUE TO SIN

ROMANS 7:7-12

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main problem Paul is seeking to address here?
2. Why is it important for Christians to understand the Law, both in its holy origin and in its devastating effect on us sinners?
3. How does understanding this section of scripture help us fight sin now as Christians?
4. How does understanding this section help us in witnessing to non-Christians, especially to moral, religious people who think they're good enough because they follow rules and regulations?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. Why would Paul have to ask if the law is sin? Hint: look at what Paul wrote in verse 5, as well as in Romans 5:20. (7)
2. How does Paul answer the question of the law being sin? (7)
3. What does Paul say the Law did for him, according to verse 7? How does the Law help us to identify sin in our lives? Why is this indispensable to our salvation? Why is it less than salvation? In other words, why is it not enough merely to identify the presence of sin in our hearts and lives? (7)
4. Galatians 3:24 says the Law was a “guarding” or a “child tutor” to bring us to Christ. How does Romans 7:7 help explain this concept? (7)
5. What specific example of sin does Paul choose as an example of how the Law works on a soul? Why do you think he chose that one? (7-8)
6. What is coveting? Why would it be impossible for a state or the federal government to make a law against coveting? What does it show about the difference between God’s Law and man’s laws? (7-8)
7. Why do you think God forbids coveting? What things does the Ten Commandments specifically forbid us from coveting? What is another name for coveting your neighbor’s wife, for the strong desire for her? How does it relate to Jesus’ prohibition against looking at a woman lustfully in the Sermon on the Mount? (7-8)
8. How does the law against coveting show that “man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart”? How does it also prove that no one can perfectly obey the Law? (7-8)
9. What personal experience does Paul relate about the law against coveting? How did the Law promote or produce sin in him? (7-8)

10. How does Paul's experience with the Law prove that education alone cannot save the human race? (7-8)
11. What does Paul mean "Apart from Law, sin lies dead"? (8)
12. What does he mean when he says "I was once alive apart from law"? Does this relate to his childhood? (9)
13. What does Paul say happened to him when he finally understood the commandment against coveting? What does he mean by "sin came alive"? What does he mean by "I died"? (9)
14. What does Paul assert was the purpose of the Law in verse 10? How was the Law intended to bring life? Does this imply that God misunderstood the effects of the Law, that He had intended something good from the Law, but it actually surprised Him by working death in people? Of course not! But how do you deal with the idea that the Law was intended to bring life in this verse? (10)
15. What does Paul say that sin did with the commandment in verse 11? How does sin "seize an opportunity"? How does sin deceive? Note: on sin's ability to deceive us, see Hebrews 3:13. (11)
16. Paul seems to make sin to be a living thing, with a clever deceitful mind and the ability to mislead us. How does that line up with your own experience of sin? (11)
17. How does Paul finish up his summary here in verse 12? How does this experience show Paul the incredibly deadly danger of sin? (12)
18. If our sin nature is this deceptive and powerful with the Law of God, can it also be deceptive and powerful concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ as well? Explain your answer.

III. SUMMARY:

Paul shares a personal experience he had with the Law's power to deceive, proving that, though the Law is holy and righteous and good, sin has the power to pervert it and turn it to evil, producing death.

THE BELIEVER'S FIERCE WARFARE AGAINST INDWELLING SIN

ROMANS 7:13-25

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it so vital to the Christian life to understand the struggle with indwelling sin Paul describes here in this passage?
2. Do you see this same struggle inside you as well: "For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate"? How do you account for this bizarre situation?
3. Why do you think God chose to allow the sin nature ("flesh") to continue in us after our conversion, when He is planning on completely destroying it at the moment of glorification (at death or at the return of Christ)? If God has the power to destroy our indwelling sin instantly, why doesn't He do it now?
4. What is the significance of Paul's lamentable cry, "wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death"? And what is the significance of his next statement, "Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!"?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. What is Paul referring to when he says "Did that which is good, then, bring death to me"? How does verse 13 relate to the previous section, 7:1-12? (13)
2. According to Paul, what was God's reason for the good Law of God producing such a negative result, even death? (13)
3. What does Paul mean when he says that sin, "through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure"? Do you think we human beings tend to underestimate the wickedness of sin? Why do we tend to do this? (13)
4. What does Paul mean when he says "We know that the Law is spiritual"? Why do you think Paul is bending over backwards to make it so plain that the Law of God is perfect and good? How does that serve Paul's argument? (14)
5. What does Paul mean when he says, "I am of the flesh"? (14)

There is a debate over Romans 7:13-25. Some say Paul cannot be speaking of himself as a Christian, since he makes statements that seem inappropriate for a Christian. They conclude that he must be talking of himself as an unconverted man or metaphorically of Israel or something else. I conclude that Paul is speaking as a converted man regarding his intense struggle with indwelling sin, thus this passage is vital for a helping Christians understand their battle with sin.

6. How does verse 15 show the insanity of sin? How could every Christian who sins agree with this statement: "I do not understand my own actions"? (15)
7. What would be some examples of "I do not do what I want"? How does our indwelling sin hinder acts of service to God? How does it hinder our evangelism? Our prayer life? Our ministry to the poor and needy? (15)

8. Give examples of “I do the very thing I hate”? How does our indwelling sin push us to commit acts that are shameful? What is the significance of the fact that we both hate those things and yet do them anyway? How does this verse show the divided nature of the regenerate but unglorified human heart? (15)
9. What does Paul mean by verse 16? What does his reluctance in sin prove in verse 16? What is the significance of the fact that Paul “agrees that the Law is good”? How does it relate to verse 25? (16, 25)
10. What does the phrase “it is *no longer* I who do it” imply about Paul’s relationship with sin? How does this (and verse 20) show that Paul is speaking of himself as a converted man? (17)
11. What is the significance of the concept of sin “dwelling” in me? What mental picture do you have of sin living in you? How is sin like a living thing? (17)
12. Why is there nothing good in the “flesh” according to verse 18? See Romans 8:5-8. Why is Paul unable to carry out the good desires he says he has? (18)
13. Paul talks a lot here about his good desires, good intentions, good plans... that do not come to fruition. What is the origin of these good desires, intentions, and plans? Why are they so often thwarted? (19)
14. How does 19 address the issue of habitual sin in the life of the Christian? Not just occasional sin, but habitual, ongoing, practices of sin? (19)
15. Paul introduces a fascinating word in verse 21—law. What “law” does Paul find at work in verse 21? How does evil “lie close at hand”? How do you find this to be the case in your Christian life? (21)
16. Paul contrasts the law of his “inner being” or mind with that he finds at work in the members of his body. How are the members of Paul’s body at war with the law of his mind? How is Paul like a prisoner in his own body? (22-23)
17. Why is it so vital to us to understand how indwelling sin resides in the “members” of our body? (22-23)
18. Why does Paul put this terrible cry in verse 24? What is the significance of this cry for your own life? How is it true that all Christians can make this cry until liberated from this mortal body? (24)
19. Why is it just as vital to understand verse 25 as verse 24? Why does a healthy view of the Christian life contain *both* the wretchedness of verse 24 and the thanksgiving of verse 25?
20. What summary does Paul give of this whole issue in verse 25?

III. SUMMARY:

In the most vital passage in the Bible on understanding the nature of the Christian’s battle with indwelling sin, Paul describes the fierceness of that struggle and the reasons for it. A healthy Christian’s battle for holiness must include a proper understanding of this section of Scripture.

TWO WAYS TO LIVE: FLESH VS. SPIRIT

ROMANS 8:1-11

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does this passage bring hope to the intense struggle of Romans 7?
2. How does the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit to break habits of sin?
3. What is the significance of Paul's assertion that there is "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"?
4. What two ways of life are described in these verses? Why is it imperative to know which of these two ways of living accurately describes us?
5. According to Romans 8:1-11, how does Christ's work on the cross and the Spirit's work in us combine to enable us to fulfill the Law in our daily lives?
6. What do we learn here about the importance of the mind on the way we live?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

CHRIST'S DEATH: THE BASIS FOR DELIVERANCE FROM SIN (VV. 1-4)

1. What is the condemnation Paul is referring to in verse 1? What is the significance of the word "now" in this verse? Now that what? How does Romans 8:1 signal a new era in Redemptive History for the human race? (1)
2. What is the value to you personally that you will never be condemned for your sins? How does it help you when you consider the dreadfulness of hell that awaits those who are condemned? (1)
3. For whom is it true that there is no condemnation? How does Paul describe such blessed people in verse 1? How does he describe them in 2-4? (1-4)
4. What is the significance of the logical connector in verse 2, "because" or "for"? How does verse 2 help explain verse 1? (2)
5. What does "the law of the Spirit of life" refer to? What is the "law of sin and death"? How does the first set us free from the second? (2)
6. How did Christ's life and death achieve what the law never could? (3)
7. What does it mean that Christ was sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh"? (3)
8. How did Christ's death serve as a Christian's condemnation for sin? How would it be impossible for God to condemn us on Judgment Day as well? (3)
9. How are the righteous requirements of the law fully met in the Christian's life? Why is this concept so revolutionary? (4)
10. How does verse 4 free us from the faulty "cheap grace" understanding of the gospel, that since we're forgiven, we can live however we want? (4)
11. Why is it vital for us to understand the final phrase of verse 4, "who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit"? Why is that qualification the key to understanding the freedom from condemnation in verse 1? (4)

FLESH VS. SPIRIT: TWO WAYS TO THINK, TWO WAYS TO LIVE (VV. 5-11)

12. What aspect of human life does verse 5 focus on? How is the mindset of the non-Christian so radically different from that of the Christian? (5)
13. Why is our thought life so incredibly vital? What is the connection between thinking and living? What is the relationship between desire and thinking? What two ways of desiring, thinking, and living are contrasted in verse 5? (5)
14. How does Paul contrast the mind of the flesh with the mind controlled by the Spirit in verse 6? What kind of death? What kind of life and peace? (6)
15. How is the mind of the flesh “hostile” against God? See Colossians 1:21. Why is it impossible for the mind of the flesh to submit to God’s law? (7)
16. Paul adds that the those “in the flesh” (i.e. controlled by a fleshly mindset) cannot please God. Why is this so? See also Hebrews 11:6. (8)
17. How does verse 9 signal a major turn in Paul’s presentation? What is the joyful news he relates in this verse to all Christians? What does it mean? (9)
18. What does he mean by the qualifier, “if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you”? What does it mean to have the Spirit “living in us”? See John 14:17. How is it true that if the Spirit lives in us, we are not “in the flesh”? (9)
19. What if one does not have the Spirit of God living inside them? What is true of that person, based on verse 9? Is it possible to be a Christian and not have the indwelling Holy Spirit? When does the Holy Spirit enter a person? (9)
20. Is there a difference between the Holy Spirit and the “Spirit of Christ”? (9)
21. What is the significance of the fact that, in verse 9, Paul speaks of the *Spirit of Christ* living in us, but in verse 10 he says, “if *Christ* is in you...” How do you explain this? Does this help explain how Christ, still in the resurrection body, can fulfill His promise to the church in Matthew 28:20? (10)
22. What does Paul say is true of us in verse 10 if Christ lives in us by the Spirit? What does it mean that the “body is dead because of sin”? What does it mean that the spirit is life because of righteousness? (10)
23. What does verse 11 teach you about the Trinity? (11)
24. What is true if the Spirit of God is living in us, according to verse 11? How and when is this promise fulfilled? (11)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul gives all Christians a clear sense of their emancipation from the wrath of God through Christ’s death on the cross, and of the new life that is theirs through Christ’s resurrection from the dead. He powerfully contrasts two ways to live—the life of the flesh and the life of the Spirit, and says that the life of the Spirit now enables all Christians to meet fully the righteous requirements of the Law.

A CHRISTIAN'S OBLIGATION TO FIGHT SIN

ROMANS 8:12-17

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does this section describe the present struggle of Christians?
2. What does it teach about the need for Christians to be holy?
3. What does it teach about the role of the Holy Spirit in that struggle?
4. How does the Holy Spirit give evidence of our status as children of God?
5. How does this passage put the sufferings of Christians in perspective?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. Paul says that Christians are “debtors” or that we have an obligation. In what way are we *not* debtors according to verse 12? Then in what way *are* we debtors? (12)
2. John Piper has written in his book *Future Grace* that grace does not make us debtors but pays our debts. How do we understand his insight and still understand what Paul means by debt in this verse? (12)
3. How would you compare Paul’s sense of debt here with that which he expresses in Romans 1:14? What debt dominates his thinking in Romans 1:14? What debt dominates his thinking in Romans 8:12-14? How does the discharge of these two debts control Paul’s whole life? How should they control our whole life? (12)
4. Why does Paul make it clear that we owe the flesh nothing? Does the flesh ever make us feel like we owe it something? (12)
5. What does it mean to “live according to the flesh”? According to verse 13, what happens if we live according to the flesh? What does he mean by “you will die”? (12-13)
6. Conversely, what does it mean for you, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to put to death the deeds of the body? (13)
7. What is the outcome for someone who does this—by the Spirit puts to death the deeds of the body? (13)
8. John Owen wrote some classic works on this very issue. One of them was entitled, *On the Mortification of Sin in Believers*. He begins with this assertion: “The choicest believers, who are assuredly freed from the condemning power of sin, ought yet to make it their business all their days to mortify the indwelling power of sin.” He also goes on to add: “The vigor, and power, and comfort of our spiritual life depend on the mortification of the deeds of the flesh.” Comment on Owen’s insights here. (13)
9. What is the connection between verse 13 and verse 14? How is Paul actually identifying who are *truly* children of God? In context, what does it mean to be

“led by the Spirit of God”? How does the Spirit of God lead true children of God as it relates to verse 13?

10. Do you think Paul would agree with the following statement: “If someone’s life isn’t characterized by the consistent pattern of the mortification of the flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit, that person is not truly a child of God”? Support your answer. (12-14)
11. How does the Holy Spirit lead every true child of God into daily battle? Why is it impossible to avoid this battle? (14)
12. What is the connection between verse 14 and verse 15? How does Paul describe the Holy Spirit’s ministry to us in verse 15?
13. What does it mean to have “a spirit of slavery to fall back in fear”? What fear does Paul have in mind? How does the Spirit free us from that fear? (15)
14. What does Paul mean by introducing the idea of sonship, or “adoption”? How are we adopted children of God? What is the significance of this? (15)
15. How does the Holy Spirit cry out “Abba” within the heart of a true believer? How is this cry a strong evidence of regeneration, of being born again? (15)
16. What does Paul mean when he says that the Spirit “bears witness with our spirit that we are God’s children”? What do the words “bear witness” mean here? What is “our spirit”? How does the Holy Spirit collaborate with our own spirits to give us assurance of our adoption as children of God? (16)
17. Would you say that it’s true that our assurance will be stronger or weaker in proportion to our faithfulness in killing sin in our lives? In other words, the more faithfully we put to death sin by the Spirit, the more certain we will be that we are children of God? (16)
18. What additional encouragement does Paul give in verse 17? What does it mean to be an “heir of God”? What is an “heir”? Please see Matthew 5:5, Acts 20:32, 1 Corinthians 15:50, and Romans 4:13? (17)
19. How are true Christians “fellow heirs” with Christ? (17)
20. What does Paul mean by “provided we suffer with him”? What sufferings does Paul have in mind? See also Hebrews 2:18. How does temptation produce suffering? (17)
21. Why is it impossible for a Christian to avoid all suffering in this world? (17)
22. In verse 17, What is the reward for those who suffer with Christ? (17)

III. SUMMARY:

In this passage, the Apostle Paul makes it plain that it is the obligation of every Christian to put sin to death by the power of the Holy Spirit. John Owen adds: “The vigor, and power, and comfort of our spiritual life depend on the mortification of the deeds of the flesh.”

PRESENT SUFFERING AND FUTURE GLORY

ROMANS 8:18-27

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this section teach us about our present sufferings? Why do you think Paul says they are not worth comparing with our future glory?
2. What do we learn about the present state of creation in this passage of Scripture? How does it explain some of the problems with the world?
3. How should this passage make us think about our present lives in this world?
4. How should we think about our future lives in resurrection bodies based on this text?
5. What do we learn here about hope? How should hope characterize our lives here on earth?
6. What does Paul say here about the help the Holy Spirit gives us? Why do you think he focuses specifically on prayer?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PRESENT SUFFERING, FUTURE GLORY... FOR BOTH US AND ALL CREATION (vv. 18-25)

1. What theme links verse 17 and verse 18? (17-18)
2. Why do you think handling suffering properly is a major issue in the Christian life? (18)
3. What incredibly encouraging thing does Paul tell us about our present sufferings in verse 18? How is it true that they aren't worthy of being compared with future glory? (18)
4. If you look at Paul's list of his personal sufferings in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27, how then is Paul's statement in verse 18 even more amazing? (18)
5. What does Paul mean by the "glory that will be revealed *to* us"? Some translations speak of the glory that will be revealed "*In* us." what is the difference? Read 2 Corinthians 4:17 and Matthew 13:43. How does Romans 8:30 ("he also glorified") show conclusively that Paul is addressing the glory that we will *be*, not only the glory that we will *see* in verse 18? (18)
6. What does verse 19 teach about the creation and the sons of God? What does Paul mean by "the creation"? Why does Paul personify creation here? (19)
7. What is creation waiting in eager expectation for? What does it mean for the sons of God to be "revealed"? (19)
8. What biblical event does verse 20 refer to? (20)
9. What link is there between Christians and the physical universe in this passage? What link is there between Adam's sin and the suffering and groaning of the earth? How will this groaning be remedied? (20)

10. What is the nature of creation's "futility"? (20)
11. Who subjected creation to futility? Why was it done? What does it mean that it was done "in hope"? (20)
12. What does verse 21 reveal about the future hope of creation? (21)
13. What is the nature of creation's liberation in verse 21? What is "bondage to corruption"? What is the "freedom of the glory of the children of God"? (21)
14. What does verse 22 teach us about the creation? How is it like the pains of childbirth? Compare this to Jesus' birth pains analogy in John 16:21-22. (22)
15. What "groaning" does Paul refer to in verse 22? What groaning does he refer to in verse 23? How are they related? (22-23)
16. What does verse 23 teach us about the Holy Spirit and the life of a Christian? How is our present experience with the Spirit merely "firstfruits"? (23)
17. What does Paul say we are waiting for in verse 23? According to verse 23, what is the official act of adoption as children of God? In other words, what does it seem Paul is saying the adoption *is*? If all you had was this verse, would you assume that a believer's adoption as a son of God was an event in the past or one yet to come in the future? Comment on our future adoption and our past adoption and how you understand those things relating. (23)
18. What does 24 teach us about hope? How would you define hope biblically? How is hope that is seen not hope? Will we need hope in heaven? (24)
19. How does hope help us live the Christian life? (25)

THE SPIRIT'S HELP IN OUR WEAKNESS (VV. 26-27)

20. How would you connect verses 26-27 with the previous section? What specific help does Paul say the Holy Spirit gives us as believers here? (26-27)
21. What is the nature of our present weakness? (26)
22. How does the Holy Spirit help us in our weakness? (26)
23. Why do we not know what to pray for? Even when we do know what to pray for how do we show weakness in our prayer life? (26)
24. What is the significance of the fact that the Spirit intercedes for us? *How* does Paul say He intercedes for us? How would you relate that to the intercessory work of Christ as our High Priest in Hebrews 7:25? (26)
25. What advantages does the Spirit have over us when He prays for us, according to 27? (27)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul speaks encouraging words about the future glory that awaits us after our present life of suffering in the physical world. In our present suffering, we should be filled with hope and rely on the promise of future glory and the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, especially in prayer.

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND OUR CERTAINTY

ROMANS 8:28-30

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this section teach us about the sovereignty of God in salvation?
2. What is the significance of the concept that God works all things for good in the lives of the elect? How can this concept bring us constant comfort?
3. According to this section, what is the ultimate goal of our salvation? How do these verses help us grow in our certainty of attaining that final goal?
4. Why is certainty of our final salvation so important to the way we live our Christian lives?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. Paul begins by speaking of what we know. How should you connect knowing a spiritual fact with allowing that knowledge to move us and affect us? (28)
2. Verse 28 has a tremendous scope, since it refers to “all things” that happen to us in our lives. Is there a limit to this concept? In other words, is it always true? If so, how should believing this affect us in times of trial? In times of success? In times when it seems like nothing is going on in our lives? (28)
3. Does verse 28 extend to our own sins? Does God work in our sins for our own good? How so? (28)
4. How do you understand God’s sovereignty over daily life in light of verse 28? How does God actually cause “all things to work together for good”? Does He wait for us to make decisions, then orchestrate things after the fact? Does He orchestrate things ahead of time to produce the best outcome? (28)
5. For what people does God cause all things to work together for good—for everyone, or only for a certain group of people? (28)
6. Who are those who love God and are called according to His purpose? (28)
7. What is the connection between verse 28 and 29? How do they relate to each other? Could the connection be “for those who are called according to his purpose” and then the chain of verses 29-30 describe God’s purpose? (28-29)
8. Verses 29-30 present a chain of actions on God’s part, and in every case, God acts on a group of people. What are the verbs Paul ascribes to God? What people is God doing this for? What is the significance of the way that the chain is set up: “those God ‘A’, He also ‘B’, those He ‘B’, He also ‘C’, those He ‘C’, He also ‘D’.” How does understanding this chain help increase our assurance of final salvation? Can anyone be lost along the way? (29-30)
9. The chain begins with the words “Those whom He foreknew.” What is this foreknowledge? Some claim that God knows ahead of time what people would do, and based on that prior knowledge, God chooses people. What is the problem with that view? Note that the verse does not say God foreknows

things about people, but rather that He foreknows people themselves. Look at the following verses that speak of God knowing *people*, not just things about people: Exodus 33:17, Amos 3:2. Clearly God knows *about* every single family on the earth, but He only *knows* (chooses) Israel. See also John 10:14, 10:27, 13:18, and 2 Timothy 2:19. There are also verses (Matthew 7:23, 25:12) where Jesus speaks of not knowing individuals, thus they are lost. (29)

10. What is the next step in the chain? Everyone that God foreknows, He also predestines. What does “predestine” mean? The Greek word is literally “pro-ordizo,” meaning to set the boundary lines ahead of time. What are “boundary lines”? See the Book of Joshua in which the boundary lines are drawn for each of the twelve tribes, and see also Psalm 16:6. So how does God pre-ordain our boundary lines?
11. Why do you think so many people struggle with predestination, given the fact that it is so clearly taught in the Bible? (29)
12. In verse 29, to what does God predestine the ones whom he foreknew? (29)
13. What does it mean to be conformed to the image of the Son of God? How does this perfectly fit God’s original intention in creating man and also in redeeming man through Christ? (29)
14. How encouraging is it to you to be predestined not merely to start the Christian life, but also to finish it through to perfection? (29)
15. What is the significance of the phrase “in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers”? How do you understand the term “firstborn”? See also Colossians 1:15, 1:18; Revelation 1:5. (29)
16. What happens next in the chain, after predestination? (30)
17. What does it mean to be “called”? What is the nature of the call? (30)
18. What is the next step in the chain? Does anyone get justified without being called? Does anyone get justified without being predestined by God? (30)
19. Conversely, is there anyone who is justified who does not end up glorified? What does it mean to be “glorified”? Why do you think the chain seems to skip sanctification, the slow progressive growth of a Christian in Christlikeness? Is it possible that sanctification is a subset of glorification? See 2 Corinthians 3:18, “from one degree of glory to another.” (30)
20. How should it encourage us that not a single person is ever justified by God who does not end up glorified by God? (30)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul presents an unbreakable chain of God’s sovereign actions on behalf of the elect, that they may obtain eternal salvation. This chain should be the source of great comfort to us.

THE GOD WHO IS FOR US

ROMANS 8:31-34

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is Paul seeking to do for his readers in these verses?
2. How do these verses encourage you in your walk with Christ?
3. What is the significance of the fact that God is “for us” in Christ?
4. What are some of the foes that Paul assumes are facing Christians?
5. What kind of life should result from truly understanding that we are “more than conquerors” in Christ?
6. If it is true that nothing in the universe can separate us from the love of God in Christ, what conclusions can come from understanding and believing that?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. How does Paul begin this section? Why is he trying to draw forth a response from his readers? What kind of response is he trying to draw out? (31)
2. How does verse 31 look backward to verses 28-30? In other words, what is the connection between verses 28-30 and verse 31? (31)
3. Put Paul’s second question in verse 31 in statement form. He is really making an assertion. What is Paul really asserting in verse 31? (31)
4. How does meditating on the infinite power of God and His absolute sovereignty help make the expression “God is for us” come alive? Read Isaiah 40:12-26 and get a sense of the greatness and power of God. Then apply those thoughts to your own personal condition in Christ: the God of Isaiah 40 is “for” me. What would it be like if God were “against” you? Is God “against” anyone? How terrifying a reality is that? If God were against you, would it matter who your allies were? So then, conversely, if God is for you, does it really matter who your enemies are? Could we not then understand verse 31 as follows: “Since God is for you, it doesn’t matter who is against you!” How vital is it that we understand that God is for us? (31)
5. Who does 32 focus on primarily? How could fully understanding the love of God the Father toward you help you be fruitful in your Christian life? (32)
6. What action of God does verse 32 focus on? Actually, Paul mentions two actions—one God didn’t do, and one He did do... what are they? What does the word “spare” mean here? Given that Romans 3 reveals us all as wicked sinners, how surprising is it that God didn’t spare Jesus for us all? (32)
7. What does it mean that God “gave Him up for us all”? What does “give up” mean? The Greek word of verse 32 is also used to speak of Judas betraying Jesus to the chief priests (Matthew 27:3), the chief priests delivering Jesus up to Pontius Pilate (Luke 24:20), and Pilate handing Jesus to the soldiers to be crucified (John 19:16). How do you answer the question “Who delivered Jesus

- over to death”? How would Acts 2:23 and Acts 4:27-28 help explain this mystery of God doing the exact thing that wicked men were doing? (32)
8. What conclusion does Paul draw in verse 32? What is the general logic? How would it be preposterous for God to give us Jesus to death for our sins, and yet withhold some lesser blessing as if they were too costly to give? (32)
 9. How does verse 32 imply that, in God’s mind, the highest possible gift He could ever give us He already has given—Jesus on the cross for our sins? Is anything in the universe worth more than Jesus to God the Father? (32)
 10. What are the “all things”? Why does Paul use the word “graciously”? (32)
 11. What is the significance of the phrase “with Him” in verse 32? How is it helpful to meditate on Christ generously giving us all things along with His Father—the two of them together lavishing gifts of grace on us? (32)
 12. Paul next brings up the issue of accusations made against us. Who specializes in accusing us of our sins? See Revelation 12:10. How is Zechariah 3:1-5 a picture of the logic of verse 33? How does verse 33 flow from verse 32? Why would it be ridiculous for God, having poured out Jesus to death for our sins to entertain any accusations against us? (33)
 13. How does verse 33 give you tremendous confidence as a sinner facing Judgment Day? Especially the idea of “Who *dares* to bring any accusation against those whom God has chosen”? (33)
 14. What is the power of the statement “It is God who justifies!” especially when linked with “Who is to condemn”? What is the answer to Paul’s question, “Who is to condemn”? Who has the right to condemn? Does anyone else in the universe have the right to condemn a soul to hell? So then, explain the power of Paul’s couplet: “It is God who justifies; Who is to condemn”? In one sense Paul is saying in effect “If God has declared a sinner not guilty, who would *dare* stand up in the heavenly courtroom and contradict God’s final verdict on our souls?!” See Romans 8:1. (33-34)
 15. How does this give you assurance? How does it help us with our present sense of guilt for sin, as Satan and our own conscience accuse us of sin in this present life? See 1 John 3:19-20, and Hebrews 9:13-14. (33-34)
 16. What other magnificent assurance does verse 34 give us? (34)
 17. How does Jesus’ intercession give us confidence in our trials? What is the significance of the fact that Paul says Jesus is “at the right hand of God”? How would you relate Jesus’ intercession with that of the Holy Spirit? (34)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul continues to give Christians a strong sense of assurance in salvation based on God’s sovereign actions through Jesus.

MORE THAN CONQUERORS THROUGH CHRIST

ROMANS 8:35-39

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is Paul's goal in these verses? What is he trying to do in the hearts of his readers?
2. How would reading these verses help someone going through intense persecution? How would they help Christians who are not going through persecution but are just leading "normal" Christian lives?
3. Why do you think the Lord ordains the death (slaughter) of His people?
4. What do you think it means to be "more than conquerors" through Christ?
5. How do verses 38-39 particularly encourage you in your Christian life?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. How does verse 35 connect with verses 31-34? (35)
2. Verse 35 begins with a rhetorical question, that is, a question asked not to get an answer but to make a point. What point is Paul trying to make? (35)
3. Why is it impossible for anything to separate us from the Christ's love? What does it teach you about his love? Does Christ's love originate from inside Himself (as expression of His own character and will) or is it drawn from Him by something outside Himself? Specifically, does Christ love us because of something He sees in us or something He commits to within Himself? (35)
4. How does Romans 5:8 relate to Romans 8:35? (35)
5. What possible factors that might separate us from the Christ's love does Paul list in 35? How might tribulation separate us from the love of Christ? How might distress? Persecution? Famine? Nakedness, danger, or sword? (35)
6. Is it possible that someone going through all those things might feel that Christ no longer loves them? (35)
7. How does verse 36 connect with verse 35? In other words, what is the train of thought here? (35-36)
8. What does it mean "*For your sake*, we are being killed all day long"? For whose sake are Christians being killed? Note: the quote is from Psalm 44:22. Read it in context to find out who the Psalmist is speaking to. How does the death of Christians in some way benefit God? (36)
9. Tertullian, a 3rd-century Christian apologist who defended Christianity to the Roman empire when the emperors were openly persecuting Christians said "The blood of martyrs is seed for the church." How is that true? How does John 12:24-26 help explain it? (36)
10. When Stephen was martyred in Acts 7, what was Jesus doing? See Acts 7:56. Why didn't Jesus stop the stoning?

11. What does it mean when it says “We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered”? What does “regarded” mean? Who regards Christians as sheep to be slaughtered? Do the Roman authorities? Does Satan? Does Jesus? Should we Christians consider ourselves as sheep to be slaughtered? If so, how should we live that out? (36)
12. Paul begins verse 37 with the word “No.” Why? (37)
13. What does verse 37 mean? Why does he use the expression “more than conquerors”? In what way are Christians greater conquerors than Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar? (37)
14. What does the expression “through him who loved us” teach us about our being “more than conquerors”? (37)
15. How does verse 38 begin? What is the significance of Paul’s statement “I am sure that...”? How does someone become convinced that none of the things listed in verses 38-39 will separate us from God’s love? (38)
16. What is the significance of the first possible threat to God’s love: death? How is it comforting that death itself cannot separate us from God’s love? How does this verse, coupled with Jesus’ statement in Matthew 22:32 prove the resurrection? (38)
17. How could life separate us from God’s love? Why is it impossible for that to happen? (38)
18. How could angels or demons separate us from God’s love? Why is it impossible for that to happen? (38)
19. Paul says, “nor things present nor things to come” can separate us from God’s love? How does that really cover everything? (38)
20. Paul also mentions “powers.” What powers could be arrayed against us to separate us from God’s love? Why are they insufficient? (38)
21. What does Paul add to the list in verse 39? It’s as though Paul was searching the physical universe (heights, depths, anything in the universe) and saying there is nothing in the entire created universe that can separate us from God’s love in Christ. How should this be comforting? (39)
22. What is the significance of the final words “love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Why does Paul qualify God’s love for us with those words? (39)

III. SUMMARY:

The Apostle Paul, seeking to encourage believers through all manner of suffering and trials, writes some of the most assuring and comforting words in the Bible. He says that nothing in the universe can separate Christians from the love of God in Christ. This gives us immense assurance, even while many Christians suffer extreme persecution and even martyrdom.

THE GRIEVOUS SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF ISRAEL

ROMANS 9:1-6

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is Paul's main reason for bringing up the plight of Israel at this point? How does Romans 9-11 (Paul's lengthy address concerning the spiritual state of Israel) relate to the joyful assertion of God's sovereign love for the elect of Romans 8:28-39? How does Romans 9:6a help answer this question?
2. What does Paul's emotional language about Israel teach us about how we should feel about the lost around us? How does this challenge you?
3. How could you use Paul's overpowering expression of grief here to answer a misguided Christian who says "The Jews are God's people and therefore we don't have to evangelize them—they are fine as they are!"?
4. Why do you think Paul lists in this section the lavish spiritual blessings Israel has enjoyed? What purpose does that serve in his train of thought?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. What does this section of Romans deal with? Is this a new topic in the flow of Romans, or is it a continuation of Romans 8? (1-6)
2. How does Paul begin this section? Why do you think he uses such powerful language to prove that he is telling the truth? (1-2)
3. Why would some think Paul was lying when he said he mourned deeply and personally for the Jews who were rejecting Christ? How did the Jews treat Paul as he traveled throughout the empire preaching Christ? See Acts 9:23, 9:29, 13:45, 13:50, 14:2, 14:5, 14:19, 17:5, 17:13, 18:6, 18:12, 20:3, 20:19, 21:11, 21:27, 22:22, 23:10, 23:12, 24:9, 25:2, 25:7, 26:7, 26:21. (1-2)
4. How does Paul's attitude toward lost Jews parallel Jesus? See Luke 19:41-44. Since salvation is being conformed to Christ, how does Paul's sorrow for the lost show the work of the Spirit of Christ in his heart? How does that teach us to pray over our own hearts if we lack compassion for the lost? (1-3)
5. How do the words "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart" affect you personally? Would you say this characterizes your attitude toward lost family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers? If not, why not? If we all are honest, wouldn't we confess that we fall far short of Paul's level of concern for the lost? What should we do about it? (2)
6. How do you relate Paul's expression of sorrow with his command in Philippians 4:4 to "Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say rejoice." (2)
7. How does this passage relate to Paul's statement about Gentile lost people in Philippians 3:18-19?
8. How would you put verse 3 in your own words? Why is this shocking?

9. Is it possible to Paul to be cut off from Christ for the sake of other lost people? Why or why not? See Romans 8:38-39! If not, then why does he even bring this topic up? What do these words mean?
10. How is Paul's willingness to be condemned for the lost parallel Jesus' own death on the cross? How is it impossible that God would require Paul to do this in addition to Jesus' own condemnation for sinners on the cross? (3)
11. What words does Paul use to make it very clear what people he is talking about that bring him such grief? (3-4)
12. What spiritual blessings does Paul list for the nation of Israel in verses 4-5? How do these blessings set Israel apart among all the nations on earth? How are they less than the salvation blessings of the gospel? In other words, how is it possible to have these blessings and still be lost, spiritually dead? (4-5)
13. What does Paul mean by the phrase "to them belong the adoption"? Is this the same adoption that he mentioned in Romans 8:15? Why or why not? If not, then what "adoption" is it? See Exodus 4:22-23, Hosea 11:1. (4)
14. What is the "glory" that Paul mentions? Is it the glory of salvation or a different glory? See Exodus 16:10, 24:16-17, 40:34-35, etc. Compare this with Paul's discussion of glory in 2 Corinthians 3:7-11. (4)
15. What are "the covenants"? What of the "law"? "Worship"? "Promises"? How did they benefit from these various spiritual blessings? Yet, how are each of these blessing insufficient for personal, individual salvation? (4)
16. What additional privileges does Paul list in verse 5? How does being biologically related to the patriarchs and to Christ Himself serve as a blessing for the Jews? How is it insufficient for salvation? (5)
17. What incredible thing does Paul claim for Jesus in verse 5? How are both aspects of the doctrine of the incarnation mentioned in verse 5? Why does he mention the issue of Christ's deity here in the list of Israel's blessings? See also Matthew 15:23 where Jesus says "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel" but also Matthew 13:57 in which Jesus says "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown..." How do these show the advantage and disadvantage of having the Savior of the world born in your hometown? (5)
18. How does verse 6a help explain what Paul is so careful to defend in this whole discussion? Why does it seem as though God's word has failed? Why would it matter after Romans 8:28-39? (6)

III. SUMMARY:

In order to defend against anyone looking at the case of Israel and their almost universal rejection of Christ and coming to the conclusion that God's word has failed, he addresses the woeful, tragic case of the Jews; and he does so by discussing his own grief for them and their rich spiritual blessings.

GOD'S PURPOSE IN ELECTION: NOT BY WORKS, BUT BY GOD

ROMANS 9:6-13

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main idea of these verses?
2. How does the sovereign election by God of some Jews but not of others help answer the question Paul is seeking to answer, "Doesn't the fact that so many Jews have rejected Christ prove that God's word can fail"?
3. Why do so many people have such a hard time accepting God's absolute sovereignty in choosing some for salvation and not others?
4. What is "God's purpose in election" in verses 11-12? Why is it so important for the glory of God that salvation be by Him and not by our works?
5. Many stumble over "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" though it is clearly in scripture. Why do you think this is? How is this reconciled with John 3:16?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. How does the question of the failing of God's word serve as a key theme in Romans 9? Why might some think God's word toward Israel had failed? (6)
2. How does the second half of verse 6 address the problem of the first half of verse 6? How does "not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel" help prove that God's word concerning the Jews has not failed? (6)
3. What does this statement mean "not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel"? How is Paul using the word "Israel" in two different senses here? (6)
4. How does verse 7 add to Paul's argument? In effect, how does verse 7 teach the same thing about Abraham's children that verse 6 taught about Israel's children? (7)
5. In both verse 6 and 7, Paul is addressing the difference between being *physically descended* from Abraham and Israel, and being *spiritually connected* with the covenant made to these men. How is this the key issue that Paul is addressing? (6-7)
6. What case does Paul bring up implicit in the words "through Isaac shall your offspring be named"? Isaac as opposed to whom? (7)
7. What is the significance of the word "named" or "called" in verse 7? (7)
8. What summary statement does Paul make in verse 8? Here again, Paul seems to be dealing with the difference between being a "natural born" child (biology) and a "supernaturally born child" (sovereign grace by the calling of God). How is this the key issue in understanding the salvation of Jews? (8)
9. What does it mean to be a "child of the promise"? Why is it important to be considered one of Abraham's children? See Genesis 12:3 and Romans 4:16. (8)

10. What promise does Paul refer to in verse 9? How does the fulfillment of that promise show the power of God? See Romans 4:17-21. It seems that Paul's main point is that no one is born biologically into the Kingdom of God, but people (Jews and Gentiles) must be born supernaturally into it, and this happens only by the sovereign grace and calling of God. See also John 3:1-8 and John 1:12-3. How is Jesus and Paul and John teaching the same doctrine? (9)
11. What case does Paul turn to next to make this same point? (10-13)
12. How does the choosing of Jacob and not Esau prove Paul's point? What is the point Paul is making? (10-13)
13. How could some Jews reject the first case (Abraham's two sons, Ishmael and Isaac), but would be forced not to reject the second case? (10)
14. How does the choosing of one twin but not the other establish God's sovereignty in salvation? (10-13)
15. How does the timing of God's statement to Rebekah "The older will serve the younger" prove God's sovereignty in salvation, especially with Paul's additional observation, "though they [the twins] were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad..."? (11)
16. What is "God's purpose in election"? What was God establishing? (11-12)
17. What is contrasted at the end of verse 11? These are the two approaches to salvation: human works or God. How does this address the issue of why the Jews were almost universally rejecting Christ? How does it prove that God's word has not failed, but is established no matter what happens? (11-12)
18. What are the astonishing implications of the words "and had done nothing either good *or bad*"? What is Paul saying when it comes to both Jacob's being accepted and Esau's being rejected? (11-12)
19. How would these verses remove the argument that God's election was based on foreseen actions on the part of both the saved and the damned? (11-12)
20. How do the words "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" sum up the point Paul was seeking to make? Read the statement in context in Malachi 1:2-5. (13)
21. Summation: simply put, what answer is Paul giving here to the searing question, "Why are so many Jews rejecting Christ and going to hell"?

III. SUMMARY:

Paul addresses the question of the Jews' almost universal rejection of Christ by saying, in effect, the ones that reject Christ were not really Israel anyway, that they had been rejected by God before they were born or had done anything good or bad. He is establishing the corresponding fact that those who are chosen are also chosen simply by the will of God, apart from any of their works. This is the doctrine of unconditional election, and it is foundational to our understanding of our salvation in Christ.

THE JUSTICE, MERCY, AND FREEDOM OF GOD IN ELECTION

ROMANS 9:14-18

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does this passage help answer Paul's overall question, "Why are the overwhelming majority of Jews rejecting Christ"? What implications are there for the rest of the human race as well?
2. What is the significance of Paul raising the question of God's injustice? In other words, how does the issue of God's injustice naturally flow from what Paul's been teaching up to this point in Romans 9?
3. What is the significance of Paul answering a question about God's injustice with a statement of God's freedom to show mercy to whomever He wills?
4. How is verse 16 a very humbling verse for the human race? How is it also a very liberating verse for those who yearn to be saved from their sins?
5. How is the summary statement in verse 18 a display of God's sovereignty in salvation?
6. Would you say that it's true that God either has mercy on or hardens every single human being on the earth? If so, what are the implications of this?
7. Why do you think these verses are hard for people to accept?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. How does the previous passage (the example of God's dealing with Jacob and Esau) raise questions of God's injustice? (14)
2. How does Paul answer the question of God's injustice? How does Scripture in general back up Paul's rather emotional answer, in verse 14? (14)
3. How would you define justice? How would you define injustice? (14)
4. Read Psalm 36:6 How does this help us understand Paul's answer in verse 14? How does a human being's sense of justice compare with God's? (14)
5. How does verse 14 connect with verse 15? How is the change from considering justice to considering mercy a very significant one? (14-15)
6. How would you define mercy? (15)
7. What is the difference between justice and mercy? How would it be appropriate to say, "You can demand justice, but you can only beg for mercy."? Would you agree with that statement? How is it relevant here? (15)
8. What would happen if a sinner demanded only justice from God? What would be the outcome if every sinner got only justice from God and received no mercy? (15)
9. Is it true to say that if God shows mercy to one sinner, He must show the same mercy to every sinner? (15)

10. What does God say about mercy and compassion in verse 15? How does this declare God's sovereign freedom in human salvation? Is God obligated to show sinners mercy or compassion? To whom does God show mercy and compassion in verse 15? (15)
11. What conclusion does Paul draw from this meditation in verse 16? How would you rephrase verse 16? Put it into your own words! (16)
12. What is verse 16 referring to? What is it that does not depend on man's will or effort/exertion? (16)
13. How does verse 16 completely destroy all human boasting in salvation? (16)
14. How does this destroy any theological emphasis on man's "free will"? (16)
15. Can a sinner ever put God in a position in which it would be unjust for God to not show mercy and save that sinner? Will God be a debtor to man? (16)
16. How does verse 16 establish God as the ultimate source of salvation? (16)
17. What does God's statement to Pharaoh add to this argument? What is the original context of this? See Exodus 9:13-16. What does "I have raised you up" mean? What was God's purpose in raising up Pharaoh? Why didn't God just wipe Pharaoh out as soon as he resisted? What answer does verse 17 give to that question? How did those ten plagues give the world a lasting display of God's power, one that would be proclaimed in all the earth? (17)
18. How did the proclamation of God's power over Pharaoh and Egypt result in salvation for Rahab in Joshua 2:10 and for the Gibeonites in Joshua 9:9?
19. In order to achieve all ten of the plagues, Exodus tells us God had to harden Pharaoh's heart. What does this mean, to "harden the heart"? (18)
20. Before God even sent Moses to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, He said in Exodus 4:21, "I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go." The other statements of hardening are in Exodus 7:3-4, 7:13, 7:22, 8:15, 8:19, 8:32, 9:12, 9:34-35, 10:1, 10:20, 10:27, 11:10. How would you answer someone who says that God never hardened Pharaoh's heart until he had hardened his own heart? Those who say such things are seeking to emphasize human will over God's hardening. How would you reply to that?
21. What does Romans 9:18 actually say about hardening and mercy? (18)
22. How does verse 18 declare God's sovereign freedom in the case of salvation? (18)
23. Is there any category of people that God neither hardens nor has mercy on? Do you think 18 covers every single person on the face of the earth? (18)

III. SUMMARY:

These verses teach God's absolute justice, mercy, and sovereign freedom in electing some for mercy and some for hardening. This passage puts the ultimate issue of human salvation squarely in God's actions, not man's.

THE FREEDOM OF THE POTTER

ROMANS 9:19-26

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What issue does Paul seek to address in this section of Romans 9?
2. How is it vital to our proper conception of God to understand the “potter’s freedom” to do what He wants with what He’s made?
3. How does this passage answer the question “Why does God make people who end up in hell”?
4. How does meditating on the ultimate outcome of the “vessels of wrath” make the riches of God’s glory known more clearly to the “vessels of mercy”? In other words, when you consider that you are no better at all than the people languishing in hell, how does that move you to praise God for His mercy?
5. Why does Paul talk so plainly at this moment about the fact that people are chosen (elect) from both the Jews and the Gentiles?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. How does this section connect with the previous one? Specifically, what is the link between verse 18 and verse 19? (18-19)
2. What objecting question does Paul raise in verse 19? How is it exactly the kind of question that someone disputing with Paul’s doctrine would raise at this point? (19)
3. What seeming implication of the doctrine “No one can resist God’s will in salvation” does Paul address in verse 19? How do you harmonize the idea that God is sovereign in salvation, and that God can still justly blame each of us for our decisions and actions? (19)
4. How does Paul answer the accusation of verse 19 in verse 20? (20)
5. How would you characterize what God is doing through Paul in verse 20? How does this verse put the entire human race in its place? How is it similar to what God does with Job at the end of that book? (20)
6. What is so evil about human beings talking back to God? How is it a fundamental part of our rebellion against Him? Compare this with Revelation 16:4-7, where the angels celebrate God’s wrath being poured out on sinful humanity. (20)
7. How do you see this same instinct in yourself—to question and talk back to God? How would verses 20-21 help heal you of this great sin? (20-21)
8. What question is forbidden from us in verse 20? How are we tempted to ask this question? (20)
9. How do you understand the potter and clay logic of verse 21? What does it teach about God’s absolute rights over every single human being? (21)

10. What is the significance of the words “same lump” (lump of clay) in the issue of election and reprobation? How does it go back to the original concept of the twins, before they had done anything good or bad? (21)
11. What is the “honorable use” and what is the “dishonorable use”? (21)
12. Paul next raises some idea in question form, using the expression “What if...” Why do you think Paul takes that approach? (22-23)
13. What is the first “what if” question? What concept does he introduce with this question? (22)
14. What does Paul say about the “vessels of wrath” in verse 22? What are God’s purpose for making these vessels of wrath according to this verse? (22)
15. What does it say God does to/for the vessels of wrath in verse 22? In what ways does God “endure with much patience” vessels of wrath? (22)
16. Does it say that God prepares them for destruction? How would you contrast the phraseology of the preparation of verse 22 and verse 23? Is this significant? (22-23)
17. How are the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? How are the vessels of mercy prepared beforehand for glory? (22-23)
18. What is the connection between verse 22 and verse 23? How does verse 23 seek to answer the question “Why do you make people like Judas who you know full well are going to end up in hell”? (23)
19. Concerning Judas, Jesus said “It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.” If that is so, then (according to the logic of verse 23) why was he born? Why did God knit Judas together in his mother’s womb? How is it better for the elect if the non-elect are born? (23)
20. What is the significance of the phrase “the riches of his glory”? How does God’s glory appear all the richer because of the non-elect? (23)
21. What is the importance of Paul’s statement “even us” in verse 24? Whom does Paul identify as vessels of mercy in verse 24? (24)
22. Why do you think Paul discusses the fact that God calls His vessels of mercy from *both* the Jews and Gentiles? (25-26)
23. How is the quotation of Hosea applied to the Gentiles? How is it significant that in the original context Hosea was speaking of the Jews as being “not my people”? (25-26)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul concludes his defense of the doctrine of divine sovereignty over human salvation by giving the analogy of the freedom of a potter to do whatever he wants with the same lump of clay, and the clay has no right to talk back to the potter. In addition, non-elect are created to display God’s glory to the elect.

THE NATION OF ISRAEL AND THE ELECTION OF GOD

ROMANS 9:27-33

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main point of the series of Old Testament quotations Paul cites here?
2. How does the salvation of only a remnant of Israel answer the overall question of this chapter (i.e. Why are so many Jews are rejecting Jesus)?
3. What does Paul assert about the Gentiles here?
4. What reason does Paul give for the failure of the Jews to attain righteousness?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. How does the first Isaiah quote connect with Israel's history as descendants of Abraham? (27)
2. How is it that someone could be both a fulfillment of the prophecy made to Abraham and also a vessel of wrath condemned to hell? (27-28)
3. What is a "remnant"? See also Romans 11:5. (27)
4. What "sentence" or "word" does the Lord carry out on earth? How does it say He will carry it out? (28)
5. What image of Almighty God do verses 27-28 give? How would you characterize God based on these verses? (27-28)
6. How does the second quote from Isaiah support the first one? (29)
7. What would have been particularly shocking about Isaiah comparing Israel to Sodom and Gomorrah? How does it support the overall approach Paul is taking to answering the problem of Israel? (29)
8. What is the original context of the two Isaiah quotes? See Isaiah 1:1-18 and Isaiah 10:1-23. How does the physical destruction of many Israelites at the times of Gentile invasion likened to the eternal destruction of many Israelites at Judgment Day? (27-29)
9. How is God's sovereign grace on display in verse 29? (29)
10. What topic does Paul next address in verse 30? (30)
11. How is the salvation of Gentiles seen to be ironic and amazing in verses 30-31? (30-31)
12. What righteousness do the Gentiles receive? Compare this with Romans 1:17, 3:21-22, 4:13, and 10:6. How is the righteousness that comes by faith the central issue here? (30)

13. Why is it particularly to Paul's purpose to point out that the Gentiles were not even pursuing righteousness at all when they received it, but the Jews were pursuing it and did not receive it? How does that help support the points Paul has made on unconditional election in verses 11-12, and the strong statement of verse 16? (30-31)
14. How does the fact that the Jews so strongly pursued their own righteousness by works prove the points of God's sovereign election Paul is seeking to make? (31-32)
15. What is the significance of the statement that Israel "stumbled over the stumbling stone"? How is the "stumbling stone" identified here? How is the "stumbling stone" identified in 1 Corinthians 1:23? (32-33)
16. In what way is Christ crucified a stumbling stone to Israel? How is he also that to every non-Christian? (32-33)
17. Does God lay the stumbling stone so that people *will* stumble, or in order to save them? (33)
18. How is the issue of faith raised in the quote? (33)
19. What does the promise that "whoever believes in him will not be put to shame" mean? What shame is intended here? (33)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul continues his analysis of the rejection of Christ by Israel by pointing out God's sovereign activity in choosing a remnant of Israel to be saved, and showing that Israel's zeal to pursue a law of righteousness by works has not resulted in their salvation. He also shows that the Gentiles did receive salvation by receiving a gift of righteousness by faith. He concludes by speaking of Christ as the stumbling stone for Israel.

THE JEWS AND THE “RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD”

ROMANS 10:1-13

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does this section continue Paul’s argument from the last chapter about why the Jews are rejecting the gospel of Christ?
2. How do we see the two different ways of salvation addressed in this passage—justification by works vs. justification by faith?
3. What is the significance of Paul’s summary of the righteousness of the law: “The person who does the commandments shall live by them”?
4. What is Paul’s point about the word being near you, not out of reach in the heavens or down in the depths?
5. How do we harmonize in our minds the simplicity of salvation by faith with the doctrine of election/predestination in Romans 9?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE JEWS’ ZEAL TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS (VV. 1-4)

1. What insights into Paul’s heart do we have in verse 1? (1)
2. Given that we just had a chapter on the absolute sovereignty of God in salvation, what is the significance of the fact that Paul immediately follows with an expression of his prayer life for people to be saved? How does it help you to harmonize the doctrine of God’s sovereignty with prayer? (1)
3. What does Paul say about the Jews in verse 2? What is zeal? How were the Jews zealous for God? What was defective about their zeal? How does this harmonize with Jesus’ judgment of the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23?
4. What is the right harmony of zeal and knowledge? Why is it important for Christians to be zealous based on knowledge? (2)
5. How does Paul clarify his statement about zeal not being based on knowledge in verse 3? What does it seem the Jews were zealous for? (3)
6. How would a true knowledge of God and of themselves make them zealous for God’s righteousness and not for their own? (3)
7. What does it mean to “submit” to God’s righteousness? How does coming to faith in Christ involve a form of submission to God’s righteousness? (3)
8. Verse 4 is a significant statement with a variety of interpretations. The word “end” can either mean Christ is the “ultimate goal” of the Law or Christ “puts an end to” the Law. Both interpretations have some validity. How is Christ the “ultimate goal” of the Law? How did Christ put an end to the Law? If Christ has put an end to the law, should Christians still obey it? (4)
9. How does verse 4 end? How is Christ an end to the Law *so that* there is righteousness for everyone who believes? (4)

THE LAW VS. THE GOSPEL: JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS VS. BY FAITH (VV. 5-13)

10. How, according to Paul, does Moses describe the “righteousness that is based on the law”? This is a quote from Leviticus 18:5. How is that contrasted with the earlier quote of Habakkuk 2:4? (5)
11. How is the effort to “live by these things” (the Law) really a death sentence when it comes to our final standing before God on Judgment Day? (5)
12. Verses 6-8 are a paraphrase and application of Deuteronomy 30:11-15. Read that passage in Deuteronomy in context. How does Paul apply Moses’ statement in Deuteronomy to the gospel of Jesus Christ? What point is Paul seeking to make here? (6-8)
13. How does the righteousness of faith say, “The word is near you; in your mouth and in your heart”? (8)
14. What is the “word of faith we proclaim”? (8)
15. What does verse 9 teach about justification by faith? How is it the opposite of a person zealous to establish his own righteousness? (9)
16. What is the significance of confessing with your mouth “Jesus is Lord”? How does Paul combine it with believing in your heart? Why do you think Paul specifically mentions the Lordship of Jesus and His resurrection from the dead as the key issues? Why not His death on the cross or incarnation? Why specifically that He is Lord and that He was raised from the dead? (9)
17. How does Paul go on to explain this in verse 10? What is the relationship between the heart and the mouth in that verse? How do you understand the relationship between the word “justified” and “saved”? (10)
18. What does verse 11 add to Paul’s message? What does he mean by the promise that belief in Christ will deliver us from shame? (11)
19. Why do you think Paul addresses the Jew-Gentile issue here? How does he make it clear that salvation in Christ is open for everyone on earth? (12)
20. What does it mean to “call on the name of the Lord”? Do you think this involves the “sinner’s prayer”? Does it involve more than that? How does Psalm 50:15 relate to this? (13)
21. Paul seems to be speaking in wide and universal terms in verses 11-13. He uses terms like “anyone”, “all”, and “everyone”. How does that line up with the doctrine of election and predestination in Romans 9? (11-13)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul speaks of the Jews seeking to establish their own righteousness by the Law, and says that they refuse to submit to the gospel of God’s imputed righteousness. He then shows in a sense, at the human level, how simple it is to be saved—believe in Jesus Christ with the heart and confess with the mouth the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

NO EXCUSE FOR ISRAEL: THEY HEARD AND DID NOT BELIEVE

ROMANS 10:14-21

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main point Paul is seeking to make in this section of his letter?
2. How does this passage give a strong basis for missions, especially missions to unreached people groups?
3. What is the significance of the statement “Faith comes from hearing” for evangelism/missions? What about for the ongoing, healthy Christian life?
4. What negative points about Israel does Paul make here?
5. What is the effect of the questions Paul asks about Israel: “Have they not heard”? and “Did Israel not understand”? Why does Paul ask these questions and how does he answer them?
6. How does Paul use the success of the gospel among the Gentiles as a contrast and a convicting goad for rebellious Israel?
7. Paul mentions the theme of Israel’s spiritual envy over the Gentiles. This will come up again in Romans 11:11-14. Why is this such an important theme?
8. What does this section teach us about the patience of God toward sinners?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. How does verse 14 connect with verse 13? (13-14)
2. Paul asks a series of rhetorical questions in verses 14-15. What is the overall point he is trying to make? (14-15)
3. What does the first rhetorical question imply about the relationship between faith in Christ and calling on his name? Which comes first—faith or calling on his name? What does this teach about the words spoken in a “sinners prayer” or the need to “come forward in response to the gospel? If faith precedes any meaningful action in the true Christian life, and if justification is only by faith, what are the implications in evangelistic technique? (14)
4. The next rhetorical question implies what about the connection between saving faith and knowledge about Jesus? Which comes first: knowledge or faith? Is that universally true—that you can’t believe something you don’t know? If so, what are the implications of this for the Christian life? (14)
5. What does the third rhetorical question teach us: “How can they hear without someone preaching”? Do you think by this question, Paul is assuming that no one can come to faith in Christ without some human messenger? Are angels ruled out by this verse? What are the implications of this question? (14)
6. And what of the fourth rhetorical question: “How can they preach unless they are sent”? What does this teach us about missions work? How does this relate to John 20:21, “As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you”? (15)

7. How does Paul support this question in verse 15? What is the significance of the Isaiah quote about the “beautiful feet”? How does this quote throw into stark light the failure of the Jews to receive the good news of the gospel? (15)
8. What sad truth does Paul connect in verse 16 to this series of questions he’s been asking? How does he support this assertion? Where does the OT quote come from? Why is the origin of that quote so significant? (16)
9. What summary truth does Paul give in verse 17? How is this one of the vital messages in the whole book of Romans? (17)
10. How does faith not only initially come by hearing the word of Christ, but is also strengthened and nourished by the same means? How does Galatians 3:1-3 support this? What about John 15:1-8? (17)
11. If a Pastor wants to strengthen and nourish the faith of the people in his church, what does Romans 10:17 tell him to do? (17)
12. What does Paul do next in the argument? Why does he ask the question he does in verse 18? How does he answer it? (18)
13. The OT quotation which Paul cites in verse 18 comes from Psalm 19 which discusses natural revelation—how the heavens proclaim the glory of God. But Paul here is speaking of the preaching of the gospel, an example of special revelation. How do you harmonize these two? (18)
14. How does verse 18 connect with Acts 19:10 and Romans 15:19-23? On the other hand, how do you reconcile it with the fact that so much of the world was unreached with the gospel when Paul wrote these words? (18)
15. What does Paul ask next? How does he answer the question? (19-20)
16. Why do you think Paul uses the quote from Moses about the Israel being made envious by the Gentiles, a people without understanding, at this point in the argument? (19)
17. What quote from Isaiah does Paul use in verse 20, and why? Why does he say that Isaiah “so bold” to say this? (20)
18. How does verse 20 reconnect back to Romans 9 and to the themes of God’s absolute sovereignty in salvation? (20)
19. How does verse 21 sum up what Paul has been saying in Romans 9-10? (21)
20. What does verse 21 teach you about God? How do you harmonize the picture of God as patiently waiting for a stubborn and rebellious people with the picture in Romans 9 of a God whose will cannot be resisted? (21)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul continues to address the issue of the rejection of the gospel by the Jews by saying that they had heard the gospel clearly explained and God made it clear to them, so that in the end, they are completely without excuse.

THE REMNANT CHOSEN BY GRACE

ROMANS 11:1-10

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is Paul seeking to prove in this section of his epistle? What question does he raise and how does he answer it?
2. What is the significance of the example of Elijah and the seven thousand whom God had reserved for himself?
3. What does it mean that there is a “remnant chosen by grace”? How does it help the overall effort in Romans 9-11 to explain the situation of the Jews with the gospel of Jesus Christ?
4. What new light does this passage shed on the earlier teaching (Romans 9:18) that God has mercy on whom He wills to have mercy, and He hardens whom He wills to harden?
5. How do you understand the quote from David, “Let their table be a snare and a trap”?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. How does Paul begin this section of Romans? What question does he ask? Why does he ask that particular question? (1)
2. If God had completely rejected the Jews, what would the result be concerning the gospel? Would any of them believe in Christ? How is the fact that Paul (and many other Jews) had trusted in Christ proof that God had not rejected His people? (1)
3. What does “His people” mean in verses 1-2? (1-2)
4. What is the significance of the addition of the phrase “whom He foreknew” in verse 2? (2)
5. What example from the Old Testament does Paul reach for at this point to prove what he’s saying about the Jewish nation? How does this example help prove his point? (2-5)
6. What happened in the time of Elijah? What was Elijah’s attitude toward the Jewish nation? Why did he have such a negative attitude? What did he conclude when he said “I alone am left”? (3)
7. How did God correct him? (4)
8. What is the significance of the expression “I have kept for myself seven thousand...”? (4)
9. How is this a very clear example of God’s sovereign election in the history of Israel? (4)
10. How does Paul link it to his present time? (5)

11. What does the word “remnant” mean? What does it imply about the nation as a whole? (5)
12. Paul comments on the fact that this remnant is “chosen by grace.” What does this mean? How does it line up with the teaching he’s already given in Romans 9? (5)
13. Paul sets up grace against works in verse 6. Why? What point is he making about grace and works here? (6)
14. What conclusion does Paul give us in verse 7? How does it address the overall issue of the state of Israel with the gospel of Jesus Christ? (7)
15. Is it true that every Jew is either chosen by grace to believe in Jesus Christ or hardened to not believe in Him? Do you think that is what Paul is saying here? (7)
16. How does Paul use the two Old Testament quotes of verses 8-10? How do they add to his argument? (8-10)
17. What is a “spirit of stupor”? What is the significance of the fact that God gave it to them? How is this hard for people who emphasize free will to accept? (8)
18. What does it mean that God gave them “eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear”? (8)
19. What does David say that also lines up with this same idea? What language does he use? Does David desire people to be snared and trapped? How are we to understand this? (9-10)
20. How is a table a “snare and a trap”? What does a table usually represent in Scripture? How could God use the rich earthly blessing of life as a “snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution” for them? How does God use good things to harden non-elect people? (9-10)
21. How does this passage help address the issue of the prosperity of the wicked? (9-10)
22. How does verse 10 show the seriousness of this doctrine? (10)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul goes into greater detail about the elect and the hardened among the nation of Israel, and describes a “remnant chosen by grace” and the rest who are hardened by their blessings.

ISRAEL HARDENED SO THE GENTILES CAN BE INCLUDED

ROMANS 11:11-16

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. In this section, what main question is Paul seeking to answer? How does he answer it?
2. How should we understand God's purposes in ordaining a clearly evil thing (Israel's rejection of Christ) for a good purpose?
3. What ultimate hope does Paul hold out for Israel in this passage?
4. In this section, Paul directly addresses the Gentiles. Why? What does he say to them?
5. Why is it very important for Gentile Christians to be humble toward Jewish non-Christians, and to remain open to God's sovereign plan for Israel's future?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. What is the connection between this section and the previous one? How is Paul continuing the argument of Romans 11:1-10? (11-16)
2. What is the "stumbling" Paul mentions in verse 11? (11)
3. What question does he ask in verse 11? What does he mean by "stumble in order that they might fall"? (11)
4. Paul again answers with the famous "By no means!" answer he has used several times earlier (e.g. Romans 6:1). That answer implies almost a repugnance to the idea. Why does he use such a strong answer here? (11)
5. What implied question does Paul seek to answer here at the end of verse 11? What answer does he give to that implied question? (11)
6. How does salvation coming to the Gentiles have the potential to make Israel envious? Is there evidence in the New Testament (especially in the Book of Acts) that that is precisely what *did* happen? Why would God desire Israel to be jealous? How does that jealousy serve to advance the gospel among the Jews and bring about God's purpose for Israel? (11)
7. What is Israel's "trespass" in verse 12? What does this word teach you about God's perspective on the rejection of the gospel by anyone who hears it? (12)
8. What is Israel's "failure" in verse 12? Comment on that word in Israel's history. (12)
9. How does Israel's trespass bring "riches for the world"? What riches does Paul have in mind? (12)

10. What “how much more” does Paul have in mind at the end of verse 12? What will bring about those greater riches? What is the “full inclusion” of Israel in verse 12? What does Paul have in view here? (12)
11. In Romans, sometimes Paul directly addresses Jews (Romans 2:17); here he directly addresses Gentiles. What does this teach you about the church at Rome to which Paul was writing? (13)
12. Why does Paul directly address the Gentiles here in verse 13? What is his purpose in doing so? See also verse 20 to understand what Paul is concerned about for Gentile believers in reference to Israel’s humiliation. (13)
13. What does Paul say he does in reference to his ministry in verses 13-14? Why does he do it? What is the danger he sees of this approach? How does he seek to cut off that danger in this chapter? (13-14)
14. How would Paul speaking so boldly and openly about the astonishing success of the gospel among the Gentiles cause jealousy among the Jews? See Acts 13:45 for a clear example. How does this jealousy hinder the gospel spread? In the end, how will it help the gospel to spread? (13-14)
15. What incredible statement does Paul make about Israel in verse 15? How did Israel’s rejection of Christ serve to bring salvation and reconciliation to the gentiles?
16. What do you think Paul is speaking of with the phrase, “their acceptance”? (15)
17. Paul is using a “how much more” argument in these verses. What is that argument? (15-16)
18. What does he mean by “life from the dead”? (15)
19. What analogy does Paul use in verse 16 to speak of the future of Israel? What does he mean by teaching that Israel is holy? (16)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul addresses in amazing fashion the reasons for Israel’s rejection by God. He states that Israel has been rejected 1) so that the Gentiles can be saved now and 2) so that Israel can be saved later.

THE JUSTICE, MERCY, AND FREEDOM OF GOD IN ELECTION

ROMANS 11:17-24

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is Paul's purpose in writing this section? Who is he mainly addressing? What is he concerned about in their case?
2. Why do you think Paul chooses the olive tree and branches "broken off" and "grafted in" analogy to speak of unbelieving Jews and believing Gentiles? What does this metaphor teach us?
3. Why does God hate boasting so much?
4. Why is it important for the Gentiles to realize the Jewish roots of their salvation?
5. Paul tells us to consider the "kindness and severity" of God. What does he mean? Why does he want us to consider both aspects of God's dealings with people?
6. How does Paul express hopefulness for the spiritual future of the Jews?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. How does this passage fit into the previous verses in Romans 11? What is the general issue Paul is dealing with in Romans 11? What has he been saying in the previous sections? What is the immediate connection between verses 11-16 and this passage? Even more specifically, what is the connection between verse 16 and verse 17?
2. Paul speaks of branches that have been broken off. What do these represent? (17)
3. Paul also speaks of wild olive branches grafted in. What do these represent? (17)
4. These wild olive branches receive nourishing sap from the olive root. What does that represent? How does it help Gentile Christians to realize the Jewish root system that supports their faith and their salvation? What are the nourishing elements (sap) that Paul has in mind? (17)
5. According to verse 18, what should Gentile Christians *not* do concerning Jewish people who are rejecting Christ? (18)
6. Why is it so harmful to the Gentiles to have an attitude of superiority over Jewish unbelievers? (18)
7. What remedy does Paul give for Gentile believers' arrogant feelings toward Jewish unbelievers? (18)
8. What answer does Paul put in the mouths of Gentile believers in verse 19? Does Paul agree with their assessment? (19-20)

9. What reason does Paul give for the Jewish “branches” being broken off? What warning does Paul give to Gentile believers in verses 20-21? (20-21)
10. In verse 20, Paul commands us to not be arrogant but to “fear.” What exactly are we supposed to fear? How is that fear helpful for us in our Christian lives? (20)
11. Verse 21 implies the Jews had a natural advantage over the Gentiles. What is that advantage? How does it cause Gentile Christians to be humble in their demeanor toward Jewish unbelievers? (21)
12. What does Paul tell the Gentile believers to do in verse 22? Why should they do this? (22)
13. What display of God’s “kindness” does he have in mind? What display of God’s severity? (22)
14. Some may think that verse 22 teaches that someone can lose their salvation. Why does it seem like this is what it is teaching? How would you answer that statement? (22)
15. What promise does verse 23 hold out for the future of the Jews? How do we see that promise being realized now? (23)
16. How does verse 23 show the sovereignty of God in salvation? How does it seem to be teaching a man-centered salvation? How would you refute that notion? (23)
17. What is Paul arguing for in verse 24? How is he appealing to what seems reasonable to us? Which is harder—to graft in a wild branch from some foreign tree, or to graft back in a natural branch from the same tree from which it was stripped? (24)
18. How does verse 24 imply that in some senses evangelism among Jews should be easier and more fruitful than that among the Gentiles? (24)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul strongly urges Gentile Christians to be very humble in reference to Jewish unbelievers. He wants them to realize their dependence God’s daily sustaining grace in their lives, and to realize also the Jewish nature of their salvation, and to realize that, at any moment, God has the power to reconnect fallen Jews to their heritage in Christ.

THE STUNNING FUTURE OF ISRAEL

ROMANS 11:25-32

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does this section serve as a fitting climax to Paul's overall addressing of the difficult case of the Jews' rejection of Christ and of the gospel?
2. What amazing thing does this section reveal about the future of Israel?
3. What is Paul's motive for telling Gentile believers about the future of Israel?
4. How does this section show the awesome power of God in human salvation? How does it show God's unshakeable faithfulness to His commitments?
5. According to this passage, what is God's reason for dealing in this way with Israel (i.e. hardening them until the full number of the Gentiles comes in, then sovereignly removing the hardening and saving all of them at the end)?
6. How does God's purpose in salvation humble humanity?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. Who is Paul addressing in verse 25? See also verse 13. Who are they? (25)
2. What is the significance of the word "mystery" in verse 25? Note: Paul usually uses this word to refer to an aspect of God's sovereign, redemptive plan that was previously unknown, but now made clear by revelation. (25)
3. How could Gentile believers' misunderstanding of God's sovereign purpose for Israel's salvation produce arrogance? Why would that be bad for both? (25)
4. What does Paul say is true of Israel in verse 25? What is a "partial hardening"? For how long will that hardening take place? (25)
5. What is the "fullness of the Gentiles"? If it is all the Gentile elect, when will this mystery of Jewish national conversion take place? (25)
6. Paul introduces verse 26 with the words "And in this way..." Based on this, what is the connection between verse 25 and 26? (25-26)
7. What stunning statement does Paul make in verse 26? (26)
8. What are the possible interpretations for the word "Israel" in 26? In Romans 9:6, Paul uses the word Israel twice, in two different ways. What are the two ways he uses the word Israel in 9:6? How would these lead us to two different ways of interpreting 11:26? How does Paul use the word "Israel" in 11:25? (26)
9. If all Paul is saying is that all the elect Jews will finally be saved in verse 26, how does that not really fit the use of the word "mystery" in verse 25, and the "partial hardening"? (26)
10. What are the limitations of the understanding of "all Israel will be saved"? If it means "national Israel" or "ethnic Israel," does that mean that no Jew will be in hell? If not, then what "Israel" does it refer to? (26)

11. How does Paul support his amazing statement in verse 26? Paul actually combines two passages from the OT: Isaiah 59:20 and Isaiah 27:9. See the two verses from the Septuagint (the Greek OT that Paul was quoting):

Isaiah 59:20 And the deliverer shall come for Zion's sake, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

Isaiah 27:9 Therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be taken away; and this is his blessing, when I shall have taken away his sin.

How do these quotes prove that “All Israel will be saved”? Who is the “deliverer”? What is Israel’s “ungodliness”? How does the removal of Jacob’s sins fulfill a covenant? See Jeremiah 31:31-33. (26-27)

12. How does the promise to save all of Israel mesh with Zechariah 12:10?
13. What point is Paul making to Gentile Christians in verse 28? (28)
14. What does verse 29 mean? How are God’s “gifts and calling irrevocable”? What does it teach about God? How would the final salvation of the Jewish nation vindicate God’s actions in calling Israel to be His people? (29)
15. What parallel does Paul set up in verses 30-31? What good thing came to the Gentiles because of Jewish disobedience? What good thing will eventually come to the Jews because of their own disobedience? How does God’s mercy to the Gentiles open the way for the Jews also to receive mercy? How does human disobedience make way for God to show mercy? (30-31)
16. Verse 32 is a breathtaking summary of all of human redemption. What does Paul say about human disobedience? In what way does God consign all men over to disobedience? How does God do that without in any way being the author of evil? See James 1:13. How is this like Romans 1:24 and 1:26? In verse 32, what is God’s purpose in consigning all men over to sin? (32)
17. What do you think is God’s ultimate motive in saving us in such a way that we know that we were all saved only by the mercy of God? (32)
18. How does God’s overall purpose in hardening the hearts of the Jews against Christ for centuries, then removing that hardening just before the second coming of Christ resulting in the whole nation of Israel (Jews alive at that time) turning to Christ for salvation—how does all that greatly glorify God?

III. SUMMARY:

Paul finishes his exhaustive look at the problem of the Jewish rejection of Christ and the gospel by asserting a mystery: at the end of human history, after the full number of Gentiles have trusted in Christ, God will sovereignly remove the hardening He Himself had been putting on the Jewish nation’s heart and they will, as a nation, turn to Christ in faith. Paul asserts that this whole thing has been to humble *both* Gentiles and Jews by sin and by their equal need for mercy.

CELEBRATING THE GLORY OF GOD IN SALVATION

ROMANS 11:33-36

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think Paul inserts this amazing paragraph of transcendent praise to God at this particular place in his epistle?
2. What do these verses teach about the relationship between theology (the study of God) and doxology (the praise of God)?
3. What attributes of God does Paul celebrate here? Why does he focus on those attributes in particular?
4. How do these verses humble us?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. What is the connection between this passage and the previous discussion on the spiritual condition of (and God's future purposes for) Israel?
2. The first word in the passage is one single letter in the Greek: "O." What is the purpose of this word? What does it show us of Paul's heart? What does it reveal about human emotion stimulated by doctrine? What does it teach us about worship? (33)
3. What specifically does Paul celebrate in verse 33? (33)
4. How are God's wisdom and knowledge "deep"? (33)
5. How are God's wisdom and knowledge "riches"? (33)
6. What is the difference between wisdom and knowledge? (33)
7. How are God's judgments "unsearchable"? How are His ways "inscrutable"? (33)
8. The Greek word translated "inscrutable" relates to the kind of tracking done by a skilled woodsman as he tracks a quarry. How is God unable to be "tracked"? How does this "inscrutability" of God greatly glorify Him and greatly humble us? (33)
9. How is the gospel as unfolded by Romans 1-11 a display of the wisdom and knowledge of God? (33)
10. How does the idea of God's unsearchable judgments and paths give you comfort as you look at the twists and turns of your own life? (33)
11. Paul next quotes Isaiah 40:13 marveling at that fact that none of us can ever "know the mind of the Lord." How does that fact glorify God and humble us? (34)

12. How do you relate Paul's question "Who has known the mind of the Lord" with his statement in 1 Corinthians 2:10? And based on that, how do you associate it with 1 Corinthians 2:16? (34)
13. How do we sometimes seek to act as God's "counselor"? Why is that endeavor so ridiculous? Why is it so sinful? (34)
14. How is God's independence from human counsel clearly on display when it comes to the doctrines of Romans 9-11? (34)
15. Why doesn't God ever need advice? (34)
16. What is the significance of Paul's question in verse 35? (35)
17. Do we ever give anything to God at all? If so, then what is Paul saying in verse 35? (35)
18. Does our giving of anything to God ever put God in a debtor's position with us? Does God ever owe us anything? (35)
19. How does verse 35 rule out a transaction view of our salvation—we give God such and such, He gives us salvation. (35)
20. What is the connection between verse 35 and verse 36? (35-36)
21. What is the doctrinal significance of the statement, "From him, and through him, and to him are all things"? How does that statement declare God's absolute sovereignty over the human race? How does it declare God's sovereignty particularly over human salvation? How does it put in proper perspective what we give to God? (36)
22. What does it mean that "through him" are all things? (36)
23. What does it mean that "to him" are all things? (36)
24. How do verses 35-36 and Acts 17:35 relate?
25. How is Paul's final statement, "To him be the glory forever. Amen." a perfect end to Romans 1-11?

III. SUMMARY:

Paul celebrates the absolute independence, perfect wisdom, and total sovereignty of God in human salvation. To God alone be the glory for our salvation!

GOD HAS BEEN MERCIFUL; HOW THEN SHALL WE LIVE?

ROMANS 12:1-8

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this section teach us about living a life well-pleasing to God?
2. How is personal holiness a vital part of our lives as Christians?
3. What does this passage teach us about the importance of the mind in a healthy Christian life?
4. What does it teach about steps toward discerning the will of God for our lives?
5. What is the significance of the fact that Paul talks extensively about spiritual gifts and the specialization of Christians as a central part of the fruitful Christian life?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. How does Paul connect this section with everything that preceded? What is the significance of “therefore”? What does Paul mean by that phrase “by the mercies of God”? What mercies does he have in mind? (1)
2. How do the mercies of God given to us in Christ compel us to live a certain kind of life? How is it a basis of faithful Christian action? (1)
3. What command does Paul give us in verse 1? The word “present” is the same word Paul uses in Romans 6:13 to command the Romans to “present” or “offer” the members of their bodies to God as instruments of righteousness. How does Romans 12:1 relate to Romans 6:13? (1)
4. What does it mean to present your body as a “living sacrifice”? What is a sacrifice? What is a living sacrifice? What does it mean practically? (1)
5. What does verse 1 teach us about the importance of the body in the Christian life? Christianity is the only religion in the world that properly embraces the significance of the physical body for spiritual purposes. How does this verse show a healthy view of the body? (1)
6. What does “holy and acceptable to God” mean in reference to our bodies? (1)
7. Paul says that the offering of the body to God in this way is our “spiritual” worship to God. How is this offering the centerpiece of worship? (1)
8. What is the central concern of verse 2? What is Paul focusing on in the Christian life? What is the connection between verse 1 and verse 2? (1-2)
9. One translation of verse 2 is “Do not allow the world to squeeze you into its mold.” What does this mean? What does the verse mean by “the world”? How does this verse relate to 1 John 2:15-16? Or to James 1:27? (2)
10. What alternative does Paul give to being conformed to the world in verse 2? What command does he give after the prohibition? (2)

11. How do you relate the transformation of verse 2 to God's ultimate purpose in Romans 8:28? What does God want us to be conformed to in that verse? (2)
12. What is the "renewing of our minds" in verse 2? How does that happen? (2)
13. According to Paul, what is the outcome of the steps he's listed in verses 1-2? What does it mean to "test" and "discern" God's will for our lives? (1-2)
14. Why is it important to be able not only to "test" (i.e. identify) but also to "discern" (i.e. approve or give our hearty assent to) God's will? (2)
15. What other words does Paul use to describe God's will in verse 2? How would meditating on them help us to embrace God's will more readily? (2)
16. What is the connection between verses 1-2 and verse 3-8? (1-8)
17. What is the main concern of 3-8? What topic is being addressed there? (3-8)
18. What does Paul mean "For by the grace given to me..."? What is this "grace given to Paul"? How does it relate to Ephesians 4:7 and 1 Peter 4:10? (3)
19. What prohibition does Paul give in 3? What command does Paul give? Why are each of these vital to finding your proper place in the body of Christ? (3)
20. What does it mean to "think with sober judgment" about yourself? (3)
21. What is the topic of verse 4-5? What other passage of Scripture addresses this same issue with the same image? (4-5)
22. What does it mean that we are "individually members one of another"? What is the significance of the fact that someone's gift of teaching, for example, does not belong to him alone but really to the whole body? (5)
23. How does verse 6 clinch the point Paul is illustrating in verses 4-5? Why do you think God gives to different Christians different gifts? (6)
24. What gifts does Paul list in 6-8? What is his general command concerning these gifts? What does Paul want people to do with their gifts? (6-8)
25. Paul also addresses *how* people should use their gifts. What are some of the phrases he uses to describe how? (6-8)
26. Verse 6 says that prophecy should be used, literally, "by the analogy of faith" or "in proper connection with the faith." What does this mean? (6)
27. Why does it matter how we use our gift? (8)

III. SUMMARY:

Having laid out eleven chapters of magnificent doctrine clearly unfolding the gospel of Jesus Christ, Paul now turns to application, how we should live in the body based on these truths. He begins with the central act of obedience: the presentation of the whole body to God as a living sacrifice. Along with that is the renewing of the mind so that we can test and approve God's will for our lives. Then Paul describes the specialization of individual Christians within the general body of Christ, and urges Christians to use their gifts to the glory of God.

LIVING WITH OTHERS AS REDEEMED CHILDREN OF GOD

ROMANS 12:9-21

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is the significance of commands coming after eleven chapters of gospel doctrine? What is the relationship between doctrine and everyday life?
2. How would you summarize the various brief commands in these verses?
3. What are the challenges Christians face in living in harmony with other Christians? What powers do we have as Christians to overcome them?
4. Why is it vital for Christians to live out these kinds of commands?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. Verse 9 says literally “Love must be unhyprocritical.” Other translations use the word “genuine” or “sincere.” What does this mean for you? How can “love” be faked or not genuine? How can love be genuine?(9)
2. What is the significance of Christians being commanded to “abhor what is evil”? Compare with Psalm 97:10 and Hebrews 1:9. Why is it important for Christians not to be neutral or blasé about evil? (9)
3. What does it mean to “hold fast to what is good”? The word refers to a union, a cleaving/adhering, as though a force was threatening to pull you away. Why is it vital for Christians to be stubborn in clinging to what is good? (9)
4. In what way is 10 vital for a healthy church? What causes brotherly affection to get strong in a Christian church? What cause it to grow weak? (10)
5. Why is it important to honor others above yourself? What does the word “honor” mean in this context? Compare this with Philippians 2:3-4. (10)
6. What does verse 11 teach you about the healthy Christian life? What issue does it address? What is the alternative to being filled with zeal for Christ? How do we maintain our zeal in service to Christ? What causes it to weaken? (11)
7. How is verse 11 related to the disdain Christ has for the lukewarm church of Laodicea in Revelation 3:15-16? Why is Christ so violently against a lukewarm church or a lukewarm Christian? (11)
8. What does it mean to “rejoice in hope”? What is hope? How is it a source of lasting joy? How can we be commanded to rejoice, if rejoicing is an emotion? Do we have control over our emotions? (12)
9. Why is it important for Christians to be “patient in tribulation”? What kinds of tribulations come on Christians in life? How does our patience under those afflictions display our faith in Christ? (12)
10. What does it mean to be “constant in prayer”? Why is this an important part of a healthy Christian life? Why do so many Christians struggle with faithfulness in prayer? How can we overcome these struggles? (12)

11. What topics are covered in 13? Why is a generous spirit with the world's goods a display of our Christian faith? What is hospitality? Why was it such a part of the Christian church back then? How can we make hospitality a part of our present church experience? Why is it especially commanded of elders that they practice hospitality? See 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:8. (13)
12. What topic does verse 14 address? Where did Jesus command this same thing? Why is it a powerful witness of the gospel for persecuted people to bless those who are persecuting them? (14)
13. Why do you think Paul repeats the command, "Bless and do not curse"? How is it human nature to curse someone who is assaulting you? How does the gospel enable us to get over that natural tendency? (14)
14. How is verse 15 a key to a healthy, united church? (15)
15. How can we develop the kind of compassion for others that enables us to obey verse 15 wholeheartedly? (15)
16. Verse 16 gives several commands that tend toward the building of a humble Christian community. How do these commands help achieve this end? (16)
17. One of the commands is literally "Be of the same mind as one another." Why is like-mindedness so important in a church? How can it be achieved? (16)
18. Why is it so tempting to only associate with people richer, more successful, more powerful than yourself? How does the Christian faith help us overcome that tendency? (16)
19. How is it "honorable in the sight of all" to be kind to enemies? (17)
20. What general command does verse 18 give? What does 18 imply concerning the actual possibility of living at peace with all people? How does verse 18 set us free from seeking the approval of irreconcilable enemies? (18)
21. How is the seeking of revenge so natural to the human heart? Why is it forbidden by the Christian faith? (19)
22. What does it mean to "leave it to the wrath of God"? What is the significance of the statement, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay"? (19)
23. What other path does Paul give concerning enemies? How is verse 20 a difficult but in the end fruitful strategy for dealing with enemies? (20)
24. How is verse 21 a fit summary of verses 17-20? Why is it true that only good can overcome evil? (21)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul gives a very detailed list of commands with the logical center of living in harmony with all kinds of people: brothers in Christ, needy people, strangers, persecutors, people who are rejoicing, people who are mourning, people of humble circumstances and low positions, bitter enemies.

SUBMISSION TO GOD-ORDAINED AUTHORITY

ROMANS 13:1-7

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why is this passage so important to understand in the Christian life?
2. Paul was writing during the days of the oppressive Roman Empire, which was at many times vigorously opposed to the Christian faith and bitterly persecuted Christians. How does understanding that backdrop help put into perspective Paul's general commands to Christians to submit themselves to the authorities?
3. How does this passage go against the grain of everyone's fleshly tendencies?
4. How is anarchy devilish?
5. How is this passage to be tempered by a consideration of the opposite chapter on human government: Revelation 13? How do Romans 13 and Revelation 13 serve as book-ends for the Christian's understanding of human government?
6. How do we harmonize this passage with the assertion in Acts 4:19 and 5:29 which both teach civil disobedience in the face of an immoral law: "We must obey God rather than man"?
7. How is all true authority ultimately from God?
8. What does this passage teach about taxes? Capital punishment?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. How would you define "authority"? (1)
2. What does "be subject" mean? Why is it vital for Christians to gladly submit by faith to all authorities instituted by God? (1)
3. What is the reason Paul gives in verse 1 for all Christians to submit to the governing authorities? (1)
4. What does it mean that there is no authority except from God? (1)
5. How is a Christian to understand the ebbs and flows of history, in that the Romans were in authority only because their pagan legions won battles against some other equally godless armies? (1)
6. What about rebellion against wicked rulers? Should a citizen in Holland during the Nazi occupation submit to the Nazis because they were the God-ordained rulers of the land now that they had invaded? And would it have been a violation of verse 13 for some Dutch to resist and fight the Nazis? (1)
7. What does verse 2 add to Paul's argument? (2)
8. Why does God delegate His authority to created beings? How does God hold those authorities subject to His higher rule? (2)
9. What is rebellion? Is it ever justified? (2)
10. How does verse 3 help explain verse 2? (2-3)

11. What “terror” or “fear” does Paul have in mind in verse 3? Is it always true that rulers hold no terror for those who do right? Again, suppose a Christian decided to resist the Nazi Holocaust in his native Germany by hiding Jews. He is “doing right”? Is it true that he need fear nothing from the government? How do you understand verse 3 in this case? (3)
12. How is verse 3 usually true in a country like the USA? (3)
13. How does the ruler “commend” those who do right? (3)
14. What is the significance of Paul’s assertion that rulers are “God’s servants for your good”? (4)
15. Do the rulers always recognize that they are “God’s servants”? Think of Paul’s case, dealing with Rome. Did Caesar look on himself as one of “God’s servants”? For a key reference, see Isaiah 45:4, speaking to Cyrus the Great of Persia over a century before he was born: “For the sake of my servant Jacob... I call you by name, I name you, *though you do not know me.*” Does the fact that the rulers do not believe in God change Paul’s command? (4)
16. What is the significance of Paul’s statement, “He does not bear the sword in vain”? What is the “sword” Paul has in mind? (4)
17. How do we reconcile capital punishment with the command “You shall not kill”? (4)
18. What is the significance of Paul’s statement of the government figure, “he is God’s servant, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath”? (4)
19. What further reason does Paul give in verse 5 for submission to God-ordained authorities? How does “conscience” fit into our submission to government? (5)
20. How does Paul defend the payment of taxes to the government? What is the flow of his argument from verse 5 to 6? (6)
21. How might some Christians in Paul’s day have a hard time justifying paying taxes? How might some in our day? What is Paul’s response to this? (6)
22. How does verse 7 sum up our general stance toward God-ordained authorities? (7)
23. What is the significance of speaking of reverence and honor? (7)
24. How should an American citizen deal with the King or Queen of another country? Does verse 7 apply in that case? (7)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul defends the submission by Christians to God-ordained authorities.

LOVE FULFILLS GOD'S LAW

ROMANS 13:8-14

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is the central idea in these verses? How does that central idea help us to understand properly the role of the law in the Spirit-filled Christian life?
2. How are the prohibitions of the law "Thou shalt not..." fulfilled by the positive exercise of genuine Christian love?
3. How do these verses give us a sense of urgency about our lives?
4. How does this passage call us to live a life of purity? Why is this so vital, especially in the present circumstances in which we are living?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. What is the meaning of "Owe no one anything"? Is it sinful for a Christian to borrow money? What Scriptures would argue for or against this view? (8)
2. How is there a continuing debt to love one another? See Romans 1:14 for another kind of debt. What was the nature of that particular debt? (8)
3. What does it mean to "love" our neighbor? What is the nature of this love? How is it different from the love we have for our children or our friends? How is the same? (8)
4. Jesus said that the greatest command was to love the Lord with all our hearts, and that the second greatest was to love our neighbors as ourselves. He then said in Matthew 22:40 "On these two commandments depend all the Law and Prophets." How does Paul's commandment fit with that? Does Paul omit the first and greatest commandment here, or does he just assume it? (8-9)
5. How is it true that all the sins listed in verse 9 are massive failures of love? (9)
6. How is a covetous heart a failure of love? It might seem that if you never act on your covetousness, you are not harming your neighbor at all. How does covetousness display a lack of love toward the neighbor? (9)
7. What does it mean to love your neighbor "as yourself"? (9)
8. Paul makes the love command negative in verse 10: "Love does no wrong to a neighbor." But of course, to merely avoid harming your neighbor is not sufficiently loving. How would you understand Paul's assertion? (10)
9. What is the connection between obeying the commands of verses 8-9 and the understanding the times in 11? Paul seems to be arguing for the urgency of the time in verses 11-12. What is the nature of that urgency? (11-12)
10. What does Paul call on Christians to understand about the time of our lives? How does this relate to his command in Ephesians 5:16. (11)
11. What does Paul mean when he urges Christians to wake up from their sleep? Compare this with 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8. (11)

12. What does Paul mean by “Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed”? What does this teach you about “salvation”? Is it true that we can believe truly in Christ, and still not yet be finally “saved” in the sense Paul means in this verse? What salvation is Paul speaking of in this verse? (11)
13. What does it mean “The night is far gone; the day is at hand”? What are “day” and “night” in this verse? Compare with John 9:4. (12)
14. What are the “works of darkness”? How are we to “cast off” them? What is the “armor of light”? How are we to put it on? (12)
15. What issues of morality does Paul address in verse 13? How would you characterize the sins he lists there? Are there some that you would acknowledge sadly are a part of every Christian’s life and some that are scarcely ever named among Christians? What do you make of this? (13)
16. Verse 13 was St. Augustine’s conversion verse. Here is his account:
 “I came to Carthage, where a caldron of unholy loves was seething and bubbling all around me. I was not in love as yet, but I was in love with love; and, from a hidden hunger, I hated myself for not feeling more intensely a sense of hunger. I was looking for something to love... I flung myself down under a fig tree--how I know not--and gave free course to my tears. ... And, not indeed in these words, but to this effect, I cried to thee: "And you, O Lord, how long? How long, O Lord? Will you be angry forever? Oh, remember not against us our former iniquities." For I felt that I was still enslaved by them. I sent up these sorrowful cries: "How long, how long? Tomorrow and tomorrow? Why not now? Why not this very hour make an end to my uncleanness"? I was saying these things and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when suddenly I heard the voice of a boy or a girl I know not which--coming from the neighboring house, chanting over and over again, "Pick it up, read it; pick it up, read it." Immediately I ceased weeping and began most earnestly to think whether it was usual for children in some kind of game to sing such a song, but I could not remember ever having heard the like. So, damming the torrent of my tears, I got to my feet, for I could not but think that this was a divine command to open the Bible and read the first passage I should light upon. ... So I quickly returned to the bench where Alypius was sitting, for there I had put down the apostle's book when I had left there. I snatched it up, opened it, and in silence read the paragraph on which my eyes first fell: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof." I wanted to read no further, nor did I need to. For instantly, as the sentence ended, there was infused in my heart something like the light of full certainty and all the gloom of doubt vanished away. {Augustine’s *Confessions*, Book 3, Chapter 1, and Book 8, Chapter 12]
17. Augustine’s key insight at that time was “You command sexual purity, but we cannot have it unless you give it by your mercy. Give what you command and command what you will!” Explain Augustine’s insight.
18. What does it mean to “put on” the Lord Jesus Christ? (14)
19. What does it mean to make provision for the flesh? How do we avoid making this provision? (14)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul gets very specific about how a Christian is to live a life of love and thus fulfill the Law, especially in the area of love for neighbor and sexual purity.

ACCEPTING ONE ANOTHER IN MATTERS OF OPINION

ROMANS 14:1-12

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main idea of this section of Romans?
2. Why is it vital for churches to learn to differentiate between essential matters and non-essential?
3. What kinds of “opinions” (i.e. disputable matters) face churches in our time?
4. Why is it so wrong to judge our brothers and sisters on matters of opinion?
5. What are some reasons Paul gives for us not judging others on these things?
6. How is the acceptance Paul urges here different from the “tolerance” that our culture embraces so eagerly and preaches so vigorously?
7. A motto from the Reformation era went like this: “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.” How does this chapter support that motto?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. What does the verb “welcome” (or “accept”) mean in verse 1? (1)
2. Who does Paul want us to accept or welcome? What does it mean that this brother’s faith is “weak”? How does he display this weakness in this passage? (1-2)
3. How is Paul using the word “opinions” in verse 1”? What kinds of such opinions or disputable matters does Paul list here? (1)
4. What does the existence of such “disputable matters” show about the Christian faith? (1)
5. What does Paul forbid us to do in verse 1? What does it mean to quarrel or pass judgment? Why is it so common for us to do? Why is it so damaging to the Body of Christ? (1)
6. What does quarreling or passing judgment on matters of opinion show about the person who does it? (1)
7. What issue does Paul bring up in verse 2? How does the weak brother display the weakness of his faith? (2)
8. Why is it a display of stronger faith to be able to eat anything? (2)
9. What opposite tendencies does Paul forbid in verse 3? What command does Paul give to the stronger brother who eats? What command is given to the weaker brother who refuses to eat? (3)
10. Why does it matter in the church if one person “despises” another, or if another person “passes judgement” someone else? What effect do these things have on the Body? (3)
11. What does it mean when Paul says, “for God has welcomed him”? (3)

12. What attitude does Paul display in verse 4 toward someone who is judgmental? Why do you think he uses such strong language? (4)
13. Why do you think Paul is so emphatic that the Lord is able to make all His servants stand? What attitude is he challenging in those who judge or look down on their brothers? (4)
14. What issue does he address in verse 5? Do you think verse 5 is relevant to the question about Sabbath observance? Or is he merely addressing the many feast days of the Jewish calendar? Who is right or wrong according to verse 5? What command does Paul give concerning this? Why does he command that each person be “fully convinced in his own mind”? How does this relate to verse 23? (5, 23)
15. What motives does Paul trace out for various convictions on “disputable matters”? How is it vital that such convictions be God-centered, not man-centered? How is legalism sometimes man-centered? How can a non-legalist be just as earthly-minded as the legalist? (6)
16. Why is thankfulness to the Lord such a vital theme here? Compare with 1 Timothy 4:3-4. (6)
17. What does Paul mean when he says, “None of us lives to himself ...”? What does it mean to “live to yourself”? How is such a self-focus damaging? What is Paul’s main point in verses 7-8? (7-8)
18. What does it mean to “live to the Lord”? What about “die to the Lord”? (8)
19. Paul seems to be appealing to the Lordship of Christ, and His rights in having died and being resurrected for the church. How does his argument work in the matter of judgmentalism in the church? (9-10)
20. How does the fact that we will all stand before the judgment seat of God help address matters of opinion? (10-11)
21. How does Paul use the quote from Isaiah 45:23 here in Romans 14? How does he use it in Philippians 2? (11)
22. How should the doctrine of judgment day shape our daily lives as Christians? What does it mean to “give an account” of ourselves to God? How does this relate to 2 Corinthians 5:10? (11-12)
23. How does the concept of future accountability to God shape Paul’s daily life according to Acts 24:15-16? (11-12)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul commands us to accept one another and not pass judgment on disputable matters. His primary reason is that each individual Christian must live for Christ alone and give an account to Christ alone ultimately, and we have no right to judge Christ’s servants.

MAINTAINING UNITY IN THE MIDST OF DIVERSITY

ROMANS 14:13-23

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does this section unfold a godly vision for unity in the church?
2. Why should Christians be concerned about the stumbling blocks we put in front of other Christians?
3. How does this section call on Christians to put others ahead of their own freedoms?
4. How is verse 23 a vital verse in the Christians life?
5. Hardly any Christians struggle with the morality of eating meat sacrificed to idols. But what are some modern-day issues that we do face for which this section of Scripture will be helpful?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. Verse 13 begins with the word “Therefore.” How does verse 13 connect with what precedes? Simply put, how does the fact that all of us will appear before the judgment seat of God help us to stop judging others? (13)
2. What is a “stumbling block” (as in verse 13)? How do Christians put stumbling blocks in front of other Christians? (13)
3. What issue does Paul bring up as an example of the kinds of “debatable issues” he has been dealing with in this chapter? Why was the issue of meat sacrificed to idols such a flashpoint back then? What does it show you that it is not an issue today? (14)
4. Paul says he “knows and is persuaded” that nothing is unclean in itself. What does this mean? How does this relate to Mark 7:19 in which Jesus declared all foods clean, and Acts 10:15 in which Peter is told (concerning food) “Don’t call anything impure that God has made clean”? How does Paul’s strong conviction here help to move the “weak brothers” of this chapter along to a more mature faith? (14)
5. What else does Paul say in verse 14, though? Is the second half of verse 14 describing the “weaker brother” of verse 2? Based on verse 14, how can it be that God could consider a food clean, but also judge someone for eating it as though that person were violating the food laws that are now obsolete? (14)
6. What additional issue does Paul bring up in verse 15? How are we beholden to someone else’s weak faith or weak conscience? How would a mature Christian boldly eating meat sacrificed to idols in front of a person who thinks its sinful to do it “destroy” him as a brother? (15)

7. What does verse 16 teach us about this situation? How would something that one brother considers good be spoken of as evil? How does that create conflict in the church? (16)
8. Verse 17 is a very powerful and sweeping statement about life in the church of Jesus Christ. What does it teach? How does it put eating and drinking in proper perspective? (17)
9. What is the significance of the phrase “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit”? (17)
10. What kind of behavior or service to Christ does Paul commend in verse 18? (18)
11. How is verse 19 an excellent guideline for the church as a whole when it comes to matters of opinion? (19)
12. What is “mutual upbuilding”? How is it the opposite of the “destroying” Paul mentions in verse 15? Or even the destroying of verse 20? (19-20)
13. Why do you think Paul restates the lesson, “Everything is indeed clean”? What does this teach you about “debatable issues”? (20)
14. What does Paul say is wrong in verses 20-21? (20-21)
15. Is there a reasonable limit to how much we should let someone else’s “weak faith” and legalistic convictions modify our behavior? (20-21)
16. What does verse 22 command? Why do you think it is important to keep it between yourself and God? (22)
17. What does “Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgement on himself for what he approves”? (22)
18. How does verse 23 probe the heart of someone on a disputable matter? What does it mean if someone’s eating is not “from faith”? (23)
19. How could verse 23 be one of the key verses in the Christian life for daily ethics? (23)
20. How does verse 23 teach that non-Christians will have no good works to show God on judgment day? (23)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul concludes his teachings to the church at Rome to keep harmony and not divide on disputable matters. He commands that the church not pass judgment on each other, grow into mature faith, and not put stumbling blocks in front of each other.

CHRIST RESOLVES DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE STRONG AND THE WEAK

ROMANS 15:1-13

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does this section resolve the discussion in Romans 14 about debatable issues and how the strong in faith should relate to those who are weaker?
2. How does this section address the issue of pleasure in the Christian life, especially of pleasing ourselves at the expense of others?
3. Why are endurance and encouragement so vital in the Christian life? How does this section teach us that endurance and encouragement come to us?
4. Why is unity so vital in the Christian church?
5. What is the purpose of the Old Testament quotes that fill up the second half of this section? What is Paul seeking to prove by those quotes?
6. How does the doxology of verse 13 encourage you personally in your Christian life?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE STRONG AND THE WEAK (VV. 1-3)

1. What is the connection between 15:1-3 and the themes of Romans 14? (1-3)
2. According to Romans 14, who are the “strong” and who are the “weak”?
3. How do the “strong” usually relate to the “weak” in the non-Christian world? How are Christians supposed to be different on that issue? (1)
4. How are the strong supposed to “bear with the failings of” the weak in the Christian church? What does this mean? (1)
5. The alternative to “bearing with” is for the strong to “please themselves.” What does this mean? Explain the drive for each sinful human being to seek to please themselves at others’ expense? How can this drive be stopped? (1)
6. Verse 2 gives us the clear alternative to pleasing ourselves. What is it? What does it mean to “build up” our neighbor? (2)
7. Does verse 2 teach us to be “people pleasers”? Read Galatians 1:10. How do you put Romans 15:2 together with Galatians 1:10? (2)
8. What does verse 3 teach us about Christ? How did He not “please himself”? What does the Old Testament scripture Paul quotes (Psalm 69:9) teach us about Christ’s ministry? (3)

THE ENDURANCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF SCRIPTURE (VV. 4-6)

9. Verse 4 is a great statement on the power of Scripture. What does it teach about the ministry of the Word of God in our lives? (4)
10. Specifically, how does Scripture give us “endurance and encouragement”? How does it give us hope? (4)

11. What does verse 5 teach us about God? How does verse 5 give us a different view of God than what Satan wants us to think about Him? (5)
12. What does Paul pray for in verse 5? How do endurance and encouragement relate to the spirit of unity that Paul wants for the Roman church? (5)
13. According to verse 6, what is the end result of the unity that Paul wants for the church? How does praise flow from a truly united church? How do factions and divisions over debatable issues greatly hinder the flow of worship toward God? How is that a devastating outcome? (6)

CHRIST THE SERVANT TO BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES (VV. 7-13)

14. How is verse 7 a final summary of what Paul's been teaching in Romans 14-15? How did Christ accept us? How should that be a pattern of our acceptance of each other? (7)
15. According to verse 7, what was the reason that Christ accepted you? (7)
16. What does Paul teach about Christ in 8? How has Jesus been a servant to the Jews? What is the end result of His service to the Jews in verses 8-9? (8-9)
17. How does Christ's servanthood show "God's truthfulness"? How did he "confirm the promises given to the patriarchs"? (8)
18. How does Jesus' service to the Jews lead to the conversion of the Gentiles? What do the Gentiles praise God for in verse 9? (8-9)
19. Why do you think Paul strings together the four OT Scriptures of verses 9-12? What is the common link in them? Why is Paul so desirous to root the conversion of the Gentiles in the OT Scriptures? (9-12)
20. The first three all have to do with praise and worship. Who is doing the praise and worship in verse 9? (9)
21. Who is doing the praising in verse 10? Who in verse 11? (10-11)
22. What does verse 12 refer to? (12)
23. If Jewish believers in Christ had been hesitant to accept fully their Gentile brothers and sisters in Christ, how would Romans 15:1-13 help them?
24. How does the doxology of verse 13 serve as a fitting climax to this section of Scripture? What does the verse ascribe to God? What does it ask God to do in our hearts? What does Paul want to be the outcome of this gracious work by God? (13)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul concludes his appeal to the Roman church to be fully united despite the existence of issues that may have divided them. Many of these issues had to do with the religious differences between Jews and Gentiles. Paul seeks to resolve them by pointing to the awesome work of God in calling out a people from both Jew and Gentile to worship Him, which He predicted in the Old Testament.

PAUL'S MISSIONARY CALLING

ROMANS 15:14-22

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is Paul's main message to the Roman church in this passage?
2. What is the significance of the fact that Paul says they are "able to instruct one another"?
3. Based on his comments in this section, how does Paul understand his missionary calling?
4. What is Paul's "ambition"? What kinds of "ambitions" should healthy Christians have?
5. What does this passage say to us in the 21st century about world missions?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. What three things does Paul ascribe to the Roman congregation? (14)
2. What does it mean that they are "full of goodness"? How can this be true when Jesus says "No one is good but God alone" and Paul says in Romans 3:12 "No one does good, not even one." How does this statement demonstrate the power of the gospel to transform our hearts and lives? (14)
3. What does Paul mean by "filled with all knowledge"? (14)
4. The third statement Paul makes is "able to instruct" one another. The Greek word translated "instruct" or "counsel" is also translated "admonish" and it relates to dealing plainly and honestly with sin and serious matters of life. What is the significance of the fact that the Roman church is "full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to act as counselors for one another"? How does it relate to Christian counseling? (14)
5. What does Paul say about his writing in verse 15? How has his writing been very bold? What is the "grace given" to Paul from God? (15-16)
6. What does Paul mean by a "minister" in verse 16? How has Paul been a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles"? How does he compare it to a priestly ministry? What is the result of his priestly proclamation ministry? How does it make the Gentile's offering "acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit"? (16)
7. How does this "priestly offering" language relate to the other offerings of the Christian life: our bodies (Romans 12:1); spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5); money (Philippians 4:18); a life of love (Ephesians 5:2); worship (Hebrews 13:15); prayers (Acts 10:4); martyrdom (2 Timothy 4:6)?
8. What does Paul mean by "I have reason to be proud" in verse 17? Is Paul boasting of his achievements on the mission field? How should we understand his attitude in verses 17-18? (17-18)

9. Do you see a healthy balance in Paul's understanding of his own efforts on the Gentile mission field, and what God achieved through him? How does this relate to Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 15:10? (18)
10. What is the role of obedience in the Gentiles faith according to 18? (18)
11. What other aspects of Paul's ministry does he mention in verse 19? How have signs and wonders contributed to the spread of the gospel in the Gentile regions? See Acts 8:6, 13:12, 14:9, 14:13, 15:12. (19)
12. How far had Paul travelled in preaching the gospel? Note: Illyricum is modern-day Yugoslavia, across the Adriatic Sea from Rome, a distance of almost 1100 miles as the crow flies, and a lot longer overland. What do you find remarkable about that? (19)
13. What was Paul's "ambition" according to verse 20? (20)
14. Why is it good to have such "ambitions"? Where do they come from? (20)
15. Should everyone have the same ambition that Paul did? Note: there are three uses of the word "ambition" in the NT: 1 Thessalonians 4:11, 2 Corinthians 5:9 and here. How do they instruct you on life callings?
16. What is the scriptural basis of his ambition? (21)
17. What practical point does Paul make about that in verse 22? (22)
18. How should we develop an appropriate concern for unreached people groups today?

III. SUMMARY:

Paul describes his own call to frontier, trailblazing mission work. His mission was to preach the gospel in places where Christ had never been proclaimed. Thus, the reason he has not been able to visit the Roman church was because he was busy laboring to reach the surrounding nations for Christ.

INVESTING IN ETERNAL BLESSINGS

ROMANS 15:23-33

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What ministry plans does Paul unfold to the Roman church?
2. How does Paul desire the Roman Christians to invest in eternal blessings?
3. What strong persuasion does Paul use to motivate Gentile Christians to share in the sufferings of Jewish believers?
4. How do praying Christians join in the struggles that other Christians are having?
5. What does this section of Scripture teach you about the unity of all Christians beyond the boundaries of local church affiliations? (i.e. the unity of the universal Christian church)

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. Paul has been saying that his ambition has always been to preach Christ in places that had never heard about Him so that he would not be building on another man's foundation. What incredible assertion does Paul make in verse 23? What does verse 23 teach about the progress that the gospel had made in such a short amount of time? (23)
2. Based on the Book of Acts, how do you account for the rapid spread of Christianity across the Roman world? (23)
3. Why do you think Paul had been longing to visit the church at Rome? (23)
4. How does Spain factor into Paul's plans? (24)
5. In what ways does Paul want the church at Rome to assist his plans for the mission to Spain? What does this teach you about 21st century support of missionaries and missions? (24)
6. How is our investing in missions financially an act of faith and Christian unity in our day? (24)
7. What does Paul reveal about his plans to go to Jerusalem? Why does he intend to go there? (25-26)
8. What does Paul teach us about the churches in Macedonia and Achaia in verse 26? What does he reveal about the condition of Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and Judea? What do you think was causing this poverty? (26)
9. How does 2 Corinthians 8-9 shed insight on Romans 15:25-27? (25-27)
10. What is significant about these churches being "pleased" to make the contribution? How does it relate to Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 9:7 "not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver"? Why is taking pleasure in giving, and being a cheerful giver, so vital? What does taking pleasure in giving show about our faith and about our hearts? (26-27)

11. How does Paul say “they owe it to them”? Who owes what to whom? How does Paul defend his statement that Gentiles owe it to Jews to share in their financial sufferings? (27)
12. What kind of spiritual blessings have the Jews shared with the Gentiles? Did they (the Jews) share those blessings cheerfully or “reluctantly, under compulsion”? (27)
13. Does Paul directly ask the Roman church for financial assistance for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem? If not, why does he go on so long to them about it?
14. What does Paul say he will do after delivering the money to the poor among the saints in Jerusalem? Is it right to make plans that might never come to pass? Is Paul aware that he might never make it to Spain? How do verses 30-31 show that Paul is very well aware he might never make it out of Jerusalem? (28, 30-31)
15. What does Paul say in verse 29? What is the “fullness of the blessing of Christ”? (29)
16. What is Paul asking for in 30-33? Compare this with Ephesians 6:19-20 (Paul asks prayer for boldness and words to speak the gospel), 2 Corinthians 1:11-12 (Paul says that God will deliver him if they help him by their prayers), and Colossians 4:3-4 (Paul asks them to pray for an open door for the gospel, and clear preaching on his part). What is the significance of the fact that Paul asks these churches to pray so many things for him? (30-33)
17. How does praying for a suffering Christian enable us to grow in compassion for them? What does Paul mean by “strive together”? How does such a committed passionate prayer life serve *both* parties? (30)
18. What specific things does Paul ask prayer for? What “unbelievers” in Judea do you think Paul has in mind? (31)
19. Paul also prays that his service to Jerusalem would be acceptable to the saints. What does this mean? (31)
20. What is the final end of Paul’s prayer in verse 32? (32)
21. What does “The God of peace be with you all” mean? (33)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul describes his ministry plans—to visit Rome, Jerusalem, and Spain. He describes the way that Gentile believers have contributed to the poor among the saints in Jerusalem, and how the Gentiles owe it to the Jews to do so. He also describes his desires to minister the gospel in Spain and to stop by in Rome for a short time so he can enjoy fellowship and mutual ministry with them, and for them to help him in his mission to Spain. Basically, Paul is seeking prayer, money, and fellowship.

FINAL GREETINGS AND BENEDICTION

ROMANS 16:1-27

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What benefits come to us in reading Paul's greetings to various people in Romans 16?
2. What insights do you gain about first century church life from reading this section?
3. What does Paul's greetings teach us about hard work for Christ?
4. How do similar friendships and partnerships in the work of the gospel enrich our lives today?
5. What dangers does Paul warn the church at Rome about? Do we face similar dangers today?
6. What can we learn about the gospel from Paul's benediction at the end of Romans?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. What does Paul mean by "I commend to you our sister Phoebe"? Some commentators have felt this implied that Phoebe hand carried this epistle to the church at Rome. What do you think? (1)
2. Paul calls her a "servant" of the church at Cenchreae. The word "servant" is "diakonon" from which we get deacon. Some commentators think that Phoebe was a woman deacon. What are your thoughts on this? Note: the word "diakonos" usually means simply servant as in Matthew 20:26, or it can mean deacon as in 1 Timothy 3:8. (1)
3. What does Paul ask the church at Rome to do for Phoebe? (2)
4. What does Paul say about Prisca and Aquila? Who were they? See Acts 18:2, 18, 19, 26; 1 Corinthians 16:3. How does the fact that they risked their lives for Paul give us a sense of their love for him and for Christ? What does verse 5 teach us about them? (3-5)
5. What does Paul say about Epaenetus? How was he significant? (5)
6. What does he say about Mary? Would you like this kind of commendation? (6)
7. Andronicus and Junias were "relatives" or "kinsmen" of Paul, meaning they might have been close relations or merely Jewish. What does Paul mean when he says "They are well known to the apostles"? What else does he say about them? (7)
8. As you look over the various greetings in verses 8-15, what are some of the common themes? Why do you think Paul emphasizes hard work and the love he has for people? (8-15)
9. He says that Apelles is "approved in Christ." What does this mean? (10)

10. What do you make of the fact that so many of the people Paul greets and commends are women, hard working women?
11. What does Paul say about the mother of Rufus? What does this teach you about the nature of the Christian church? (13)
12. What does it mean to greet one another “with a holy kiss”? (16)
13. What does Paul warn the church about in verses 17-19? Do we still face these same kinds of threats today? (17-19)
14. Why are divisions so devastating in the life of the church? (17)
15. What command does Paul give about divisive people? (17)
16. What does Paul mean when he says that false teachers are not serving Christ but their own appetites? (18)
17. What are the techniques of “smooth talk and flattery”? Why are they so effective? How can we discern the difference between flattery and encouragement? (18)
18. How does Paul commend the Roman church in verse 19? What does it mean to be wise about what is good and naïve or innocent about what is evil? (19)
19. What great encouragement comes in verse 20? What does it mean? (20)
20. What does Paul say about Timothy in verse 21? (21)
21. What shocking insight about the Book of Romans does verse 22 give? (22)
22. Who is Gaius? Why is hospitality so important in the Christian life? (23)
23. Who are Erastus and Quartus? How could they encourage us in our jobs today? (23)
24. What does the closing benediction teach us about the gospel? (25-27)
25. What does Paul say God is able to do based on the gospel? (25)
26. What mystery was hidden for long ages past? How is it now revealed? (25-26)
27. How important is obedience in demonstrating the true faith of the church? (26)
28. How has God commanded the light of the gospel to shine worldwide? (26)
29. What does “to the only wise God” mean? (27)
30. How does the Book of Romans end? (27)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul closes the Book of Romans with a series of loving greetings to individuals in the church, and by warning about false teachers and ascribing to God the glory of salvation while asking Him that He continue in His saving grace toward them.

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