

## ROMANS

### CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] **Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ**, [who was] **called to be an apostle**, [and] **set apart for [preaching] the Gospel of God**. 2) **God had promised this good news a long time ago through His prophets** [and had it written] **in the holy Scriptures** [i.e., the Old Testament]. 3) **It was about His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born as a physical descendant of King David**. 4) **He was appointed to be the Son of God with power through the Spirit of holiness** [Note: This could refer to the Holy Spirit] **when He was raised from the dead**. 5) **It was through Jesus, and for His name-s sake, that we [i.e., I] received God-s favor to become an apostle, in order to bring about obedience based on faith from among people of all nations**.

6)-7) **All of you there in Rome** [i.e., the church there] **are also among such obedient believers. You are called Jesus Christ-s [people], loved by God and called to be His holy people. May you have unearned favor and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**.

8) **First of all, I want to thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being told about throughout the whole world**. 9) **For God, whom I serve wholeheartedly in [preaching] the Gospel of His Son, is my witness [to the truth] of how continually I mention you in my prayers**. 10) **I am always requesting that somehow, by God-s will, I may now eventually be able to visit you**. 11) **For I long to see you so that I can provide you with some spiritual gift** [See I Cor. 12:1-11], **for the purpose of strengthening you [in the faith]**. 12) **What I mean is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other-s faith**. 13) **And I want you to be aware, brothers, of how frequently I [had] planned to visit you (but was prevented from doing so until now). I wanted to come in order to bear some fruit [i.e., make additional converts] among you, just as I have done among the other Gentiles** [i.e., unconverted people].

14) **I have a debt to pay** [i.e., an obligation to preach] **to Greeks and heathens; to the educated and to the ignorant**. 15) **So, to the best of my ability, I am eager to preach the Gospel to all of**

you in Rome also.

**16) I am not ashamed of the good news [i.e., the Gospel], because it is God's power for [bringing] salvation to every person who believes [in Jesus]; first to Jews and then to Greeks [i.e., unconverted Gentiles]. 17) For the Gospel reveals how a person can be made right with God. It is through faith [in Jesus], from beginning to end, just as it is written [Hab. 2:4], 'The righteous person will [obtain] life by [his] faith [in God].'**<sup>@</sup>

**18) For God's extreme anger is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people who restrain the truth [from being known and obeyed] by their wickedness. 19) For what is known about God is plain to these people [i.e., to the Gentiles], because God has made it clear to them. 20) For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities of eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, [capable of] being perceived through the things that He has made. So, these people have no excuse [i.e., for not believing in Him]. 21) Now they knew who God was, but they did not honor Him as God or thank Him [for their blessings]. Instead they engaged in their useless speculations and their foolish minds were filled with [spiritual] darkness. 22) They claimed to be wise, but became fools, 23) and exchanged the honor belonging to the immortal God for the statues of mortal men, and birds, and animals and reptiles.**

**24) So, God allowed [or, abandoned] them to have the impure desires of their hearts, and to [practice] degrading behavior with their bodies among themselves. 25) For they exchanged God's truth for the [devil's] lie, and worshiped and served what was created instead of the Creator, who is to be praised forever. May it be so.**

**26) For this reason God allowed [or, abandoned] them to [practice] degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function [i.e., of sex] for what is against nature [i.e., lesbianism]. 27) And men did the same thing, leaving the natural function [i.e., of sex] with women, and burning in their desire for each other. Men committed indecent [sexual] acts with other men [i.e., homosexuality], and [so] brought on themselves the penalty they deserved for this perversion.**

**28) And since these people refused to acknowledge God, He has allowed [or, abandoned] them to have degraded minds and to practice those things which they should not do. 29) They are full of**

all kinds of wickedness, evil, greed, and maliciousness. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30) slanderers, hateful toward God, arrogant, proud and boastful. They think up evil things to do; they disobey their parents; 31) they do not have any sense; they do not keep their promises; they fail to show natural affection; and they are merciless. 32) These people know that God's decrees require that those who practice such things deserve to die [i.e., either spiritual or temporal punishment], yet they not only do the same things [themselves], but even approve of other people who practice them.

## CHAPTER TWO

1) **So, whoever you are, you people do not have any excuse for judging people** [Note: At this point Paul begins addressing the Jews. See verse 17]. **For in a matter where you judge someone else** [to be wrong] **you** [actually] **condemn yourselves, because you are practicing the same things** [you condemn them for doing]. 2) **Now we** [Jews] **know that God's judgment against people who practice such things** [i.e., the Gentiles] **is according to truth.** [Note: Some use **As you say,** at the beginning of the sentence, making it an assertion of the Jews which Paul sets about to answer]. 3) **But consider this, you people who judge others for practicing the same things you** [yourselves] **practice; do you think you will escape God's judgment** [for this]? 4) **Or, do you despise the abundance of God's kindness and tolerance and patience** [toward you], **not realizing that His kindness is intended to cause you to repent?** [i.e., to change your hearts and lives]. 5) **But your stubbornness and refusal to repent are storing up wrath** [i.e., punishment] **for yourselves,** [to be experienced] **on the Day of Wrath** [i.e., the Day of Judgment] **when God's just judgment will be revealed.** 6) **He will repay every person for what he has done.** [See Psa. 62:12]. 7) **To the ones who continue doing what is good and who look for glory, honor and immortal life** [God will give] **never ending life.** 8) **But to the ones who have selfish ambition** [Note: Some translate these words **are contentious**] **and refuse to obey the truth, but** [instead] **obey what is wrong,** [God will bring] **wrath, fury, 9) anguish and distress. He will bring these upon every human being who does wrong, upon the Jews first, then also upon the Greeks** [i.e., Gentiles]. 10) **But** [He will bring] **glory, honor and**

peace upon every person who does what is good; upon the Jews first, then also upon the Greeks, 11) for there is no favoritism with God. 12) For all those people [i.e., Gentiles] who have sinned without [knowing] the Law of Moses will also be lost without [knowing] that law. And all those people [i.e., Jews] who have sinned under [the authority] of the Law of Moses will be judged by [the requirements of] that law. 13) For [it is] not those who hear the Law of Moses who are right with God, but [it is] those who obey [the requirements of] that law [perfectly] who will be considered right with God. 14) (For when the [unconverted] Gentiles, who do not have the Law of Moses, instinctively practice [some of] its requirements, they become their own lawmakers, even though they do not have the Law of Moses. 15) In doing this [i.e., practicing some of the requirements of the Law of Moses], they demonstrate that these requirements are written in their hearts. Their conscience tells them this, and their thoughts alternately accuse them [of wrongdoing], or else endorse them [for doing right]). 16) This will be done on the day when God judges the secrets of men-s [hearts] through Christ Jesus, according to [the teaching of] my Gospel.

17) But if you call yourselves AJews,@ and [claim to] rely on the Law of Moses, and brag about [belonging to] God; 18) if you know His will and have been taught by the Law of Moses to [evaluate and] give approval to what is best; 19) if you are confident that you can give [spiritual] guidance to blind people and enlightenment to those who are in [spiritual] darkness; 20) if you are instructors of the ignorant, and teachers of babies [i.e., immature people] and possess in the Law of Moses the [correct] form of knowledge and truth --- 21) since you teach other people [all of this], why do you not teach yourselves [these things]? You preach that a person should not steal, [but] do you steal? 22) You say that a person should not commit adultery [i.e., sexual unfaithfulness to their mate], [but] do you commit adultery? You [claim to] hate idols, [but] do you rob [their] temples? [Note: It is difficult to determine how the Jews were doing this. Perhaps they were guilty of the Aspirit@ of idolatry by devoting their efforts and affections to material things instead of to God]. 23) You boast about having the Law of Moses, [but] do you dishonor God by breaking that law? 24) For God-s name is being spoken against among the Gentiles because of your behavior, just as it is written. [See Isa. 52:5].

25) Now the practice of circumcision [i.e., the Jewish rite of

identity, signifying the responsibility to observe the Law of Moses] is worthwhile, providing you obey [the rest of] the Law of Moses. But if you disobey the law, you might as well have never been circumcised. 26) So, if an uncircumcised person [i.e., a Gentile] obeys [the rest of] the requirements of the law, will not the fact that he is not circumcised be considered [by God] as though he were? 27) So, will not those physically uncircumcised people [i.e., the Gentiles], who obey the law, condemn you [Jews] for breaking the law, even though you have the written code and [practice] circumcision?

28) For that person is not a Jew who is one [merely] on the outside. And circumcision is not [merely] an outward physical ordinance. 29) But the [true] Jew is the person who is one on the inside, and [his] circumcision is a heart condition, [produced] by the Holy Spirit and not by the written Law of Moses. [Note: Some translate ASpirit@here as Aspirit@and make it simply an amplification of Aheart@]. This person receives his praise from God and not [merely] from people.

### CHAPTER THREE

1) What advantage then does the Jew have [i.e., over the Gentile]? Or what value is there in circumcision? 2) Much in every way! First of all, the Jews were entrusted with the messages of God [i.e., their prophets received divine revelations]. 3) But what if some [of the Jews] were unfaithful? Does their lack of faith nullify the faithfulness of God? Certainly not! 4) But let God be truthful, [even if] everyone [else] is a liar. For it is written [Psa. 51:4], A[God], you should be proven right when you speak, and win [your case] when put on trial.®

5) Now if our wrongdoing serves to emphasize more clearly that God does what is right, what should we say about that? Is God being unjust for sending [His] wrath [on the world]? (I am raising a human objection). 6) Certainly not, for then how could He judge the world? 7) But if my Alie® [i.e., as you Jews call it] would result in God's truthfulness [about you Jews] increasing the honor He receives, why am I also still judged to be a sinner [by you]? 8) And why should we not say, ALet us do what is wrong so something good will come from it,® as some people slanderously claim that we are

saying? These people deserve to be condemned.

9) What then? Are we [Jews] any better off [than those Gentiles]? No, not at all, for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks [i.e., Gentiles] alike are under [the power of] sin, 10) as it is written [Psa. 14:1ff; 53:1ff], ANo one [always] does what is right; not even one person. 11) No one understands [everything]. No one looks to God [all the time]. 12) Everyone has turned away [from God]. All of them have become worthless. No one is [always] kind; no, not even one person.@ 13) [Psa. 5:9 says], ATheir throats are like open graves [i.e., they are foul-mouthed]. They have spoken deceitfully.@ [Psa. 90:3 says], AThere is snake venom under their lips [i.e., their words are deadly].@ 14) [Psa. 10:7 says], ATheir speech is full of cursing and bitterness.@ 15) [Isa. 59:7ff says], ATheir feet [take them where they] are quick to commit murder. 16) Their pathways are strewn with ruin and misery [i.e., caused by them]. 17) They have not known [how to walk on] a peaceful pathway.@ 18) [Psa. 36:1 says], AThey do not view God with reverence.@

19) Now we [all] know that everything the law says applies to those who are under [obligation to obey] that law, [Note: Here Athe law@ appears to refer to the Old Testament Scriptures generally, since Psalms and Isaiah are quoted. See verses 10-18]. This is so that the mouth of every objector may be stopped [i.e., from making excuses for his sin], and thereby bring the entire world under God-s judgment [i.e., both Jews and Gentiles]. 20) This is because no human being can be considered right with God by [obeying] the requirements of a law. [Note: It is difficult to determine the exact sense in which Alaw@ is used in these verses. It may be law *generally*, or the Law of Moses *specifically*. See Bruce, pages 52-58]. For the knowledge of what sin is comes from the Law of Moses.

21) But now [i.e., under the Gospel age], a way of being considered right with God apart from [any] law has been made known. [The writings of] the law [i.e., the Pentateuch] and the prophets bear witness to this. 22) Being considered right with God is [obtained] through faith in Jesus Christ by every person who believes [in Him], for there is no favoritism [with God], 23) for everyone has sinned and falls short of God-s glory [i.e., His approval, or His perfect character]. 24) But people are made right with Him as a free gift by His unearned favor, through being bought back [from Satan] by Christ Jesus. 25) God presented Jesus as the atoning sacrifice [for our sins] through [our] faith in His blood [i.e., His death

on the cross]. **This was in order to demonstrate His justice when, by using forbearance, He passed over people=s sins in previous generations. 26) [In doing this] God [also] demonstrated His justice [to people] of this present time that He Himself is just and the One who makes the people right with Him who have faith in Jesus.**

**27) Where then is the [basis for] boasting [i.e., over being right with God]? There is not any. Is it by [obedience to] a law? Is it by doing certain deeds? Not at all, but by a law of faith. 28) For we conclude that a person is made right with God by faith [in Christ], apart from [obedience to] the requirements of a law [or, the Law of Moses, See verse 20]. 29) Or is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not the God of the Gentiles also? Yes, [indeed], of the Gentiles also, 30) since there is [only] one God, who makes the circumcised ones [i.e., the Jews] right with Him by faith [in Christ] and the uncircumcised ones [i.e., the Gentiles] through faith [in Christ].**

**31) Do we then [intend to] destroy law [observance] because faith [in Christ is now required]? Certainly not! But [instead], we uphold [the validity of] law.**

## CHAPTER FOUR

**1) What should we say then [about what] our forefather Abraham discovered? 2) For if Abraham had been made right with God by doing good deeds he would have had something to boast about, but not in God=s presence. 3) For what does the Scripture say? [Gen. 15:6 says], <sup>^</sup>And Abraham believed God, so God considered him righteous.@ 4) Now wages are not considered a gift if the person has to work for them, but [rather] an obligation [of his employer]. 5) But to the person who believes in God, who makes ungodly people right with Himself apart from doing good deeds, that person=s faith is considered by God [as the basis] for being righteous. 6) Even King David also spoke of the blessing experienced by the person who was considered righteous by God apart from doing good deeds. 7) He said [Psa. 32:1ff], <sup>^</sup>Those people whose ungodly deeds are forgiven [by God] and whose sins are covered over, are [truly] blessed. 8) That person whose sin will not be held against him by the Lord is [truly] blessed.@ 9) Is this blessing experienced by the circumcised ones [i.e., the Jews only] or by the uncircumcised ones [i.e., the Gentiles] also? We are saying,**

**AAbraham's faith was credited to him for righteousness.@ 10) [But] when was he given credit [i.e., for being righteous]? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was before he was circumcised, not afterward. 11) He received the sign of circumcision as a seal [confirming] that he had been [considered] righteous because of the faith he had before being circumcised. Thus, he became the [spiritual] father of all people who believe [in God], even though they have not been circumcised, so that they could be considered righteous [by their faith]. 12) And he also became the father of circumcised people [i.e., the Jews], who are not only circumcised, but who also follow the [same] example of faith [in God] which our forefather Abraham had before he was circumcised. 13) For it was not through [obedience to] law [See 3:31] that the promise to Abraham or his descendants of inheriting [the best of] the world [was made], but through their being considered righteous because of faith [in God]. 14) For if [only] those who are obedient to the law deserve an inheritance, [then their] faith [in God] is for nothing, and God's promise is nullified. 15) For the law brings [God's] wrath [i.e., because of man's failure to obey it perfectly], but where there is no law, there is no [responsibility for] sin.**

**16) For this reason, the promise [i.e., of being made right with God] comes through faith [in God], according to His unearned favor, so that it may be [given] with certainty to all of Abraham's descendants. The promise is given not only to those [who live] under the law [i.e., the Jews], but also to [all] those [who live] by faith, like Abraham. Abraham is the [spiritual] father of all of us [believers], 17) just as it is written [Gen. 17:5], AI [i.e., God] have made you [i.e., Abraham] forefather of many nations.@ He received this promise in the presence of God, in whom he believed, and who gives life [back] to dead people and who refers to things [promised] as though they were [already] fulfilled. 18) Abraham hoped for what he believed [God had promised], even when there seemed little hope [of it happening], so this made him forefather of many nations, according to the words spoken to him [Gen. 15:5], AYour descendants will be many.@ 19) Abraham's faith did not become weak [even though] he was about one hundred years old and considered his body almost dead and Sarah's womb incapable of conceiving a child. 20) Yet he looked for the promise of God [to be fulfilled] and did not waver, doubting [that it would happen], but his faith strengthened him. He honored God 21) and was fully**

convinced that what He had promised, He was able to carry out. 22) So therefore, God considered him righteous [i.e., because of such faith]. 23) Now the words **^**considered righteous [by God]<sup>@</sup> were not written for his sake only, 24) but they were written for our sake also, who will be considered righteous by God for believing in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25) [This] Jesus was delivered up [to die] for our sins and was raised [from the dead] to make us right with God.

## CHAPTER FIVE

1) So, since we are made right with God by [our] faith, we have peace with Him through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2) Through Jesus we have also gained access by [our] faith to this unearned favor [of God]. We stand firm in it, and are glad that we have the hope of being honored by God. 3) And not only this, but we also rejoice in our troubles, knowing that [experiencing] troubles produces endurance; 4) and endurance [produces God-s] approval; and [His] approval [produces] hope. 5) And [having such] hope keeps us from being disappointed, because God-s love [for us] has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who was given to us [by God].

6) For while we were still helpless, at [just] the proper time, Christ died for ungodly people. 7) Someone would not likely die to rescue a righteous person, though possibly someone would dare to die in order to rescue a good person. 8) But God demonstrates His own love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. 9) Since we are now made right with God by the blood of Christ [i.e., by His dying on the cross], how much more certain it is that we will be saved from God-s wrath [in the future] by Him! 10) For if while we were [God-s] enemies, we were restored to fellowship with Him through the death of His Son, now that we have been restored, how much more [certainly] will we be saved [from condemnation] by His life! 11) And not only is this true, but we also rejoice in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have been restored to fellowship with God.

12) Therefore, just as sin came into the world through [the action of] one man [i.e., Adam] and [physical] death through that sin, so [physical] death has spread to all people, because all people

**have sinned.** [Note: This difficult passage (verses 12-21) seems to be saying that the entire human race must experience physical death because of Adam's sin (I Cor. 5:22), which is somehow considered to be everyone's sin. See Murray, pp. 180-187, for a thorough discussion].

**13) For even before the Law of Moses, sin was [being committed] in the world. But man is not responsible for [his] sin when there is no law. 14) Yet [physical] death ruled [over mankind] from the time of Adam to Moses, even over those people who had not sinned the way Adam did. [Now] Adam prefigured the coming of Jesus.**

**15) But the free gift [of salvation through Christ] is not [exactly] like the sin [of Adam]. For if many people died [physically] because of the sin of the one man [i.e., Adam], how much more did God's favor abound by [providing] His gracious gift [of salvation] to many people because of the one man, Jesus Christ. 16) And the gift [of salvation] is not like [the effect of] one man's sin [i.e., Adam's], for [God's] judgment of condemnation came [upon mankind] through one man [i.e., Adam], but the free gift [of salvation] came as the result of [the] many sins [of mankind] and [it] made people right with God. 17) For if [physical] death ruled [over mankind] because of the sin of the one man [i.e., Adam], how much more will those who receive the abundance of God's unearned favor, and the gift of being right with Him, rule in [never ending] life through the one man, Jesus Christ.**

**18) So then, just as [God's] judgment came, condemning all people [to physical death] because of one sin [i.e., Adam's]; even so the free gift of being made right with God and [resulting in] life may be received by all people because of one man's [i.e., Christ's] act of righteousness.** [Note: This *Alife@* may refer to spiritual life now, or to being made alive in the resurrection, which would reverse the curse of physical death caused by Adam's sin]. **19) For just as many people [i.e., all mankind] were considered [by God] to be sinners [and thus to suffer physical death] through the disobedience of the one man [i.e., Adam]; even so, many people [i.e., all believing mankind] will be considered right with God [and thus live again] through the obedience of the one man [i.e., Christ]. 20) Now the Law of Moses was introduced [into the world] in order to cause sin to increase [i.e., it defined many things to be wrong that were previously not regarded as sin]. But with the increase of sin, God's unearned favor increased all the more. 21) This was so that just as sin ruled [over mankind], causing [physical] death, even so God's unearned favor would rule**

[over mankind], **providing** [them with] **righteousness, and leading to never ending life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

## CHAPTER SIX

**1) What shall we say, then? Should we continue sinning so that more of God-s unearned favor will [have to] be shown? 2) Certainly not! How can we, who died to sin [i.e., stopped living under its power], go on living in it [i.e., practicing it] any longer? 3) Or, do you not know that all of us who were immersed into Christ Jesus were immersed into His death? 4) Therefore, we were buried with Him through [our] immersion [in water] into [a relationship with] His death, so that, just like Christ was raised up from the dead through the glorious power of the Father, so we also can [be raised up from the water to] live a new life. 5) For, if we have become united with Christ in an act similar to His death [i.e., by being buried in water], we will also be [united with Him] in an act similar to His resurrection from the dead [i.e., our rising from the water to live a new life]. 6) We know that our old self was [figuratively] crucified with Christ, in order that the body of sin [i.e., our whole life of sin] might be destroyed [i.e., become powerless to control our actions and thoughts], so that we should not be enslaved to the practice of sin any longer. 7) For a dead person is freed from [the control of] sin.**

**8) Now if we have died with Christ [i.e., to the practice of sin], we believe we will also live with Him.** [Note: This *Alive@* probably refers to our spiritual relationship with Him during our Christian life]. **9) We know that Christ was raised from the dead, never to die again, because death does not have control over Him any longer. 10) For [in] the death He experienced, He died to sin [i.e., to remove sin] once for all. But the life that He [now] lives, He lives [fully] for God. 11) So, you [too] should consider yourselves dead to sin [i.e., no longer under its power], but [spiritually] alive to God, in [fellowship with] Christ.**

**12) So, do not allow [the practice of] sin to rule your mortal bodies, so that you obey its desires. 13) And do not offer the parts of your bodies [i.e., hands, eyes, etc. See Matt. 5:29-30] as tools for [accomplishing] evil purposes; but [instead] offer yourselves to God, as [people who are] alive from the dead [i.e., no longer under the power of sin] and the parts of your bodies as tools for**

[accomplishing] **righteous purposes for God. 14) For sin must not be your master** [i.e., it must not have power over you], **for you are not governed by law, but by God-s unearned favor.**

**15) [So], what then? Should we sin because we are not governed by law but by God-s unearned favor? Certainly not! 16) Do you not know that you are the slaves of whoever you offer your obedience to? If you obey [the desire to] sin, it leads to [spiritual] death; or if you obey [God] it leads to righteousness. 17) Thank God that you people, who were once slaves to [the practice of] sin, became obedient from [your] heart to the pattern of teaching [i.e., the Gospel message] you committed yourself to. 18) And when you were freed from [the practice of] sin, you became slaves to doing what is right. 19) I am using human reasoning because of your human weakness. For just as you once offered the parts of your bodies as slaves to impurity and to wickedness, which led to further wickedness; so now [you should] offer the parts of your body as slaves to do what is right, which leads to holy living. 20) For when you were [once] slaves to [the practice of] sin, you were free from [being controlled by] righteousness. 21) What benefit did you receive at that time from doing the things you are now ashamed of? For the end of such behavior is [spiritual] death. 22) But now, since you have been freed from [the practice of] sin and have become slaves to God, the benefits you receive are a holy life [here] and never ending life in the future. 23) For the wages for sinning is [spiritual] death, but God-s free gift is never ending life in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus our Lord.**

## CHAPTER SEVEN

**1) Or, do you not know, brothers, (I am talking to people who know how law works) that the law has authority over a person only as long as he lives?** [Note: It is not clear whether this refers to Roman law or the Law of Moses]. **2) For a married woman is legally bound to her husband for as long as he lives. But, when he dies, she is released from the marriage contract. 3) So, if she lives with another man while her husband is still alive, she will be called an adulteress [i.e., a person who is sexually unfaithful to their mate]. But if her husband dies, she is legally free to marry another man without committing adultery.**

**4) Therefore, my brothers, you also died to the law** [i.e., were released from its binding requirements] **through the body of Christ** [Note: This seems to refer to Christ's death on the cross, but some think it refers to becoming a part of the church], **so that you could belong to someone else, [namely] to Christ, who was raised from the dead in order that we might live spiritually productive lives for God.** **5) For when we were in the flesh** [i.e., before conversion], **our sinful desires, aroused by** [the restrictions of] **the Law of Moses, worked in our bodies to produce activity that led to** [spiritual] **death.** **6) But now that we have died to what controlled us and have been released from** [the requirements of] **the Law of Moses** [i.e., under the Gospel age], **we serve** [God] **in a new way** [directed] **by the Holy Spirit** [Note: Some take "Spirit" here to be "spirit" and see it as describing the inner person], **and not in the old way** [directed] **by the written Law of Moses.**

**7) What shall we say then? Is the Law of Moses sinful? Certainly not! For I would not have known what sin was if it had not been for the law. For** [example]; **I would not have known** [what it meant] **to covet** [i.e., have a strong desire for what belongs to someone else] **except that the law said** [Ex. 20:17], **"You must not covet."** **8) So, through that commandment, sin found an opportunity to produce in my heart all kinds of improper desires for what belonged to others. For until there was the law, sin was dead** [i.e., it did not stimulate excitement and activity as much]. **9) And I was** [once] **alive before being aware of the law** [i.e., complacent and without a sense of guilt]; **but when** [awareness of] **the commandment** [not to sin] **came, sin sprang to life,** **10) and I died** [i.e., came under its power]. **And** [so] **the commandment, which was** [intended] **to bring** [spiritual] **life, actually brought** [spiritual] **death.** **11) For by means of God's commandment** [against sinning], **sin found an opportunity to deceive me and** [even] **kill me** [spiritually]. **12) So, the Law of Moses itself is holy and the commandment** [against sinning] **is holy and just and good.** **13) Was this** [commandment] **then, which was intended for my good,** [actually] **responsible for my** [spiritual] **death? Certainly not! But so that sin could be seen as** [truly] **sinful, it produced** [spiritual] **death in me through something that was good** [i.e., the commandment against sinning]. **This was so that, by means of the commandment** [against sinning], **sin could be seen as extremely sinful.**

**14) For we know that the Law of Moses is spiritual** [i.e.,

from the Holy Spirit in origin and character], **but I am fleshly, sold as a slave to sin.** [Note: AFlesh@throughout this section refers to a person's natural inclinations to sin]. **15) For I do not [really] understand what I am doing; I practice what I do not want to and I hate what I do.** [Note: This highly controversial section (verses 14b-25) is here viewed as the struggles of the apostle Paul *after* his conversion, and by extension, of all Christians. See Bruce, pages 150ff; Murray, pages 255ff; Lard, pages 236ff]. **16) But if I do what I do not want to, I agree with the law [which condemns such conduct] that it is good. 17) So, now I am not [really] the one doing this, but [it is] sin which is living in me. 18) For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh, for the desire to do good is present in my heart, but the ability to carry it out [consistently] is not. 19) For I do not do the good [things] I want to, but I practice the evil [things] I do not want to. 20) But if I do what I do not want to, [then] I am no longer the one doing it, but [instead], it is sin which lives in me [i.e., that motivates such conduct].**

**21) So, I find this principle [at work]: [Although] I want to do what is good, evil is [always] present [and often wins out]. 22) For in my heart I am delighted with God's law, 23) but I see a different law [at work] in my body, waging [spiritual] warfare against the law in my mind. It brings me into captivity to the law of sin in my body. 24) What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body doomed to [spiritual] death? 25) Thank God [that I can be rescued] through [the power of] Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**So then, I personally [try to] serve God's law with my mind, but [all too often] I serve the law of sin with my flesh [i.e., submitting in weakness to my human desires].**

## CHAPTER EIGHT

**1) Therefore, none of those who are in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus will be condemned. 2) For the Holy Spirit's law which provides [never ending] life for those in [fellowship with] Christ Jesus has freed me from the law that requires [spiritual] death for sinning. 3) For what the law was not able to do [for mankind], since it was [too] weak [to deliver them from condemnation] because fleshly people [were unable to obey it perfectly], God condemned sin in the flesh [i.e., sin was declared evil and its power over man broken]. God**

did this by sending His own Son in a body like sinful man-s, and to destroy sin, 4) so that the requirements of the law could be [considered] fulfilled in us, who do not live according to [the dictates of] the flesh, but according to [the promptings of] the Holy Spirit. 5) For those people who are [controlled] by the flesh think about [i.e., desire] what the flesh wants; but those who are [controlled] by the Holy Spirit [desire] what the Holy Spirit wants. 6) For the one whose mind is [controlled] by the flesh will suffer [spiritual] death; but the one whose mind is [controlled] by the Holy Spirit will enjoy [never ending] life and peace. 7) This is because the one whose mind is [controlled] by the flesh is an enemy of God; for he is not obedient to God-s law, and in fact, cannot obey it. 8) And those people who are living according to the flesh cannot please God. 9) But if the Spirit of God [truly] lives in your heart, you are not [being controlled] by the flesh, but by the Holy Spirit. But if any person does not have the Spirit of Christ [living in him], he does not belong to Christ. 10) And if Christ lives in your hearts, even though the body is [doomed to] death because of [Adam-s?] sin; yet the spirit is [destined to] live [forever] because of being [made] right with God. [Note: Some take ASpirit@ here to be AThe Holy Spirit gives you life.@ See next verse]. 11) But if the Spirit of God, who raised up Jesus from the dead, lives in your hearts, [then] that One [i.e., God] who raised up Christ Jesus from the dead, will restore life to your mortal bodies also, through [the power of] God-s Spirit who lives in your hearts.

12) So then, brothers, we are under obligation, but not to live under [the control of] the flesh, 13) for if you people live under [the control of] the flesh, you must die [spiritually]; but if you put to death [i.e., stop practicing] the [sinful] habits of the body by [the power of] the Holy Spirit, you will live [spiritually]. 14) For all of those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. 15) For you did not receive the Holy Spirit, to enslave you again to fear, [Note: Some translators take AHoly Spirit@ here to be ASpirit,@ making the verse say Ayou did not receive the spirit of slavery@], but you received the Holy Spirit [who produces] sonship, so we can call out, AAbba@, [which means] AFather.@ 16) The Holy Spirit Himself bears testimony [along] with our [human] spirit that we are the children of God. 17) And if we are [His] children, then we have an inheritance from God [i.e., blessings here and hereafter] and are fellow-sharers with Christ [of such blessings], providing we [are willing to] suffer with Him, so

we can also be honored with Him [i.e., in the future life. See verses 18-25].

**18) For I consider that our present sufferings do not deserve to be compared with the glory that will be revealed to us** [i.e., in the future life]. **19) For [all] creation** [Note: ACreation@ here refers to the material heavens and earth, and is personified through verse 23] **is eagerly waiting for the children of God to be revealed** [i.e., in their glorious state]. **20) But God subjected the created world to aimless frustration** [i.e., after the fall. See Gen. 3:17-18] --- **it did not happen by its own choice. Yet there was hope 21) that the created world itself would be freed from its slavery to corrupting influences** [i.e., produced by the fall] **and receive the glorious freedom which belongs to God-s children.** **22) For we know that the entire created world moans in painful anguish** [i.e., as a woman in childbirth] **until this present moment.** **23) And not just the world, but even we** [Christians] **ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Holy Spirit** [i.e., the first installment of our inheritance from God] **also groan within us, eagerly waiting to be adopted as [God-s] children, and receive back our bodies** [i.e., in the resurrection]. **24) For in [this] hope we were saved** [i.e., we received the hope of future blessings]; **but if we [already] see what we hope for, it is not [really] hope. For who hopes for what he [already] sees? 25) But if we hope for what we cannot see, then we [must] patiently wait for it** [to be received].

**26) And in the same way, the Holy Spirit helps [us in] our weakness; for we do not know what we ought to pray for** [Note: Some translators understand this as Ahow to pray@]. **But the Holy Spirit goes to God on our behalf with groanings** [in our hearts] **that are not expressed** [in words]. **27) And God, who searches our hearts, knows what the Holy Spirit [has] in mind, because He** [i.e., the Holy Spirit] **goes to God on behalf of the saints** [i.e., God-s holy people] **in harmony with God-s will.**

**28) And we know that God works out everything for the good of those who love Him and are called** [to serve Him] **in harmony with His purpose** [for them]. **29) For [that class of] persons whom God knew beforehand He also predetermined to become conformed to the [spiritual] likeness of His Son, so that He could be the firstborn One among [His] many brothers** [i.e., so He could be the preeminent example to all His followers. See Heb. 2:11]. **30) And [that class of] persons whom God [so] predetermined, He also called** [through the Gospel. See II Thess. 2:14]. **And those He called, He also**

made right with Himself. And those He made right with Himself, He also [determined to be] honored [i.e., in the future life].

31) What then should we conclude from this? [Just this]: If God is on our side, who can [successfully] oppose us? 32) God did not withhold His own Son [from dying], but offered Him up for all of us. [Since He did that], will He not, along with Jesus, freely give us everything [else] also? 33) Who will bring an accusation against God's chosen people? [Certainly not God, for] He makes people right with Himself. 34) Who condemns [us]? Certainly not Jesus, for He is the One who died [i.e., to save us], and what is more, He was raised from the dead and is [now] at the right side of God. He also goes [to God] on our behalf [i.e., as we pray]. 35) Who [i.e., what] can separate us from Christ's love [for us]? [i.e., what unfortunate circumstance of life might suggest that Christ does not love us?] Would [it be] trouble? Or distress? Or persecution? Or inadequate food? Or inadequate clothing? Or danger? Or [even] death? 36) Just as it is written [Psa. 44:22], *¶*We are [in danger of being] killed all the time. We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.® 37) No, [suffering any one of these things is not proof that Christ does not love us], for in spite of all these things we have a decisive victory [over life's difficulties] through [the care shown us by] Christ who loved us. 38) For I am convinced that neither death, nor [the trials of] life, nor [evil] angels, nor [evil] rulers, nor present or future [circumstances], nor [evil] powers, 39) nor [things] above, nor [things] below, nor any [other] created thing will be able to separate us from God's love [for us], revealed through Christ Jesus our Lord [Note: The idea of this passage is *¶*Regardless of what happens to us, God still loves us®].

## CHAPTER NINE

1) I am telling [you] the truth in Christ [i.e., since I am a Christian]; I am not lying. My conscience, [confirmed] by the Holy Spirit, supports my statements [as true], 2) that I have great sorrow and continual anguish in my heart. 3) For I could wish that I, personally, were cut off from Christ [and lost] for the sake of my brothers, who are my physical relatives, 4) the Israelites. These people are God's adopted children; they have [experienced] His glorious presence; they have [received] His Agreements; they have been given the Law of Moses; they possess the [Temple] service and

the promises [of God]. 5) They are descended from our forefathers; they are the ones from whom Christ was born physically. He is God over everything [Note: Or this may be AGod is over everything@] and should be praised forever! May it be so.

6) But it is not as if the word of God [i.e., His promise to Israel] has failed [in its fulfillment]. For not all those descended from the Israelites are [truly] Israelites [i.e., God's people]. 7) Neither are all [Jewish] people children [of God], [simply] because they are Abraham's descendants. But [Gen. 21:12 says], AI is through Isaac that you [i.e., Abraham] will have descendants.@ 8) This means that it is not the physical descendants [of Abraham] who are God's children, but it is the children [born] according to [God's] promise who are [Abraham's true] descendants. 9) For these are the words of the promise [Gen. 18:10], AI [i.e., God] will come at the appointed time and Sarah will have a son.@

10) And that is not all, but Rebecca also conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac. 11)-12) For even before the twins were born, and therefore had not done anything good or bad, Rebecca was told [Gen. 25:23], AThe older one [i.e., Esau] will serve the younger one [i.e., Jacob].@ This was so that God's purpose of choosing and calling [whomever He wanted to] might prevail, instead of [it depending on] what a person did. 13) Just as it is written [Mal. 1:2-3], AI [i.e., God] loved Jacob, but hated Esau.@

14) What shall we say then? Is God guilty of wrongdoing? Certainly not! 15) For He said to Moses [Ex. 33:19], AI will show pity to whomever I want, and I will show mercy to whomever I want.@ 16) So then, it does not depend on what a person wants or does, but on God, who shows pity [i.e., to whomever He wants]. 17) For the Scripture said to Pharaoh [Ex. 9:16], AI raised you up [to be a ruler] for the very purpose of demonstrating my power in your life and that my name might be made known throughout the entire world.@ 18) So then, God has pity on whomever He wants to, and He makes stubborn whomever He wants.

19) But you [i.e., probably an objecting Jew] will say to me, AWhy does God still find fault [with people]? For who can [successfully] resist what God wants to do?@ 20) But who [do you think] you are, [you mere] man, to [attempt a] reply to God? Will the object formed [i.e., a clay pot] say to the one who molded it AWhy did you make me this way?@ 21) Or, does not the potter have the right to make what he wants to out of the clay? Can he not make

both a beautiful vase and a common pot out of the same lump [of clay]? 22) What if God [did] patiently put up with people who deserved His wrath and [who were] ready for destruction, even though He was willing to demonstrate His wrath and power? 23) [What if He did this] in order to demonstrate His wealth of glory toward people who deserved His mercy, whom He had previously determined should receive [such special] honor? 24) We were these people, whom He called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles. 25) God said this also, in Hosea [2:23], AI [i.e., God] will call those people mine who were not [previously] my people. And [I will call] her >dearly loved=- who was not [previously] loved.@ 26) [Hosea 1:10 says], AAnd it will happen that in the very place where people were told, >You people do not belong to me [i.e., God],=- they will be called children of the living God.@

27) And Isaiah declares about [the nation of] Israel [Isa. 10:22-23], A[Even] if the number of Israelites were [as many] as the grains of sand in the ocean, [still only] a small minority will be saved. 28) For the Lord will carry out His word in the world [i.e., He will require an accounting from the people] quickly and decisively.@ 29) And, as Isaiah had said in a previous passage [1:9], AIf the Lord of the [heavenly] armies [i.e., Almighty God] had not left us some descendants [i.e., a small minority], we would have become like Sodom; He would have made us like Gomorrah [i.e., destroyed].@

30) What shall we say then? [Simply this]: That the Gentiles, who did not attempt to become right with God [by how they lived] were made right with God, and this was the result of their faith [in Christ]. 31) But the Israelites, who were attempting to become right with God by [conformity to] the Law of Moses, never achieved [this righteousness] by that law. 32) Why? Because they did not [attempt to do it] by faith [in Him], but by trying to fulfill all the requirements [of the law]. So, they stumbled over Athe stumbling stone,@ [i.e., the Jews refused to become obedient to Christ. See I Pet. 2:6-8]. 33) Even as it is written [Ex. 28:16], ALook, I am placing a stone in the city of Zion that people will stumble over and a rock on which they will trip and fall. But the person who believes in Him will not be put to shame [i.e., he will never have unforgiven sin brought up against him].@

## CHAPTER TEN

1) Brothers, my heart=s desire and [fervent] request to God is for the salvation of my fellow-Jews. [See 9:3-4]. 2) For I can testify that they have an enthusiasm for God, but it is without [true] knowledge. 3) For they did not know about God=s way of making people right with Himself, so they attempted to establish their own way. In doing this they did not submit to God=s way for being made right with Him. 4) So, Christ has brought an end to the law [as a means] of being made right with God for every person who believes [in Him].

5) For Moses wrote [Lev. 18:5] about a person being made right with God by obeying the requirements of the Law of Moses, that he would gain [never ending] life for doing this. 6) But the [means of] being made right with God by faith [in Christ] is described in the Scripture this way [Deut. 30:12-13], ADo not ask yourself, >Who will go up into heaven?=@ (in order to bring Christ down [to earth]). 7) AAnd [do not ask yourself], >Who will go down into the deep hole?=@ (in order to bring Christ up from the dead). [Note: This Adeep hole@probably refers to the unseen place of departed spirits, or possibly the grave. Being made right with God does not require something as difficult as bringing Christ down from heaven or up from the dead (which God had already done), but is within easy reach of everyone]. 8) But what does the Scripture say [about being made right with God]? [Deut. 30:14 says], AThe message of God is near you [i.e., it is not difficult to comprehend]. It is on your lips and in your heart.@ This is the message of faith [in Christ] which we [apostles] preach. 9) So, if you profess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe with your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10) For a person believes [in Christ] with his heart in order to be made right with God, and he makes a profession with his lips in order to be saved. 11) For the Scripture says [Isa. 28:16], AWhoever believes in Him [i.e., Christ] will not be put to shame.@ [i.e., he will never have unforgiven sin brought up against him] 12) For there is no distinction [with God] between Jews and Greeks [i.e., Gentiles], for all have the same Lord, who is generous to all who appeal to Him [for help]. 13) For [Joel 2:32 says], AEvery person who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.@ [i.e., whoever appeals to God through obedient faith in Christ] 14) [But] how can they appeal to Him if they have not [first] believed in Him? And how can they believe in Him if they have not [first] heard [about Him]? And

how can they hear [about Him] if there is no preacher? 15) And how can people preach [anywhere] unless they are sent out? Even as it is written [Isa. 52:7], **AHow welcome is the coming of those who preach the good news [of salvation through Christ]?@**

**16) But not everyone [of the Israelites] obeyed [that] good news. For Isaiah said [Isa. 53:1], ALord, who has believed our message?@ 17) So, faith results from [people] hearing, and [their] hearing results from [the preaching of] the message about Christ. 18) But I ask, ADid not they [i.e., the Jews] hear [the message]?@ Certainly they did! [Psa. 19:4 says], AThe sound [of their preaching] went out into all the world, and their message reached to the ends of the earth.@ 19) But I ask [again], ADid not the Israelites understand [the message]?@ In the first place, Moses said [Deut. 32:21], AI [i.e., God] will stir up you [Jews] to become jealous, by [favoring] a nation [i.e., the Gentiles] that is unworthy [of your approval]. [I will do it] by using a nation of fools to make you people angry.@ 20) Then Isaiah boldly said [Isa. 45:1], AI [i.e., God] was found by a people [i.e., the Gentiles] who were not looking for me. I became known to people who were not asking for me.@ 21) But Isaiah said about the Israelites [Isa. 40:2], AI reached out all day long to [help] people who disobeyed and spoke against [me].@**

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

**1) Then I ask, ADid God reject His [own] people [i.e., the Jews]?@ Certainly not! For I am an Israelite too, a descendant of Abraham and a member of the tribe of Benjamin. 2) God did not reject His people whom He knew previously. Or, do you not know what the Scriptures say in the passage where Elijah pleads with God against Israel? 3) [I Kings 19:10], ALord, they [i.e., the Israelites] have killed your prophets and have destroyed your altars; I am the only one left and they are trying to kill me, too.@ 4) But how did God answer him? [I Kings 19:18 says], AI [i.e., God] have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed their knee [in worship] to Baal [Note: ABaal@ was a term used for one of the idols worshiped in Elijah's day by Canaanites and others in Palestine]. 5) So, now also, there is a small minority which has been selected by God's unearned favor [i.e., to be saved]. 6) And if [they were selected] by God's unearned favor, [then] the choice is not based on the good**

that people may do. Otherwise, God's favor would not be [really] unearned.

7) What then? [Just this]: **The very thing that the Israelites are looking for** [i.e., a right relationship with God], **they have not found. But God's selected ones obtained** [this right relationship with Him] **and the rest** [of the Israelites] **were made insensitive to God's call,** 8) **as it has been written** [Isa. 19:10], **AGod gave them a spirit of numbness** [i.e., they developed a spiritual insensitivity to God and His word]. [He gave them] **eyes to see with** [but they would not look], **and ears to hear with** [but they did not listen]. **And they still have this spirit.** 9) **And King David said** [Psa. 69:22-23], **ALet their table ensnare and trap them** [i.e., let the Jews' devotion to such things as lavish feasts become the occasion for leading them astray], **and become an occasion for their falling** [away from God]. **And let them be repaid** [for such conduct with punishment]. 10) **Let their eyes become** [spiritually] **dim so they cannot see, and may their backs always bend** [i.e., under heavy burdens].@

11) **I say then, did the Jews trip** [over Jesus] **just so they could fall** [away from God]? **Certainly not!** [There was another reason]: **Instead, it was by means of their sin that salvation was made available to the Gentiles, so that the Jews might become jealous of them** [i.e., causing them to want what the Gentiles now had]. 12) **Now if the Jews sinning meant blessings for** [the rest of] **the world, and their** [spiritual] **defection meant blessings for the Gentiles, how much more will their fullness** [also produce blessings]! [Note: AFullness@here may mean either a large or the complete number of Jews who will be saved, or become completely obedient to God].

13) **Now I am talking to you Gentiles, [and] since I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I will make the most of my ministry** [to you], 14) **in hope that somehow I might stir up jealousy among my fellow-Jews, and thereby save some of them.** 15) **For if their rejection** [by God] **meant that** [the rest of] **the world could be restored to favor** [with God], **what would** [God's] **receiving the Jews back into fellowship be, except like dead people coming back to life?** 16) **And if the first part of the dough is dedicated to God, the entire batch of dough will be also. And if the roots** [of a tree] **are dedicated to God, the branches will be also.** 17) **But some of the branches** [of a cultivated olive tree] **were broken off** [i.e., God's rejection of the Jews] **and you** [Gentiles], **representing a wild olive tree** [branch], **were grafted into it. So then, you** [Gentiles] **were able to benefit from the**

roots and sap of the olive tree, along with the Jews. 18) Therefore, you should not brag [about your superiority] over the [natural] branches [i.e., the rejected Jews]. But, if you must brag, it should not be over you [Gentiles] nourishing the roots [i.e., the Jews], but over the roots nourishing you. 19) But you [Gentiles] will then say, <sup>A</sup>The branches were broken off so that we could be grafted in.<sup>@</sup> 20) True, but they [i.e., the Jews] were [really] broken off because they did not believe [in Christ], and you [Gentiles] remain [in God's favor] because you do believe [in Him]. So, do not become arrogant [about it], but be fearful. 21) For if God did not spare the natural branches [i.e., the Jews], He will not spare you [Gentiles] either.

22) So, look at God's kindness and severity. He was severe with those [Jews] who have fallen, but He is kind to you [Gentiles], if you continue to accept His kindness [i.e., by living for Him faithfully]. Otherwise, you too will be cut off [like the Jews were]. 23) And these Jews also will be grafted [back] in [to the olive tree] if they do not continue in their lack of faith [in Christ], because God is able to graft them back in again. 24) For you [Gentiles] were cut off from a natural wild olive tree and [then], contrary to the natural process, were grafted into a cultivated olive tree. [Since that has happened], how much more likely is it for these [Jews], who are the natural branches, to be grafted [back] into their own olive tree [again]?

25) For I want you to know this secret, brothers, so you will not become conceited: Part of the Israelites have become [spiritually] insensitive [to God], [and will remain that way] until the fullness of the Gentiles occurs. [Note: As with verse 12, concerning the Jews, <sup>A</sup>fullness<sup>@</sup> here may mean either a large or the complete number of Gentiles who will be saved]. 26) And so [i.e., in this way] all the Israelites will be saved. [Note: The <sup>A</sup>all<sup>@</sup> here is thought by many to refer to a large number of the physical Jews who will be saved, not necessarily to every single individual Jew]. Even as it is written [Isa. 59:20-21], <sup>A</sup>The Deliverer [i.e., Christ] will come from Zion [i.e., the city of Jerusalem, or from the nation of Israel]. He will take away the wickedness from Jacob [i.e., the Jews].<sup>@</sup> 27) [A summary of Jer. 31:31-34 says], <sup>A</sup>And I [i.e., God] will make this Agreement with them [i.e., Jewish and Gentile believers] when I take away their sins.<sup>@</sup>

28) Now in response to the [proclamation of the] good news [about Christ], the Jews became [God's] enemies for the sake of you [Gentiles]. But concerning [God's] select people, these Jews became

[God=s] **dearly loved ones for the sake of their forefathers** [i.e, who believed God=s promises regarding their descendants]. **29) For God does not change His mind about the gifts He gives and the people He calls [to Him]. 30) For you Gentiles were disobedient to God in the past, but now you have obtained [God=s] mercy by means of the disobedience of the Jews. 31) So, now these [same] Jews have also been disobedient [to God], so that they may also now obtain [God=s] mercy by means of the mercy [He has] shown to you [Gentiles]. 32) For God has made all people prisoners of a disobedient life, so that He could show mercy to everyone.**

**33) O, how deep is the richness of God=s wisdom and knowledge! How difficult [it is for us] to explain His judgments and how impossible [for us] to accurately track how He operates! 34) [Note: The following are rhetorical questions raised from their reading of the Old Testament]. For who has known [what goes on in] the Lord=s mind? Or, who has been His advisor? 35) Or, who has given [something] to God that He has to pay back? 36) For everything was created by Him, exists through His [power] and is intended for His [glory]. May He be praised forever. May it be so.**

## CHAPTER TWELVE

**1) So, I urge you, brothers, because God is so merciful [to us], to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, [fully] dedicated and very pleasing to God. For this is a reasonable [or spiritual] way for you to worship [or serve] Him. 2) And you people must not be conformed to [the values and standards of] this age, but you should become transformed [i.e., changed in attitude and action] by having your mind renewed [i.e., to think in a totally different way]. Then you will be able to determine [and practice] God=s will, the thing that is good, and acceptable and perfect.**

**3) And because of God=s unearned favor shown to me [i.e., in appointing me to be an apostle], I am telling every person among you not to think he is more important than he really is. Instead, he should have a sensible estimate [of his gifts] in harmony with the degree of faith God has given to each person. 4) For there are many parts to a single human body and all of these parts do not have the same function. 5) In the same way, though we [Christians] are many, we are one [spiritual] body in [fellowship with] Christ, and each one**

of us is part of [all] the others. 6) And we [all] have different gifts, in harmony with the unearned favor [God has] shown us. If our gift is the ability to prophesy [i.e., to speak for God], we should make use of this gift in harmony with the amount of faith we have. 7) Or, if our gift is serving, we should devote ourselves to rendering service. Or, if our gift is teaching, we should devote ourselves to teaching. 8) Or, if our gift is encouraging others, we should devote ourselves to encouraging. Or, if our gift is sharing with others, we should do so generously. Or, if our gift is leading others, we should do so diligently. Or, if our gift is showing caring concern for others, we should do it cheerfully.

9) Let [your] love be sincere. Hate whatever is evil. Cling to whatever is good. 10) In your love for your brothers, show tender affection toward one another. Try to outdo one another in showing respect [for each other]. 11) Be enthusiastic instead of lazy. Be fervent in your spirit [Note: Some translators take  $\text{\AA}$ spirit@here to refer to the  $\text{\AA}$ Holy Spirit@], [as you] serve the Lord. 12) Be joyful as you hope [i.e., for future blessings]. Persevere in spite of the troubles you experience. Continue steadfastly in prayer. 13) Contribute to the needs of God-s people. Be eager in showing hospitality. 14) Ask God-s blessing on people who persecute you, instead of cursing them. 15) Be happy with those who are joyful. Cry with those who are sad. 16) Have the same [good] thoughts toward one another. Do not [always] be thinking you are a  $\text{\AA}$ big shot,@ but lower yourself to accept humble tasks [or, humble people]. Do not think you are so smart. 17) Do not [try to] pay back a wrong done to you by doing something wrong to the other person. Think about how to live honorably in front of all people. 18) If it is at all possible, as far as your part is concerned, live peacefully with all people. 19) Do not take revenge on someone who has wronged you, but leave it up to God-s wrath [to take care of it], for it is written [Deut. 22:35],  $\text{\AA}$ The Lord says, I will pay people back [for doing wrong] because taking revenge belongs to me.@ 20) But [Prov. 25:21-25 says],  $\text{\AA}$ Feed your enemy if he is hungry; give him something to drink if he is thirsty. For when you do this, it will be [like] heaping burning coals on his head.@ [i.e., it can cause him burning shame that can lead to his repentance and ultimate forgiveness]. 21) [So], do not be conquered by evil, but [instead] conquer evil by doing good [deeds to people].

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1) Every person must be submissive to the ruling authorities, for all authorities come from God. And the existence of authorities has been established by God. 2) Therefore, the person who resists [these] authorities is opposing what God has ordained. And those who oppose [these authorities] will bring judgment on themselves. 3) For [our] rulers are not a threat to [the person doing] a good deed, but to [the person doing] an evil one. So, do you want to avoid having to be afraid of the authorities? Then do what is good and you will be commended by them [generally]. 4) For they are servants of God for your good. But you should be afraid if you do what is evil, because they do not carry the sword [i.e., for executing criminals] for nothing. For they are servants of God who take revenge [on wrongdoing] by punishing the person who does evil. 5) Therefore, you must submit [to the authorities], not only because of [the threat of] punishment, but also for the sake of [your] conscience.

6) This is the reason why you should pay taxes also. For the authorities are God-s servants who continually tend to this matter [i.e., of collecting taxes]. 7) [So], pay everyone what you owe them; pay taxes to the tax collector; pay revenue to the revenue collector; show respect to the one deserving it; give honor to the one deserving it.

8) Do not owe anything to anyone, except to love one another. For the person who loves others has fulfilled [the requirements of] the law. 9) For [the commandments are: Ex. 20:13ff], AYou must not be sexually unfaithful to your mate. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not have a strong desire for what belongs to someone else.@ These and any other commandments are summed up in these words; AYou must love your neighbor the same as you love yourself.@ 10) If you love your neighbor, you will not do anything wrong to him. So, to love people is the way to fulfill [the requirements of] the law [See Matt. 22:39].

11) Now this [is another reason for observing the law of love]: You should know that it is about time to wake up out of your [spiritual] sleep, because [the day of our final] salvation is now nearer to us than when we first believed [in Christ]. 12) The night is almost over and the day is near. So, we should stop doing the

**deeds of darkness** [i.e., sinful things] **and we should arm ourselves with the weapons of light** [i.e., virtues for right living]. **13) We should be living properly, as in the daytime** [i.e., when people normally behave themselves], **not engaging in orgies and drunkenness; not practicing sexual immorality and indecent vices; not quarrelsome and jealous.** **14) But clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and do not make any plans for satisfying the strong desires of your flesh** [i.e., your appetites for sinful pleasures].

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

**1) But you should welcome** [into your fellowship] **the person whose faith is weak, and not argue** [with him] **over questionable matters.** **2) One person has enough faith that allows him to eat anything** [i.e., without it bothering his conscience that the food, such as animal meat, was used in an idolatrous worship ceremony]. **But the weak person can eat only vegetables** [conscientiously]. **3) The person who can eat anything should not look down on the person who cannot eat** [what was used in idolatrous worship]; **and the person who cannot eat** [such things] **should not pass judgment on the person who can. For God accepts that person, too.** **4) Who** [do you think] **you are, to pass judgment on someone else-s household servant? He stands** [approved] **or falls** [into disapproval] **before his own Master** [only]. **Yes, [surely] he will stand** [approved], **for the Lord is capable of helping him to stand.**

**5) One person regards a certain day more important than another; the next person regards every day alike. Each person should be fully convinced in his own mind** [i.e., concerning their relative importance]. **6) The person who observes a certain day** [as specially sacred], **does so out of devotion to the Lord. And the person who eats** [only certain foods] **does so out of devotion to the Lord, for he is thankful to God** [for what he eats]. **And the person who refuses to eat** [certain foods], **does so out of devotion to the Lord and he is thankful to God** [for what he does eat]. **7) For none of us lives for his own benefit** [only], **and none of us dies for his own benefit** [only]. **8) For if we live, it is for the Lord-s** [honor]; **or if we die, it is for the Lord-s** [honor]. **So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.**

**9) For this is the reason that Christ died and** [now] **lives**

again, so that He could be Lord of both those who have [already] died and those who are [still] alive. 10) But why do you [who eat only certain foods] condemn your brother [who feels he can eat anything]? Or, indeed, why do you [i.e., who feels he can eat anything] look down on your brother [i.e., who eats only certain foods]? For all of us will have to stand before the judgment bar of God. 11) For it is written [Isa. 45:23], AAs surely as I am the living God, says the Lord, everyone-s knee will bow before me, and everyone-s mouth will confess to [or, praise] God.® 12) So then, every one of us [i.e., including Christians] will have to give an account of himself to God.

13) So, we should stop judging one another any more. But instead, you people should determine not to put anything in your brother-s way [to cause him] to trip or fall [away from God]. 14) As one who is in [fellowship with] the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that nothing in itself is [ceremonially] unclean. But to the person who considers something [ceremonially] unclean, it then becomes unclean to him. 15) For if your brother is hurt [spiritually] by [your eating certain] food, you are no longer acting lovingly [toward him]. Do not destroy [spiritually] the person Christ died for by what you eat. 16) Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken against [i.e., the exercise of a liberty by the strong to eat anything must not become the occasion of criticism by the weak]. 17) For God-s kingdom is not a matter of what people eat or drink, but [instead, it is a matter] of doing what is right, having peace [of heart] and having [inner] joy, which come from the Holy Spirit. 18) For the person who serves Christ with these qualities is very pleasing to God and wins the approval of people. 19) So then, let us pursue such things that produce peace and things that build one another up [spiritually]. 20) Do not destroy God-s work [i.e., someone-s life] for the sake of something to eat. All foods are truly clean [ceremonially]; however, it is wrong for a person to eat something when it causes another person to fall [away from God]. 21) [So], it is better [for you] not to eat bread, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything [else] that could cause your brother to fall [away from God]. 22) Therefore, whatever you believe about this matter should be held between you and God. That person is happy who does not condemn himself for practicing something he believes is right. 23) But the person who has doubts about eating [a certain food] is self-condemned if he [goes ahead and] eats it, because his action is not based on faith [i.e., if he lacks the conviction that he is doing what is right]. And whatever

is not done with such a conviction is a sin.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1) Now those of us who are strong [spiritually] should put up with [or, help] the failings of [spiritually] weak people, and not [simply] do what pleases ourselves. 2) [Instead], each of us should do what pleases his neighbor in order to accomplish something good and uplifting [in his life]. 3) For even Christ did not please [just] Himself, but as it is written [Psa. 69:9], **AThe insults of those people who insulted you [i.e., God] fell on me [i.e., Christ].@** 4) For whatever things were written previously [i.e., in the Old Testament], were intended for us to learn from, so that we could have hope [i.e., in the face of difficult times] through remaining steadfast, and through the encouragement [received] from reading the Scriptures.

5) May God [who is the source] of steadfastness and encouragement, give you [a sense of] like-mindedness among yourselves, in harmony with [the example of] Christ Jesus, 6) so that in [genuine] unity and with one voice, you people may honor the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7) So, welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed you [or, *Aus@*], as a way of honoring God. 8) For I tell you that Christ was [appointed] to be a servant of the circumcised ones [i.e., the Jews], in order to uphold the truth of God. This was so He could confirm [as valid] the promises made to our forefathers, 9) and so that the Gentiles [also] may honor God for His mercy, as it is written [Psa. 18:49], **ATherefore, I will praise you among the Gentiles and sing to your name.@** [Note: Paul here accommodates the words of King David by applying them to Jews participating with Gentiles in praising God as part of the one body]. 10) **And again it says [Deut. 32:43], ARejoice with His people [i.e., the Jews], you Gentiles.@** 11) **And again [Psa. 117:1], APraise the Lord, all of you Gentiles, and let all the nations praise Him.@** 12) **And again, Isaiah says [11:10], AA root [i.e., a descendant] from Jesse will appear [i.e., Christ], and He will rise up to rule over the nations, and the Gentiles will place their hope in Him.@**

13) May God, [the source] of hope, fill you with complete joy and peace as you believe [in Christ], so that you may have an abundance of hope in the power of the Holy Spirit.

14) And I, myself, am convinced about you, my brothers,

that you yourselves are full of goodness, and have been filled with all kinds of knowledge and are capable of counseling one another. 15) But I have written to you quite boldly in some places to remind you [of certain things], because of the favor shown to me by God, 16) in appointing me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. I am serving like a priest in preaching God's good news, so that the Gentiles might be like an acceptable sacrifice [to God], dedicated by the Holy Spirit.

17) Therefore, as I have fellowship with Christ Jesus, I am proud of my service to God. 18) For I will not dare to speak about anything, except what Christ has done through me in bringing about the obedience of the Gentiles. He accomplished this by my message and my deeds, 19) in the power demonstrated by [miraculous] signs and wonders, [produced] by the power of the Holy Spirit. So, I have completed preaching the good news about Christ from Jerusalem, all the way around [the area] to Illyricum [Note: This country was located northwest of Greece and in present-day Croatia]. 20) Now it has been my ambition to preach the good news at places where Christ's name has never been heard, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. 21) But, as it is written [Isa. 52:15], **Those people who had not been told about Him will see [the truth], and those who have not heard [the message] will understand [it].** [Note: Paul here applies a Messianic prediction to his ambition of doing pioneer evangelism].

22) This is why I have been so often hindered from coming to you. 23) But now, since I do not have any more [new] places [to preach] in this area, and have been wanting to visit you for many years, 24) I am hoping to see you when I travel to Spain. And I also hope to receive help from you in getting there [i.e., to Spain], after enjoying a brief visit with you. 25) But for now, I am on my way to Jerusalem to minister to [the needs of] God's holy people there. 26) For [the Christians in] Macedonia and Achaia [Note: These were provinces in Greece] thought it was a good idea to take up an offering for the poor saints at Jerusalem. 27) For they thought it was a good idea, and [besides] they were indebted to those Jewish Christians. For if the Gentiles [have] shared in the spiritual blessings of the Jews, [then] they owe it to those Jews to help meet their material needs. 28) So, when I have completed this task, and have guaranteed [the safe delivery of] this offering to them, I will visit you on my way to Spain. 29) And I know that when I arrive

there [in Rome], I will be coming with an abundance of Christ-s blessings [to give to you. See 1:11-12].

30) Now I urge you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ [See 12:1], and through the Holy Spirit-s love [in us], that you people join me in fervently praying to God for me 31) to be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea [i.e., unbelieving Jews]. And [pray] that my service for Jerusalem [i.e., the offering for poor people. See verses 25-26] will be acceptable to God-s people there. 32) And pray that I will [be able to] come to you joyfully, if it is God-s will, and have a refreshing visit with you. 33) Now may the God of peace be with all of you. May it be so.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1) I recommend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church at Cenchrea. [Note: This was a seaport town about seven miles east of Corinth]. 2) Welcome her [as someone to fellowship] in the Lord, in a way that God-s people should. And you people should help her in whatever way she needs you, for she herself has helped many people, including me.

3) I send greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow-workers in [the service of] Christ Jesus. 4) They risked their own lives for me, so not only I, but also all the Gentile churches [i.e., people converted from among the Gentiles] are grateful to them [for this]. 5) I also send greetings to the church that meets in their house. Greetings to my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia [Note: This was a province in the western part of present-day Turkey]. 6) Greetings to Mary, who worked very hard for you [i.e., she served the church in Rome]. 7) Greetings to Andronicus and Junias, my fellow-Jews [or possibly actual relatives] who were in prison with me. These [men] are considered outstanding by the apostles, and were Christians before I was [converted]. 8) Greetings to Ampliatus, my dear friend in [the fellowship of] the Lord. 9) Greetings to Urbanus, our fellow-worker in [the service of] Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. 10) Greetings to Apelles, [who was tested and] approved in [the service of] Christ. Greetings to members of the family of Aristobulus. 11) Greetings to Herodion, my fellow-Jew. [See verse 7]. Greetings to those members of the family of Narcissus who are Christians. 12) Greetings to

**Tryphena and Tryphosa, who are workers in [the service of] the Lord and to Persis, my dear friend who worked hard in [the service of] the Lord. 13) Greetings to Rufus, an outstanding servant in [the service of] the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me also. 14) Greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the [other] brothers who are with them. 15) Greetings to Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all [the others] of God-s people who are with them. 16) Greet one another with a holy kiss [i.e., to signify affection, yet without sensuality]. All of the churches of Christ [i.e., which Paul established or preached in] send you their greetings.**

**17) Now I urge you, brothers, watch out for those who are causing divisions and occasions for falling [away from God over matters] contrary to the teaching you have learned, and withdraw from them [i.e., stop listening to their false teaching]. 18) For such men are not serving our Lord Christ but their own [unspiritual] appetites. They are deceiving the minds of innocent people by their smooth talk and flattering words. 19) For everyone has heard about your obedience [to the truth], and [because of this], I am very happy over you. But I want you to be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil. 20) And the God, who brings peace, will soon crush Satan under your feet [i.e., bring an end to the divisive work of the false teachers there].**

**May the unearned favor of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you [people].**

**21) My fellow-worker Timothy sends his greetings to you, and so do my fellow-Jews Lucius, Jason and Sosipater. [See verse 7].**

**22) I am Tertius, who is writing this letter [for Paul], and I send you my greetings in [the fellowship of] the Lord.**

**23) Gaius, who is hosting me [i.e., Paul] and the whole church [here], sends you his greetings. [Note: This was probably the Gaius who lived in Corinth (I Cor. 1:14) and was apparently both wealthy and generous].**

**Erastus, the city treasurer [of Corinth] sends his greetings to you, along with our brother Quartus. {{Some manuscripts contain verse 24), which repeats the benediction of verse 20}}**

**25)-27) Now may there be glory for ever, through Jesus Christ, to the only wise God, who is able to make you stand firm [in the faith], according to the good news and proclamation of Jesus**

**Christ. This message is the secret which was [eventually] revealed, after having been kept quiet about for long ages. It is now being made known through the writings of the prophets, as commanded by the eternal God, to [people of] all the nations, in order to bring about their obedience to the faith [i.e., so they will believe and obey the truth]. May it be so.**