

ROMANS

Conversational Version

Salutation

1:¹Paul, servant of Christ^{Messiah} Jesus, called *to be* an apostle, and set apart to deliver the good news ²God promised through his prophets in the scriptures. ³⁻⁵That news is about his Son, David's son by descent—physically, and God's Son by designation—spiritually as to holiness. *God powerfully designated him such* by raising him from the dead. Through Jesus Christ our Lord we've received grace and apostleship for making obedient faith available to Gentiles. ⁶Among them you, too, are the called *people* of Jesus Christ.

⁷To God's loved ones in Rome, called *to be* holy: grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rom 1:1-7

Desire to Visit the Romans

⁸First, I'm grateful to my God for you, *grateful* through Jesus Christ because everywhere in the world people are talking about your faith. ⁹God's my witness—that I serve in my spirit for the good news about his Son—I think about you constantly. ¹⁰In my prayers I always plead that, somehow by God's will, I can eventually come to you. ¹¹I long to see you so I can share some spiritual gift that will help make you secure *in the faith*. ¹²That way I'll be encouraged among you by the faith we share. ¹³I want you to know that I've often intended to come but couldn't. *I've wanted* to accomplish something among you like I've done among the rest of the Gentiles. ¹⁴⁻¹⁵I'm obligated to preach to Gentiles and barbarians, to wise and foolish, and to you in Rome.

Rom 1:8-15

Life by Trust

¹⁶I'm not ashamed of the good news. It's God's power for bringing salvation to everybody that trusts, to Jews first and to Gentiles. ¹⁷The good news reveals a goodness that comes from God through a growing trust *in him*. The scripture says, "*A good person will have life by trusting*" [Hab 2:4].

Rom 1:16-17

Foolishness of Disbelief

¹⁸God reveals from heaven his displeasure at ungodliness and at unjust people that suppress the truth by *their* injustice. ¹⁹He does that because what they know about God is evident in them because he made it clear to them. ²⁰Ever since he created the universe, what he's created clearly makes visible the invisible things about him, namely his eternal power and divine nature. So people don't have any excuse. ²¹They knew God but didn't give him his rightful place as God or practice gratitude. They gave themselves over to foolish speculation and their senseless hearts went dark. ²²While they claimed to be smart, they became dumb ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images of mere mortals, birds, four-footed animals, reptiles. **Rom 1:18-23**

God's Giving People Up

²⁴So because of lusts in their hearts, God gave them up to unclean *behavior*—to dishonoring their bodies between themselves. ²⁵They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served what was created instead of the One that created, who is blessed forever. Amen. ²⁶God gave them up to dishonorable desires. Their females exchanged *their* natural sexual relationships for what's contrary to nature. ²⁷Males left their natural sexual relationships with females and burned in lust for other males, males with males, committing shameful acts and receiving in themselves the payback that's appropriate to their delusion. ²⁸Even as they didn't see fit to have God in what they knew, God gave them over to a perverted mind. ²⁹*They were* filled with sinfulness, wickedness, greed, malice, jealousy, murder, strife, deception, meanness, gossip, ³⁰slander, hatred for God, arrogance, boasting, disloyalty, evil scheming, disobedience to parents. ³¹*They were* without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful. ³²They knew God's standards and *knew* that people who practice such things deserve to die; but they did them *anyway* and delighted in people that did them.

Rom 1:24-32

God's Just Judgment

^{2:1}So you^{sg} that condemn don't have any excuse. When you condemn someone else, you condemn yourself, because you're doing the same things. ²You know it's right for God to condemn people that do things like that. ³Do you suppose—condemner of another while doing the same things yourself—that you are going to escape his condemnation? ⁴Do you disregard his rich kindness, tolerance, and patience, and not understand that his kindness is for leading you to repentance? ⁵Because of your stubborn, unrepentant heart, you're storing up displeasure for yourself when God reveals his just condemnation. ⁶He'll pay back every person for what they've done. ⁷*That will mean* eternal life for people who strive for glory, honor, and immortality by carrying through in good works. ⁸*It'll mean* displeasure and anger for people that chase after injustice. ⁹*There'll be* trouble and distress for everybody that does evil, for Jews first and for Greeks. ¹⁰But *there'll be* honor and peace for everybody that does good, for Jews first and for Greeks. ¹¹God doesn't play favorites: ¹²as many as have sinned without having the Law will perish without *having* it; as many as have sinned under it will be condemned by it. ¹³It's not who hears the Law that's good, as far as God's concerned; it's who does the Law. ¹⁴When Gentiles that don't have the Law, naturally do what's in it, they are governing themselves. ¹⁵They show that the Law is written on their hearts. Their conscience testifies, and *their* thoughts defend or accuse one another. ¹⁶*That's the basis for judgment* when God by Christ Jesus judges people's secrets by the good news I'm presenting.

Rom 2:1-16

Criticism and Moral Consistency

¹⁷But if you wear the name Jew, rely on the Law, take pride in God—¹⁸*if you* know his will, approve of superior things because of what the Law teaches you—¹⁹*if you're* confident that you're a guide to the blind, a light to people in the dark, ²⁰a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the ignorant because you have the knowledge and truth that's in the Law—²¹then do you teach others, but not learn yourself? You that preach against stealing, do you steal? ²²You that say people shouldn't commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You that detest idols, do you steal from temples? ²³You that take pride in the Law, do you dishonor God by breaking it? ²⁴***"Gentiles blaspheme God because of you"*** [Is 52:5], like the scripture says. ²⁵Circumcision benefits you if you practice *the* Law. If you transgress it, your circumcision amounts to uncircumcision. ²⁶If then the uncircumcised keep the Law's standards, won't their uncircumcision be considered circumcision? ²⁷If the naturally uncircumcised keep the Law, won't they condemn literal-and-circumcised transgressors of the Law? ²⁸It's not the Jew outwardly that's *a Jew*, and it's not outward circumcision that's *circumcision*. ²⁹It's the Jew inwardly that's a Jew, and it's the circumcision of the heart—spirit, not letter—that's circumcision. Their praise doesn't come from people, but from God. **Rom 2:17-29**

The Advantage Jews Had

3:¹ So, what advantage does a Jew have? What's the benefit of circumcision? ²A lot, in a lot of ways. *The first advantage is* that God entrusted *the Jews* with his messages. ³So what if some *Jews* were unfaithful? Their unfaithfulness doesn't do away with God's faithfulness, does it? ⁴Goodness, no! Let God be true and everyone else a liar, like the scripture says,

***"... that you can be regarded
as right in what you say
and correct in the judgments you make"*** [Ps 51:4].

⁵If our unrighteousness highlights God's righteousness, we wouldn't say, would we, that God's not fair in inflicting *his* displeasure? (I'm speaking here for the sake of argument.) ⁶Goodness, no! How would he judge the world? ⁷*We wouldn't say, would we, that* since our lie highlights God's truth, he shouldn't consider us sinners? ⁸We wouldn't *say, would we*—as some accuse us of saying, "*Let's do evil to bring about good*"? (They deserve condemnation!) **Rom 3:1-8**

Nobody's Good

⁹So are we any better *than Gentiles*? Not at all! We've already said *that* Jews and Gentiles are both sinners ¹⁰like the scripture says,

***"Not one is good,
not one.
¹¹Nobody understands;
nobody seeks God.***

¹²*They've all turned away;
as a group they've become depraved.
None of them are kind,
not even one does good* [Ps 14:1-3; 53:1-3].

¹³*Their throat's an open grave;
they deceive with their tongues* [Ps 5:9];
there's snake venom behind their lips [Ps 140:3];
¹⁴*their mouth is full of cursing and spite* [Ps 10:7];
¹⁵*their feet run to shed blood;*
¹⁶*ruin and misery lie in their paths;*
¹⁷*they don't know the path to peace* [Is 59:7-8].

¹⁸*There's no respect for God in their eyes* [Ps 36:1].

¹⁹We know that what the Law is saying *here*, it's saying to people that are under it; so *by saying "not a one,"* it shuts everybody up, *including Jews*. The whole world—*Gentiles and Jews*—becomes exposed to God's condemnation, ²⁰because what people do under law doesn't make them good; law *only* tells them what's sinful. **Rom 3:9-20**

Goodness by Trust

²¹Now, aside from law, a goodness from God has come to light, *a goodness* the Law and prophets talk about: ²²a goodness from God through trusting in Jesus Christ whether by Jew or Gentile. ²³Everybody has sinned and falls short of God's glory; ²⁴his grace freely justifies them through the redemption that comes through Christ Jesus. ²⁵He's the One that God appointed *as a* basis for forgiveness by trusting in his blood. *Putting him forward* demonstrates God's goodness in overlooking sins previously committed ²⁶during the time when he puts up with *them*. *Putting Christ forward* demonstrates *God's* goodness now, so he's both just and justifier of people that trust in Jesus. **Rom 3:21-26**

Humility Under Justification by Trust

²⁷So where can boasting come in? It can't. By what kind of "law"? *Can it come by a "law" caused by what we do under law?* No, *it's replaced* by a "law" conditioned on trust *in another—God*. ²⁸We reason that trust justifies us apart from what we do under law. ²⁹Or is God the God over Jews only? Isn't he God over Gentiles too? Yes. ³⁰Since there's one God, he's the One that justifies the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision *and does it the same way*—by trust. ³¹So are we contradicting law by *advocating* trust? Goodness, no! We're establishing *the purpose of law another way*. **Rom 3:27-31**

Abraham and David

⁴¹What can we say, then, our ancestor Abraham discovered? ²If what he did, justified him, he had something to feel good about, but not toward God. ³What does the scripture say? ***“Abraham trusted God, and God considered him righteous”*** [Gen 15:6] *because of it*. ⁴In the case of people that are producing righteousness, the consequence—*being considered righteous*—doesn’t come from God or his grace; he would owe it to them *to consider them righteous*. ⁵But for those who are not producing righteousness but are trusting the One that considers the ungodly as righteous, their trusting God *to do that* is considered righteousness. ⁶David speaks about the “good fortune” of people God considers righteous aside from law,

⁷***“‘Fortunate’ are the ones whose unlawful deeds God forgives,
whose sins he covers.***

⁸***‘Fortunate’ are the people whose sin the LORD
doesn’t hold against them”*** [Ps 32:1-2].

⁹Is the “good fortune” *only* on the circumcised, or *is it* on the uncircumcised too? We’ve said, ***“God considered Abraham righteous because he trusted”*** [Gen 15:6]. ¹⁰When did God consider him righteous? When he was circumcised or uncircumcised? When he was uncircumcised. ¹¹He received the circumcision sign as a seal for the righteousness he’d received by trusting when he was uncircumcised. *And he received it as a seal* that he would be the father of everybody that, without being circumcised, trust that God will consider them righteous *like he did Abraham*. ¹²*His circumcision was also a seal* that he would be the father of the uncircumcised who walk in his footsteps while he was uncircumcised. **Rom 4:1-12**

The Promise to Abraham

¹³The promise to Abraham and his descendants—that he’d inherit the world—didn’t come by law, but by righteousness conditioned on trusting. ¹⁴If law can cause people to be heirs, trust is null and promise is void. ¹⁵Law brings God’s displeasure, but where there’s no law there’s no violation of it. ¹⁶So righteousness comes by trust so it can come by grace and make the promise sure for all of Abraham’s seed, whether they’re under law or under the trust he had who is “father” of us all: ¹⁷the scripture says, ***“I’ve appointed you to be the father of many nations”*** [Gen 17:5]. He trusted God, who makes the dead live and speaks of things that aren’t *yet* as if they *already* are. ¹⁸Hoping against hope, he trusted that he would become *“the father of many nations,”* like God said, ***“That’s how your seed will be”*** [Gen 15:5]. ¹⁹He wasn’t weak in trust but considered his own body as good as dead—he was about 100—and Sarah’s womb as dead too. ²⁰He didn’t hesitate to trust God’s promise but grew strong in trust. He praised God, ²¹confident that what he’d promised, he could do. ²²So, ***“God considered him righteous”*** [Gen 15:6]. ²³Now that wasn’t written just about him, ²⁴but about us too. God will consider us “righteous” who trust in the One that resurrected our Lord Jesus—²⁵who was delivered up for our trespasses and resurrected for our justification. **Rom 4:13-25**

Extreme Grace

5:¹We've been justified by trusting, and we express trusting God by trusting our Lord Jesus Christ. ²*The Christ* gives us access to this grace that we stand in. *Because of it*, we rejoice in the hope that comes from *our* glorious God. ³Not only that, but we can even rejoice in hardships because we know they produce endurance, ⁴which produces character, which produces a hope ⁵that doesn't disappoint because God keeps pouring out his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit he gave us. ⁶When we were still weak, at the right time Christ^{Messiah} died for the ungodly. ⁷Hardly anybody is *willing* to die even for somebody that's good. Somebody might, ⁸but God has shown us how much he cares about us by having Christ^{Messiah} die for us while we were still sinners. ⁹More than that, if his blood has justified us, we're safe from God's displeasure. ¹⁰If the death of his Son reconciled us to God while we were estranged, now that he's reconciled us, his life will save us. ¹¹All the while, we take pride in God through his Son who reconciled us.

Rom 5:1-11

Adam and Christ in Contrast

¹²So, as through one man, sin—hence death—entered the world, death passed on to everybody because everybody has sinned. ¹³Before the Law, there was sin in the world, but sin isn't held against a person if there's no law. ¹⁴But, death did prevail from Adam to Moses even over the ones that hadn't sinned like Adam did—who corresponds to the One that was to come.

Rom 5:12-14

¹⁵But the gracious gift isn't like the sin. In the one case, many died because one sinned. In the other case, many received abundant grace because of God's gracious gift and the one man Jesus Christ. ¹⁶The gracious gift isn't like what came through the one sinner; the judgment *that came* in connection with one sin *led* to condemnation, but the gracious gift *that came* in connection with many sins *led* to justification. ¹⁷If death prevailed because of one man's sin, much more will life prevail—in the ones that receive abundant grace and bestowed righteousness—because of the One, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸As by the sin of one *there was what led* to condemnation for all people, so by one act of righteousness *there is* justification that leads to life for all people. ¹⁹As by one man's disobedience many became sinners, so by One *man's* obedience many will become righteous. ²⁰The Law came in besides to increase sin, but where sin increased grace multiplied. ²¹So as sin prevailed in death, grace could prevail in righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rom 5:15-21

Death to Sinning

6:¹So should we say, "*Let's keep sinning so there'll be more grace*"? ²Goodness, no! How can we who died to sin keep living in it? ³Don't you know that we who were baptized into

Christ Jesus, were baptized into his death? ⁴Baptism buried us with him into death. As the Father gloriously raised Christ from the dead, we too can live in a new life. ⁵If we've participated in what's like his death, we'll participate in what's like his resurrection. ⁶Know this: our old self was crucified with him to destroy the sinful body so we wouldn't serve sin anymore. ⁷Whoever dies is justified from sin. ⁸If we've died with Christ, we believe we'll live with him. ⁹We know that since Christ arose from the dead, he won't die again, and death doesn't have control over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin once and for all; the life he lives now, he keeps living to God. ¹¹We consider ourselves dead to sin too, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. **Rom 6:1-11**

“Enslaved” to Righteousness

¹²So don't let sin prevail in your mortal body by yielding its drives. ¹³Don't keep offering your members as tools for unrighteousness. Offer yourselves to God as alive from the dead, and offer your members to him as tools for righteousness. ¹⁴Sin won't be controlling you because you're under grace, not law.

¹⁵What then? Should we sin because we're under grace instead of law? Goodness, no! ¹⁶Don't you know that whatever you yield to, you're 'slaves' to—'*servants*' to sin, *which leads* to death or 'servants' to obedience, *which leads* to righteousness? ¹⁷Thank God, though you used to be servants to sin, you've obeyed from the heart the type of teaching you received. ¹⁸You've been freed from sin and put 'in servitude' to righteousness (¹⁹an illustration to help you understand). As you 'put yourselves in servitude' to unrighteousness and increasing lawlessness, now 'put yourselves in servitude' to righteousness and holiness. ²⁰When you were servants to sin, you were 'free' from righteousness. ²¹So, what things were you producing then that you're ashamed of now? Their outcome *was* death. ²²Now that you're free from sin and 'in servitude' to God, you're producing holiness, whose outcome *is* eternal life. ²³The wages of sin *is* death, but the gracious gift of God *is* life in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Rom 6:12-23**

The Marriage Comparison

^{7:1}Don't you know, you that know the Law, that it applies to someone as long as the person's alive? ²The Law ties a woman to her husband as long as he's alive. If he dies, she's free from the law about husbands. ³So while he's alive, she'd be an adulteress if she joined herself to another man. But if her husband dies, she's free from the law, and she's not an adulteress if she joins herself to another man. ⁴So, through the Christ's body you also died to the Law and united with someone else—who resurrected—so you could bear fruit to God. ⁵When you were in the flesh, *its* sinful desires that were through the Law worked in your members to bear fruit that led to death. ⁶Now you're released from the Law because you've died to what imprisoned you. As a result, you're serving in the new spirit, not in the old letter. **Rom 7:1-6**

Indwelling Sin

⁷What should we say then? *Is* the Law sinful? Goodness, no! But I wouldn't have known sin if it weren't for the Law. I wouldn't have known coveting if the Law hadn't said, "***Do not covet***" [Ex 20:17; Deut 5:21]. ⁸Sin used the commandment to produce all kinds of covetousness in me. Apart from law, sin *is* dead. ⁹I was alive apart from law at one time; but when the commandment came, sin came to life ¹⁰and I died. The commandment that was meant to bring me life turned out to bring *me* death. ¹¹Sin used the commandment to lead me astray and kill me. ¹²So the Law *is* holy, and the commandment *is* holy, just, good. Rom 7:7-12

Inner Conflict

¹³So, did what was good kill me? Goodness, no! Sin—to show itself for what it was—killed me by using the commandment. By using the commandment, sin became extremely sinful. ¹⁴We know the Law is spiritual, but I'm physical, sold like a servant to sin. ¹⁵I can't figure out what I'm doing. I don't do what I want to do; I do what I hate. ¹⁶If I'm doing what I don't want to do, I agree the Law's good. ¹⁷I'm no longer doing it; sin's doing it in me. ¹⁸I know nothing good lives in me—in my flesh. Wanting to do good is present, but doing it isn't. ¹⁹I don't do the good I want to do; I do the evil I don't want to do. ²⁰If I'm doing what I don't want to do, I'm not doing it; sin's doing it in me. ²¹I find the principle that evil lies in me who wants to do good. ²²In my heart of hearts, I delight in God's Law, ²³but in my members I see another pattern of operation that's in conflict with the pattern of operation that's in my mind. That pattern is imprisoning me in the sin that's in my members. ²⁴Miserable man! Who's going to rescue me from this death-filled body? ²⁵Thank God, our Lord Jesus Christ! So, I serve God with *my* mind but serve sin with *my* flesh. Rom 7:13-25

Freedom Through Christ

8:¹So *there's* no condemnation in Christ Jesus. ²The life-producing spirit that operates in him has freed you from law that produces sin and death. ³What the Law couldn't do because it operated through weak flesh, God *did* by sending his Son in the form of sin-oriented flesh to deal with sin in the flesh and put it in its place. ⁴So the goodness the Law called for, you can fulfill by living according to the spirit instead of the flesh. ⁵People that live in a flesh-oriented way focus on material things; people that live in a spirit-oriented way focus on things that are not material. ⁶The fleshly mentality leads to a dead end; the spiritual mentality leads to life and peace. ⁷So the flesh-oriented mentality opposes God because it doesn't—and can't—be in submission to his Law. ⁸People that live in a flesh-oriented way can't be pleasing God. ⁹But, we're not flesh-oriented, but spirit-oriented if God's Spirit lives in us. If we don't have Christ's spirit, we don't belong to him. ¹⁰If Christ is in us, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the spirit *is* alive because

of goodness. ¹¹If the Spirit of the one that resurrected Jesus is living in us, the One that resurrected Christ will make our mortal bodies alive by the Spirit that is living in us. **Rom 8:1-11**

Living Above the Flesh

¹²So, we're not obliged to live in a flesh-oriented way. ¹³We'll die if we live that way. But, we'll live if by spirit we put to death the misdeeds of flesh. ¹⁴As many as God's spirit leads, are God's children. ¹⁵We didn't receive again a sense of bondage resulting in fear, but a sense of sonship that calls out '*Father!*' ¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we're God's children. ¹⁷If *we're* children, then *we're* heirs, God's heirs, fellow heirs with Christ—if we suffer with *him* so we can be glorified with *him*. **Rom 8:12-17**

Longing for the Eternal

¹⁸I don't consider the sufferings of this time worth comparing to the glory that'll be revealed. ¹⁹Creation's deep longing waits for *that* revelation to God's children. ²⁰Creation's been subjected to worthlessness, not willingly, but by the One who subjected it in hopes ²¹of freeing it from bondage to decay *and delivering it* to the glorious freedom of God's children. ²²Up till now the whole creation has been groaning in birth pains. ²³We, too, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, long to be adopted as children, and to have our bodies redeemed. ²⁴Hope has saved us but hope that we can see isn't hope. ²⁵We hope for what we don't see, and patiently long for it.

²⁶And, the Spirit helps our weaknesses. We don't know what to pray for, but he intercedes for us with sighs we can't say. ²⁷The One who examines hearts understands what our spirits mean and intercedes for the saints in a way that harmonizes with God's will. ²⁸We know everything works out for good for those who love God and are called in a way that fits with his purpose. ²⁹The ones he foreknew he predestined to conform to the image of his Son so he'd be the oldest of many brothers. ³⁰The ones he predestined he called, justified, and glorified. **Rom 8:18-30**

Trials Don't Show Separation from God

³¹What's that tell us? If God's for us, who's against us? ³²If he didn't spare his own Son, but offered him up for us all, how will he not graciously give us everything we need? ³³Who's going to level accusation against God's chosen people? He justifies; who condemns? ³⁴Jesus Christ *is* the One that died and, beyond that, resurrected to God's right hand to intercede for us. ³⁵What's going to separate us from the love Christ has for us? Trouble, distress, persecution famine, nakedness, danger, or sword? ³⁶As the scripture says,

***"We're killed all day long for your sake;
we're considered sheep for slaughter" [Ps 44:22].***

³⁷In all these things, we more than conquer through the One who loved us. ³⁸I'm confident that death or life, angels or rulers, present or future things, powers, ³⁹height or depth, or any other created thing, can't separate us from the love God has for us in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Rom 8:31-39**

God's Choice of Israel

9:1-2 Truth is, in Christ I have constant sorrow in my heart. I'm not lying; my conscience confirms *it* in the Holy Spirit: ³I'd be willing to be cut off from the Christ^{Messiah} for my fellow Jews, my physical relatives, ⁴Israelites, who have the adoption as children, the honor, the covenants, the Law, the *divine* service and worship, the promises. ⁵They're the ones that descended from the ancestors, and from them physically came the Christ^{Messiah}, who's over all, God blessed forever! Amen! **Rom 9:1-5**

⁶It's not that God's message has failed. Not all of Israel's descendants *are* "Israel." ⁷Not all of Abraham's descendants *are* "children": ***"Your lineage will be counted through Isaac"*** [Gen 21:12]. ⁸That means it's not physical children that are God's children, but promised children that God counts as descendants. ⁹The promise was, ***"At that time I'll come, and Sarah will have a son"*** [Gen 18:10, 14]. ¹⁰That's not all. Rebekah conceived from our ancestor Isaac. ¹¹⁻¹²Before she had *the twins* or they had done anything good or bad, God told her, ***"The older will serve the younger"*** [Gen 25:23]. That pictures how God's purpose would come from his choosing, not their doing—a *purpose that came* from the One who called. ¹³As the scripture says,

"I loved Jacob more than Esau" [Mal 1:2-3].

¹⁴We aren't going to say God's unjust, are we? Goodness, no! ¹⁵He told Moses,

***"I'll decide who to give grace
and who to show mercy"*** [Ex 33:19].

¹⁶So things don't happen because somebody wants them to or because somebody's controlling things, but because God's showing mercy. ¹⁷The scripture tells Pharaoh, ***"I raised you up specifically to show my power in connection with you and to make myself known in the whole world"*** [Ex 9:16]. ¹⁸So he has mercy on whoever he wants to and makes stubborn whoever he wants to. **Rom 9:6-18**

God's Displeasure and Mercy

¹⁹Will you say to me then, ***"Why does he find fault? Who's resisting his will?"*** ²⁰Mere mortal, who are you to get smart with God? What's formed doesn't say to the one who formed it, ***"Why'd you make me like this?"*** ²¹Doesn't a potter have the right from the same lump to make a container for elegant purposes or menial ones? ²²So what if God, wanting to demonstrate his displeasure and make his power known, puts up with containers fit for destruction ²³so he can make known his abundant honor on containers he shows mercy to—containers he prepared

ahead of time for honor? ²⁴We're *those containers that have been prepared for honor*, that he called from Jews and Gentiles. ²⁵As he says in Hosea,

*"I'll call them my people that weren't my people;
I'll call them friends that weren't friends [Hos 2:23].
²⁶Where it was said, 'You're not my people,'
they'll be called 'children of the living God'" [Hos 1:10].*

²⁷Isaiah cried out in regard to Israel,

*"Though the number of Israelites is like sand by the sea,
only a remnant will be saved.
²⁸The LORD will thoroughly and quickly
carry out his word in the world" [Is 10:22-23; Hos 1:10].*

²⁹As Isaiah said before,

*"If the LORD hadn't left us a seed,
we'd be like Sodom and Gomorrah" [Is 1:9]*

Rom 9:19-29

Righteousness by Law vs. Trust

³⁰What are we going to say then? *We're going to say* that Gentiles received righteousness who didn't pursue it, a righteousness that comes from trust. ³¹But Israel pursued a righteousness that comes from law and didn't attain it. ³²Why? Because they didn't pursue it by trust, but by what they did themselves. They stumbled over the stone that "trips" people up. ³³Like the scripture says,

*"I'm laying a stone in Zion that people trip over,
a rock that causes them problems.*

Whoever trusts him won't be disappointed" [Is 28:16].

Rom 9:30-33

10:¹My heart's desire and prayer to God is for their salvation. ²I admit they have a zeal for God, but they don't know what they're doing. ³They don't understand the righteousness that comes from God, and they try to establish their righteousness by themselves. They haven't submitted to the righteousness God gives. ⁴For everybody that trusts, Christ puts an end to law as a way to achieve righteousness.

Rom 10:1-4

⁵As to righteousness under law, Moses writes, *"The one that does them is the one that will have life by them"* [Lev 18:5]. ⁶But goodness that comes from trust says, *"Don't say in your heart, 'Who'll go up into the sky?' [Deut 30:12]"* (that is, to bring Christ down); ⁷or, *"Who'll go down into the ground?"* (that is, to raise Christ up from the dead). ⁸But what does it say?

*"The message is near you—
in your mouth and in your heart" [Deut 30:14].*

That's the "message" about trust, *the message* we preach. ⁹If you acknowledge Jesus *as* Lord and trust in your heart that God raised him from the dead, he'll "save" you. ¹⁰With your heart you

trust to *be considered* upright; with your mouth you confess to receive salvation. ¹¹The scripture says, ***“He won’t disappoint those who trust in him”*** [Is 28:16]. ¹²There’s no difference between Jew and Greek because the same Lord is Lord of both; he’s rich toward everybody that calls on him. ¹³***“The LORD will save everybody that calls on him”*** [Joel 2:32]. Rom 10:5-13

Making Salvation by Trust Available

¹⁴How will people call on somebody they don’t believe in? How will they believe in somebody they haven’t heard about? How will they hear *about him* without a messenger? ¹⁵How will they bring the message if they’re not sent? Like the scripture says, ***“How welcome they are that bring good news!”*** [Is 52:7; Nah 1:15] ¹⁶But not everybody has obeyed the good news. Isaiah says,

“LORD, who’s believed our report?” [Is 53:1]

¹⁷So faith *comes* from hearing—hearing *the message* about Christ. ¹⁸But I say, the Israelites have heard, haven’t they?

***“Their testimony went out all over the world,
and their words to the ends of the earth”*** [Ps 19:4].

¹⁹But I say, Israel surely didn’t know, did they? First, Moses says,

***“I’ll make you jealous by what’s not a nation;
I’ll anger you by a nation that doesn’t understand”*** [Deut 32:21].

²⁰Isaiah is bold,

***“People found me that weren’t looking for me;
they saw me who weren’t asking about me”*** [Is 65:1].

²¹He tells Israel,

***“All day long I’ve held out my hands
to a disobedient, stubborn people”*** [Is.65:2 LXX].

Rom 10:14-21

Israel’s Remnant

11:¹So God hasn’t set his people aside, has he? Goodness, no! I’m an Israelite too, a descendant of Abraham from the tribe of Benjamin. ²God hasn’t set aside the people he chose ahead of time. Don’t you know what the scripture says in the passage about Elijah? He pleads with God against Israel,

³***“LORD, they’ve killed your prophets
and torn down your altars;
I’m the only one left,
and they’re trying to kill me”*** [1 Kg 19:10].

⁴How does God answer him?

***“I’ve reserved for myself 7,000
that haven’t bent a knee to Baal”*** [1 Kg 19:18].

⁵It's the same way now. By God's grace there's a remnant. ⁶If it's by *God's* grace, it's not from what *the remnant* does. Otherwise, grace wouldn't be grace. ⁷So what's the point? What Israel's looking for, it hasn't found, but the Chosen have found *it*. The rest became stubborn. ⁸Like the scripture says,

*“To this day, God has put them in a stupor,
eyes that can't see,
ears that can't hear”* [Deut 29:4; Is 29:10].

⁹David says,

*“Let their table become a snare and a trap,
a stumbling block and payback.*

¹⁰*May their eyes grow dim so they can't see;
bend their backs always”* [Ps 69:22-23].

¹¹So, they didn't stumble and fall down, did they? Goodness, no! By their sin, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make the Jews jealous. ¹²If their sin enriches the world and their failure enriches the Gentiles, how much more their full number!

¹³I'm talking to you Gentiles now. Since I'm an apostle to Gentiles, I highlight my ministry ¹⁴if somehow I can make my fellow Jews jealous and save some of them. ¹⁵If the Jews' rejecting means reconciling the world, what will their accepting *be* except a return from the dead? ¹⁶If the original piece *of dough is* holy, the whole lump's holy. If the root's holy, so are the branches.

Rom 11:1-16

The Olive Tree Parable

¹⁷If some branches were removed and you, a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them and partook of the nourishment from the root of the olive tree, ¹⁸don't feel superior to the *original* branches: you don't *support* the root; it *supports* you. ¹⁹You may say, “*Branches were removed so I could be grafted in.*” ²⁰Right. But they were removed because they didn't trust, and you stand by trust *as well*. Don't get smug; be reverent. ²¹If God didn't spare the natural branches *because they didn't trust*, he won't spare you *either*. ²²So pay attention to God's kindness and severity. For the ones that fell, severity; but for you, God's kindness—if you stay in his kindness. Otherwise, you'll be removed too. ²³And if they don't keep distrusting, God will graft them back in; he can do that. ²⁴If God took you out of a naturally wild olive tree and grafted you unnaturally into a cultivated olive tree, much more will he graft them into their own olive tree.

Rom 11:17-24

Israel's Salvation by Trust

²⁵I want you to understand this mystery so you won't feel smug: a hardening has come over Israel in part till the full number of Gentiles comes in. ²⁶That's the way all Israel will be saved, like the scripture says,

*“A deliverer will come out of Zion;
he’ll turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*

*²⁷That’s my covenant with them
when I take away their sins” [Is 59:20-21].*

Israel’s Continuing Responsibility

²⁸As far as the good news is concerned, *they’re* enemies for your sake; as far as *God’s* choice is concerned, *they’re* highly regarded for their ancestors’ sake. ²⁹God’s gifts and calling *to them* aren’t being revoked *here*. ³⁰You once disobeyed God but have now received mercy because they disobeyed. ³¹In turn, they’ve now disobeyed because God showed mercy to you to prod them to receive mercy. ³²God has locked everyone up in disobedience so he could have mercy on everyone. **Rom 11:25-32**

³³The depth of God’s wealth, wisdom, and knowledge! His judgments are so unknowable, his ways so unfathomable!

³⁴*“Who has known the LORD’s mind?*

Who was his counselor? [Is 40:13 LXX; Job 15:8; Jer 23:18]

³⁵*Who gave to him first*

to have it paid back to him?” [Job 35:7; 41:11]

³⁶Everything is from him, by him, and for him. Glory to him forever! Amen.

Rom 11:33-36

Christians as Living Sacrifices

12:¹So I urge you by God’s mercies to present your bodies *as* living sacrifices, holy *and* pleasing to God; *that’s* your spiritual service. ²Don’t conform yourselves to this world; transform yourselves by renewing your mind so you can discern what God’s will *is*—*what’s* good, pleasing, and perfect.

³By the grace God gave me, I say to everyone among you not to think more of yourselves than you should. Think properly as measured by the faith God has allotted to each *of you*. ⁴There are many parts to one body, and they don’t all serve the same purpose. ⁵That’s how it is with the many of us that are in Christ. Individually we’re interdependent parts with one another. ⁶We have different gifts according to God’s grace. If *our gift is* prophecy, *let’s prophesy* in accordance with our faith. ⁷If *it’s* service, *let’s carry out our commitment to him* in our service. If *it’s* teaching, *let’s do it* in teaching. ⁸If *it’s* encouraging, *let’s do it* in encouragement. If *it’s* sharing, *let’s do it* liberally. If *it’s* leading, *let’s do it* diligently. If *it’s* showing mercy, *let’s do it* cheerfully. **Rom 12:1-8**

⁹Love has to be genuine. Hate what’s bad; hold onto what’s good. ¹⁰*Devote yourselves* to one another in brotherly love. Look up to one another in showing honor. ¹¹Be diligent, *be* enthusiastic in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, endure adversity, devote yourselves to

prayer, ¹³share in the saints' needs, show hospitality to strangers. ¹⁴Bless people that persecute you; don't curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who are rejoicing; cry with those who are crying. ¹⁶Take the same attitude toward other people that *you take toward* yourself. Don't be proud; associate with humble people. Don't consider yourself smart. ¹⁷Don't pay back evil for evil. Be careful to do what's good in front of everybody. ¹⁸As much as comes from your part, live peacefully with everyone. ¹⁹Don't take revenge, dear friends; walk away from anger. The scripture says,

***“Revenge belongs to me;
I'll take care of it,' the LORD says”*** [Lev 19:18].

²⁰But,

***“If your enemy's hungry, feed him;
if he's thirsty, give him a drink.
If you do that,
you'll pour hot coals on his head”*** [Pro 25:21-22].

²¹Don't let evil overcome you; you overcome evil with good.

Rom 12:9-21

Respect for Political Rulers

13:¹Every person needs to submit to higher authorities, because there's no authority except by God's *approval*. God has established the authorities that exist. ²So if a person resists them, he's resisting what God has established, and he'll be condemned for it. ³Rulers don't bring fear for good behavior, but for bad. You shouldn't be afraid of authority. Do what's right, and you'll be praised for it. ⁴They're God's ministers to you for good. If you do what's wrong, be afraid; they don't carry a sword for nothing. They punish people for doing bad things. ⁵So you need to submit, not only to avoid punishment, but for conscience sake. ⁶For the same reason, pay *your* taxes, because they're God's ministers, who dedicate themselves to those very things. ⁷Pay everybody what's due to them—taxes, customs, respect, honor.

Rom 13:1-7

Call for Renewed Goodness

⁸Don't owe people anything except to love them. The one that loves another fulfills the Law. ⁹***“Do not commit adultery, murder, steal, covet”*** [Ex 20:13-15, 17; Deut 5:17-19, 21] or any other commandment is summed up in ***“Love your neighbor as yourself”*** [Lev 19:18]. ¹⁰Love doesn't do anything bad to a “neighbor;” so it fulfills the Law.

¹¹*Do* that because you know it's time to get up from sleeping. Your salvation's nearer now than when you came to believe. ¹²Nighttime is far gone and daytime's coming; so lay aside what people do in the dark and pick up the tools used in daylight. ¹³Live respectably in the daylight, not with carousing and indecency, rivalry and jealousy. ¹⁴Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and don't cater to physical drives.

Rom 13:8-14

Cautiously Accepting Weak Brothers

14:¹Accept people that are weak in faith, and don't pass judgment on the way they think.
²One person believes he can eat anything, but a weak person *just* eats vegetables. ³The one that eats must not look down on the one that doesn't; the one that doesn't eat must not criticize the one that does. ⁴What right do you have to criticize somebody else's household servant? He stands or falls to his own Lord. And, he will stand because the Lord can make him stand. ⁵One person considers one day more important than another; another person considers every day alike. Each one should be fully confident in his own mind. ⁶The one that observes a day observes *it* to the Lord; the one that eats, eats to the Lord because he thanks God. The one that doesn't eat, doesn't eat to the Lord, and thanks God. ⁷None of us live to ourselves or die to ourselves. ⁸If we live, we live to the Lord; if we die, we die to the Lord. So whether we live or die, we're the Lord's. ⁹That's why Christ died and came to life so he could serve as Lord of the living and the dead. ¹⁰And why criticize^{sg} your fellow Christians or look down on them? We'll all stand at God's judgment seat. ¹¹The scripture says,

*“As sure as I live,’ the LORD says,
 ‘every knee will bend to me;
 every tongue will acknowledge me’”* [Is 49:18 + 45:23].

¹²So each one of us will give account of himself to God.

Rom 14:1-12

¹³Don't criticize one another anymore. Determine^{pl} not to make your brother or sister stumble. ¹⁴I'm convinced that no thing *is* unclean in itself, but it is unclean to someone that considers it unclean. ¹⁵If you're grieving your fellow Christian by what you're eating, don't destroy with food the one Christ died for. ¹⁶Don't let people slander your goodness. ¹⁷God's kingdom doesn't have to do with what you eat or drink; it has to do with goodness, peace, joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸A person that serves Christ that way is acceptable to God and respectable to people. ¹⁹So let's follow what makes for peace and what helps one another. ²⁰Don't tear down God's work by what you eat. Everything's pure, but it's not pure for people that feel like they're offending *God* when they eat it. ²¹It's good not to eat meat or drink wine or *do* anything that makes someone stumble. ²²Exercise your faith in front of God according to your own convictions *on such matters*. People are fortunate that don't condemn themselves by what they approve of. ²³If they have doubts about what they're eating, they stand condemned because they're not doing it out of a good conscience. Anything that doesn't arise from a good conscience is sin.

Rom 14:13-23

Bearing with the Weak

15¹We that are strong need to bear with people's weaknesses, instead of pleasing ourselves. ²Let's make every effort to be pleasing to our neighbors for *their* good, so we can build them up. ³Christ didn't please himself; like the scripture says,

***"The insults from the ones that insulted you
have fallen on me"*** [Ps. 69:9b].

⁴What was written earlier was written to instruct us so that by patience and the scriptures' encouragement we could have hope. ⁵May God, who is patient and encouraging, influence you to take the attitude toward one another that Jesus Christ takes *toward us*. ⁶That way with united voice you can praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Rom 15:1-6**

⁷So accept one another like Christ accepted you to God's honor. ⁸I tell you, the Christ has become a minister for the Circumcision for God's truth, for confirming *his* promises to the ancestors, ⁹and for the Gentiles to praise God for *his* mercy—like the scripture says,

***"I'll acknowledge you among the Gentiles;
I'll sing praises to you"*** [Ps 18:49].

¹⁰Again it says,

"Gentiles, rejoice with his people" [Deut 32:43];

¹¹and,

***"Praise the LORD, every nation;
praise him, all peoples"*** [Ps 117:1].

¹²Again Isaiah says,

***"A root will come out of Jesse,
One who rises up to govern the Gentiles.
They'll put their hope in him"*** [Is 11:10].

¹³Now may the God who gives "hope," fill you with joy and peace in your faith so you'll have high "hopes" by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Rom 15:7-13**

¹⁴My siblings *in Christ*, I'm confident that you're good and knowledgeable, and able to admonish one another. ¹⁵On some things I've written to you boldly to remind you. Because of the grace God gave me, ¹⁶I minister God's good news to the Gentiles as a priest for Christ Jesus. I do it so they can become an acceptable offering that's sanctified by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁷In Christ Jesus I have something to take pride in, as far as God's things are concerned. ¹⁸I won't take it on myself to say anything but what Christ has accomplished through me in the Gentiles' obedience by word and deed. ¹⁹*What he accomplished through me came* by the power of signs and wonders *that I did* by the power of God's Spirit. So, from Jerusalem to Illyricum I've presented the good news about Christ. ²⁰I've aimed to preach where people have not known Christ. I didn't want to build on somebody else's foundation, ²¹but like the scripture says,

***"People that haven't received the news about him, will see;
those who haven't heard will understand"*** [Is 52:15].

Rom 15:14-21

Paul's Plans

²²⁻²³Over the years I've wanted to come to you, but I've been prevented from doing it. Now I don't have anywhere left in these regions. ²⁴When I go to Spain, I hope to see you, and to have you send me forward after I've refreshed myself with your company for a while. ²⁵At present I'm headed to Jerusalem to serve the saints. ²⁶Macedonia and Achaia wanted to take up a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. ²⁷They've wanted to do that because they owe them. If the Gentiles have benefited from their spiritual things, they do well to minister to them from physical things. ²⁸When I've finished that *project* and safely delivered the collection, I'll go through you to Spain. ²⁹When I come, I know I'll have Christ's full blessing. **Rom 15:22-29**

³⁰Now I urge you by our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of the Spirit, to pray sincerely with me that God will deliver me from the ones who disobey in Judaea, ³¹that the saints will accept my ministry in Jerusalem, ³²and that with joy I'll come *to you* by God's will and refresh myself with you for a while. ³³Now the God that brings peace *be* with you all. Amen.

Rom 15:30-33

Extensive Greetings

^{16:1}I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant in the church in Cenchrea. ²Welcome her in the Lord in a way appropriate to saints. Help her with whatever she needs. She's helped lots of people, including me.

³Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. ⁴They've risked their necks to save my life. Not only am I grateful to them; so are all the Gentile churches. ⁵Greet the church that meets in their house. Hello to Epaphroditus, my dear friend, the first convert to Christ in Asia; ⁶and to Mary, who has worked hard for you^{pl}. ⁷Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kin and fellow prisoners. They're well-known among the apostles and have been Christians longer than I have. ⁸Give our regards to Ampliatus, my friend in the Lord; ⁹to Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ; and to my close friend Stachys. ¹⁰Greet Apelles^{mas}, approved in Christ, those *in the family* of Aristobulus, ¹¹and Herodion, my compatriot. Greet the *family* of Narcissus, who are in the Lord; ¹²as well as Tryphaena and Tryphosa, laborers in the Lord. Greet ¹³Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. ¹⁴Say hello to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the disciples that are with him; ¹⁵as well as Philologus and Julia; Nereus and his sister Olympas; and the saints that are with them. ¹⁶Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send their greetings. **Rom 16:1-16**

¹⁷I urge you to keep an eye on people that cause division and upset people's faith by teaching things contrary to what you've learned; stay away from them. ¹⁸People like that aren't serving Christ our Lord; *they're serving* their own appetites. With smooth talk and flattery, they deceive unsuspecting people. ¹⁹Everybody's heard about your obedience; so I'm happy over you

and want you to be wise about what's good and innocent about what's bad. ²⁰The God that brings peace will quickly crush Satan under your feet.

²¹Timothy, my fellow worker, says hello, as does Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen. (²²I, Tertius, the one writing out this letter, greets you in the Lord.) ²³Gaius, host to me and the whole church, sends regards. Erastus, the city treasurer, greets you *as does* Quartus the brother.

Rom 16:17-22

Closing Doxology

[²⁴]^{ms} ²⁵Now to the One who can give you security by the good news I'm delivering about Jesus Christ, according to the mystery

kept unrevealed from times eternal,

²⁶but revealed now in the scriptures of the prophets by the commandment of the eternal God,

made known to all nations, and

leading to an obedience *rooted in* faith—

²⁷to the only wise God through Jesus Christ *be* glory forever! Amen.

Rom 16:24-27

Translator: Virgil Warren

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