

# JUST PAUL

comments on

# ROMANS

JONATHAN MITCHELL

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COMMENTS ON

ROMANS

based upon  
The Jonathan Mitchell New  
Testament

BY  
JONATHAN  
MITCHELL, MA

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BOOK COVERS

Copyright 2014, Harper Brown  
Publishing

ISBN 978-0-9852231-5-1

New Testament text:

*The New Testament, God's Message  
of Goodness, Ease and Well-Being,  
Which Brings God's Gifts of His  
Spirit, His Life, His Grace, His  
Power, His Fairness, His Peace and  
His Love* translated by Jonathan  
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ISBN 978-1-4507-0505-9

Bible Commentaries:

978-0-9852231-0-6: Peter, Paul and Jacob, Comments On First Peter, Philippians, Colossians, First Thessalonians, Second Thessalon

978-0-9852231-1-3: John, Judah, Paul & ?: Comments on First John, Second John, Third John, Judah (Jude), Hebrews, Galatiansians, First Timothy, Second Timothy, Titus, Jacob (James)

978-0-9852231-9-9: Peter's Encore & Later Paul, comments on Second Peter & Ephesian

Cover photo: Mishara Mitchell

Front Cover design and creation: Lynda Mitchell, Mishara Mitchell and Joshua

Mitchell

Cover productions: Joshua Mitchell

Back Cover text: Lynda Mitchell and  
Joshua Mitchell

eBook formatting & creation: Petrus  
Vermaak [vermaakpetrus@gmail.com](mailto:vermaakpetrus@gmail.com)

# INTRODUCTION

This volume is an interpretation of Paul's letter to the first century called-out, covenant community of Christ in Rome. It is based upon my translations of the Greek texts and gives some explanations of the reasons for, and the implications of, my renderings.

Included with my comments are citations from a variety of scholars who present a variety of views from their own ways of reading this letter from Paul. So this work is a partial anthology of

interpretations of Romans, but is primarily my own reading of the text, which has in some degree been guided by my predecessors, as well as by my reading of Paul's other letters, and from statements in other NT documents.

For modern readers of Romans, how we understand his topics of "justification, salvation, atonement, judgment, wrath/personal-emotion, participation in Christ and new covenant inclusion" impact how we live our lives, how we treat and regard others, and how we present to the world God's message of goodness, ease and well-being in Christ that has come to us via His Word and His Spirit. An example of this is

pointed out by Kenneth E. Bailey (*Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels*, IVP, 2008) as he discusses the Hebrew word for “righteousness/justice” as often referring to “mighty acts of God to save” (p 78), then citing Mic. 6:8 (“do justice... love kindness... walk humbly with your God”) as an example of Israel’s “pattern of the kinds of compassionate acts that He expected from them toward others.... How *God treated them* in their need is the model for how *they are to treat others*” (p 80; emphasis original). God’s compassionate deliverance was “the way pointed out” to Israel.

My own comments in this work are based upon: *THE NEW TESTAMENT, God's Message of Goodness, Ease and Well-being Which Brings God's Gifts of His Spirit, His Life, His Grace, His Power, His Fairness, His Peace and His Love* – a translation by the author. My conclusions reflect this expanded translation, and take into consideration the semantic range of many Greek words. Additional potential lexical meanings are parenthetically inserted into the text of the translation, along with variant manuscript readings. I have given much attention to the significance of the Greek verb tenses and to the functions of the noun cases, rendering

the different ways that each of them could be translated within its context. Each verse is presented in bold face with alternate renderings parenthetically given in light face. The reader should not give preference to one rendering over another, but should thoroughly and thoughtfully consider all the possible combinations. An “=” sign signifies that what follows is a paraphrase, which means that the literal Greek has been *interpreted* to assist the reader. Bear in mind that such instances are just one studied interpretation of that particular Greek expression.

The main guides for interpreting the

original works are the translation and the context, together with careful attention given to the culture and historical setting of the people to whom these letters were written, as well as the rhetoric that the author is using. A concise introduction begins the comments, which includes comments from other scholars. I make references to other New Testament letters and to the four gospels, as well as occasionally citing the Old Testament and other Jewish literature that may shed light on the context and message of Paul's letter. Insights from friends are also cited.

In short, this work is intended to shed

new light based upon a correct understanding of the Greek text(s), the purpose of the letter, and the local life situations in their first century context, and equally important, to serve as a catalyst for critical thinking regarding the impact of this letter upon our lives today.

In addition to this commentary, three topical studies have also been included.

For your edification and God's glory,

Jonathan P. Mitchell

August 2014

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to first thank my wife Lynda for her continued support of this work, for her editorial skills, for her insightful comment throughout the course of this work, and for her creative talents in the design of the cover. Next I want to thank my son Joshua for his technical expertise and artistic talents which has made possible this publication.

I want to thank my sister Rebecca

Mitchell for her proof reading and input on grammar and style. I want to thank the following family and friends for allowing me to quote their comments which have added insights in various places in this collection of comments:

Lynda Mitchell, Rebecca Mitchell, Dan Kaplan and Mark Eaton.

I want to acknowledge the following scholars whose works have been cited or mentioned:

Ambrosiaster, Mary E. Andrews, Kenneth E. Bailey, Karl Barth, A. Baxter, William Barclay, C.K. Barrett, John L. Berquist, Manfred T. Branch, Walter Brueggemann, David Byrd,

Rudolf Bultmann, Chrysostom, Douglas  
A. Campbell, W.S. Campbell, C.E.B.  
Cranfield, Diodore, James D.G. Dunn,  
C.H. Dodd, N. Elliott, Julie Ferwerda,  
Ludwig Feuerback, Joseph A. Fitzmyer,  
Lawrence Garcia, John Gavazzoni,  
Gregory of Nyssa, Katherine Grieb, A.E.  
Harvey, Richard B. Hays, Stephen  
Jones, Jerome, Jacob Jervell, Josephus,  
Max Kadushin, Ernst Kasemann, L.E.  
Keck, J.R. Daniel Kirk, Gunter Klein,  
A.E. Knoch, Werner Kummel, H.B.  
Mitchell, Johannes Munck, Mark D.  
Nanos, Ann Nyland, Oecumenius,  
Origen, Elaine Pagels, Pelagius, A.T.  
Robertson, John A.T. Robinson, Richard  
Rohr, E.P. Sanders, Rudolf

Schnackenburg, Glen H. Stassen, David H. Stern, Paul Tillich, Ben Witherington III, D.E.H. Whiteley, N.T. Wright, Kenneth Wuest and J. Ziesler. In joint-works are: H.E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey; F. Davidson and Ralph P. Martin; Pinchas Lapide and Peter Stuhlmacher.

All works that have been quoted are referenced within the text of this work; some of the above authors were cited within the works of other scholars listed, above.

Quotes from the Old Testament have been from the *Concordant Version of the Old Testament*

(CVOT), Concordant Publishing Concern, 2005; Ferrar Fenton's *The Holy Bible in Modern English*, Destiny Publishers, 1966; Joseph B. Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*, Kregel Publications, 1971; JM Powis Smith (the OT) in *The Complete Bible, An American Translation*, The University of Chicago Press, 1964; *Tanakh*, The Jewish Publication Society, 1985; *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, Oxford University Press, 2007; or the Septuagint (LXX), translated by the author.

Other versions cited (primarily for contrast or comparison) are: *The*

*Amplified Bible*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1965; *The Concordant Greek Text*, Concordant Publishing concern, 1975;

*Concordant Literal New Testament* (CLNT), Concordant Publishing Concern, 1983; *The KJV*, The National Bible Press, 1944; *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*,

Watchtower Bible & Track Society, 1969; *NASB*, American Bible Society, 1977; *The New English*

*Bible*, Oxford University Press, 1970; *The New American Bible*, Catholic Bible Publishers, 1993;

*The NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan

Publishing House, 1983; *NRSV*,  
American Bible Society, 1989; *The New  
Word Translation*, Watchtower Bible &  
Tract Society, 1984; *The New  
Testament, An Expanded Translation*,  
WM B Eerdmans Publishing Company,  
1998.

# ABBREVIATIONS & TEXTUAL APPARATUS

## ABBREVIATIONS:

MS: manuscript

MSS: manuscripts

LXX: The Septuagint – Greek version of  
the Old Testament

Gen., Ex., Matt., Rom., etc.:  
commonly accepted

indicators of the books of the Bible

Aleph, A, B, C, D, Ψ, etc.:  
indicate an individual codex  
or MS

*p*: signifies that the MS is a  
papyrus MS

TR: Textus

Receptus (the  
"Received

Text;" the

"Majority  
Text")

*cf*: confer or  
compare

JM:

translations of

the LXX by the  
author

## APPARATUS:

Brackets, [ ]'s,  
have been used  
for the following  
situations:

to give a reading  
based upon other  
MSS

to insert notes or  
comments into  
the text

to insert words  
to aid in the

reading of the  
English version  
to indicate the  
reference of a  
quote from the  
Old Testament  
to insert explanations

Parentheses,  
( )'s, have  
been used  
for the  
following  
situations:  
to give other  
possible  
meanings of

a Greek  
word  
to give  
alternate  
renderings  
of phrases  
or verses  
to give a potential idiomatic translations

“=” has been placed before  
words for the following  
situations:

to signifies that the following  
is a potential idiomatic  
translation, or paraphrase to  
give another spelling of a name  
or a suggested equivalent name

to give a Hebrew equivalent of  
a word or name to give an  
explanatory note

# **COMMENTS on ROMANS**

[Ch1](#), [Ch2](#), [Ch3](#), [Ch4](#), [Ch5](#),  
[Ch6](#), [Ch7](#), [Ch8](#), [Ch9](#), [Ch10](#),  
[Ch11](#), [Ch12](#), [Ch13](#), [Ch14](#),  
[Ch15](#), [Ch16](#)

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The period for the writing of this letter

is determined by John A.T. Robinson (*Redating the New Testament*, The Westminster Press, 1976) to be circa AD 57. It is generally accepted that Paul wrote it from Corinth, or nearby Cenchrea, and had plans to visit the called-out covenant community (which likely was still meeting in homes) in Rome, and from there to proceed to Spain. He had not founded the Christian group to whom he is writing, and had not yet had opportunity to visit them, although he had friends and relatives there and some had been his co-workers in the message of Christ when they had lived in Corinth.

Paul addresses many issues in this letter,

both theological and ethical, and in the passages dealing with the latter it becomes clear that there were divisions among the groups – most likely between the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians (who were, apparently, the dominant group) – and so one of his aims is to effect peace and harmony between them. Paul's skill in rhetoric to achieve this end is masterfully presented in *Paul's Letter to the Romans, A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, by Ben Witherington III, with Darlene Hyatt (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004).

Another view of the purpose of this letter is given by E.P. Sanders in *Paul*

*and Palestinian Judaism* (Fortress Press, 1977) where he follows Gunther Bornkamm's observation (*Geschichte und Glaube* II, and *Paul*, 1971) that the situation addressed in Romans has in view the issue of the Jews and the Law, and also has in mind Paul's impending visit to Jerusalem. Sanders says,

"The letter to Rome, while recapitulating many themes from other correspondence, is really concerned with the Jewish-Gentile problem... [and] is to assert that salvation is for both Jews and Gentiles and that it must be *based on the same ground*. That ground cannot be the law and

must therefore be faith" (p 487-8; emphasis his; brackets mine).

Rudolf Bultmann (*Theology of the New Testament*, Vo. 1, 1952) posits,

"In chapter 5 [Paul] endeavors to demonstrate that eschatological life, though a matter of hope, is, nevertheless, in a certain manner already a present reality. Further, he shows in 6:1-7:6 that even sin has lost its domination for the rightwised.... [and] chapter 8 is the conclusion; it deals once more with freedom from sin (8:1-11) and from death (8:12-39)..." (p 279; brackets mine).

With a nod to these scholars, noted

above, in this work I shall also draw on insights by J.R. Daniel Kirk, *Unlocking Romans, Resurrection and the Justification of God* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008) where he points to the issue of theodicy (Has God been just in His dealings with Israel, considering His covenantal promises to them?) and where he discusses resurrection as a central theme of the letter.

My own comments will be based upon my translation of the text and upon views from a variety of other scholars, which will be cited within the body of the work. Among those will be Mark D. Nanos and David H. Stern whose

respective works shed insights from the Jewish context of this letter. The views of C.H. Dodd will at some points present us with perspectives from his era and theology, and the more recent work of Douglas A. Campbell will inform us from *The Deliverance of God, An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), with whom I agree the most – of all the scholars cited in this work.

Consideration will be given to the possible alternate renderings of the Greek, which my translation provides, and some explanations of the effects of these differences in translating (or: in

the variant readings of other MSS) will also be provided to assist the reader.

Werner Kummel suggested,

"The Epistle to the Romans bears a double character: It is basically a dialogue of the Pauline gospel with Judaism... And yet... contains expressions which definitely characterize the congregation as Gentile Christians.... [and] is conditioned by the fact that Paul, in seeking an association with the Roman Christians in the interests of his further missionary work... says to them what to him is the essence of Christianity and the content of the gospel..."

*(Introduction to the New Testament, 14<sup>th</sup> Rev. Ed., Abingdon Press, 1965, p 218, 221),*

but Campbell makes a strong case that, "Fundamentally, Romans was written for the same reasons that Galatians was written – to defend Paul's gospel against the depredations of certain hostile countermissionaries... [and is] an engagement primarily with false teachers [16:17-20]... [and] is a full-fledged engagement with 'another gospel that is really no gospel at all' [Gal. 1:6-7]" (ibid p 495ff; brackets mine).

He further sees this letter to the Romans as,

"... little more than a reminder of what the Roman Christians already know independently of Paul" (ibid p 499; *cf* 15:14-15, below).

As in his letter to the Galatians, we will find Paul drawing upon and reinterpreting the OT stories of Abraham; and as in 1 Cor. 15, we will find references to Adam's place in God's plan of the ages. My purpose is to let Paul's text speak afresh to us, as we consider the letter verse by verse, as well as providing some alternative interpretations from various scholars.



## Chapter 1

1. **Paul, Jesus Christ's slave** (or: a slave servant of and from [the] Anointed One, Jesus; a slave belonging to Jesus [the] Anointed [= Messiah]), **a called person, one sent forth with a mission** (or: an ambassador or emissary by invitation), **being one having been marked off by boundaries** (fully parted and determined by bounds; separated away and limited off; delineated; defined) **unto God's good news** (or: into a message of goodness and well-being which is God),  
The way of real living that has been pointed out to us (*dikaiosune*) is

somewhat of a paradox. In Gal. 5:1 Paul instructs us, “**For freedom, Christ immediately set us free...**,” and then he begins this letter by describing this new life in Christ as one of being His slave. Here, he follows the advice of Jesus for kingdom living: assume a low position – one of service (Mat. 20:26, 27; Lu. 14:7-11). In this, Paul is saying that Jesus Christ owns him, and so all the rest – being a person that has been **called**; being a person that has been **sent forth with a mission**; being a person that has been **marked off by boundaries unto God’s good news** – relates to and has its source in God’s sovereign ownership (the meaning of “Lord,” by

the way) of Paul. What an example. We should keep this in mind when we read Paul saying,

**“Progressively come to be imitators of me, correspondingly as I, myself, also [am] of Christ and from [the] Anointing.”** (1 Cor. 11:1)

But to those in Rome, this self-description would not only be a humble introduction of himself, but it also would demonstrate to everyone (and especially, the “strong” – probably the Gentile component – 15:1) the attitude that members of Christ should have toward one another, as well as the position in the community which they should

assume.

Next he identifies himself as a **called person**. His role and function was not that of a volunteer. His Master had called him to be a follower, and to serve a specific function for the body of Christ. He also identifies himself with the original twelve disciples (students, apprentices) by using this term, for Jesus had called each of them personally for the tasks that He had in mind for them. Paul was **one sent forth with a mission** (or: an ambassador or emissary). As such, he had the authority of the One who sent him on this life-mission, but that mission was to bring the message of goodness, ease and well-being (an

expanded meaning of the word often rendered, “evangel,” or “good news”), which is Jesus Christ (*cf* Mark 1:1, rendered in apposition) and which Paul says here is **God’s good news**: namely, Israel’s Messiah has come and all the ethnic multitudes (nations; Gentiles; *goyim*) are now included in His covenant and the new creation.

The final clause of this verse describes the definite call and mission that Paul was given. It defined and described his new life: **one having been marked off by boundaries** (fully parted and determined by bounds; separated away and limited off; delineated; defined) **unto God’s good news** (or: into a

message of goodness and well-being which is God). The risen Christ “fully separated [him] away” from Judaism, “limited off” his purposes in life, “delineated” his function in the kingdom and for the covenant communities, and “defined” who he now was:

**“For you see, to me, to be living [is] Christ (or: For the [situation] in me and for me, life [is the] Anointed One)...”** (Phil. 1:21)

**“I was crucified together with Christ [= the Messiah], and thus it remains (or: I have been jointly put on the execution stake in [the] Anointed One, and continue in this state), yet I continue living! [It**

**is] no longer I, but it is Christ continuously living and alive within me!” (Gal. 2:20)**

This is how Paul regarded himself, and how he presented himself to those in Rome whom he desired to help with this letter.

**2. which He Himself previously promised through His prophets, within [the] set-apart writings (or: holy and sacred Scriptures),**

Right from the start, Paul is alerting his audience that the message that he proclaims is the fulfillment of God’s promise – and it was a promise that was delivered to Israel, by Israel’s prophets. From this we should conclude that he

expects the community in Rome to have some familiarity with the OT.

If we recall the incident when the resurrected Jesus spoke with two people (presumably, disciples, since they knew where to find “the eleven”) on their way to Emmaus, we see that,

**“beginning from Moses, and then from all the prophets, He continued to fully interpret and explain to (or: for) them the things pertaining to (or: the references about) Himself within all the Scriptures.”** (Lu. 24:27)

So Paul is laying the foundation for his arguments which will follow. He will base them upon Israel’s Scriptures. It is

not unreasonable to assume that Paul would have been aware of this incident from Luke, who wrote his gospel around the same time that Paul is writing this letter (following Robinson's dating).

3. **about** (concerning; with reference to) **His Son – the One coming into existence** (or: birthing Himself) **from out of David's sperm** (or: Davidic seed; = David's descendant), **down from and in the line of succession of flesh** (or: = in the sphere of the natural realm); We see here that God's good news (vs. 1) was **about** God's **Son**, and that he was a physical descendant of David. Paul is referencing the genealogy of Jesus, found in Lu. 3 and Mat. 1. This

reference establishes Christ as a Jew, to Paul's Gentile listeners, as well as affirming His relationship to the Jewish Christians in Rome, and the fact that He was qualified to be the historical Messiah and King of Israel. So the cultural setting has been laid out, and Paul has anchored his arguments in Israel's story and their Scriptures.

**4. the One being bounded** (marked off, thus defined; separated, and so designated; divided away, and so determined; or: appointed) **God's Son** (or: a Son Who is God; or: a Son from, or having the character and qualities of, God; = God's Regent, *cf* Ps. 2; 2 Sam. 7:14) **immersed within the midst of**

**power and in union with ability, down from** (or: corresponding to and on a level with; in the sphere of) **a Breath-effect of set-apartness** (or: an attitude of holiness and sacredness; a spirit pertaining to being set apart) **forth from out of a resurrection** (a standing back up again) **from among dead folks – Jesus Christ, our Lord** (Master and Owner),

Paul uses the same verb **bounded** (etc.) about **God's Son** that he does about himself, in vs. 1, minus the intensifying prefix, *apo* (from which we get “fully parted and determined by bounds,” or, “fully separated”). Paul is subtly saying that just as Jesus had a set course for His

life, determined by God (which the passive voice implies), he, too, was bound to follow the same course as his Master – as an extension of the same work. If we take the extended meaning of the verb, “appointed” (in fact Moffatt renders the word, “installed”) it would then point toward reading Paul as using the phrase **God’s Son** in the sense that it was used of Israel in Ex. 4:22, 23, making a definite connection to the salvation history of Israel, and the deliverance executed by God with their exodus. Or, this title would flow with vs. 3, where he is affirming His being in the royal lineage, and he might be echoing Ps. 2:

7. Do let me recount the statute of Yahweh: He has said to Me, My Son, [are] You; I, today, have begotten You.

Or, 2 Sam. 7:14, referring to Solomon, “I will be his Father, and he shall be My son.”

However, taking the more literal meaning of the word: “defined, separated or determined (by a boundary),” we can connect the phrase **God’s Son** with what follows. Let us consider this chain of three prepositional phrases:

a) **immersed within the midst of power and in union with ability.** I have given two renderings of the preposition

*en*, the first indicating location or sphere, the second indicating union from being centered-in and thus joined-to. I also have expanded *dunamis* to its two central meanings: power and ability. Both of these renderings of the phrase make sense, and giving the two expands our perceptions of what Paul was saying. Christ was either ontologically God's Son, and existed **immersed** in God's Spirit of **set-apartness** with an attitude of holiness and sacredness, or, as a man (stressing the line of thought from vs. 3), immersed at His baptism, when the Breath-effect descended upon Him, anointing Him and setting Him apart as the Messiah.

b) **down from** (or: corresponding to and on a level with; in the sphere of) a **Breath-effect of set-apartness** (or: an attitude of holiness and sacredness; a spirit pertaining to being set apart). Here the preposition is *kata*. My first rendering, **down from** is the most literal, is a spatial and directional meaning. It would indicate that the object of this preposition, a **Breath-effect of set-apartness** (etc.) is the source of the **power and ability**. The second rendering is a use that signifies correspondence, so this would indicate that the **power and ability** “corresponded” to “a spirit of being set apart,” or “an attitude of holiness and

sacredness,” or that the effect of God’s qualities of being “set-apart” had a corresponding influence that gave Christ power and ability. The next two renderings, “on a level with” and “in the sphere of” indicate that the power and ability have an intensity equal to God’s holiness, and operate within the realm of God’s influence and existence within His creation.

c) **forth from out of a resurrection** (a standing back up again) **from among dead folks**. From this phrase, some have suggested that Paul is saying that it was His resurrection that “defined and determined” Jesus Christ as **God’s Son**. However, from the semantic range of the

verb, discussed above, it can also be concluded that it was the resurrection that “designated” and “marked [Him] off” as a Son who is God (reading this last genitive phrase as apposition). The theological view of the reader will guide him or her in the conclusion of which is the correct rendering of those on offer in my translation.

Still another view of “from standing back up again (or: **out of a resurrection**), out from among dead people” is that of this being a vindication of who He was and is, and it was this act of God that “declared [Him] to be God’s Son.”

It is this early mentioning of Christ’s

resurrection that leads J.R. Daniel Kirk (ibid, p 39ff) to rightly see that this is one of the defining themes of this letter. We will encounter this theme again, and Kirk points out that “the inclusion of Gentiles as Gentiles is often linked with Jesus’ resurrection lordship in Romans” (ibid, p 37). Recall Paul’s passionate response to some in Corinth who said that there is no resurrection of the dead:

**“Now if there is presently no resurrection of dead people (or: if there continues being no resurrection of dead ones; if a resurrection of dead ones does not constantly exist), neither has Christ been awakened and**

**raised up. So if Christ has not been awakened and raised up, our message which we preach [is] consequently empty and without content – and your [other MSS: our] faith and trust [is] empty and vacuous...” (1 Cor. 15:13-14)**

Resurrection is definitely a central element of Paul's theology, so we should expect to find it in his most extensive theological work. Note the present tense of the verb, in vs. 13 of this quote. It is worth pondering. Paul is speaking of an existential reality to the Corinthians. Campbell points to this verse as an indicator of Paul's emphasis on

eschatological, resurrection life, saying, "In the light of this cue, it is difficult to interpret the citation of Hab. 2:4 in Rom. 1:17 in any other sense; 'the righteous one because of faithfulness will live' in the sense of '... be resurrected' (ibid p 686).

In reference to this text, from 1:1b-4, he recommends this emphasis on Jesus' Davidic descent "be correlated in a significant interplay with the ancient discourse of kingship," as found, e.g., in many of the Psalms, and that we should, "begin to recognize [this theme] as programmatic for much of the rest of Romans" (ibid p 695; brackets mine).

One thing that this verse firmly establishes is that Jesus is the Messiah, and that He is our Lord, not Caesar (remember, he is writing to the capital of the Roman Empire, and allegiance to the emperor was affirmed by saying, “Caesar is Lord.”). But Paul’s long sentence continues:

**5. through Whom we receive grace, as well as a sending off with a mission [leading] unto faith’s obedience** (or: obedience that springs from trust and loyalty; [the] paying attention associated with loyal allegiance; or, as apposition: "obedience which faith is" – Rudolf Bultmann) **among all the ethnic multitudes, over [the essence, reality**

## **and power of] His Name**

(or: through means of Whom we at one point received a joy-producing act of favor, and then suddenly took in hand a commission as emissaries with a view to a humble and submissive hearkening – along with an appropriate response, which is faithfulness – and a giving-of-the-ear from beneath [Him], with compliant listening and paying attention that has its source in trust and involved commitment, within all the non-Jewish nations for the sake of and in behalf of His Name [and reputation]),

The statement, **through Whom we receive grace** echoes John's gospel, in 1:17,

**“the Law was given through Moses, yet grace and truth are birthed (or: joyous favor and reality came to be) through Jesus Christ.”**

This not only affirms Paul's distinction between the Law and the good news from Jesus Christ, but it also is a witness that Paul and the other followers of Jesus proclaimed the same evangel, even if they were given different understandings about it, and received individual revelations about what the Christ event inaugurated.

Here **grace**, another core theme of

Paul's teachings, also makes an early appearance. It, too, is a key ingredient that we will see further developed as we proceed through his letter.

The second half of the first clause brings up not only another key ingredient of their mission (note Paul's use of the word "we," here: he is speaking corporately). The phrase **faith's obedience** has been a topic of debate, over the centuries. It is either a genitive or an ablative phrase, and my bold rendering translates it as a genitive of possession, indicating the obedience which belongs to faith – that is, an obedience that is a part of the faith that has been implanted into us through the

proclamation of the message of good news, the Word which is Christ.

The next option expresses this phrase as an ablative, indicating the source:

obedience that springs from trust and loyalty. Here, there are two possibilities:

1) the obedience spawned in us is the result of Christ's **faithfulness**, trust, faith and loyalty, i.e., the result of the work of the cross.

2) the obedience comes from the trust and loyalty that has been implanted within us by the coming of the Word and the Spirit to dwell within us.

A third option combines **grace** and the **mission** of the sent-forth folks as the

driving force [**leading**] into “[the] paying attention associated with loyal allegiance” of those unto whom they are ministering.

The forth option, suggested by Rudolf Bultmann, takes the genitive of “faith” as in apposition to “obedience,” and we have “obedience which faith is.” In other words, **faith becomes obedience**, because that is what obedience is – it is the fruit, the inherent produce, of faith and trust (and here again we have the ablative, presented in our second option). Or, we can say that the two are identical.

The phrases, **among all the ethnic multitudes, over [the essence, reality**

**and power of] His Name**, describe first the scope of the effects of the Christ event, moving through Paul's and his co-workers mission, beyond the original mission "unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (by Jesus and his first disciples), on to "all the ethnic multitudes." The whole world is now included. This foreshadows Paul's arguments based upon the promises made to Abraham, seen below, and his reaching back all the way to the story of Adam to demonstrate the universal reach of the work of the cross.

The second phrase gives the key and authority that operate and rule over the essence, reality and power of God's

message of goodness: **His Name**. It was into His Name (which encompassed all the aspects of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) that His disciples were to, “...**instruct and make disciples** (at some point enlist students and apprentices) **of all the ethnic multitudes** (the pagans; the Gentiles; the nations; the non-Israelites).” (Mat. 28:19)

They had the same mission as did Paul. I have offered an alternate rendering of the entire verse in the parenthetical expansion. I owe this rendering of grace, as “a joy-producing act of favor,” to Jim Coram, a scholar whom I highly respect. “Took in hand” gives a more personally

involved, and literal, picture of what is rendered **receive**, and gives a simple past rendering for the aorist tense, instead of the simple present of the bold rendering.

For the phrase **faith's obedience**, I expanded and conflated other ways of saying this, as:

“with a view to a humble and submissive hearkening – along with an appropriate response, which is **faithfulness** – and a giving-of-the-ear from beneath [Him], with compliant listening and paying attention that has its source in trust and involved commitment.”

Yes, all that just from two Greek words. Here, you can look at what Paul was saying, as it were, from all four directions and have a comprehensive view of the semantic range of these two words. It is really a beautiful picture, and I just had to paint it for you.

Once again, the final phrases, in different dress: “within all the non-Jewish nations for the sake of and in behalf of His Name [and reputation].” “For the sake of,” and “in behalf of” are two extended meanings of the word that I first rendered literally: **over**. The former two are more easily understood, as we would say in English, “for His sake,” or “over Him.” But in meditating

upon the term, **His Name**, following the preposition **over**, the sense that came to me was that it meant something more than something like “for Him.” There is a mystery and a power in **His Name**.

**6. within the midst of which peoples** (or: among whom) **you yourselves are continuously existing, being also called folks of Jesus Christ** (or: Jesus Christ’s invited ones) –

There in Rome, they were within the midst of **all the ethnic multitudes**, being examples of the result of the mission of all the followers of Christ. It has been suggested that the Roman community of believers had originated from folks that had been in Jerusalem on the Day of

Pentecost. That initial explosion of the fruit of the Spirit scattered many seeds. Notice that Paul is identifying these folks as also being “called ones,” just as he is. He is showing solidarity with them and is validating them. This would not only open their hearts to him, but it would also point out to them that they, too, have a mission among the Gentiles who live in Rome.

**7. to (or: for) all those being in Rome: God’s loved ones (folks dearly loved of God), set-apart (holy) called ones, joyous grace and peace to you (or: favor and harmony [= shalom] [are] in and with you) from God, our Father and Lord, Jesus Christ (or: from our**

Father God, and [the] Master, Jesus Christ; or: from God our Father, even [the] Owner – [the] Anointed Jesus). The foregoing was a preamble to the letter's greeting, which he now gives. He further affirms and firmly establishes who they are in Christ: **God's loved ones**. They now occupy the same place in God's heart as does Israel (Deut. 11:10b; Zech. 2:8b). They have been grafted-in among the believing branches of His tree that is the source of anointing people (11:17, below), and which grows within His garden. Next he again affirms their functional relationship to God: **set-apart** (holy; sacred) **called ones**. Now everything (and everyone)

that God set apart (and thus makes sacred) was (and is) understood to be treated in this way for a purpose. They were to be the Light within the darkness. Now Paul speaks a blessing: **joyous grace and peace to you**. However, this could also be another affirmation of their situation: favor and harmony [= the Hebrew word, *shalom*] [are] in and with you. The prepositions “to, in, with” are all functions of the dative case of the pronoun **you**. A. E. Harvey points out that instead of the more usual greeting (*chairein*, literally, “to rejoice”) Paul uses the word *charis* (joyous grace; favor) and says, “this is almost a pun: the two words are derived from the

same stem” (*The New English Bible Companion to the New Testament*, Oxford University Press, 1970, p 505).

In what Harvey suggests as being “a conscious twisting of a conventional expression” (*ibid.*), we may be able to see not only his again bringing **grace** forward as a theme, but also his proclaiming that God’s **peace** is among them and is thus also opening their hearts for internal group reconciliation to heal the division that he will address later in his message to them.

Then we see that Paul speaks for God in the foregoing announcement of there being grace and peace among them (or, he is prophesying this into their midst).

God's emissary holds God's authority. Furthermore, God is the source of joyous grace, as well as of peace and harmony. He identifies the God of whom he is speaking (for Rome was full of gods, including some of the Caesars who thought of themselves as gods, or as sons of god): **our Father and Lord, Jesus Christ**. My parenthetical expansion gives alternative renderings of this string of titles: from our Father God, and [the] Master, Jesus Christ; or: from God our Father, even [the] Owner – [the] Anointed Jesus. You may choose the rendering which best suits your views – I am simply offering potential ways that this string of phrases can be translated.

In assessing these first seven verses, Witherington states,

“It is important to bear in mind from the outset that Paul is drawing on and alluding to a storied world... his own story... and the story of Jesus...” (ibid p 30).

With these thoughts to inform us, as we read through the rest of Paul’s letter we may become more aware that Paul had a strategy for what he brought to their table, and when he does it, as he weaves his arguments throughout the entire text.

**8. First, indeed, I am constantly giving thanks to my God** (or: expressing the well-being and goodness in the grace

and favor by my God) – **through Jesus Christ – about** (with reference to; concerning) **all of you folks, because** (or: that) **your faith, trust and loyalty are being repeatedly proclaimed** (or: announced) **down within** (= throughout the midst of) **the whole ordered System** (world of culture, economy, government and religion; or: = the Roman Empire). The parenthetical rendering in the first clause sets forth the core elements that are involved when Paul speaks of **giving thanks to my God**. The stem of the verb is *charis* (grace and favor) which is prefixed by the particle *eu-* (well-being, goodness, ease). This should instruct us about the kind of thinking (our attitude,

our outlook) from which we should draw our expressions of gratitude to God, and also remind us that He is the source of the grace and favor that He constantly brings to us, and the goodness that we inhabit in Him. Also, the noun God is in the dative, with no expressed preposition, so we give thanks TO God, and recognize that all this goodness is BY God.

Because we are “in Christ” it is only logical that our communication with God be **through Jesus Christ**, for in Col. 3:3 Paul informs us,

**“for you folks died, and your life has been hidden so that it is now concealed together with the**

**Christ, within the midst of God**  
(or: in union with God).”

Whether Paul is using hyperbole, or whether it was actually true, the whole Empire knew about the Christians in Rome. Now the word *kosmos* had a wide semantic range, so it may have been more the world of the Christians, or the broader sense of the religious worlds of paganism, Judaism and Christianity. The thing that was noted about them (and here Paul may be doing some bragging on them – not an unknown rhetorical device) was their **faith, trust and loyalty**. They were thus well-established believers, so Paul can feed them something more than milk.

9. **For you see, God is my Witness** (or: continuously exists being my Evidence) – **to, in and with Whom I continuously render service** (or: for Whom I am hired to constantly work), **within my spirit** (or: in union with my Breath-effect; in my attitude), **within His Son's good news** (or: in union with the message of goodness, ease and well-being pertaining to, coming from, having the character of, and which is, His Son) – **how unintermittingly** (without intervals in between; unceasingly) **I am habitually constructing a memory** (or: producing a recollection) **pertaining to you** (or: making mention of you folks), Here Paul echoes his opening story of

his being God's slave. He continuously renders service to Him, as one hired to constantly work for Him. But let us not too quickly pass over **in**, the locative aspect of the dative form of **Whom**. Paul lives and works/serves **IN** God, as Col.3:3, above, affirms. Then there is the aspect of God's imminence: God is also within the service and work of proclaiming **His Son's good news**, and so Paul was serving along **with** God. We see this idea in Mark 16:20,

**“He continuously cooperating and working together, and repeatedly establishing (setting on good footing) the message (the Word; the thought; the idea).”**

We get a beautiful picture of this in 1 Cor. 3:9,

**“For we are God's fellow-workers** (or: we are co-workers of and from God; we exist being co-workers who belong to God). **You folks are God's farm** (or: field under cultivation), **God's building** (or: construction project; structure, or act of building).”

Our work is within and in union with the message of goodness, ease and well-being which pertains to, comes from, has the character of, and WHICH IS, His Son. This expansion represents the genitive-ablative form of the phrase **His Son**, expressed in its various functions.

The last clause tells us that Paul, along with the rest of the Empire, was acquainted with various aspects of their community life in Rome, and he was both **habitually constructing a memory** of the reports that he had heard, and was “making mention” of them to God and to others. Rhetorically, we see that he is telling them that they are already part of his life, even though they have never met. His prayers (making mention of them) show his solidarity with them and his personal involvement. He will not be coming to them as a complete stranger; already he is a part of them.

**10. always upon my thoughts and expressions toward having things go**

**well (or: my prayers), continuously requesting (or: asking) if by any means (or: somehow), at length, I shall sometime be prospered along the path within God's will and purpose to come to you folks and be face to face with you,**

He tells them that he is for them, on their side, and that he wishes them well. In fact, he wants to come to be face to face with them. He not only wants them to know of his work of prayer for them, but he also wants to prepare their hearts to receive him. He expresses his affection by stating his **continuously requesting** of God that he would **be prospered along the path within God's will and**

**purpose** (remember, he is God's slave; he died, and his life is now hidden with the Christ, within God; his actions depend upon His Master's will and purpose) **to come to them.** The phrase **if by any means** expresses his passion to do this.

**11. for I constantly long** (or: am increasingly yearning) **to see you, to the end that I may share and exchange some spiritual effect of favor with you folks** (or: mutually partner in the impartation to you people, and among you, of some gift that is a result of grace and which has its source in the Breath-effect) **[leading] into the [situation for] you to be established**

(firmly settled and made steadfast; stabilized).

The first clause expresses his deep emotions that have a view toward seeing them. They must indeed be special to him, as he above stated that they are to God.

Now he moves to the motive for his visit to them. After all, he could just bypass Rome on a ship bound for Spain. But no, he has a purpose in his visit: to **share and exchange some spiritual effect of favor with you folks**. This clause and the attending parenthetical expansion both need some explanation. The verb is the word that means “to give” that is prefixed with the preposition *meta-*

which has the root sense of “with” or “together” or “mutual,” but also, in combination – such as here – means “change” or “exchange.” So the meaning of the verb means either “**share** (i.e., give with, and thus to others),” or “**exchange** (mutual giving; together giving).” So the sense can also mean “mutually partner in and impartation (or: gift).”

The noun which is the direct object of the verb (just discussed) is *charis-ma*. Here we encounter our word “grace; favor” again, this time with the *-ma* ending which signifies effect or result. So what Paul desires to share or exchange with them is an effect of God’s

favor, or a result of His grace. He qualifies the noun *charisma* with the adjective *pneumatikos* (spiritual; having the character of, and its source from, the Breath-effect, or Spirit). Interaction and inter-participation is key to a healthy community life. He was coming to receive, as well as to give. The life of the body of Christ is a life where each member plays a part.

The goal, the result of such a corporate event is being “**established** (firmly settled and made steadfast; stabilized)” both individually and corporately.

**12. Now this means to be called together to be side-by-side for an interchange of aid, encouragement or**

**consolation among you folks, through the faith and trust within each other – both yours and mine.**

Paul now plainly restates in general terms what he has just said in vs. 11.

The exchange of the effects of grace will happen when they are all called together to be side by side one another as they exchange encouragement, consolation or help in whatever the need may be. The verb does not describe a formal meeting with one person at the front talking to others. The Greek is *sum-para-kaleo*: together-beside-to call. It gives the picture of intimacy – small groups, like that which Jesus described in Mat. 18:20,

**“You see, where there are two or three people that have been led and gathered together into My Name, I am there (in that place) within the midst of and among them.”**

**13. Yet I do not want you to continue to fail to know (or: be unaware or remain ignorant), brothers (= fellow believers and members of the Family), that I often set before myself (purposed and proposed) to come (or: go) to you – and I was prevented until now (up to this point) – to the end that I may have (or: could hold and enjoy) some fruit within you folks (or: among you), correspondingly as also [I do]**

**within** (or: among) **the remaining ethnic multitudes** (or: the rest of the nations – the non-Israelites; the Gentiles).

In anticipating what he has just expressed regarding his desires to see and be with them, he now impresses upon them his sincerity in these desires, explaining to them that he has often purposed to go to them, but circumstance (or: the Lord – he does not explain) have not let that happen.

He uses an agriculture metaphor in the last part of this verse: **fruit**. Plants bear fruit only when they have reached a certain stage of maturity, so Paul may be implying that he considers them to be

mature enough to be producing the fruit of the Spirit, as in Gal. 5:22, 23,

**"love** (unrestricted acceptance and the drive to overcome existential separation), **joy, peace** (or: harmony; [= shalom]), **length before a stirring of emotion** (slowness of rushing toward something; long-enduring; longsuffering; patience), **useful kindness, goodness** (virtuousness), **faith** (or: faithfulness; trust; trustworthiness; loyalty; reliance; reliability; allegiance; fidelity), **gentle friendliness** (meekness; mildness), **inner strength** (self-

control)."

Such qualities within the Roman community would have gone a long way to ending any divisions.

He also may have been calling to their mind the need to be "abiding in the Vine" (John 15:4, 5).

Bringing up **the remaining ethnic multitudes** (or: the rest of the nations – the non-Israelites; the Gentiles) may have been his way of reminding them that having a reputation of having divisions or causes for making one another stumble does not seem to fit with what has been their reputation for having faith, or faithfulness, (vs. 8, above) – especially among the covenant

communities which Paul had established. He calls to their sense of honor and shame: a key ingredient in the Greco-Roman world in that time.

14. **I am** (or: I continue being) **a debtor to** (or: for; or: with) **both Greeks** (Hellenists) **and to** (for; with) **barbarians** (non-Hellenists: those who do not possess Greek culture); **to** (or: for; with) **both wise ones and to** (for; with) **those without understanding** (unintelligent ones; foolish ones; folks who lack sense).

Having just included the covenant community in Rome in the same category as "the rest of the nations – the non-Israelites," or Gentiles, where he was

seeking to find the fruit of Christ, he now lets them know that his mission is to all cultures, classes, mental capacities and levels of education. God has not just called smart people, or the elite, or a favored nation, or folks with special talents, but rather, this new creation which brought forth a new arrangement between God and people, and which was established by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is inclusive of all humanity. C. H. Dodd comments, "Thus **Greeks and barbarians** means practically 'cultured and uncultured.' Similarly, **wise and foolish** mean educated and uneducated" (*The Epistle to the Romans*, The Moffat NT Commentary,

Harper and Brother Publishers, 1932 p 8).

He further describes his outreach using debt language: he owes this message of freedom to everyone, and is under obligation to bring Christ to all. This phrasing calls to mind the story of the servant who was forgiven an inconceivable debt, and perhaps Paul has this story in mind, and the great debt of which he himself had been forgiven. It was a parable about the kingdom of the heavens, which Jesus told in response to Peter's question about the extent of forgiveness:

**"Master (or: Lord), how many times shall my brother be habitually**

**wronging me** (or: failing to do or perform unto me as he rightfully should; committing a sin [which penetrates] into me [like being hit with an arrow]), **and I shall continue to let it pass away for him** (or: forgive him)? **Until seven times?"** (Mat. 18:21)

Jesus answered him in a way that would suggest making forgiveness of other people a way of life. He said, "**Until seventy times seven!**" He ended the parable (which was a warning about the consequences of NOT forgiving the debts that people owe us) by saying that each person should release and forgive his brother (fellow human being, or,

fellow believer) "**from [their] hearts**" (vs. 35). Paul saw his own life as a letter to be read and imitated, as cited above, and he describes himself as the foremost of sinners (thus, perhaps, one who had incurred the greatest debt to humanity),

**" The Word [is] full of faith, and [is] deserving of every welcome reception of equal value, because (or: Faithful and trustworthy, even worthy of all and complete acceptance, [is] the message and saying that) Christ Jesus came into the ordered System (the world of secular culture, religion, government and**

economy; or: the cosmos) **to rescue failures** (to deliver those missing the target; to save and make sinners healthy and whole; to restore outcasts to their rightful position), **of whom I myself exist being first** (or: am foremost). **But nonetheless, through this I was mercied** (or: I am given mercy), **to the end that within me first** (= as the foremost case) **Jesus Christ may point out so as to publicly display every emotion which is long in arriving** (all long-suffering patience) **with a view to being an underline** (toward [being] a subtype; as

facing a sketch or outline; for a pattern) **of those about to be habitually believing** (or: progressively trusting; one-after-another placing faith) **upon Him, [that is,] into the midst of eonian life** (into Life which pertains to and has the qualities and characteristics of the Age [of Messiah]; into life of, and which lasts through, the ages)." – 1 Tim. 1:15-16

Perhaps Paul is picturing himself here, to the Romans, as being a debtor to all cultures and classes so as to plant the seed of forgiveness in his listeners, in regard to the divisions and stumbling

blocks among them – which he addresses later on, in this letter.

[Point of history on Pauline exegesis: the second century Christian Gnostics (e.g., Valentinus and his students) interpreted the "wise" (who they thought to mostly composed of Gentiles) in this verse as the spiritual people, and the "foolish" as those who are soulish (who they thought to mostly refer to the Jewish Christians, e.g., "the weak" of 14:1, below) and who read Paul in natural or physical terms, specifically, as the orthodox Christians did (e.g., Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus and Origen). Since Paul says that he ministered to both, they felt that he wrote in a way that presented two

levels of interpretation. (Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Paul, Gnostic Exegesis of the Pauline Letters*, Trinity Press International, 1975, p 7)]

**15. In this condition** (or: Thus so) – **commensurate with me, the ready** (willing; eager) **one** – **[I] myself** **[desire and intend]** to also bring and **proclaim** (or: announce) **the message of goodness, ease and well-being** (or: Good News) **to and among you folks** (or: for you folks) **in Rome, for you see, I am not in the habit of being ashamed of** (= I am proud of and thrilled about) **the Good News** (message of goodness, ease and well-being; [other MSS add: of, from and

which is Christ]).

And so we see that to "**bring and proclaim** (or: announce) **the message of goodness, ease and well-being** (or: Good News)" to them was the means of his discharging what he perceived as his debt to everyone. And he is **ready, willing and eager** to do so.

The cultural concept of honor versus shame was a core value in the Greco-Roman world. For a person to be crucified on a Roman cross was the ultimate shame. In the eyes of this culture, it branded a person as a criminal and an outcast of society. But the message about the crucified Messiah was central to Paul's message. In fact

personal identification with "Christ crucified" was what he wanted to see in the followers of Jesus. To the divided body of Christ at Corinth, he at one point said,

**"for I decided not to see or know anything among you folks, except Jesus Christ – and this One being one having been crucified (executed on a stake)!"**  
(1 Cor. 2:2)

This is what he wanted to see displayed in the way that they lived with each other. Later, in this letter to Rome, we find him admonishing these folks,

**"Consequently, brothers, I am repeatedly calling you folks**

**alongside to exhort, implore and encourage you, through God's compassions to stand your bodies alongside** (or: to set or place your bodies beside) [**the Well-pleasing, Set-apart** (Holy; Different-from-the-usual), **Living Sacrifice by God** (or: in God; for God; to God; with God), [**this being**] **your sacred service which pertains to thought, reason and communication** (or: your reasoned and rational service; the logical and Word-based service from you folks)" – (12:1, below).

16. **You see, God's power** (or: the ability of God; the capacity from God;

or: **the power which is God**) is unto **deliverance** (or: exists [leading] into rescue, salvation, health, wholeness and restoration to the original state and condition) **for everyone** (or: in all; to everyone) – **to, for, in and with the person continuously having faith and trusting** (or: believing and relying upon [it]; being faithful): **for** (to; in) [**the**] **Jew first, also for** (to; in) [**the**] **Greek** (or: = non-Jew)

(or: – for both the believing and trusting Jew, firstly, and then for the Hellenist as well) –

Now in vs. 17, we see that God's act of power in resurrecting Israel's Messiah also unveils God's justice (and

everything that is included in the parenthetical expansion there). Also note that I have rendered the word "faith; trust" there as **faithfulness**. Faithfulness is one of the meanings of the word *pistis*, and I have chosen this as my preferred reading, because I see this as being Christ's faithfulness to do the Father's will and submit to the cross. His obedience (which Paul expands upon in ch. 5) to His Father, "not My will but Your will be done," carried Him to the cross, and from out of His death and resurrection His faith now comes to us, part and parcel of the message of goodness, ease and well-being (gospel; good news). The

impartation of the life of Christ, via the preaching of Christ's goodness to humanity, is the power of life from the dead. And His **power**, which is **God Himself**, leads humanity **unto deliverance**, through Christ.

Deliverance, rescue and a return to wholeness is the goal of **God's power**. Salvation is the target toward which His plan and purpose has aimed, through Christ. He will not fail, or miss the target!

The present participle, **continuously having faith and trusting** (or: believing and relying upon [it]; being faithful), should inform us about the continuous, habitual aspect of the life in Christ that

provides progressive and repeated **deliverance** and wholeness to us. Recall the words of Jesus about the branches of the Vine, and the need to continue "abiding; dwelling" in Him (John 15:1 ff). If we do not stay connected to Him, we wither and die – and lose our state of living in deliverance (which is for here and now), our condition of wholeness, and our "salvation" or rescue from the worthless age in which we lived our lives. Paul's use of the term *soteria*, **deliverance**, is his first echo of one of the main defining stories from Israel's history, the exodus. It was a deliverance from the slavery in Egypt, which led to their being established as a

nation. We will see this "deliverance from slavery" theme again, below, in this letter. But although Israel had been "saved" from Egypt and experienced the Passover, with the blood applied to their homes, the older generation died in the wilderness, and later generations lost their state of being rescued and saved when Yahweh sent them into exile because of their having turned from Him and for treating the poor unjustly.

When the Word (that's what the message is) enters into the mind or heart of a person, the Spirit of God (recall that Jesus said that His words were both spirit and life – John 6:63) and the life of Christ enter into the person. This

Spirit, this Life, contains the power, ability and capacity to raise the spirit/mind/consciousness of a person to life from the dead. It is the power to change our thinking (i.e., it causes repentance, which means a new attitude, a turning toward God, a new way of thinking, a new perspective and a new world view). My friend, Mark Eaton, put it this way,

"The Dunamis [power] of God is Revealed, and reaches it mark as deliverance. It is one thing to know God's power, His Mind, but this Dunamis is the Good news that comes out of the heart of God. The Gospel is the effect of the

Sovereign Dunamis." (from a personal email; emphasis his; brackets mine)

The faith that is imparted to us, via the preaching of the Word, engenders faithfulness and allegiance through the Spirit that now inhabits “the believing folks.” Yet if folks turn from the Path, and unhook themselves from the flow of the Sap (a figure of the Spirit) of the Vine, they will wither and die, and experience God's cleansing fire (John 15:6), as a field is burned off to prepare it for another planting (Heb. 6:7-8). But just like unbelieving Israel whom God

broke out of His olive tree (11:17, below), God will yet graft these withered branches back in again (11:24). Notice, below, the OT quote that Paul inserts into the next verse, and how it emphasizes LIVING.

So why did Paul next say, **for** (to; in) **[the] Jew first, also for** (to; in) **[the] Greek** (or: Hellenist; = non-Jew)?

Recall, above, that Witherington pointed out the "storied" character of Paul's narrative? Here I suggest that he is once again accessing the story of Jesus, and the statement which He made about His earthly ministry,

**Yet He, making a discerning reply, said, "I was not**

**commissioned and sent off as an emissary (representative) – except into the midst of those sheep having been destroyed, the ones that belong to the house of Israel (or: unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel)."**  
(Mat. 15:24)

To use my friend Lawrence Garcia's term, "phase one" of the mission of the Messiah was to Israel, which was to inaugurate the fulfillment of the promises made by Israel's prophets. Phase two was the mission to the ethnic multitudes (or: Gentiles), including the entire world in the effects of the work of Israel's Messiah – and as Paul argues below, the

embodiment of the Promises that Yahweh made to Abraham. By citing these two Jewish classifications of humanity (**Jew/Greek**), we see that **God's power** brings **deliverance** to the entirety of humanity.

Not only this, but Paul's rhetorical design is to validate and bring honor to the Jewish Christians in Rome. Just a few years earlier, Claudius had banished all Jews from Rome, so upon their return they continued as second-class citizens in the eyes of the Gentiles. It is now commonly accepted that "the weak" of chapter 14, in this letter, refers to the Jewish Christians within the community. However Mark D. Nanos (*The Mystery*

*of Romans, The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter*, Fortress Press, 1996) questions this assumption and devotes chapter 3, "Who Were the 'Weak' and the 'Strong' in Rome?," to suggest that the "weak" were non-Christian Jews (p 85ff).

Paul's normal practice, when first visiting a city where there was not yet an established called-out group, was to go to the synagogue of the Jews, for he himself was a Jew, and furthermore, the Good News was based upon the Scriptures of the Jews. He further gives insight for this statement in 9:3-5, below.

David H. Stern (*Jewish New Testament*

*Commentary*, Jewish NT Publications, Inc., 1992, p 329) points to one of the major theses of this letter,

"... so far as salvation is concerned, Jews and Gentiles are equal before God (2:7-12; 3:9-31; 4:9-12; 5:12, 17-19; 9:24; 10:12-13; 11:30-32)."

**17. for by Him (or: in it) God's justice (solidarity in fair conduct; equity; righteousness; [covenantal] qualities of the Way pointed out; way of righting what is wrong; right relationship [with us]; or: a means of turning us in the right direction by an eschatological deliverance, which is God,) is continuously and progressively being**

**unveiled** (revealed; disclosed), **from out of faithfulness** (or: forth from the midst of faith, trust and conviction), **[proceeding] into faith, trust, conviction and loyalty, according as it has been written,**

**"But the one righteous** (or: just) **out-of-faith/faithfulness will himself continue living** (or: Yet the Just One will experience life in himself from faith/faithfulness; or: Now the one in accord with the Way pointed out from trust, will in himself be living; or: And the person rightwised from out of faith will continuously live; or: So the One

being fair and equitable from trust will progressively receive life into Himself from that trust)."

[Hab. 2:4]

In this continuation of Paul's sentence, the opening prepositional phrase is a rendering of a pronoun in the dative case. The bold rendering, **by Him**, takes **God**, in "**God's power**" (vs.16, above), as being the antecedent – a reference to God raising Jesus from the dead. The alternate rendering of the pronoun, "in it," would be read as referring back to **the Good News**, at the end of vs. 15, concerning Christ's death and resurrection.

The question that now faces us is, Why

does he say that **by Him**, or “in it,” **God's justice** (fair conduct; etc.) **is continuously and progressively being unveiled** (revealed; disclosed; Greek: *apokalupsis* – and Paul's use of this word should alert us to the eschatological nature of God's work in the Messiah!)? He uses this same verb in vs. 18, below, but for another purpose. Here, in 17, we are reminded of what is written in Eph. 1:17,

**“that the God of** (or: pertaining to; or, reading the genitive as in apposition: Who is) **our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of the Glory** (or: the founder and archetype of, and which is, this

manifestation which calls forth  
praise), **might give** (suddenly  
impart) **to you a spirit** (or:  
breath-effect; attitude) **of wisdom  
and revelation (unveiling;  
uncovering; disclosure) within  
the midst of a full, experiential  
and intimate knowledge of  
Himself**

(or: in a full realization of  
Him; or: within and in  
union with His full,  
personal knowledge; or:  
centered and resident  
within an added insight  
from Him, and which is  
Him).”

We find in Eph. 3:4-5 that it is,

**“the secret (or: mystery) of the Christ... [that] is now (at the present time) uncovered (unveiled; revealed) in spirit (or: within a Breath-effect; or: in union with [the] Spirit)...”**

Then we read in 8:18b, below, about,

**“[being] face to face with the glory (or: [are] of insufficient weight when put in balance to the manifestation which calls forth praise as well as the reputation and good opinion) which is progressively about to be disclosed unto us, and for us (or: unveiled into our midst; revealed**

to and [enter] into us).”

And in 16:25b, below, Paul refers to,  
“**an unveiling of a secret** (or: a revelation and a disclosure of a mystery) **that had been being kept silent** (or: quiet) **in eonian times** (or: for time periods of the [preceding] ages; to [the] times [that would] pertain to the Age [of Messiah]).”

So we see that Christ is directly tied to what God was **unveiling**, and it is in the context of God's justice, which is the faithful, righteous act which God, in Christ, performed.

Just what is God's "justice"? This is the Greek word *dikaio<sup>s</sup>une* (see my

discussion of the word in *John, Judah, Paul and ?*, Harper Brown Publishing, 2013). Tom Wright (*Paul for Everyone, Romans Part One*, Westminster John Knox Press, 2004 p 9) renders this phrase, "covenant justice." Witherington states that this word is a "relational term" (ibid p 54), as seen in my renderings, "solidarity in fair conduct," "equity," or, "right relationship" (a rendering supported by William Barclay), or, a "way of righting what is wrong." It has been traditionally rendered "righteousness" or "justice," but as you can see from my parenthetical expansion, it has a wide semantic range. Bultmann preferred that the verb form be

translated "rightwised," which means "turned in the right direction," and Witherington renders it "set right" in 5:9, below, (ibid p 133).

Wright insightfully suggests that "righteousness (to use the old technical term) is essentially the same thing as 'membership in the covenant'" (ibid p 69). This comports with the basic meaning of the Greek term, "the Way pointed out," which I suggest is synonymous with Jesus saying,

**"I Myself am (exist being) the Way (or: Path), the Truth (the Reality) and the Life (or: = I am the way to really live)" – John 14:6.**

So being in "the Way pointed out" equals being "in Christ," and this, in turn equals membership in the new covenant. Wright further states that "God's covenant justice was always designed to put the whole world to rights" (ibid p 73) – which echoes Witherington's suggested expression, "set right."

It is from this concept of "covenant," which Yahweh established with Abraham via His promise to him, and which He established with Israel via the Law which He gave to create that society, and the promises made to Israel via God's prophets, that Kirk is seeing an issue of theodicy (whether or not God was just and faithful to His covenants).

He concludes that Paul is arguing in defense of God's justice, showing Him to have been faithful to these promises via the Messiah, and I agree with this. However, I see this as a secondary benefit of Paul's central themes. God's justice was expressed in both His promises and His Law, and His Law was holy and just and good (7:12), as well as spiritual (7:14). But the continual, progressive unveiling of God's *dikaio<sup>s</sup>une* (rightwising eschatological deliverance into the Way pointed out, which includes covenant membership) has brought so much more than proving that God's dealings with Israel and humanity have been right, as

Paul will progressively unfold. He discusses this topic in chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10, and lists this word as one of the central aspects, or qualities, of God's kingdom in 14:17.

Paul states that this unveiling has come **from out of faithfulness** (or: forth from the midst of faith, trust and conviction), **[proceeding] into faith, trust, conviction and loyalty**. It comes into the world of mankind from out of the **faithfulness** of Jesus Christ submitting to the death on the cross. It comes from out of His faithfulness to, and trust in, the Father, and from His conviction that this was the Way pointed out. What His **faithfulness** accomplished was to

impart **faith, trust, conviction and loyalty** (or: faithfulness) **into** those whom He makes alive by placing them into Himself,

**"each person within the result and effect of his or her own class** (or: ordered place; appointed position [in line]; arranged time or order of succession; = place in a harvest calendar, thus, due season of maturity)" – I Cor. 15:23.

As he says, below, in 6:5,

**"For since** (or: You see, if) **we have been birthed** (have become; have come to be) **folks engrafted and produced together** (or:

planted and made to grow together; brought forth together; congenital) **in, by, to and with the result of the likeness of** (or: the effect of the similar manner from) **His death, then certainly we shall also continue existing [in and with the effects of the likeness] of The Resurrection** (or: which is the resurrection; or: from, and with qualities of, the resurrection)."

So what about this OT quote to which Paul reaches back (into Israel's story) so as to use as the legitimizing of his argument?

**"But the one righteous** (or: just)

**out-of-faith/faithfulness will  
himself continue living**

(or: Yet the Just One will experience life in himself from faith/faithfulness; or: Now the one in accord with the Way pointed out from trust, will in himself be living; or: And the person rightwised from out of faith will continuously live; or: So the One being fair and equitable from trust will progressively receive life into Himself from that trust)."

[Hab. 2:4]

Moffatt renders this, "Now by faith shall the righteous live." Witherington gives, "The righteous from faith shall live"

(ibid p 49). The NEB (1970 ed.) reads, "[H]e shall gain life who is justified by faith." Here, together with the other possible renderings on offer in my translation, are a number of statements to consider.

One text of this verse in the LXX reads,  
**"Yet the Just One will habitually live (or: continue living) from out of My faithfulness/faith."** (JM)

Let us review what these various renderings are indicating:

- a. My first, bold, rendering is saying that the person who will continue living is the one who has faith and faithfulness as his/her source of being righteous (or, of living in the

covenantal Way that has been pointed out). Now the faith/faithfulness can refer to Christ and His work on the cross. Note the durative (**will... continue**) aspect of the future tense.

- b. My first parenthetical rendering is saying that Christ (the only Just One) will experience life from out of His faith, or from the faithfulness given to Him by the Spirit.
- c. The third option means that the person who has been aligned with Christ's Path from out of trust as the source of being in His Path

will in himself (stressing the middle voice) be living.

- d. The next option is like the bold rendering, but uses the term rightwised.
- e. My final parenthetical version means that Christ, having trust as the source for living fairly and equitably, will progressively receive life into Himself from that trust.
- f. Moffatt tells us that the righteous person shall live by means of faith.
- g. Witherington tells us that if a person is righteous from faith, he/she "will live."

- h. NEB parallels Witherington, but uses the phrase "gain life," instead of "will live."
- i. The LXX version (referring either to Christ, or, in lower case, "the just one," meaning a follower of the Way) make one's way, or source, of living to be God's faithfulness and faith.

It seems to me that all of these can fit Paul's thinking, and each one gives a nuanced view of this verse – as Dan Kaplan has said, it is an example of "**God's greatly diversified** (exceedingly varied in colors, as a tapestry that depicts a scene; or: = many-phased) **wisdom**" (Eph. 3:10).

Stern (ibid p 330) notes that Paul's quote of Habakkuk, above, should alert folks to the fact of faith, trust and faithfulness being a core element of Judaism.

Sanders includes an Appendix by Manfred T. Brauch who quotes Ernst Kasemann (*Gottesgerechtigkeir bie Paulus*, p 377-8):

"God's righteousness is what it must be as the power which rightwises the sinner, namely God's victory over against the rebellion of the world.... For Paul it is God's dominion over this world revealed eschatologically in Christ.... God's righteousness is his power which creates

salvation... to be led back into God's Lordship in the world's redemption" (Sanders, *ibid* p 528).

Brauch also gives a summary of K. Kertelge (*'Rechtfertigung' bei Paulus*, p 112) on this topic, in saying:

"The sinner is transferred into the sphere of God's righteousness and experiences his justification as a result of the action of God's grace" (Sanders, *ibid* p 535).

Campbell (*ibid* p 688) credits Richard Hays as suggesting that 1:17, here, is "informed" by Ps. 97:2-3, LXX),

"The Lord made intimately and experientially known His

deliverance (or: salvation); He unveiled (or: reveals; disclosed) His Way pointed out (or: release into a rightwised life of solidarity in covenant participation). He remembered His mercy to and for Jacob and His truth (or: reality) to and in the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth saw (and: see) the deliverance (salvation) of, from and which is our God." (JM)

This act of deliverance culminated in Christ's resurrection, which gave birth to the new creation: a rightwised life of solidarity (with God, with all humanity and with creation) that is participation and membership in a new arrangement –

a new covenant.

Julie Ferwerda (*Raising Hell, Christianity's Most Controversial Doctrine Put Under Fire*, Vagabond Group, 2011, p 119) points us to the “law of liability” that was codified in Ex. 21:33-34,

“When a man opens a cistern or pit, or when a man digs a cistern or pit, yet does not cover it, and a bull (or: ox) or an ass falls therein, the owner/possessor of the pit/cistern shall make it good (or: repay); he shall restore (pay back) silver to the owner [of the bull or ass] – and the dead animal shall be his.”

Ferwerda then cites Stephen Jones,

*“This is the law that sets the standard of liability. It is the owner of the pit who is liable, and he must then buy the dead ox for himself.*

“In applying the spirit of this law to Adam’s situation in the garden, God is both the owner of the pit [the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; the serpent] and the owner of the ox (Adam). First, God dug a pit, because He created an opportunity of Adam to sin. God did not cover this pit in that He created Adam with the potential to sin and created a tree

of knowledge, putting it within Adam's reach. He did not build a ten-foot fence around that tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God created an opportunity for Adam (the ox) to fall into the pit (sin and death). That made God legally liable by His own law and created a 'tension' that demanded a resolution" ("Free Will," God's Kingdom Ministries: [www.gods-kingdom-ministries.org/free\\_will\\_-\\_chapter\\_2.htm](http://www.gods-kingdom-ministries.org/free_will_-_chapter_2.htm); emphasis original; brackets mine).

So God's justice is that He bought the dead bull/ox (humanity) and dead

humanity belongs to him: it is His responsibility to “restore (repay),” and this is what He did in the Christ event. Resurrection of humanity out of the pit of death and into life was the restoration by the Owner of the pit (tree; serpent).

Ferwerda (ibid p 120) then points us to Ps. 30:3,

“O Yahweh, You have brought my soul up from the unseen (Sheol); You have preserved me alive from descending into the pit.”

Although David did not physically die, in the context of this psalm, humanity did, and still does.

**18. You see, God’s personal emotion** (or: mental bent; natural impulse;

teeming desire and swelling passion;  
temperament; disposition; or: anger;  
wrath; or: an inherent fervor, which is  
God,) **is continuously and  
progressively being unveiled**  
(revealed; disclosed) **from heaven  
upon every irreverence** (lack of awe or  
absence of pious fear; disrespect) **and  
injustice** (wrong; unrighteousness;  
situation or act contrary to the Way  
pointed out) **of mankind** (or: that arises  
from humans) – **the folks continuously  
holding down** (restraining; stopping  
while possessing) **the Truth** (or:  
reality) **in the sphere of** (or: within the  
midst of) **injustice** (unrighteousness; that  
which is not right; unfairness and

inequality) –

Verses 17 and 18 are parallel structures in the Greek, and are joined by the conjunction *gar* which I have translated, **You see**. Paul's thoughts move from verse 17 to almost a mirror image in vs. 18. The first clauses of each verse have the same verb, **unveiled**, each verse revealing something different in God. The one **God's justice**, the other **God's personal emotion**. Harvey points out: "This sentence, and the sentence before, both contain the word **revealed**, and each expresses a complementary side of God's activity towards men" (ibid p 507).

As you see from the parenthetical

expansion of **personal emotion**, the Greek *orge* has a wide semantic range. Both ends of this range describe deep, core human emotions. They can all be seen in circumstances that we might deem as good (although the English term "wrath" is usually considered something bad) and they can all be focused on bad intent, or be bent away from the good. The terms "temperament" and "disposition" are usually considered neutral, but a person can have a good temperament and disposition, or a bad temperament and disposition. Such assessments come from both observation and experience of human beings. But how should we assess God's

personal emotions? Should we tie to His *orge* the character and qualities of an estranged, alienated (or: "fallen") human being? Or are all of His personal emotions pure and holy? Does the creator God whom Jesus addressed as "our Father" and who 1 John 4:16 instructs us "is Love" have the same estranged inherent fervor; mental bent, natural impulse, teeming desire, swelling passion, temperament, disposition, anger or even wrath that we encounter in those who are "dead in trespasses and sin" (Eph. 2:1)? I am laboring the point to engender mature thought concerning what we ascribe to God from this verse. How we have been

programmed – either by unloving natural parents, or by the traditions of whatever religion enculturated us – should not be imported into Paul's thinking or the meaning in this text. He is a God of justice and judgment (decisions made after evaluation), but we should let the kind of judgment that we see in Israel's Scriptures inform us, just as Paul uses these same writings to inform his arguments. There we see that all His judgments and corrections were acted out in this life.

Paul now says that **God's personal emotion is continuously and progressively being unveiled (revealed; disclosed) from heaven**

**upon every irreverence** (lack of awe or absence of pious fear; disrespect) **and injustice** (wrong; unrighteousness; situation or act contrary to the Way pointed out) **of mankind** (or: that arises from humans). If it is "continuously and progressively" being unveiled and disclosed, then people are able to observe its effects upon humanity. We find Amos proclaiming,

"Would there come to be evil in a city and Yahweh not have done it?" (3:7)

Isaiah 54:16 informs us that Yahweh "created the ravager to destroy (the CV reads: the ruiner to harm)," and in Isa. 45:7 Yahweh says,

"Former of light and Creator of darkness; Maker of good and Creator of evil (Heb. *ra*), I, Yahweh, make all these [things]."

God has never ceased to be active in our world. The entire OT is replete with His works upon this earth. He rules, and John 3:36 teaches us that,

**"the person now continuing being unpersuaded by the Son (or: presently being constantly incompilant, disobedient or disbelieving to the Son; being repeatedly stubborn toward the Son) will not be catching sight of (seeing; observing; perceiving) [this] life.**

**To the contrary, God's personal emotion and inherent fervor** (teeming passion and swelling desire; mental bent and natural impulse; propensity and disposition; or: anger, wrath and indignation) **is continuously remaining** (is now habitually dwelling and abiding) **upon him."**

This last clause describes an ongoing situation. Note the present tense (**continuously and progressively**) and the passive voice (**being unveiled, revealed and disclosed**) in vs. 18a, above. Both the good and the bad habitually dwell upon people. His *orge* constantly remains and abides upon

humanity. This is the nature of the universe which He created, and the conditions under which He placed us. Recall that Job told his wife, amid all of Job's woes,

"What? [he asks her in amazement] Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not also receive evil?" (Job 2:10)

Now it is evident from what comes next in this verse that here, and in the passages to follow, Paul is referring to God's judgment upon humans, and he makes it specific upon whom: **the folks continuously holding down** (restraining; stopping while possessing) **the Truth**

(or: reality) **in the sphere of** (or: within the midst of) **injustice** (unrighteousness; that which is not right; unfairness and inequality). C. H. Dodd observes that Paul does not ever uses the verb, "to be angry," with God being the subject of this verb (ibid p 21). Paul will now go on to give a generalized storied-narrative as he builds his first argument. It is with this verse that Campbell (ibid, 495ff) reads Paul as beginning a presentation of a competing gospel put into the mouth of his interlocutor – a Jewish Christian teacher, and his followers, who want all Christians to observe the Law (to Judaize). He sees Paul as presenting this alternate scheme

from here through 3:20, below. So we can read the text with this question in mind: Is this Paul's revelation of life in the new creation in Christ, or, are these the views of the false teacher? Is Paul presenting this picture to his listeners so that they will recognize it when they hear these teachers, and thus know to reject it – in favor of what they have already been taught, and what he presents as a reminder (*cf* 6:17; 15:15, below), in contrast, in chapters 5-8, below? In 16:25, below, Paul characterizes the good news as,

**“an unveiling of a secret (or: a revelation and a disclosure of a mystery) that had been being**

**kept silent** (or: quiet) **in eonian times** (or: for time periods of the [preceding] ages; to [the] times [that would] pertain to the Age [of Messiah]).”

**19. simply because the thing experientially known** (or: personally knowable; able to be gained by insight) **pertaining to God** (or: from, and which has its origin in, God; which is God) **is continuously made visible** (made apparent; manifested by light) **within** (or: among) **them, for God at one point made** (or: makes) **it visible** (manifests it) **to them** (or: for them; in them; by them; among them).

So here we read Paul (or: the

interlocutor; the Judaizer) affirming that both God's justice and His personal emotion are things that folks can observe. Now it is true that they happen here, in this life, in His creation (*cf* the OT witness). Both of these are **experientially known** and are "able to be gained by insight" from being **continuously made visible** both **within them** (!) and among them. God manifests it to them. So humanity experientially knows, both from history, and from current living, what God's "wrath" involves. But what if the other aspects of *orge*, as well as anything else **pertaining to God**, are also **made visible to them** – like the "teeming

desire and swelling passion" (vs. 18) with which "God in this manner loves the aggregate of humanity" (John 3:16)? And further, can humanity – in its estranged, enslaved, inept and spiritually “dead” condition – know enough from human observation (apart from the unveiling of the heart and mind by the work of the Holy Spirit) to make a decision to turn to God? Or is this the false teacher’s wrong assumption?

**20. For you see, from [the] creation** (framing; founding of order out of chaos; settling) **of [the] ordered System** (cosmos; universe; or: world of culture, religion and government) **His invisible things** (unseen [qualities and attributes])

– **both His imperceptible** (unobservable, but effecting-all) **power, ability and capacity, as well as divinity** (Godship; God-state) – **are habitually seen down the line** (or: are normally correspondingly perceived), **being continually apprehended** (grasped by the mind; mentally conceived) **in the results and by the effects of things which are made or done, in order for them to be continuously defenseless** (without an excuse),

Those who have been raised to be aware of God through His creation might tend to take for granted what he says in the first half of this verse. But here Witherington suggests that by starting

with a "foundational argument," which is based upon human experience, Paul is creating a "leveling effect" between the predominantly Gentile Christian audience and the Jewish Christian minority. This leveling was needed in order for "unifying" (one of the purposes of this letter) to come about. (ibid pp 58, 61). Yet Campbell rightly, I suggest, questions that this is Paul's rhetorical purpose here. Although it may be true for the Jew who was privileged with having the teachings from the OT, would this be the case for the pagan?

The clause, **in the results and by the effects of things which are made or done**, would refer first to nature, and

then to societies and God's interaction with them throughout history. My friend, Dan Kaplan, has pointed out that people tend to seek God, or ask for His help, during times of crisis. Sometimes the **things done** are through natural events; other times through the clashes of cultures or because of something that we ourselves have done; and then other times within the frailty of our human bodies. His sovereignty, although **imperceptible**, can often be correspondingly perceived within all of life's experiences – that is, if our eyes have been blessed to perceive this (*cf* Matt. 13:15-16). Because of all of this, Paul (or, rhetorically, his interlocutor)

says that humans are **continuously defenseless**, or, without an excuse. Note the condemning tone of this conclusion: does this represent Paul's gospel? He gives the reasons why this is the case, as he continues, in the next verse.

21. **simply because, although at one point experientially knowing God with insight, they did (or: do) not glorify** (imagine; esteem; suppose; fancy; conjecture about; hold an opinion of; repute) **[Him] as God, or even thank [Him]** (or: give thanks in joyously expressing the goodness and well-being inherent in [His] grace and favor). **And so in contrast, they were made futile** (vain; fruitless; without profit; empty;

useless; worthless; subject to a process of meaningless frustration; subject to exercises in futility) **in their reasonings** (or: thought processes; dialogues; ideas that went throughout in every direction), **and their [collective] unintelligent** (stupid; unable-to-put-things-together) **heart was darkened** (= the core of their being was made to experience an absence of light in a dim, shadowy gloom of obscurity [= ignorance]). Is Paul presuming people to have a basic, **experiential** knowledge, awareness and insight about God? Or does this represent the program of the Judaizing teacher? Wright sees this verse as Paul addressing human

rebellion, and considers the passage from vs. 18 on through 2:16 as a "charge against the human race, in general" (ibid. p 16). A. E. Knoch comments, "Such a knowledge of God called for worship and thanksgiving" (*Concordant Commentary on the New Testament*, Concordant Publishing Concern, 1968 p 230). But were not their minds blinded (2 Cor. 3:14)? And Jesus instructed His disciples,

**“Yet to (for; in; among) the rest (the remaining folks) [it is given] in illustrations (parables; things cast alongside for comparison), to the end that,**

**‘while constantly looking,**

**they can not** (or: may not; would not) **be presently seeing, and while repeatedly listening, they can** (or: could; should; would) **not make things flow together so as to understand** (comprehend; = get the meaning).” (Lu. 8:10; *cf* Isa. 6:9; Mk. 4:12; Mt. 13:11-16)

The verb **glorify** has a wide semantic range. It can mean to ascribe glory, to exercise the imagination, to hold someone in esteem, to suppose something, to fancy something, to conjecture about, to hold an opinion

about, or to repute. In this case, those whom he is thus "charging" have done **NONE** of this to or about **God, AS God**. And so it follows, neither did they "give thanks in joyously expressing the goodness and well-being inherent in [His] grace and favor," **or even thank [Him]**. In contrast to this, we find Paul admonishing in 1 Thes. 5:18,

**"Within the midst of everything, be continuously giving thanks** (or: In union with all people, be habitually expressing the goodness of grace and the well-being from favor), **for this is God's intent** (will, purpose)..."

So now we are informed about God's

decision (His judgment) about this: **they were made futile in their reasonings.**

This rather undercuts the myth about people having "free" will: they have futile, fruitless, empty, useless, worthless wills that are subject to a process of meaningless frustration. Their "thought processes and ideas went throughout, in every direction." Their **unintelligent, stupid heart was darkened** – the core of their being was made to experience "an absence of light in a dim, shadowy gloom of obscurity [= ignorance]." Is this the existence of a person who has a "free" will? No, it describes people upon whom God's inherent fervor continuously abides –

people experiencing God's judgment. These are the characteristics of estrangement from God; they are the embodiment of the false persona, the "shadow self," to use Richard Rohr's expression. They are in need of being saved OUT OF this condition. In contrast to this, in John 8:12 Jesus instructs us,

**"I Myself am** (or: continuously exist being) **the Light of the world** (or: of the cosmos; of the ordered system; of the dominant cultural, political, economic and religious arrangements; of the universe; of 'the theater of history' – Walter Wink). **The one**

**habitually and progressively following Me can by no means walk around** (= under no circumstances live his or her life) **within the darkness** (or: the dim and shaded areas; the gloom and obscurity due to the lack of the Light of the Day; the [realm] of the shadows; [note: = ignorance; = that situation which existed before the Light came; or, could also refer to the dim condition within the holy place of the Temple, or to the darkness of death, blindness or the womb]), **but, to the contrary, he will progressively possess**

(constantly have and hold) **the Light of 'the Life!'** (or: the light which is life.)"

22. **[So] continuously claiming**

(asserting; alleging with pretense) **to be wise ones, they were made to be dull** (sluggish; moronic; stupid; foolish)

23. **and they at once changed** (or: exchange in barter; make other than it is) **the glory** (or: splendor and praise-inducing manifestation; or: esteem; opinion; imagination; supposition; thought; appearance; honorable consideration) **of the imperishable** (un-ruinable; unspoilable and incorruptible; non-decayable) **God within the result of a likeness** (resemblance; conformed

similarity; copy-effect) **of an image** (form; appearance) **of a perishable** (corruptible; spoilable) **human, as well as of flying things and of four-footed [animals] and of creeping things.**

Or, we could paraphrase vs. 22, "So continuously claiming to have free wills, they were enslaved." The estranged, alienated persona lives with the illusion of being wise and like a god. But without the resurrection life of the Messiah, they remain under the judgment of being outside the Garden, away from the Tree, or Vine, of Life, excluded from intimacy with God. This is the story of Adam: **they were MADE to be dull, sluggish, moronic, stupid and foolish.**

This was the death into which Adam was sent.

It was outside the Garden that humans at some point created idols. Witherington suggests that in this passage (from 1:20 to 1:29) Paul repeatedly draws from The Wisdom of Solomon, found in the LXX. Examples are:

12:24 For they went astray on the paths of error, taking as gods the most despised and loathsome of animals (living creatures), being deceived like foolish infants.

13:13-17 ... taking a cast-off piece of wood... forms [it] into the image of a human being, or makes [it] like some worthless animal....

when he prays... he is not ashamed to address a lifeless object.

14:8 but the handmade [idol] is accursed, and the one who made it, because he worked it, and the corruptible thing was named a god.

14:12 For the invention of idols was the beginning of fornication, and the discovery of them the corruption of life. (*A New English Translation of the Septuagint*)

Some scholars (e.g., Witherington, *ibid* p 63) suggest that Paul is, above, giving a typical Jewish criticism of pagan idolatry. However, we see how Israel picked up the idolatry of Egypt and had

Aaron make a golden calf as an *elohim* (gods; or a god; Ex. 32) after seeing God's miracles and deliverance. In Ex. 20:4 God had told them not to make any carvings or representative images.

**24. Wherefore** (or: On which account) **God gave** (or: hands) **them over** (or: delivered or delivers them into another's power), **within the full passions** (or: rushing passionate cravings; added earnest desires, wants and wishes; or: compiled angers and complete wrath) **of their hearts, into uncleanness** (or: ritual impurity), **to be continuously dishonored and shamed – with respect to** (or: pertaining to) **their bodies – among** (or: within) **themselves,**

In the first clause the verb is in the aorist tense, so we can read it as what He did in the past, or as what he continues to do. We read about it in history; we see it about us today. We can read a commentary on Israel's times of rebellion and idolatry in Ps. 106, and how at this point of the ongoing story, "He gave them into the hand of the heathen..." (vs. 41). Nevertheless, we read in vss. 44-46 that "He remembered FOR THEM His covenant, and changed His thinking to be in accord with the MULTITUDE of His MERCIES" (*cf* 11:32, below). Also notice, above, that God's judgment simply reflected their own attitudes (refusal to honor and give

glory to God), passions and hearts back into them. The disobedience of Adam involved self-seeking and self-glorification (seeking honor) – to be wise and to be like God. The judgment was to be enslaved to addictions (passionate cravings), compiled angers with complete wrath and uncleanness (figured in ritual impurity) – all of which brought them **dishonor and shame**: the opposite of what is desired in an honor/shame-based society, such as Rome or the Hellenistic culture of Paul's day.

Note the plurals in this verse: **them... their... their... themselves**. We will see this corporate theme all through this

letter.

**25. whichever folks altered or exchange God's truth (or: the reality from and which is God, and which pertains to God) to and for something else, within (or: in union with) The Lie, then they were adored and venerated with dread, and next rendered religious service to and for the creation (or: creature; or: forming, framing, founding and settling which brought order from chaos) alongside (or: to the side of; parallel to; or: = rather than) the Creator (The One framing and founding) Who is (continuously exists being) well spoken of (praised; blessed; eulogized; or: is**

One filled with thoughts of goodness and well-being) **on into the ages. It is so (Amen)!**

Here we have expression of the core essence of idolatry: **to alter God's truth to be something else; to exchange God's reality for something else.** The verb is *met-allasso*, whose root meaning is "other; **something else**," with the prefix *meta-* which signifies either change/alter, or **exchange**. This same verb is also used in vs. 26, below. Observe that these **folks** altered and exchanged **God's reality**, and **then THEY were adored and venerated with dread** and next **rendered religious service**. This describes a priesthood that

orchestrated the idolatry and controlled the masses.

This verse expresses the spiritual aspect of the idolatry; below, in vss. 26-27, we see that we become what we worship, and the idolatry of this verse becomes physically expressed in the lives that they lived. If our image of God is distorted from His reality, then we will make ourselves according to that distorted image. As Witherington rightly states, "Bad theology... leads to bad ethics" (ibid p 65).

I capitalized **The Lie**, both because the definite article is in the text, and because I see this as another instance of Paul's storied narrative: he is reaching back to

Genesis, and the original Lie spoken by the serpent. Placing the self, or our will, or our desires, before the instruction from God opens us up to deception – especially within our own thinking. It amounts to a worshipping of ourselves (**the creature**), or others, and then **the creation** – whether it be that which God has made, or that which we have made. A great deception can be that of worshipping **the Creator**, but also worshipping something else **alongside the Creator**.

In the last clause Paul gives honor and glory to **the Creator**, referring to Him as "One filled with thoughts of goodness and well-being," and He remains with

these qualities **on into the ages**. He punctuates this typically Jewish doxology with the affirming "**It is so (Amen)!**" as stark contrast to all idols. Ferwerda suggests,

“The people being talked about in this passage were those who already knew God, stopped acknowledging the truth about His character, suppressed the truth that had been revealed to them, and then taught lies. This is not saying that all people everywhere have had the truth of God revealed to them, but rather that those who did were not faithful with it, and became darkened in their

understanding. It is *these people* who are without excuse” (ibid p 118; emphasis original).

**26. Because of this** (or: Wherefore) **God gave, or hands, them over** (delivered, or delivers, them into the power of someone else) **into experiences of dishonor** (or: ignoble sufferings; situations of being unvalued; unworthy passions), **for even their females at one point altered** (or: alter; change or exchange) **the natural use into the [use which is] off to the side of** (or: beside; = other than) **nature** (or: a natural condition; natural production; a generated situation).

**27. And likewise** (or: So in like manner)

**also the males, sending away (or: abandoning; leaving) the natural use of the female, were set aflame within their cravings unto (or: into) one another; males in males continuously producing (accomplishing; effecting; working down) shameless indecency, and constantly taking away (or: receiving back) the necessary retribution (return compensation; the opposite of a reward; the anti-payment) of their wandering (or: the corresponding wage which is binding, pertaining to their straying and deception) within the midst of, or among, themselves.**

Paul's main point, in these two verses, is

that this is a corresponding judgment that **God gave** (or: delivers – again, the aorist: something that happens in a point of time) **them over INTO**. It was delivering them over into the existential results of idolatry. In Gal. 6:8 he informs them,

**"the person continually sowing into the flesh of himself** (= his estranged inner being), **will progressively reap corruption** (spoil; ruin; decay) **forth from out of the flesh** (= the estranged inner being);

(or: the one habitually sowing into the flesh [system], of himself will continue to reap decay from out of

the flesh [system])."

Where humans fail to give glory and honor to God, He does not fail to respond. He has established the law of sowing and reaping, and so for those who distort His image, in any way or for any purpose, He delivers them **into experiences of dishonor** (or: ignoble sufferings; situations of being unvalued; unworthy passions). He reflects their error back onto them so that they will learn from their mistakes and change their thinking. Below, in 11:22, Paul advises his audience,

**"Observe, perceive and consider, then, God's useful kindness (benevolent utility) and**

**abruptness** (sheer cutting-off; rigorous severity) – **on the one hand upon those falling:**

**abruptness** (sheer cutting-off); **on the other hand** (or: yet) **upon you: God's useful kindness** (benign, profitable utility), **provided** (or: if) **you should persistently remain in** (or: with; by) **the useful kindness** (or: = continue to be kind and useful).

**Otherwise you, also, will proceed in being cut out!"**

But lest we lose hope, let us consider God's purposes in these severe judgments upon people who have sown into the flesh and are now experiencing

**corruption**, or figurative death, Paul give us a sure expectation for these folks, for,

**"[What] is habitually** (repeatedly; presently; one after another) **being sown within corruption** (or: in union with decay and ruin; in perishability); **it is being habitually** (or: presently; repeatedly; one after another) **awakened and raised up within incorruption** (non-decayability; imperishableness). **[What] is constantly being sown within dishonor** (in union with lack of value; in the midst of worthlessness), **it is being**

**habitually** (or: repeatedly; constantly; one after another; progressively) **awakened and raised up within, and in union with, power and ability"** (1 Cor. 15:42, 43).

This is Paul's message of hope and expectation. The Law brought the judgments upon the failures listed in vss. 25-27, above. This continued be a part of the message of the Law-keeping Christian teachers (and conventional Christianity, today), but we observe Paul's perception of the effect of Christ's resurrection as he described it is this quote from 1 Cor. 15. Christ's faithfulness has overturned the effects of

disobedience and humanity's offenses (see 5:15-21, below).

**28. And then, correspondingly as they did not** (or: to the same degree as they do not) **put God to the proof and so approve [Him] as fit and suitable, to be continuously holding [Him] within full experiential knowledge** (or: having [Him] in union with added intimate insight; or: possessing [Him] in recognition and acknowledgment), **God gave them over** (hands or delivers them) **into a mind which fails to meet the test** (a disqualified mind) **to continuously do** (practice; make) **things that consistently are not fitting** (not reaching the proper level),

Once again, Paul affirms the existential nature of God's "inherent fervor; mental bent; natural impulse; teeming desire and swelling passion; temperament; disposition." It happened right there and then, and was a part of "**His imperceptible** (unobservable, but effecting-all) **power, ability and capacity, as well as divinity** (Godship; God-state) – [that was] **HABITUALLY SEEN down the line** (or: normally correspondingly perceived)" – vs. 20, above. But has there been any understanding of what has been seen? In regard to **putting God to the proof**, Yahweh asked,

"What iniquity did your fathers

find in Me that they have wandered far from Me and have gone after vanity and become vain?" (Jer. 2:5)

He expected them **to be continuously holding Him within [their] full experiential knowledge [of Him]**. This would apply to both Israel and the Gentiles. But when they did not, **God gave THEM over into a mind which fails to meet the test**. This was the story of Adam, in the Garden, and Israel left to wander in the wilderness, and later Israel being given into exile. The rest of humanity (the Gentiles) simply faded into the background of Adam's death, while Yahweh focused on Israel.

Again, God's judgments came within this life, on this earth.

**29. being people having been filled with all injustice – so that they are now full of every inequity and unfairness which lacks rightwised relationships and right actions – [as well as] worthlessness (or: criminality; unprofitableness; badness of condition; misery-gushed existence), inordinate, anti-social desire for more (or: ruthless, aggressive and self-assertive greed for advantage), ugliness (poorness of quality; malice); folks very full of (or: replete with) jealousy and envy, murder, strife (or: contentiousness), bait for entrapment, [and] with a**

**settled habit of evil and a disposition of depravity.**

The participle of the first clause, **being people having been filled**, is in the perfect tense. It means that the action happened in the past with the results continuing on into the present. They were people that were experiencing God's judgment here in this life.

"The long list of vices in vss. 29-32 has many parallels in the religious and philosophical literature of the ancient world" (Harvey, *ibid* p 508).

30. [**They are**] **whisperers** (or: gossipers, i.e., folks who disseminate detrimental information about other people), **slanderers, haters** (detesters)

**of God, overbearing and outrageous folks, haughty and arrogant people, ostentatious and vainglorious ones, inventors of ugly, worthless and bad things, [being] incomppliant (stubborn; disobedient) to parents,**

**31. unintelligent (stupid; unable to cause things to flow together), covenant-breakers (or: folks bound by no arrangement or who are false to agreements; not put-together), folks without natural affection, people unwilling to make a treaty (or: implacable), unmerciful folks,**

**32. those who, fully knowing by experience (being fully aware of) the effect of God's justice (or: the result of**

God's fairness and equity; or: the result of what is right, from the way pointed out, which is God; or: God's decree of the Way pointed out) – **that those continually performing** (committing; executing) **such things are folks deserving** (worthy; of equivalent value) **of death – not only keep on doing the same things, but also are constantly mutually approving, taking pleasure in and consenting with those habitually performing** (or: committing; practicing) **them.**

Humanity was not only **deserving of death**, their state of existence was the figurative death of being separated from the Vine (John 15:1 ff), or of having been

broken out of His olive tree (11:17, below: a figure of that within His Garden that produces oil – a figure of the anointing of His Spirit and a placing into a designated function within His representative community). These that he is describing are **FULLY knowing by EXPERIENCE the EFFECT of God's justice** – the result of what is right, from the Way that God has pointed out for humanity to live their lives.



## Chapter 2

**1. Wherefore (or: Because of which) you continue to be without a defense or an excuse, O human – everyone continually judging (pronouncing a judgment; separating, evaluating and making decisions; determining) – for within that which you continue judging the other person (or: the different one), you are correspondingly evaluating (or: commensurately deciding about; condemning) yourself, since you who are continually judging are constantly performing (committing; practicing) the very same things!**

The inferential conjunction,

**"Wherefore, or, Because of which,"** tells us that Paul is continuing the same argument that we just read in 1:18-32. He is proceeding with his leveling of the field between the Jews and the Gentiles within the covenant community. The issue here is judgmentalism – of one person against another, or by implication, of one group against another. Judging others was one of the mistakes of the Pharisees. Jesus spoke against this practice in Mat. 7:

**1. "Stop separating-off, dividing-out and making distinctions (or: Do not have a habit of evaluating or judging) – so that you folks may not be**

**separated-off, evaluated or judged.**

**2. "You see, within and with whatever aspect of separating-off, effect of evaluation, result of discrimination, or produce of judgment you folks are habitually or normally separating-off, dividing-out, discriminating, evaluating and judging, you will be judged (etc.). And further, within and with whatever measure or standard you folks are using or applying, it will be used to measure you, and that standard will be applied to you (or: = you**

will receive in the same proportion that you give).

In vs. 2, Jesus is stating a law of reciprocity, or, the law of sowing and reaping, both of which are embedded within the nature of creation. Paul's version of this, here, is addressing the issue of people judging others when in fact they are themselves doing the same things, and vs. 9 makes it clear that he is speaking to both the Jews and the Gentiles within the community. The specifics of what he is speaking about, which are here in general terms, are laid out in the verses below.

Paul takes up a specific type of rhetoric (diatribe) in this verse where he enters

into a dialogue with an imaginary opponent, or interlocutor, who represents either Jew or Gentile within this called-out community. Witherington suggests that in this letter Paul confines this rhetorical style to the theological section of the discourse, with the exception of 14:4, 10-11 (ibid p 75). He uses this as a teaching tool. Campbell sees this diatribe as Paul directly addressing the same Judaizing teacher who is Paul's opponent throughout this letter, and who's program Paul has been rehearsing from 1:18-32, above (ibid p 495ff).

**2. Now we have seen and thus know (or: are aware) that result of God's**

**judgment** (decision rendered; separation; determination) **is down from, in line with and accords to Truth and reality, [coming] upon those habitually performing or committing such things.**

In the last chapter, Paul (or, his interlocutor) pointed out that these **results of God's judgments, decisions and determinations** are "**continuously made visible**" (vs. 19) to everyone. So he is not speaking of some "final judgment" (which is not a Scriptural phrase) after a person dies. He is speaking of the same kind of judgment that God has always done and habitually continues to do, as we discussed above.

And here, he is affirming that God's decisions regarding human beings come **down from Truth**, are **in line with reality**, and are in **accord** with Christ – Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life of the Kingdom of God. If we survey just the kingdom parables in Matthew, we find a thread running through them that points to God's judgment on Jerusalem, which culminated in AD 70. This in no way means that God's judgments are only in this life, but it is an error to presume that every time "judgment" is mentioned that it is referring to an "after this life" scenario.

And we should take note that God's rendering of a decision is upon those

**habitually** doing these things. Such habitual behavior requires intervention. But His dealings with us are never without grace and mercy, because they are in accord with Christ.

**3. Yet you continue logically thinking (reckoning; counting on) this, O human – the one continuously judging those who are normally performing or committing such things, and yet are also a person habitually doing the same things – that you will proceed in making an escape out of the result of God's judgment (the effect of a decision from God)?**

Paul again addresses his interlocutor of vs. 1, making the same evaluations of the

life that Paul has assigned him in this diatribe. Then he asks such a person if this person presumes that he **will proceed in making an escape OUT OF** (note: this means that he is already there!) **the result**. I stop there, to call attention to the fact that the **judgment**, the **decision**, has already been made by God; God's personal emotion and inherent fervor (John 3:36) even now continue dwelling upon him. Who can escape from the effect or result of what God decides to do (Greek: *kri-ma*) in regard to such a person? Such a person is unwise in presuming upon God's grace in this way. God is treating him as a son (Heb. 12:5-9). Furthermore, this

child-training and discipline,

**"is constantly and progressively yielding fruit which has the character and qualities of peace and harmony – which equates to fair and equitable dealings in rightwised relationships which are in line with the Way pointed out" (Heb. 12:11).**

Paul is endeavoring to make his listeners think, and listen to their consciences (*cf* Dodd, *ibid* p 32).

**4. Or, are you continually having a "down-oriented" frame of mind (or: despising; thinking down or with disrespect; or: = a negative disposition) concerning the riches (or: wealth) of**

## **His kind and gentle usefulness**

(benevolence with a sweet disposition; kindness), **[His] delaying forbearance** (the tolerant holding-back) **and [His] patient longsuffering, constantly being ignorant that God's kind and gentle usefulness** (benevolence with a sweet disposition) **is continuously leading you into a change of mind and purpose** (a paradigm shift; or: = repentance with a change of heart and thinking, accompanied by a turn, or return, to God)?

I rendered the verb of the first clause with the adjective phrase "**down-oriented**" to give a literal picture of the effect of the preposition *kata-* which is

prefixed to the verb. The parenthetical expansion gives more of the semantic range that is possible here. This imaginary opponent is acquainted with **the riches** of God's dealings with people, but Paul suggests that he or she may be despising them, treating them with disrespect, or having a negative disposition (thus, dishonoring and devaluing) them. This calls to mind his words to the Gentile believers in 11:18-21, below, "... **since** (or: if) **God spares not** (or: did not spare) **the natural branches** (the branches down from, or, in accord with, nature), **neither will He continue sparing you!**"

The **riches** of God's dealings with us are

worth noting:

- a) **kind and gentle usefulness**  
(benevolence with a sweet disposition; kindness)
- b) **delaying forbearance** (the tolerant holding-back)
- c) **patient longsuffering.**

It is **God's kind and gentle usefulness** (benevolence with a sweet disposition) that **is continuously leading you into a change of mind and purpose.** What a picture of God! The parenthetical expansion gives further understanding of the last phrase here. His gentle usefulness can give this person a paradigm shift, or, can incite repentance from a change of heart that He has

caused. The idea of "a turn, or return, to God" comes from the OT concept when using this word. Our interlocutor should not underestimate the value of God's qualities.

Dodd reminds us that this idea was familiar to Judaism (ibid p 32) and points us to Wisdom of Solomon 11:23-26,

"But You repeatedly have mercy on all mankind, because You constantly have power and ability [to do] all things (or: You continuously exercise power [over] all mankind), and You overlook (take no notice of) the mistakes (errors; sins; deviations)

of human beings [which leads] into (or: with a view to) a **change of mind** and **purpose** (a paradigm shift with a change in manner of thinking; = repentance which causes a turn to God) for You continuously love and accept all mankind that continues existing (or: all things that exist), and You detest nothing of which You have made....

(26) But You spare all humans, because they are yours, O Sovereign Lord, You who are fond of and a friend of souls (or: human beings)." (LXX, JM)

We can recall the stories that Jesus told

in Lu. 15: the recoveries of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the "lost" son.

**5. Yet down from your hardness** (or: in line with and in accord to your obstinacy) **and an unrepentant heart** (= unchanged thinking and affection in the center of your being) **you habitually collect and lay up stores of personal emotion in yourself** (or: progressively treasure up to yourself inherent fervor, passionate impulse and a mental bent or a disposition; or: periodically bank for yourself anger, indignation or wrath) **within a day of personal emotion** (fervor; passion; anger; etc.) **and of an unveiling of a decision of rightwising from God**

(or: of a revealing of God's verdict regarding fair and equitable dealing; of an uncovering of a just judgment which is God; of a disclosure of a separation for a decision having the character of the Way pointed out from God; of a disclosure from God's right evaluation),

Giving close attention to the dative form of the personal pronoun, **yourself**, and to the core idea in the prepositional phrase **within a day**, we can see a different picture than the one which puts what is discussed in this verse off into the future. Focusing on the locative function in the pronoun, **in yourself**, we can see a

parallel to the locative preposition of the phrase, **within a day**. Also, note the repeating of the phrase, **of personal emotion**, in both locations: **yourself; a day**. Now add to this the present tense of the verb, **habitually collect and lay up**, in the context into which Paul is writing. He is speaking of a present situation. Furthermore, the **unveiling of a decision of rightwising from God**, or, "a revealing of God's verdict regarding fair and equitable dealing" and "a disclosure from God's right evaluation" was an event that was happening right then and there through Paul teaching by means of this letter. Jesus spoke of the present situation:

**“At the present time (or: Now) is an evaluation of and a decision pertaining to (or: a sifting of and separation for; or: a judgment from) this System (or: this ordered arrangement; this world; this polity, culture and religion; or: this system of control and subjugation; or: the aggregate of humanity)...”** (John 12:31)

That decision pertaining to the System and ordered arrangement (the world and the aggregate of humanity) was the cross: a decision that ended with an eschatological deliverance for mankind. In the first half of the verse, Paul is using his interlocutor to describe the human

condition: **hardness; an unrepentant heart**. Because of this, people **habitually collect and lay up stores of personal emotion in [themselves]**: inherent fervor, passionate impulses, a particular mental bent, a bad disposition, anger or wrath. We saw, above, that when people turned to idolatry God gave them over to the effects of their deviations right here in this life. This is no different. We are living in a day of God's continuous unveiling of His decisions concerning His activities of **rightwising** folks – here and now – because of the deliverance from God. He is turning people in the right direction and setting them "to

rights" via the work of the cross and the transforming power of His indwelling Spirit. Paul said in 2 Cor. 6:2,

**"Consider! [It is] now (at this moment) a day of deliverance (of health, rescue, safety, salvation and restoration to the wholeness of the original state and condition)!"**

Recall Isa. 26:9

"For when Your judgments are IN the EARTH, the inhabitants of the world LEARN righteousness (the right way to live; the right direction in which to be pointed)."

In the parenthetical expansions of the final phrases, I have: "of an uncovering

of a just judgment which is God." The last phrase puts the noun "God" in apposition to "judgment." Here we see a picture of the cross, which unveiled God's right decision: to give His life to us. When this decision (or, judgment) came into the world via the Messiah, folks became able to learn righteousness, and experientially know the Way (Christ) that God has pointed out to us.

**6. Who will progressively award in each person (or: habitually give back to or pay for each one) down from (in line with; in accord to; to the level of) his works (actions; deeds):**

This began happening when Christ arose

from the dead and figuratively took His seat on the throne of the Kingdom of heaven. In Eph. 2:4-6 Paul instructs us,

**4. But God, continuously being wealthy and rich in mercy, because of His vast** (much; great in magnitude and quantity; outstretched; long-lasting; repeated) **Love in** (or: with) **which He focused love on** (or: loves and accepts) **us** [*p46* reads: had mercy on us],

**5. even us, being continuously dead ones by** (or: in; to; with) **the results and effects of stumblings aside** (wrong steps; offences) [*p46* reads: ... in (to; by) the

bodies; other MSS: by the failure(s) to hit the mark (sin/sins); B reads: within the stumblings aside and the cravings (lusts)], **He made alive together** (or: joins us in common life with, for and in; [p46, B: within; in union with]) **the Christ** – **by Grace and joyous favor you continually exist, being folks having been delivered** (rescued and saved, so that you are now safe; made whole)! –

**6. and He jointly roused and raised** (or: suddenly awakens and raises) **[us] up, and caused [us] to sit** (or: seats [us]) **together**

**within the things situated upon**  
[thus, above] **the heavens**  
(or: in union with the full,  
perfected heavenlies; or, although  
neuter: among those comprising  
the complete and perfected  
heavenlies; among the ones  
[residing] upon the atmospheres;  
in union with the celestials)  
**within and in union with Christ**  
**Jesus.**

With the passage from Wisdom, just  
quoted above, in mind, take note of the  
themes of verse 4, here: **rich in mercy...**  
**love and acceptance**, and then the result  
of His judgment at the cross – **made us**  
**alive together... delivered us... jointly**

**roused and raised us up** (from having been **continuously dead ones** – vs. 5)... **caused [us] to sit together within the things situated upon the heavens.**

He does not wait until after we die to pay us for our work for Him, as Paul goes on to explain in vs. 7, as well as giving **personal emotion, pressure and squeezed narrowness**, vs. 8 & 9, for those who continue **being in compliant** (an echo of John 3:36, again) and **working the bad or effecting the ugly**, etc. The sowing and reaping happens in the earth, in this life, and – via resurrection – in the next. But God (and Jesus Christ – Heb. 13:8) remains the same throughout.

**7. in those** (to those; for those), **on the one hand, in accord with [the] patient endurance** (humbly remaining under for persistent support) **of a good work** (or: virtuous action) **[who] are constantly seeking glory** (a good reputation; a manifestation of that which calls forth praise) **and honor** (value; worth) **and incorruptibility** (or: incorruption) – **life which belongs to, is connected with, and is proper to the Age** (or: eonian life; the life of and for the ages).

Paul is addressing the subject of ethics in 6-9. Good works are part and parcel of his teachings about kingdom life in the covenant communities. This is not about "faith versus works," but about virtuous

actions the spring from faith and faithfulness. It is about the life of following the Master. All those who are in Christ should be **constantly seeking** His **glory**, a good reputation for Him and for the community, and a manifestation of Christ which calls forth praise from those who observe it. Their focus should be on **honor** and things of value and worth – things that are **incorruptible** – such as the gold, silver and precious stones of which Paul spoke regarding Christian labor (1 Cor. 3:8-17). These things define the **life which belongs to, is connected with, and is proper to the Age of the Messiah** (Who has come and who is here with

us). This is eonian life: life in union with Christ.

**8. Yet, on the other hand, in those (to those; for those) out of a work for ambitious, factious or contentious purposes, and in (or: by) being continuously in compliant (disobedient; unwilling to be persuaded) to (or: by) the Truth (reality; veritable essence), but constantly compliant (obedient; persuaded) in, to, by and for the injustice (inequity; that which is not in accord with the Way pointed out), [there will be] personal emotion (or: inherent fervor; passionate impulse; anger; indignation; wrath; a habit of mind; a mental bent or disposition) and**

**rushing of feelings** (or: intense passion of the mind; violent breathing; glowing animation; turbulent commotion of the mind; or: rage; fury),

We should keep in mind that Paul is still speaking to the person that represents the community in Rome. The divisions there may be caused, in part, from **in those** who are working **for ambitious, factious or contentious purposes**, from **being continuously incomplicant to the Truth** that was delivered to them, while they continue acting unjustly to others in the group (e.g., to the "weak"). He is also speaking to (or about) the Judaizing teachers whose labors among the called-out communities have caused contention,

factions and divisions from the ambition to promote their Law-keeping views of the Christian life. His statements would also apply to humanity at large, but his argument is aimed at the folks of the community, for their understanding of both current situations, and as a warning for the false teachings that may soon be coming to them. But consider, again, the nature of His judgments: **personal emotion** (this can come from within the person) and **rushing of feelings**, or intense passion of the mind, etc. He brings forth within us the fruit of whatever we do. Many followers of Christ can be observed displaying these things.

But let us consider the other functions of the dative case of the pronoun **those**, to which the final phrases of the verse apply. The "inherent fervor, passionate impulse, indignation or even wrath" can come "to" these folks, from God, to be a benefit "for" these folks, to bring correction – here and now.

9. **pressure** (affliction; trouble; tribulation; ordeal) **and squeezed narrowness** (tight restriction; distress; anguish) – **upon every soul of mankind which is persistently in himself working down and effecting the bad** (the ugly; the worthless; the evil; the injurious; the bad situation; the worthless quality; the malicious intent) –

**both of a Jew, first, and also of a Greek** (or: one of the Hellenist culture); Here he makes this all inclusive, **every soul of mankind**, and includes the two categories that make up the covenant community in Rome. But in stating it this way, he is also very much including this community, in his remarks. This is what Wright would call "covenantal justice," and we see that the Greek (= the Gentile) is also included. Dodd (p 34) points us to the prophetic tradition of Amos, where we find not only judgment proclaimed for Judah and Israel, but also for a variety of nations. Notice the present tense (the **persistent** action) of the verb. The context is this present life,

and the **pressure and squeezed narrowness** (restrictions, distress or anguish) speaks of situations that He repeatedly brings in this life, to bring correction.

This may be a good time to discuss the term **bad** (often just rendered "evil"). Depending upon our personal cultural and religious history, each of us usually has certain nuances attached to these words – they are often emotionally loaded. I trust that by inserting the broad semantic range of this word we can see that our Father will address every level, listed here, that He discerns in us, or observes us doing to others. He will deal with even what is "ugly" about our

attitudes or expressions, as well as what is "worthless" in the ways in which we perform our jobs. Paul is speaking primarily about "kingdom living" as he writes to the body of Christ in Rome, but "kingdom living" applies to every area of our life.

**10. but yet glory** (a manifestation of that which calls forth praise; a creditable reputation) **and honor** (value; worth) **and peace** (or: harmony; [=Shalom]) **in, to, for and with everyone habitually working and accomplishing in himself the Good** (or: the virtuous and excellent) **both in, to, and for a Jew, first, and also in, to and for a Greek** (or: Hellenist);

11. **for partiality** (favoritism; receiving on the basis of faces, countenances or personalities) **does not exist alongside of God** (or: by God's side; = with God or in His presence and dealings).

Fairness and equity are central markers of the covenant and in rightwised living on the Path. Even though Yahweh had chosen Israel to be His son, and gave all that Paul lists in 9:4, below, to them, it was not from out of **partiality or favoritism**, for these qualities **do not exist alongside of, or with, God**. He does not entertain them.

**Everyone habitually working and accomplishing in himself** (this is expressed by the middle voice of the

verb) **the Good** (that is, producing Christ, which is the Fruit of the Spirit, or exuding the Oil – the anointing – as we are crushed) reflects His image to the world and within the community. His life being manifested in us shows forth virtue and excellence – the opposite of the ugly and worthless – and this brings **glory** (a manifestation which causes folks to praise God and which gives Him a good reputation among people) and it brings **honor** both to God, and to humanity. **Peace and harmony** are gifts to mankind, from out of His **Goodness and excellence**.

The **working and accomplishing** could be seen as “works of Law” from the

point of view of a Judaizer, or, they can be seen as the work of the Good One who resides within us,

**“for the fact is, we are (continually exist being) the effect of what He did (or: His creation; the thing He has constructed; the result of His work; His achievement; His opus; the effect of His Deed): people being founded from a state of disorder and wildness (being framed, built, settled and created; being changed from chaos to order), within and in union with Christ Jesus; [founded and built] upon good works (virtuous**

actions; excellent deeds) **which God made ready** (prepared; or: prepares) **beforehand, to the end that we may, could, should and would walk about** (= live our lives) **within and in union with them. for the fact is, we are** (continually exist being) **the effect of what He did** (or: His creation; the thing He has constructed; the result of His work; His achievement; His opus; the effect of His Deed): **people being founded from a state of disorder and wildness** (being framed, built, settled and created; being changed from chaos to

order), **within and in union with Christ Jesus; [founded and built] upon good works** (virtuous actions; excellent deeds) **which God made ready** (prepared; or: prepares) **beforehand, to the end that we may, could, should and would walk about** (= live our lives) **within and in union with them.**" (Eph. 2:10)

12. **For you see, as many as** (or: however many) **miss the goal** (or: sin; fail; or: erred; missed the target due to lack of ability or through distraction) **without (a) law** [= Torah?], **without (a) law will progressively lose and continue destroying themselves; and**

**as many as** (or: however many) **within law** (or: within [the] Law [= Torah]) **miss the goal** (sin; sinned; fail; deviated), **through law** (or: [the] Law) **will be judged** (separated, evaluated and decided upon),

When the text has the definite article with the word **law** in Paul's writings, we can usually assume that he is referring to the Torah, or the "Law of Moses." When the definite article is not there, it becomes less clear, for there is no indefinite article (a; an) in Greek, and sometimes it is correct to supply [the] because of the discerned context of the passage. What further may cloud our understanding is that the word can mean

the Law of Moses, in general, or specifically the first five books of the OT, or the implied teachings of the Law, or a principle, or a custom. These options should be kept in mind as we continue through this letter. The capitalization of the word in this translation means that I am reading the text as referring to the Law of Moses, or those books of the OT, or Israel's Scriptures, in general.

In this verse, since **law** is used in direct comparison with **without law**, in the first clause I rendered it with a tentative "(a)." In the last clause I simply gave both options. May the Spirit enlighten us.

In the first clause, I render it **miss the goal** (an archery term that literally means "to miss the target" – i.e., the goal at which one is aiming) because Paul states that this can be done **without a law**. From this I read him as reaching back to God's original goal for humanity: for them to bear and reflect God's image. And since the true image of God is Christ, not to bear the image of Christ is the basic meaning of **missing the Goal, failing, erring, or, sinning**. And this is the story of Adam and all his descendants. Even those being without a law **progressively lost themselves, and continuously destroyed themselves**. But since God has always dealt with all

of humanity with fairness and equity, those who **within law/Law miss the goal through that law, or Law, will also be judged** – i.e., be evaluated and have a decision made about them. Now this final clause can also be read to be saying that it is their **law/Law** that will judge them. Either reading is correct. I should also point out that the Greek *apollumi* means both to **lose** and to **destroy**, so I gave both renderings. The word **themselves** come from the verb being in the middle voice, here. Jesus used this same verb in Mat. 15:24,

**" I was not commissioned and sent off as an emissary (representative) – except into the**

**midst of those sheep having been destroyed, the ones that belong to the house of Israel (or: unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel)."**

Being "lost" or "destroyed" means that the Good Shepherd will go looking for this person, until He finds him or her (Lu. 15:4ff). One recent translation omits this verb in vs. 12, above – at least in his commentary – rendering it like the verb in the last clause. This would seem to simplify Paul's thought, but instead it clouds what he is saying. People that are not joined to Christ lose themselves and destroy themselves. Most common versions render the verb

"perish" but they do not render it as a middle voice, to indicate that folks do this to themselves. Also, our English word "perish" has become freighted with a sense of finality, which, from Jesus' use of the word in Lu. and Mat., above and elsewhere, is simply not the case.

This losing and destroying oneself is a decision, or judgment, made by God upon all humans as the result, or consequence, of missing the goal, or sinning (whether with a law or without a law). That judgment takes place right here in this life (John 3:36b) as well as the evaluation after we have passed from this life (Heb. 9:27). Recalling vs.

6, above, we see that God **will progressively award in each person** (or: habitually give back to each or pay for each one) **down from** (in line with; in accord to; to the level of) **his works** (actions; deeds). We see in 1 Cor. 3:10-15 that there is a difference between being saved and receiving consequences for one's **works**. All go through this evaluation and then receive either reward or correction. Judgment for worthless works does not mean loss of being in covenant or what religion has called "losing one's salvation." But it might involve deportation from the land of promise and a time of captivity in "a foreign land," as we observe of Israel's

history in the OT.

1 Cor. 11:29 is an example of ongoing decisions with regard to situations in this life:

**"for the one continually eating and drinking in a manner or situation without equal value (or: in an unworthy or unsuitable way) is repeatedly eating and drinking the effect of an evaluation and the result of a decision (or: a judgment) in (or: to; for) himself – not continually passing [this] judging through the whole body**

(or: in not continuing to separate throughout the

body; not completely evaluating the body; not discriminating for, discerning about, or making a distinction of, the body [of believers]; [other MSS add: of the Lord])."

Then we see another insight from Paul in 1 Cor. 4:

**5. Hence** (or: And so), **do not be constantly evaluating** (or: stop judging, making decisions about or critiquing) **anything before [its] season** (before a fitting, due or appointed situation; prior to a fertile moment): **until the Lord** [= Yahweh or Christ] **would come** –

**Who will continue giving light to**  
(or: shine upon and illuminate)  
**the hidden things of the**  
**Darkness** (or: the hiding things  
which are things in the shadows  
and dimness of obscurity), **and**  
**will progressively set in clear**  
**light** (or: keep on manifesting) **the**  
**intentions and purposes** (designs,  
dispositions, motives and  
counsels) **of the hearts – and**  
**then the praise and applause**  
**from God will repeatedly be**  
**birthed** (happen; come into being)  
**in each human** (or: for every  
person)!

And keep in mind that the Lord

repeatedly comes to us as He said in John 14:

18. **"I will not be leaving you abandoned or be sending you off as orphaned ones** (or: folks without family). **I am repeatedly** (or: habitually) **and now progressively coming to** (or: face to face with; toward) **you people.**" (cf John 14:23b)

13. **for [it is] not the hearers of [the] Law** (= the ones instructed in the Law, or who listen to the Torah) **[that are] just ones** (rightwised folks who are in right relationships in accord with the Way pointed out; fair and equitable ones) **by God's side** (= with God and in

His sight and presence), **but rather the doers of [the] Law** (= the folks performing deeds of the Torah, and producing the character and qualities of the Law) **[who] will continue being made right and just** (constituted in the Way pointed out; or: pronounced as being fair, equitable and in right relationship).

As you see, I indicate that Paul is speaking of the Torah, or **Law**, because Paul is referring to those that listen to the Torah and are instructed in the Law. We must keep in mind that Paul is addressing the ethics of a community of believers in this present argument. What he is saying is that people who behave

justly are in fact just. Those who are in right relationship with their fellows, as well as with those in the larger society, are the ones who are truly living "in accord with the Way pointed out," as a genuine follower of Jesus. Those who live with fairness and equity through the ability of the indwelling Spirit of God – who existentially are the body of Christ – are those fulfill the Law, for Christ is the goal and finished product of the Law (10:4, below).

Jacob (or: James), writing to believers who are already in Christ, as here, addresses this same issue in 1:22-25 of his letter,

**"Now you must continuously**

**come to be** (or: be progressively birthed) **performers of [the] Word** (or: makers of collected thought; framers of an idea; authors of a message; producers of reason; [the] Word's doers), **and not only hearing ones** (listeners; those hearing in an auditorium), **continuously deceiving** (reckoning aside; miscalculating) **yourselves.**

(another combination of these options yields: So you folks must be progressively birthed to be authors of a message, and not only those in an auditorium, continuously miscalculating

yourselves.)

**Because if someone is a hearer of [the] Word (a listener to a thought, idea or message) and not a doer (performer; producer), this one is like (resembles) an adult male contemplating (considering; attentively pondering) in a mirror the face of his birth (genesis; origin; existence; generation; lineage; or: = the face with which he was born): for he contemplated himself and has departed, and immediately forgot of what sort (quality; manner) he was.**

**But the one stooping down**

**beside in order to attentively view into** (giving a penetrating look into) **the perfect** (finished and realized; matured; completed; full-grown and fully developed; purposed and destined) **law – the one which is freedom** (or: the one whose source is, and which has the qualities of, freedom and liberty) – **and then remaining** (abiding; dwelling) **beside [it] – not being birthed** (or: coming to be) **a hearer of forgetfulness** (or: a forgetful listener), **but rather a performer of work** (a producer of action) – **this person will continue being happy and**

**blessed within his performing  
and in union with his producing."**

Note that Jacob used the term **Word**, instead of **Law**, until vs. 24, where he terms it "**the perfect** (finished and realized; matured; completed; full-grown and fully developed; purposed and destined) **law – the one which is freedom** (or: the one whose source is, and which has the qualities of, freedom and liberty)." In this he was speaking of Christ, and His law:

**"the principle and law of, from  
and which is the spirit and  
attitude of 'The Life within  
Christ Jesus'..."** (12:2, below)

**14. You see, whenever ethnic**

**multitudes** (or: [certain] Gentiles; or: [some] non-Israelite nations; = pagans) – **those not having a law** (or: [the] Law) **by nature** – **may normally do the things of the Law** (= Torah), **these, [although] not having a law** (or: [the] Law), **are in and among themselves a law** (or: continuously exist being a principle, or custom, for or to themselves),

Paul is picking up what he was talking about in the first clause of vs. 12, above. The topic is still ethics, not "salvation" or "theology." As he from time to time does, Paul is using other cultures or philosophers to make his point. William Barclay quotes Aristotle as saying,

"The cultivated and free-minded man will so behave as being *a law to himself*" (*The Letter to the Romans*, Rev. Ed., *The Daily Study bible Series*, The Westminster Press, 1975, p 45, italics original).

This is similar to Jesus saying to the Roman centurion,

**"Truly I am saying to you folks, with no one in Israel do I find so much faith [as this]! (or: I did not find such great trust and confidence at the side of even one person within the midst of Israel!)"** – Mat. 8:10

**15. which very ones continuously**

**display** (exhibit; show outward proof by demonstration) **the work of the Law** (or: action and conduct of that law and principle) **written within their hearts, their conscience** (the knowing with themselves; awareness; integrated recognition from what has been seen) **continually bearing joint-testimony** (giving confirming witness and evidence, together), **and, in between each other's calculations** (or: logical thoughts), **also constantly accusing** (speaking down [against] in the assembly) **or defending themselves** (or: and in the mean time one another's reasonings and reckonings constantly accusing, or even repeatedly excusing

themselves),

Paul now appeals to the **conscience** – the knowing within one's self; awareness; integrated recognition from what has been seen. Dodd tells us that the Stoics invented this term (ibid). Paul is using every tool in his rhetorical bag for persuasion. He is building his case for how the members of the Roman called-out should behave towards one another. God has indeed written laws into the hearts of humans – they are in their DNA! The Jews had the Law of Moses, but now our consciences are guided by **Christ's Law** (or: the law which is Christ; the law of the Anointing; the law whose character and

source is Christ): Gal. 6:2b.

If we consider the phrase, **the law written within their hearts**, to be a reference to Jer. 31:33, the new arrangement, and if we see that Paul already considers the ethnic multitudes (Gentiles) to be part of the "one new humanity" (Eph. 2:15), then can vs. 14-15, here, be referring to those who have been grafted into Israel's olive tree (11:17, below)? Heb. 8:12 describes God's grace,

**"because I shall continue being (existing) merciful with a cleansing covering for their injustices (behaviors contrary to the Way pointed out; inequities)**

**and acts of lawlessness, and then I would by no means be reminded further of their mistakes and failures** (errors and falling short of the target; sins),"

and this quote from Jer. 31 gives insight into Paul's statement in 2 Cor. 5:19b,

**"not accounting to them** (not putting to their account; not logically considering for them; not reasoning in them) **the results and effects of their falls to the side** (their trespasses and offences), **even placing within us the Word** (the Idea; the Reason; the message) **of the corresponding transformation to otherness** (or:

the full alteration; the change from enmity to friendship; the conciliation)."

Another reading of this verse can see Paul's interlocutor promoting Law-observance with these words. In this view, the **joint-testimony between each other's calculation is constantly accusing** other people, while **defending themselves**. This is legalism, not love. The calculations and logical reasonings may well refer to comparison of behavior to the code of the Law. This will, of course, foment judgmentalism. So unless, we read this as positive behavior that is generated by the indwelling Spirit in the new creation (in

Christ), the language of this verse sounds more like that of a Judaizer (Law-keeper) than the heart of Paul.

**16. within a day, when God is presently judging** (or: continues deciding and is progressively separating off and evaluating; [some MSS: in which day God will continue judging]) **hidden things of humanity** (or: concealed things pertaining to people) – **commensurate with my good news** (or: according to and following the pattern of my message of goodness, ease and well-being) – **through Jesus Christ** [with other MSS: by means of Jesus [the] Anointed [= Messiah]).

Observe that the ongoing activities of the

conscience (vs. 15) are **within a day**, **when God is presently judging** (or: continues deciding and is progressively separating off and evaluating) **hidden things of humanity** (or: concealed things pertaining to people)! That **day** came with the advent of the Messiah:

**“At the present time** (or: Now) **is an evaluation of and a decision pertaining to** (or: a sifting of and separation for; or: a judgment from) **this System** (or: this ordered arrangement; this world; this polity, culture and religion; or: this system of control and subjugation).” (John 12:31a)

The alternate MSS simply point to the

ongoing activities of God in His dealings with humanity. This activity is **commensurate** with the good news that Paul is bringing them. The continual deciding, evaluating and progressively separating off for consideration is done **through**, and by means of **Jesus Christ** who lives in God's temple: the covenant community. He is here right with us, joined to us as a Vine is to its branches. Reading this verse as a part of the dialogue between Paul and his interlocutor, the first half of the verse may be the interlocutor emphasizing God's judgment that is based upon the Law (referred to in vs. 15, above). The second half of the verse would then be

Paul's interjection to counter this forensic direction of the false teacher, reminding him or her that all of **God's present judging** is done **through** the grace deployed from the work and resurrected life of **Jesus Christ** – just as **Paul's good news** has proclaimed.

17. **So since** (or: But if; [other MSS: Consider this,]) **you yourself are habitually calling** (naming; classifying) **yourself a Jew and are continuing to rest** (lean back) **upon [the] Law** (= Torah), **and are even from time to time boasting** (expressing pride) **in God,**

The interlocutor now becomes specifically a Jew, for Paul's argument, representing the Jewish Christians of the

Roman community, or the Judaizers (false teachers) who would be coming to them. They obviously believe in Torah-keeping, which may be one of the grounds of division within the mixed group – and bringing the Law into the new arrangement in Christ has caused division in His body ever since. If they are **from time to time boasting in God** on the grounds of having a history with the Law, they might feel that they have advantage over the Gentile majority of the gathered assembly. The false teachers relied on the Law as being necessary for Christian ethics. It would seem that Paul is suggesting that they are not relying upon grace, since they

continue to **rest upon [the] Law**, which would also translate into "resting upon Jewish customs." Jews had been known for looking down on Gentiles, so we may have racial issues in the Roman community, as well as the potential for falling out of grace – if they listen to the Judaizers.

**18. and you are progressively knowing the Will by personal experience and insight, and are constantly testing in order to prove (or: approve) the things that carry through, by habit (i.e., the essential things which matter and are different in that they are of greater value), while being a person regularly undergoing oral instruction from out**

**of the Law** (= Torah),

The phrase **progressively knowing the Will** goes one step beyond **resting or leaning back [securely?] upon Law**, or the Torah. The progression, in the view of the Judaizers, is from the foundation of the Law to the reception of Jesus as the Messiah, and Gentiles being included in the new arrangement (or: covenant). New ideas from different sent-forth emissaries (e.g., Apollos, Peter, Pricilla and Aquila, and others that Paul mentions in ch. 16) were making it necessary to be **constantly testing in order to prove** (or: approve) just what it is **that carries through, by habit**, from the Law and the old

covenant. This Jewish Christian (idealized here for Paul's rhetorical purposes) is someone who continues **regularly undergoing oral instruction from out of the Law** (= Torah). Such a person might have been one of Paul's opponents in the province of Galatia, and Paul knows such a person very well.

19. **[and] likewise** (or: besides) **you have confidence in yourself** (or: you have persuaded yourself) **to be a guide or an escort of blind folks on the way or in the path; a light within [the] darkness** (obscurity of the shadow areas; dimness of the gloom), 20. **a trainer** (instructor; corrector;

discipliner; educator) **of senseless ones** (folks without will, heart or guts; imprudent ones; foolish ones); **a teacher of infants** (ones not yet able to speak), **while habitually having** (or: holding) **the outward form** (rough sketch; outline; framework; semblance) **of the experiential knowledge and of the truth** (or: reality) **within, or in union with, the Law** (= Torah)...

We begin to get the picture, now. This Messianic Jew sees himself as someone who can teach the **blind folks** (i.e., the Gentiles of the communities), and **guide** them on the **path** of Torah-keeping. He is **a light** for their pagan **darkness**. Being well-instructed in the Law, he can be a

**trainer** (instructor; corrector; discipliner; educator) **of senseless ones** (folks without will, heart or guts; imprudent ones; foolish ones), **a teacher of these infants** (ones not yet [fit] to speak, or able to discourse on the Law) within their covenant community. Such a learned teacher could easily overwhelm folks that are new to being in Christ, so Paul must warn the folks at Rome (and we, too, need to listen) to reject Judaizing, no matter how religious and informed these coming teachers may be. They must not bring the old covenant Law into the new arrangement.

**21. You then, the one habitually teaching another** (a different one), **are**

**not habitually teaching yourself! You, the one constantly preaching** (proclaiming; heralding), **“Do not steal,” are habitually stealing!**

So Paul's interlocutor is teaching folks to keep the Law. Well, is he in some way breaking the Law (or: custom), e.g., by mixing with Gentiles? Paul's example of **stealing** stands for all manner of failure to completely keep the Law. In 5:20, below, he will argue that the Law entered so that **"the effect of the fall to the side** (or: so that the result of the offense and the stumbling aside) **would increase to be more than enough** (should greatly abound and become more intense)!" So, good luck with

Torah keeping. In Gal. 5:4 he informs them,

**"You people who in union with** (or: centered in; [remaining] within) **Law continue being liberated and rightwised, from grace** (or: placed in the Way pointed out and included in the new covenant of grace; being given an eschatological transformation, which is favor), **were at once discharged** (made inactive, idle, useless, unproductive and without effect; or: voided, nullified, exempted) **away from Christ – you at once fell out from [the grace and**

**favor]!"**

**22. The person continually saying not to be committing adultery, you are habitually committing adultery! You, the one repeatedly detesting idols (responding to forms, shapes or concepts as an abomination, as something that is foul and stinks), are in the habit of robbing temples (despoiling or profaning the sanctuary)!**

[note: vss. 21-22 can also be rendered as questions]

I suggest that Paul is using hyperbole here, exaggerating the accusations to this Law-keeping Jewish Christian to make his point. In this verse, he has rhetorically piled up examples upon the

point he was making in vs. 21, making the same point, again, here. This is in essence the same argument of 2:1b, above, where it was stated in more general terms in order to include the Gentiles of the community. 1 Cor. 10:21 addresses the issues of attending pagan festivals and eating in their temples, and vs. 14 of that chapter tells them to "flee from idolatry."

**23. You who are boasting in law** (or: [the] Law [= Torah]; or: a law), **through the transgression of** (stepping across the line of; stepping to the side of; deviating from) **the Law, you are constantly dishonoring** (devaluing) **God,**

**24. for according as it has been, and stands, written [in the Tanakh (Hebrew Scriptures)],**

**"Because of you, God's NAME [Yahweh?] is continuously being blasphemed (vilified; misrepresented; slandered; given a false image which hinders the Light) among the ethnic multitudes (nations; non-Jews; Gentiles)." [Isa. 52:5; Ezk. 36:20]**

In this quote from the Hebrew Scriptures, Paul cites two examples of Israel's prophets who accused ancient Israel of behavior that gave Yahweh a bad name among the Gentiles. Paul is saying that this Torah-keeper is doing the

same thing – i.e., the Messianic, Law-keeping, Jews of the community in Rome (or, the soon-coming false teachers) were in some way (figured by his fictitious examples of 21 and 22, above) **constantly dishonoring and devaluing God**. They are likely trying to keep parts of the Law (as many Christians, from Paul's time to the present, have done) yet in Gal. 3:10 Paul gives strong warning,

**You see, however many people continue their existence from the midst of observances and works of Law (= Everyone who lives by deeds and actions based upon the Torah) are continuously under a curse** (a negative, down-

focused or adversarial prayer; an imprecation), **for it has been and now stands written, namely that, "A curse (or: an adversarial prayer; imprecation) [is settled] upon all (or: [is] added to everyone) not constantly remaining within all the things having been and standing written within the scroll of the Law [= Torah], in order to do them."** [Deut. 27:26]

Their behavior was just the opposite of their call, "to be a light of and for the nations" (Isa. 42:6; 49:6). Campbell's reading of this passage does not apply these verses to the members of the

Roman community, but rather as a part of the Judaizers' teaching that he is predicting will soon come to Paul's listeners there via these misguided Christian missionaries.

**25. Now you see, circumcision, indeed, continues being beneficial** (continues to profit, to help), **if you should continue practicing** (or: observing) **[the] Law** (= Torah). **But if you should be a transgressor** (side-stepper; violator) **of [the] Law, your circumcision** (cutting around) **has become uncircumcision** (literally: the foreskin).

Paul gives a softer approach to these folks whom he has never met, than he did to the communities that he

established in Galatia. We, however, have the benefit of seeing how he really felt about Torah-keeping. Dodd has pointed out (ibid p 40) that he is still speaking in terms of the Law and the old covenant as he addresses this interlocutor, and not from the perspective of Christ and the new arrangement. We might paraphrase him as saying, "OK, then, if you think you can rightly practice Torah-keeping, have at it. But if you fail and break some commandment, you have in effect cancelled-out your circumcision (a figure Paul uses to stand for Torah-keeping)."

The imagery of circumcision, here and

through vs. 29 where he asserts "circumcision [is] of [the] heart (= core of our being)," has its roots in Lev. 26:41 where it speaks of "their uncircumcised hearts" and in Deut. 10:16,

"Hence you will circumcise the foreskin of your heart..." (CVOT).

In Gal. 5:3 he told them that if they got circumcised (the identity marker of a Torah-keeper), that they were under obligation to keep the entirety of the Law. So it may well be that the first statement of this verse comes from the mouth of the Judaizer (for it can be read as an endorsement of Torah-keeping), and then the second statement is Paul's

response to his interlocutor.

Here again, if we read this verse as a rhetorical discussion, the first statement would reflect the position of the Judaizing teacher, while the second statement would be Paul's answer to him.

**26. Therefore, if the Uncircumcision (= non-Jews) should be habitually on watch to guard (have in keeping and maintain) the effects of justice and equity (the results of being pointed in the right direction; the fair and equitable dealings; the acts which result from what is right) of or from the Law (= customs from neighbor-based equity), will not his uncircumcision continue to be**

**logically considered and accounted**  
(reckoned; calculated) **into circumcision**  
(or: credited to his account for  
circumcision)?

The term **Uncircumcision** is a code word for the Gentiles within the covenant community, or to pagans (non-Jews) in general. His argument here parallels the argument about the “some Gentiles” who might keep the equitable conduct of the Law from their conscience and the natural law (vss. 14, 15, above) that was written in their hearts. What he says here is a view from the opposite position of vs. 25. Notice that the theme of all these examples continues to be ethics: conduct – the way

to walk the Path, following the Master, and continue pointed in the right direction (toward Christ). He is suggesting that the Gentiles of their community were "having in keeping and maintaining **the effects of justice and equity**," and the acts which result from having been "put to rights" in Christ – i.e., in the covenant community which is His body. It is NOT a discussion of how to be "in Christ" or how to be a member of the called-out community. It is an argument about behavior that is addressed to folks who are "in Christ" and who are members of the community. Paul's argument here is the same as in Galatians: don't drag the old covenant

with its Torah into the new covenant with its law of the Anointing (or: of Christ).

If we read Paul as still addressing the interlocutor, then his rhetoric is still arguing against the Judaizing position. Everyone in the Roman called-out community (both Jew and Gentile) was, by habit, **watching and guarding the effects of justice and equity – the results of having been pointed in the right direction (in Christ)**, so these Gentile Christians (the **Uncircumcision**) did not need to become observers of the Law. Their new ethic, in Christ, went beyond the ethics of the Law. They were the ethics of the Christ – the way of life

that is directed by the Anointing, not by the Torah.

**27. And so the Uncircumcision, out of natural instinct** (out of nature or native conditions; = naturally) **habitually bringing the law to its goal** (or: completing or fulfilling the Law), **will continue judging** (or: making a decision and a separation regarding) **you – the one [who] through Letter and Circumcision [are] a side-stepper** (a transgressor; a violator) **of [the] Law**, He is referencing vs. 14 and 15, again – the rhetorical device of restatement. I suggest, however, that here Paul is speaking of the new nature of Christ that has been implanted into the new creation

Gentiles of the community through the proclamation of Christ and the coming of the Spirit. He is also affirming that those who are Torah-keepers within the community, are, and will continue being **side-steppers** (transgressors; violators) **of [the] Law**, because of their adherence to the **Letter**, rather than to the imparted Spirit. This at the same time addresses the interlocutor (the **you** in this verse that is being judged). Reading this passage in both ways shows a two-pronged argument, by Paul, that addresses both the Judaizing teachers and any members of the Roman community that may be tempted to listen to them.

**28. for you see, the Jew is not the one in the visibly apparent or outwardly manifest** (or: For not he in the outward appearance is a Jew), **neither [is] circumcision that [which is] visibly apparent** (outwardly manifest) **in flesh** (= in body),

This must have flown in the face of the Jewish Christians in Rome, and would have been a scandal to the Pharisees who might have heard of this statement. This is central to Paul's teaching of Christ's "**creating The Two [Jew and Gentile] into One New [p46 & others: common] Humanity within the midst of, and in union with, Himself**" (Eph. 2:15). Outwardly, there was no change –

the physical races continue, though becoming more and more intermingled over time.

We have here in the second clause an echo of Israel's prophetic tradition in Jer. 4:4, "Circumcise yourselves to Yahweh, and remove the foreskin of your hearts..."

and Deut. 10:16 is similar. Deut. 30:6 connects this idea, but it is Yahweh that does it for them,

"And so, Yahweh your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed, so that you will love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you can live."

**29. but rather, a Jew [is] the one within the hidden [place] (or: [that which is] in the concealed [realm]) and circumcision [is] of [the] heart (= core of our being) – in union with Breath-effect (or: within [the] spirit; in attitude), not in letter – whose praise (applause; full recommendation; [note the play on words: Jew is a derivative of "Judah," which means "praise"]) [is] not from out of mankind (humanity), but rather from out of God.**

The key phrase of this verse is, "**in union with Breath-effect** (or: within [the] spirit; in attitude)." This is the identity-marker of those who are members of the covenant community,

people of the new creation, the second humanity. The new arrangement is union with God by being placed within Christ, and being joined to His Spirit, as Paul said in 1 Cor. 6:17,

**"Now the person continually joining himself (or: being habitually glued in intimate union; in himself being continuously welded) to (or: in; with) the Lord exists being one spirit (or: one Breath-effect)."**

And thus, it is as Paul instructs us in Phil. 3:3,

**"For you see, we ourselves are (exist being) The Circumcision: the people (or: those)**

**continuously rendering sacred service in a spirit of God (or: by God's Breath-effect; to God's Spirit; with God's breath)..."**



## Chapter 3

**1. What then [is] the advantage (the thing given by the surplus of abundance which results in pre-eminence, prerogative and superiority) of the Jew, or what [is] the furthering benefit of the circumcision?**

Either Paul anticipates this question to arise in the minds of both the Jews and the Gentiles who are listening to this letter being read, or more likely, he puts this into the mouth of his interlocutor in order to make the points that follow in this imaginary dialogue.

**2. Much, in accord with every turn** (i.e., from every angle, or, in every

way), **for first [of all]** (or: in the first place; foremost; mainly), **indeed, that they were** (or: are) **entrusted with God's brief utterances** (little words; [note: the diminutive of Logos; often translated: "oracles"]).

Wright emphasizes the word **entrusted** here. **God's brief utterances** were given to Israel both to be lived out, for its own benefit, and then to reflect them to the nations among whom they lived. Isa. 42:6-7 gives us one picture of this, to be fulfilled via His Chosen Servant,

"I, Yahweh, I called you in righteousness, and I have taken you by the hand and I have kept you; I have given you as a

covenant to the People, a light to the nations (Gentiles), to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness."

Paul may have had this passage in mind, as a common word view of the Jews, when he created the interlocutor's self-image in 2:19-20, above.

In other words, they were **entrusted** with the Scriptures so that they could pass God's Word on to the Gentiles – those who were blind, imprisoned by Adam's disobedience, and in darkness, having no light of the Truth. The promise made to Abraham was not to just

culminate in Israel, but included all the nations. Israel was the historical conduit, and was a part of the "many nations" that were to be blessed through Abraham's Seed (Gal. 3:16), and now they were all included in that Seed. Also, the Light (Christ) was to come through and to the Jews.

Paul gives a further answer in 9:4-5, below, to the question posed in vs. 1, above, but he keeps the dialogue here moving quickly to make his immediate points.

**3. For what if certain ones refuse** (or: if some at one point refused) **to believe** (or: disbelieved; are unfaithful or

disloyal; were without faith; are faithless)? **Will not their unbelief** (faithlessness; lack of trust; disloyalty) **proceed in causing God's faithfulness** (or: trustworthiness; loyalty; trust; faith) **to be idled-down** (rendered useless and unproductive)?

Paul has his interlocutor question whether God's intents and purposes will proceed as planned, considering the unbelief, lack of trust, faithlessness or disloyalty of the Jewish leadership (which represented Israel). This rhetorical question expects a negative answer, which Paul emphatically supplies in the next verse. Even if the agent (Israel) failed in part of its

mission (remember, they DID keep God's brief utterances recorded, so that mankind continued in possession of them), it would not **idle-down**, render useless and unproductive, **God's faithfulness**.

"The faithfulness meant here is that to the promises made to Abraham, to whom it was said that *in your seed all the nations will be blessed*" (Pelagius's Commentary on Romans, *Ancient Christian Commentary on scripture*, New Testament, Vol. 6, Intervarsity Press, 1998, p 83; emphasis original).

4. **Certainly not!** (May it not come to

be!; "Heaven" forbid!) **Now God must repeatedly come to be true** (or: let God continually be birthed genuine and real), **though every human [be] a liar – even as it has been written:**

**"So that You should be justified** (seen as fair and equitable – in accord with the way pointed out) **within Your words** (or: sayings), **and You will repeatedly overcome** (conquer) **within the [situation or time for] You to be periodically judged and decided about** (or: You will be winning the case when You are tried)."

[Ps. 51:4 & 6]

Paul affirms the trustworthiness of God

and His faithfulness to His promises. Humans cannot always be trusted, but God can, and the Torah is a revelation of God in His dealings with people at that time. Even though circumstances may appear to contradict His promises, God is true to His Word and does not lie.

The verb **repeatedly come to be** (continually be birthed) is in the imperative, and corresponds to Paul's "**Certainly not!**" that just exploded from him. But he is using this verb figuratively, from the point of view of human assessment of God's faithfulness.

The *New World Translation* expresses this idea by paraphrasing the verb as "be found," correlating it to the OT quote

that immediately follows.

The psalm briefly brings up the theodicy issue, for humanity periodically wants to "put God on trial," and **judge** Him, for one reason or another. The Gentiles of the audience could also reach the wrong conclusion about "Israel's God," unless they received the revelation of His faithfulness to His promises in Israel's representative, Jesus, the Messiah – through whom ALL the promises have been fulfilled.

This is just the beginning of Paul's grounding his argument in the Psalms, and other OT passages. His main point, here, is seen in the last phrase of Ps. 51:4 – we can count on God; He is

reliable and will always be ultimately found as having been faithful to Himself (i.e., His Word), and to humanity.

**5. However (or: But; Now) if our injustice** (disregard for what is right; behavior contrary to the Way pointed out) **continues to stand together with** (is jointly establishing; habitually commends) **God's solidarity in fair and equitable dealings** ([covenantal] justice; Way pointed out; rightwised direction), **what shall we continue saying** (or: declaring)?

**God, the One continuously bringing the personal emotion** (inherent fervor; impulse; or: wrath; anger; indignation), **[is] not unjust!** – **after the manner of a**

**man** (down from [my] humanity) **I am now laying this out**

(or: [Is] not God, the One repeatedly bringing on the personal emotion against mankind or anger in correspondence to humanity, unjust? I proceed saying this from a human perspective; or: God [is] not unfair by being the one constantly bringing this inherent fervor and impulse against a person, is He? I am presently speaking on the level of humanity)!

Paul now has his imaginary objector raise a possible (as seen in the slanderous objection given in the quote

in vs. 8, below), though false, conclusion about the interplay of human **injustice** and **God's justice**. His argument continues fielding all questions about the effects of the message of Christ which he is proclaiming.

God's justice, His **solidarity in fair and equitable dealings** with humanity does indeed **continuously bring His personal emotion**, His inherent fervor, His impulse, as well as, at times, His indignation, anger and even wrath, all of which are aligned with the Way that He has pointed out to humans, and all these move in a rightwised direction: toward Him.

The alternate understandings of the

Greek in the second half of this verse are here on offer. The first, in the bold rendering, emphatically affirms that **God [is] not unjust!** The second renders this as part two of the interlocutor's posed question: "[Is] not God... unjust?" This would be his interlocutor speaking, and here I have rendered the *kata* phrase, "against mankind," where in the bold it is, "**after the manner of a man.**" The third option is another affirmation that it could not occur that God would be unjust by bringing this fervor against a person – fervor is part of the arrangement laid out in the covenants, and is often involved in His "righting" the world. Following Paul's line of

reasoning, I think that the first and third renderings (the positive statements) reflect what Paul is saying, and thus this would be his own response to his imaginary Jewish Christian in this ongoing dialogue.

But how does God bring this to mankind? In Israel's story we see that He used nature (famine, pestilence, etc.), leanness into their souls (Ps. 106:15), and most often raiding or conquering nations that lived within reach of them. We can see from what Paul has described, above, that He also gave them over to their own impulses, cravings and deviations that had brought about their own **injustice**.

I want to point out the present tense of the verb which indicates that God does not wait forever, or wait until the next life or some future existence to invoke His **solidarity** with justice. He is **the One CONTINUOUSLY bringing** correction to humanity – through many different means.

6. **Certainly not** (May it not come to be)! **Else** (or: Otherwise), **how is God constantly making decisions about and repeatedly judging** (or, as a future: how will God continue separating, evaluating and judging) **the ordered System** (controlling world of society, economy, government and religion; human aggregate)?

Paul continues his side of the dialogue and gives this logic to support his emphatic denial of the suggestion of there being injustice in God's actions. Reading *krinei* (**making decisions; judging**) as either a present tense or a future (only an accent mark makes the difference, and the earliest MSS had no accent marks) makes little difference, for both tenses are durative as to type of action. But note how this plainly instructs us that **God [is] constantly making decisions about and repeatedly judging** the world – and will CONTINUE doing so in the future. How have we missed this and put all God's corrective measures as being

beyond normal human existence? And likewise why should we read Paul's argument, here, in this manner? These are rhetorical questions that I am asking – and the proper response to the second one is: We should not!

**7. But [other MSS: For] if in the result of my lie (or: falsehood-effect) God's truth and reality encircles (or: surrounds) for superabundance into His glory (or: [leading] unto His enhanced reputation and a manifestation which calls forth praise), why am I also still being continually separated (judged; evaluated) as one failing to hit the target (as a sinner or an outcast)?**  
The interlocutor responds with this

question to Paul. Paul has him admitting that he is continually evaluated as being one who fails to fully keep the Law. The idea of the **lie** echoes back to vs. 4 and Paul's arguments there. But Paul also has him admitting that, nonetheless, **God's truth and reality encircles** (or: surrounds) **for superabundance into His glory** (or: [leading] unto His enhanced reputation and a manifestation which calls forth praise). This calls to mind Ps. 76:10, "For the wrath (fury; heat) of humanity shall praise and acclaim You."

**8. Now [it is] not according as we are constantly being slandered** (abusively spoken of so as to hinder the Light) **and**

**according as certain folks – of whom the result of the judgment (or: whose evaluation-effect and separation) is fair (equitable; in accord with justice) – habitually affirm us to be continually saying, "We should constantly be doing (or: producing) the bad things (the ugly, worthless and evil things) so that the good things may come [of it]!"**

Paul responds, countering what **certain folks** are **slanderously** saying about what Paul and his co-workers are teaching. Paul, the slave of God, did not embrace the foolishness of such human logic that advocated license. Paul's comment about these **certain folks**

shows that he believes that these people are now experiencing the **result of the fair and equitable judgment** that is presently abiding upon them – the effects of their slander.

From what Paul has just said, Campbell observes of Paul,

"... his posture toward these figures is the same as it is in 16:17-20; they are enemies, fighting for the other side. Paul is apparently being accused by these figures of libertinism. And libertines in the ancient world were figures who could not control their own appetites; *they were slaves to their bellies!*"

(ibid p 500; emphasis his; *cf*  
16:18, below; Phil. 3:19).

**9. What, then (or: therefore)? Do we continue holding an advantage** (habitually have something ahead; or, as a passive: are we continually surpassed)? **Not at all** (or: Not entirely), **for we already charged** (previously accused) **all mankind, both Jews and Greeks** (or: Hellenists), **to be** (to continuously exist) **under [the direction, power and control, or result, of] failure** (the missing of the target by falling short or shooting astray through lack of skill and ability or by distraction; or: error; a mistake; sin), His interlocutor asks another question

regarding the Jews yet having an advantage, and Paul responds with an inclusive, leveling statement that takes in **all mankind: both Jews and Greeks** (or: Hellenists), **[that are already charged] to be** (to continuously exist) **under [the direction, power and control, or result, of] failure** (etc.). All has changed. The Jews once held an advantage (vs. 2, above), but there is now a new creation. The old has passed; the new has come into being (2 Cor. 5:17). Now both Jews and Greeks (which describes all humanity) stand together as the "one new humanity" (Eph. 2:15).

Stern argues for translating Paul's

answer (*ou pantos*) to the rhetorical questions as, "Not entirely," and cites C.E.B. Cranfield as rendering it "Not altogether" (Stern, *ibid* p 342), based partially upon what Paul had just said in vs. 2, above. Which way is correct depends upon the perspective one draws from Paul's arguments here. All of these examples are grammatically correct. In vss. 10-18, Paul now gives a foundation for what he has just said by quoting to this rhetorical Jewish Christian all these verses from the Jew's own Scriptures:

**10. according as it has been, and stands, written, "There is not a just man (there is none fair or in**

right relationship; or: No one exists being in accord with the Way pointed out), **not even one!**

11. **"The one understanding does not exist** (or: There is no man bringing it together to understand)! **The one habitually seeking God does not exist** (or: There is none continually looking for or repeatedly searching-out God).
12. **"All bend out of the regular line** (turn aside; or: avoid [God]), **[and] at the same time they are made useless; there is no one habitually doing useful kindness** (or: kind usefulness); **there is not as much as one.** [Ps. 14:1-3; 53:1-3]

13. **"Their throat [is] an opened grave; by their tongues they were consistently baiting for entrapment (or: to deceive); [Ps. 5:9] venom of asps (vipers) [is] under their lips, [Ps. 140:3]**
14. **"whose mouth constantly is crammed full of a wishful curse and of bitterness. [Ps. 10:7]**
15. **"Their feet [are] swift (or: sharp) to pour out blood.**
16. **"The results of crushing (bruising; shattering) and misery (wretchedness) [are] in their paths (or: ways),**
17. **"and the road of peace (path or way of shalom) they do not**

**experience** (intimately know).

[Isa. 59:7-8; Prov. 1:16]

18. **"There is no fear of or respect for God before (in front of) their eyes."** [Ps. 36:1]

Having listed all this OT support, Paul now concludes this argument with his interlocutor, by speaking first about the Jews that are under the Law (vs. 19) but including the Gentiles in vs. 20 (**no flesh**).

19. **But we know from having seen that whatever the Law ([Torah]; or: custom) continues saying, it continues speaking to and for those within the Law (or: custom) – to the end that every mouth may be shut (fenced in;**

hedged around; stopped; barred; silenced)! **And then all the world** (ordered System of religion, culture, economy, and government; or: secular society; or: = all humanity) **can come to be "under fair and equitable dealings," in God** (or: would become subject to a just decision and a pointing out of the Way, by God; or: should come to be liable to God, "under what is right"; or: may be brought to a just trial with God).

The OT is Israel's story, and the Law was inserted to make them a nation of twelve tribes. It was never for the ethnic multitudes (or, Gentiles). **The Law**, together with their customs, **continues**

**speaking TO and FOR those within the Law**, i.e., the Jews. It is not to or for the Gentiles. The **mouths** that are to be "fenced in, hedged around, stopped, barred, silenced and **shut**" are those of the Jews who would wish to shine a dim old covenant light from the Torah, or be a guide to the blind. But,

**"The True and Genuine Light ... is continuously and progressively enlightening (giving light to) every person (or: human) continuously (repeatedly; progressively; constantly; one after another) coming into the world (or: the ordered system of culture, religion, economics and**

government; or: the universe)" –  
John 1:9.

It was to the Pharisees that Jesus referred, when He said,

**"Abandon them at once!** (other choices: Divorce them; Let them flow away; Leave them; Leave them [alone]; Send them away; Let them go!) **They exist being blind guides of the Path** (or: blind leaders of the Way). **Now if a blind person should ever lead or guide [another] blind person, both people will proceed to be falling into a pit!"** (Mat. 15:14)

This happened at the cross, when Israel was buried with their representative

Head, the Messiah. With this being "finished," it became true, "**And then ALL the world** (ordered System of religion, culture, economy, and government; or: secular society; or: = all humanity) **can come to be 'under fair and equitable dealings,' in God.**" And so it is.

I have on offer three other renderings of this last clause:

- a) would become subject to a just decision and a pointing out of the Way, by God
- b) should come to be liable to God, "under what is right"
- c) may be brought to a just trial with God.

The first, bold rendering speaks of the whole world, the aggregate of humanity, being included in God's new covenant. With a), we have God's decision to make a new creation and a second humanity, with Jesus as the new Adam, and Christ now as the Way, the Truth and the Life, instead of the Torah having that role. With b) we have the whole world **"no longer continuously existing being strangers (foreigners) and sojourners (temporary residents in a foreign land), but continually existing being fellow-citizens (folks residing together in a City) of those set apart: even God's family (members of God's household) – Eph. 2:19 – in a creation that has been**

set right. With c) we have the metaphor of God awarding liberty to the captives, moving Christ's disciples (His sheep) into the eonian inheritance (which was later recorded in the book of Acts), and assigning corrective treatment for those in need of His purifying fires in His **fair and equitable dealings** with them, as we see that Christ did, historically (AD 70), and as described in the prophetic parable of the sheep and the kids in Mat. 25.

Each of these renderings presents the new situation (or, new covenant arrangement in the new creation), with each translation giving a different aspect of the result of God's eschatological

deliverance through the Christ event.

**20. On account of that** (or:

Wherefore), **no flesh** (= person) **[at] all will proceed to be rescued or put right** (be rightwised or turned in the right direction; or: be considered justified; be freed from guilt and placed in the covenantal Way pointed out) **before Him** (in His sight; face to face with Him in His presence; *corem Deo*) **from out of works of Law** (or: deeds or accomplishments springing from Law; performance of Laws' cultus; or: observance of custom or Torah), **for you see, through Law [comes] a full, clear, exact, added and experience-gained knowledge of sin** (or: from failure;

having the character of a missing of the target; which is deviation and error). Because of what Paul just stated in the last half of vs. 19, **no flesh** (neither Jew nor Gentile) **will proceed to be rescued or put right** (be rightwised or turned in the right direction; or: be considered justified; be freed from guilt and placed in the covenantal Way pointed out) **from out of works of Law**. The **all** in vs. 19 corresponds and equates to the **all** in this verse. Paul has used a modified form of Ps. 143:2b (142:2b, LXX) to inform his argument:

"... because no one living will proceed to be rescued or put right (be rightwised or turned in the

right direction; or: be considered justified; be freed from guilt and placed in the covenantal Way pointed out) before You (or: in Your sight)." (JM)

This shuts the mouth of the Jews, in general, as well as the Jewish Christians in the covenant community in Rome who wish to be Torah-keepers. The phrase **works of Law** includes deeds or accomplishments springing from Law, the performance of Laws' cultus, or, observance of custom or Torah. There are only "works by the Spirit, and living one's life in the Spirit" in the new arrangement. The absence of the definite article before the noun, **Law**, leaves the

application of this phrase open. But in Paul's day, Torah-observance was the central meaning.

Verse 19 put **all** the world "**under fair and equitable dealings, in God,**" and now here Paul put everyone **before Him**, in His sight, face to face with Him in His presence. The Law has no place in any of this – it is a new arrangement. Paul's leveling of Jew and Gentile has become complete. The Law had its place and its job, and it did it well. In 5:20 Paul reveals that one of its jobs was to make sin increase to be more than enough. And it gave folks quite a full, clear, exact, added and experience-gained knowledge of sin and from

failure. The Way pointed out and being turned in the right direction (*dikaiosune*) are joined with resurrection life in Ps. 143:11 (142:11, LXX, JM),

"For the sake of Your Name, O Lord (Owner), you will proceed in making me alive (or: give life to me) in union with Your Way pointed-out (in Your righteousness and justice; centered in Your covenantal solidarity and fairness); You will proceed in bringing my soul/life out from the midst of affliction (squeezing pressure and compressed distress)."

This affirmation is based upon the

psalmist's understanding of God's goodness and fairness, and expresses a trust that Yahweh will bring the needed deliverance. Campbell (ibid p 698) observes that there is no mention of a requirement of the psalmist's personal piety or godliness in order for God to do this. Rather, it is based upon God's character that is revealed in His Name. The point is not that the Law was bad or that obedience to Torah did not involve faith and trust. The point is that God has brought in a new age: the age of the Messiah, and that the world is set to right, turned in the right direction, placed in the Way pointed out by way of the faithfulness of the Messiah, not by

obedient observance of the Torah. It is a new arrangement (or, covenant) in which a new humanity is joined in Spirit to the Messiah, and membership within Him is now the definition of membership in God's new covenant involving the one new humanity where Jew and Gentile have been joined together in the resurrected, cosmic Christ.

In the explanation to Messianic Jews concerning what has happened in the Christ event, the writer of Hebrews characterizes Jesus the Messiah as a Priest of a new order, quoting Ps. 110:4,

**"You [are] a Priest on into the midst of the Age, according to (down from) the station (order;**

placement; arranging; succession)  
**of Melchizedek**" (Heb. 7:17).

In Heb. 7:12 we are instructed,

**"For it follows that with the  
priesthood being presently  
place-changed** (or: progressively  
after-placed and transferred), **out  
of necessity** (or: compulsion)  
**even a change of law** [= Torah] **is  
being born** (or: also an after-  
placement transference of custom  
is coming into existence)."

Furthermore, this same letter explains  
that the old cultus was, "**a shadow of  
the folks upon the heavens**," or, "of  
[things or situations] from the One  
[resident] upon the atmosphere" (Heb.

8:5). And so now we have,

**"a superior (stronger and better) arrangement (covenant; settlement; disposition) which has been instituted (set by custom; legally [= by/as Torah] established) upon superior (stronger and better) promises!"**  
(Heb. 8:6b).

Now because, **"a place of a second one [was] sought"** (Heb. 8:7),

**"He has made the first (or: former) 'old,' and that [which is] progressively growing old and obsolete (failing of age; ageing into decay), [is] near its disappearing (vanishing away)"**

(Heb. 8:13).

And this is the existing situation from which Paul is making his arguments here, to the Romans.

Witherington sees the remainder of this chapter as a recapitulation and an expansion of what Paul has just proposed, above. Wright sees a change in the mood here, and suggests that vs. 21 "begins a whole new section of the letter" (ibid p 51). Harvey suggests, "There is now (this is Paul's 'Gospel') a new answer worked out **independently of law**, yet, (as will be shown in ch. 4) consistent with the scriptures" (ibid p 510; parentheses his).

21. **Yet now, apart from Law** (or:

custom; habitual practice; ordinance made by authority; or: = Torah), a **righteousness of God** (God's just action of eschatological deliverance; God's solidarity, with moral integrity in fair and equitable dealings; a turning in the right direction that comes from God; God's covenantal faithfulness, justice and pointing out of the Way; a rightwisenedness and right relationship, which is God) **has been manifested and remains displayed in clear light – being continuously attested in witness by means of (or: under) the Law (= Torah) and the Prophets –** The Christ event (the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah) is

**“God’s righteousness” – a just action of eschatological deliverance** that has been set for the world to see. The death came through Roman hands, but because of the Jewish Law. However, the resurrection was **“apart from Law.”** So now everyone exists apart from the Law since the advent of God's new arrangement that stemmed from Christ’s resurrection, bringing His new Way that has been pointed out: solidarity in a covenant of His faithfulness which brings moral integrity in fair and equitable (rightwised) dealings, and which turns us in the right direction through union with, and existence in, the Messiah, who **has been manifested and**

**remains displayed in clear light**, and He continues being attested by the witness of the Law and the Prophets. Covenant membership is now **apart from Law**. God's justice answered theodicy from out of fulfillment (in and through Christ) of the promises made to Abraham. God's solidarity with humanity is now **apart from Law**. The act of being turned in the right direction comes from God, not from works of Law. From the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC Jewish writing, *Jubilees*, we see a parallelism between "righteousness" and "grace":

31:25. And Isaac blessed the God of his father, Abraham, who did not withhold his MERCY and his

RIGHTEOUSNESS from the son of his servant Isaac..

45:3 ... the God of Isaac, who did not withhold his MERCY and his GRACE (or: kindness) from his servant Jacob. [note: I owe this connection to E.P. Sanders]

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, IQS 11:12, we read:

"As for me, if I stumble, the mercies (loving-kindness) of God shall forever save me... my justification (*mishpat*) will be by the righteousness of God which endures for all time."

Commenting on the phrase **righteousness of God** here, Karl Barth

says,

"To unbelief, His righteousness is necessarily manifested as divine negation.... through the compulsion by which He drives men helplessly on to the barrier which hems them in

... In this negation God affirms Himself and pronounces His claim upon men..." (*The Epistle to the Romans*, Oxford University Press, 1968, p 93).

In the OT we see many examples of God's "negation" upon Israel, as when He sends them into exile. In the NT we read,

**"Yet the person now continuing**

**being unpersuaded by the Son** (or: presently being constantly in-compliant, disobedient or disbelieving to the Son; being repeatedly stubborn toward the Son) **will not be catching sight of** (seeing; observing; perceiving) **[this] life.**

**To the contrary, God's personal emotion and inherent fervor** (teeming passion and swelling desire; mental bent and natural impulse; propensity and disposition; or: anger, wrath and indignation) **is continuously remaining** (is now habitually dwelling and abiding) **upon him"**

(John 3:36b).

This is a current and ongoing situation for people described in this verse. It is part of God's dealings with humans, "driv[ing] men helplessly on to the barrier [i.e., God Himself] which hems them in" (Barth, *ibid*; brackets mine). It is the negative side of His faithfulness – a most necessary part of the Way pointed out.

**22. yet a righteousness of God** (or: a right relationship and solidarity with and which is God; justice from God; God's fair and equitable dealings in accord with the Way pointed out; a rightwised condition effected by God; God' eschatological deliverance which brings

covenant inclusion/participation)  
**through Jesus Christ's faithfulness**  
(or: faith-trust; convinced loyalty) **unto**  
**all humanity – as well as upon and**  
**unto all those presently believing** (or:  
habitually trusting [in God]), **for you**  
**see, there exists no distinction** (no  
difference; no divided arrangement)!

Paul goes on to make it crystal clear that  
this **righteousness of God** (along with  
the other renderings) was **through Jesus**  
**Christ's faithfulness unto all humanity**  
**– as well as upon and unto all those**  
**believing**. Here, in the last phrase, the  
MSS vary, so I conflated the renderings  
that they offer. But note how the sentence  
continues: **for you see, there exists no**

**distinction** – there is no difference or divided arrangement between all humanity and those who are presently believing. As Paul said in 1 Tim. 4:10, "**... because we have placed our expectation** (or: set our hope) **and thus rely upon a living God** (or: upon [the] living God), **Who is** (exists being) **[the] Savior** (Deliverer; Rescuer; Restorer to health and wholeness) **of ALL human beings** (all mankind) – **especially of believers** (of folks full of faith and trust; of faithful ones)!"

On the last clause, Barth says, "Paul... is able, in Jesus, also to perceive the

divine breaking down of all human distinctions..." (ibid p 100). In the phrase, "**unto all humanity**," we can see Paul's universal scope: the work of the crucified Messiah does not apply just to Israel, but to the Gentiles, as well. (Cf 10:12-13, below, where we again see that there is "**no distinction**") Campbell points out,

“[I]t is no longer necessary to place the question of inclusion in a voluntarist setting...” (ibid p 616)

But before moving on, I want to highlight the nuanced alternate meanings of a **righteousness of God**:

a) a right relationship and

solidarity with, and which is  
(genitive of apposition), God  
b) justice from (as an ablative)  
God

c) God's fair and equitable  
dealings (with humanity) [that are]  
in accord with the Way pointed  
out [in Christ]

d) a rightwised condition effected  
by God

e) God' eschatological  
deliverance which brings  
covenant inclusion/participation.

Indeed, good news! Dodd observes, "In  
verses 21-22 we have a full and careful  
re-statement of the thesis of 1:17" (ibid  
p 49). Campbell makes an insightful

comment in regard to the faith/belief terminology of this passage (and indeed in the entire letter) that it:

“is never said explicitly to function as the criterion for Christian salvation – because it is not functioning in that way (i.e., as Justification theory defines it). Certainly, *pistiV* [faith/belief] *marks* those who are currently being saved by virtue of their incorporation into Christ, but it is not necessarily functioning beyond this as the key action that individuals must exercise in order to *appropriate* salvation” (ibid p 712; emphasis his; brackets mine).

**23. You see, all people at one point veered off the mark (or: all folks deviated; or: everyone fails; all humanity sins), and so they are continually posterior to, falling short of, inferior to and wanting of, God's glory (of a manifestation of God which calls forth praise; of a reputation which comes from, and has the character of, God; of God's opinion and imagination; of [having] an appearance of God; of the glory from God),**

Paul's statement is grounded in the OT,

"There is no human who does not sin (miss the goal; make mistakes; err)" (1 Ki. 8:46).

"For there is no righteous human

in the earth who does good and never sins" (Ecc. 7:20).

He also instructs us in Gal. 3:22,

**"the Scripture encircles and encloses [as fish in a net] all things, shuts them up together and locks the whole (the totality of everything) under (or: by) failure (error; deviation; the missing of the target; sin)."**

There is no difference: Jews and Gentiles, alike, deviated. **All people at one point veered off the mark**, or (the verb is in the aorist tense), everyone fails – all humanity sins. This is the ontological condition brought on by Adam's disobedience (see 5:12, below).

Because of this, both Jews and Gentiles **are continually posterior to, falling short of, inferior to and wanting of – God's glory.** Apart from inclusion in the risen Christ, humanity – due to the offense of the one, Adam (5:10ff, below) – fails in its prime destiny: to bear God's image (Gen. 1:26). It describes a universal ontology, Witherington (ibid p 102) says, "Later rabbinic discussion talked about how Adam had such glory but lost it, but we find the notion already in 3 Baruch 4:16," which dates as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> century:

"They know, Baruch, that just as Adam through this tree was

condemned and was stripped of the glory of God..." (*The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1, *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1983, p 663, translated by H.E. Gaylord, Jr., Greek MS)

He quotes a similar statement from *Apocalypse of Moses* 21:6, and suggests that this reference "may prepare for the discussion of Adam" in chapters 5-7, below. Paul had earlier written to Corinth that we,

**"... continuously observing, as ourselves, the Lord's [= Yahweh's or Christ's] glory (or:**

being those who progressively reflect – from ourselves as by a mirror – the glory of [our] Owner), **are presently being continuously and progressively transformed into the very same image, from glory into glory – in accord with and exactly as – from [the] Lord's Breath-effect (or: from [the] Spirit and Attitude of [the] Lord [= Christ or Yahweh])." – 2 Cor. 3:18**

**Glory** (*doxa*) has a wide semantic range. The prepositional phrase can also be rendered:

a) of a manifestation of God which calls forth praise

b) of a reputation which comes from, and has the character of, God

c) of God's opinion and imagination

d) of [having] an appearance of God

e) of the glory from God.

Dodd suggests that the phrase "come short of the glory of God" is the central meaning of sin [or, failure] (ibid p 50; brackets mine).

**24. while being folks presently and progressively being made right, freed from guilt, placed in solidarity within the Way pointed out, and continuously set in right relationship (or: being [all])**

one-after-another rightwised; being ones habitually turned in the right direction; being [all] presently justified [by covenant inclusion]) **freely** (as a gift; gratuitously) **by His grace** (or: in His joyous favor; with His grace; to His favor) **through means of the process of a release-from-an-enslaved-condition and a liberating-away-from-imprisonment, which is resident within Christ Jesus** (or: by the setting-free which is centered in [the] Anointed Jesus; or: through the redemption that is union with Jesus [the] Messiah), This verse begins with a present participle, and is a continuation of the previous verse. This means that the

people described in vs. 23 are the subject of the first clause of vs. 24. People that **veered off the mark, deviated** (and thus became "deviants"), **sin, and lack God's glory are presently and progressively being made right – are being freed from any sense or reality of guilt – are being placed in solidarity with God within the Way (Christ) that has been pointed out through the proclamation of God's message of goodness, ease and well-being** (which is inherent in Christ) and **are continuously set in right relationship** with other people, as well as with God. Let us consider other ways to express this wonderful existence:

- a) being [all] one-after-another (i.e., existentially) rightwised
- b) being folks habitually turned in the right direction (pointed toward Christ)
- c) being [all] presently justified [by covenant inclusion from eschatological deliverance].

Drink deeply of this precious word that is usually simply rendered "justified" – made just, by being placed into the Just One. “Christians possess ‘faith’ because they participate in the faithful Christ...” (Campbell, *ibid* p 618) It was pictured by Jesus when He spoke of the branch dwelling, or abiding, in the Vine. The **process of release** comes as the sap

(figure of the Spirit – H. B. Mitchell) flows from the Vine and into the branches.

I have used the term "rightwised" (which means "turned in the right direction") at the suggestion of Rudolf Bultmann (*Theology of the NT*, Vol. 1, p 253).

And this God has done to us **freely**, as a gift. But not a gift to be taken or received; no, it was a gift **of the process of release from an enslaved condition and liberating-away from imprisonment** (redemption; setting-free). I owe the concept of this being a **process** to Campbell (ibid p 657). It speaks of Christ's work effecting the release of humanity from its prior

predicament of enslavement to sin (6:16, 18, below). Paul's expressing the work of the Messiah as "the setting-free" is an echo of Israel's story of the exodus from Egypt. Christ's giving of His life to us by His sprinkling our hearts with His blood (Heb. 10:22) is due to the fact that His life-and-soul was in His blood (Lev. 17:14). Dodd points out that *apolytrosis*, the "act of redeeming," is the equivalent of emancipation (ibid p 53).

This was done **BY [God's] grace**; it was done **IN His joyous favor**; it was done **WITH His grace**; and it brought us **TO His favor**. All these renderings represent the potential functions of the dative form of *charis* (grace; favor)

within the context of this verse. Grace was the instrument and the accompaniment of Christ's work, and joyous favor was the destiny to which He brought us. Campbell points out the rhetorical redundancy that Paul uses in emphasizing "the gratuity of the process" (ibid p 664) that is expressed in "**freely** (as a gift; gratuitously) **by His grace.**" It was all done to us, for us and in us **through means of** the releasing-away **that is centered in the Anointed Jesus.** All the work of the cross, though acted-upon by humans by crucifying Jesus, was done by the life that is resident within Him. No one but God was involved in our liberation and our cleansing

atonement – except we humans who lacked His glory, on whom and unto whom God's work, in Christ (2 Cor. 5:19), was performed. This is what Paul meant, in this same verse to Corinth, saying that God was,

**"in Himself, to Himself, for Himself and by Himself, not accounting to them (not putting to their account; not logically considering for them; not reasoning in them) the results and effects of their falls to the side (their trespasses and offenses)..."**

**25. Whom God publicly set and places before [us] (or: before put-forth; purposed) [as] a sheltering, cleansing**

**covering** (lit.: mercy seat, the lid of the ark; = act of atonement) **through the faithfulness** (or: the trust, faith and that loyalty) **resident within His blood – into a demonstration which points out the proof of His solidarity by the rightwising deliverance** (or: His fairness in covenantal, relational rightness, and His just act which accords with the Way pointed out), **through** (or: on account of and because of) **the letting flow-aside, and the releasing-to-the-side, of the effects of errors** (or: the deliverance from the results of sinful acts or offenses against the Law, and the divorcing from the effects of mistakes) **having previously occurred**

(being ones having been before brought into being) **during the midst of the holding-back and support from God –**

For a study on the concept of ATONEMENT, see my article, under this title, at the end of these comments on Romans. Dodd points out that the only sense in which the LXX uses the verb is "to perform an act whereby guilt or defilement is REMOVED.... acts... felt to have the value, so to speak, of a DISINFECTANT. Thus in the OT a whole range of ritual actions are prescribed for disinfecting the priest, the altar, or the people from various forms of defilement, ritual or moral" (ibid

p 54; emphasis mine).

By mentioning **His blood**, Paul is accessing the sacrificial cultus of Israel, especially referencing the story of God's covenant with Noah, instructing him that the life/soul of the flesh **is** the blood (Gen. 9:4; cf Lev. 17:11; Deut. 12:23). In the redemption of the slaves (Israel) from Egypt, it was the blood of the Lamb that protected each home's first-born (typifying Israel as a whole, God's firstborn – Ex. 4:22). Campbell (ibid p 1099 n 4) points us to where we see the elements of the merciful, cleansing covering (*hilasterion*) and the blood, in 4 Macc. 17:20-22,

"... through them... the homeland

was purified – [their] having become, as it were, an [atoning] life-instead-of (or: an in-place-of-a-life; or: a living in the opposing position) from the failure (mistake; deviation; sin) of the Nation – and so through the blood of these pious folks and [through] the sheltering, cleansing cover from (or: of; which is) their death, the Divine minding-beforehand (provident care; provision; forethought) brought Israel safely through (or: thoroughly saved and preserved Israel) from the aforetime affliction." (LXX, JM)

Note the perceived element of

purification in this story. Having been set-apart (sanctified) by God, the sacrifice of their lives brought a cleansing covering (and Campbell sees *hilasterion* as an "event" in this passage – *ibid* p 1100 n 11) to Israel which overcame their enemy. The dating of 4 Macc. ranges from mid-1<sup>st</sup> century, to early 2<sup>nd</sup> century, to even later.

Nonetheless, as Campbell rightly points out, it is likely "an interpretative trajectory that predated [Paul]" (*ibid* p 649; brackets mine).

Campbell sees an underlying "*martyrological narrative* at the center of this text's atonement terminology and its significance. Paul is alluding to the

story of Christ's passion... in terms of Christ's faithfulness and shed blood" (ibid p 647; emphasis his).

**God publicly placed Jesus** before the world as **a sheltering, cleansing covering**. The word that Paul uses literally meant the **mercy seat**, which was the lid of the ark – which became a covering over the tablets of the Law that were within the ark – where the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement (*cf* Heb. 9:1-28; 10:19-22). By using this one word, **mercy seat**, Paul may be encapsulating the entire significance of that day in Israel's cultic calendar: the cleansing of the entire nation of Israel, and the removal

its sin. The act of shedding His blood on the cross became our sheltering and our cleansing **through the FAITHFULNESS that is resident within His blood.** The antecedent of this thought is vs. 22, above, in Paul's phrase, "**through Jesus Christ's faithfulness**" (*cf* Eph. 3:12). Stern suggests that here "'blood' must be understood as a metaphor for 'death'" (*ibid* p 350), but it can also be seen as a symbol for His LIFE. This was God's **demonstration which points out the proof of His solidarity by the rightwising deliverance** of humanity, His fairness in covenantal, relational rightness, and His just act of moral

integrity which accords with the Way that Christ both embodied and showed to us.

This **fairness** on God's part in **letting flow-aside the effects of the errors** (etc.) which humanity had made in the past is showing that God is taking responsibility for the entire situation; the **proof** within the Christ event points to **God's rightwised solidarity** (etc.) with us. He effected **the releasing-to-the-side of the effects of errors**: the deliverance from the results of sinful acts or offenses against the Law (here again a reference to the Day of Atonement), and the divorcing [of us] from the effects of mistakes (and the

cross **demonstrates** this) because humanity belongs to Him and He set up the whole situation – by putting the death-producing tree in the Garden of Eden, by putting the wise serpent there to deceive innocent Eve when she was apparently alone, and then by making humanity to be estranged from the life of the Spirit in exiling everyone from the garden so that they would not have access to the "Tree of Life," which many interpret to be a type of Christ. So God takes all humanity's wrath upon Himself, and "bears it away, outside the camp." This is an act of fairness, equity, right relationship – and it points out the way, the path for us to take as we follow our

Master/Owner.

Here Campbell instructs us:

"We have already seen that the basic sense of the salvation obtained in Christ is one of release from slavery... a deeply incapacitated situation, enslaved to Sin and Death in Adam" (ibid p 671).

Sanders points out that in these previous verses Paul makes no mention of Judaism's emphasis on the subject of repentance which led to forgiveness, under the old covenant, suggesting that these "play virtually no role in [Paul's] thought. *They do not respond to the real plight of man*" (ibid p 499; emphasis

his; brackets mine).

I owe the first part of the rendering **"holding-back and support from God"** to Campbell. He sees this phrase as referring to "an act of respite within which God holds back something oppressive" (ibid p 671). The word comes from *an-echomai*. *Echomai* means "to hold," and *an-* signifies "back," or "up," and to hold something up can also mean to "support" it. So this gives a positive perception to God's actions on behalf of mankind prior to the giving of His Son to us. Remember that God has always loved humanity (John 3:16). He was not just "tolerant" and "forbearing," He was actively on our

side, all along!

**26. toward the demonstration which points out the proof of His rightwising deliverance, in solidarity and with fair and equitable dealing (His justice; His righteousness; His compliance with the Way pointed out) within the present season (in the current fitting situation; in union with the current fertile moment), for Him to be just (or: One in covenantal solidarity that accords with fair and equitable dealings which comprise the Way pointed out) and the One liberating, progressively turning in the right direction, making just and freeing from guilt while constantly placing in the Way pointed out which**

**is righted, covenantal relationship** (or: The Right-wiser and Justifier of) **the person [issuing; being born] forth from out of the midst of Jesus' faithfulness** (or: from [the] trust, loyalty, and trustworthiness [emanating] from, and [the] faith which is, Jesus)! Paul repeats here the exact same phrase "**the demonstration... rightwising deliverance**" that he used in vs. 25 (a rhetorical use of "parallelism"), but now stating that it is **within the present season**, or current situation – which is also a "fertile moment." This demonstration is to show that God is just and in covenantal solidarity with humanity, and that He is **turning in the**

**right direction the person** that is being born, or is issuing forth, **from out of the faithfulness of Jesus**. From Jesus' faithfulness, and then from the implantation of "the faith which IS Jesus," God is **placing people into righted, covenantal relationships** – with Himself, and with others.

This **demonstration** inaugurates the “new song” (a figure of the new covenant/creation) prophesied in Ps. 98:1, and there the next two verses foreshadow that of which Paul speaks here:

2. The Lord has made known His deliverance (salvation); He has unveiled (revealed; disclosed)

His justice and fairness (His Way pointed out; His rightwisedness; His eschatological liberation and covenant inclusion/participation) in the sight and presence of the ethnic multitudes (or: the nations; the non-Israelites).

3. .... all the ends (extremities) of the earth have seen the deliverance (salvation) of and from, and which is, our God.

(LXX, JM)

Dodd points to the prophetic tradition where "the righteousness of God" was considered to be the deliverance of His people (ibid p 59). We see the "alpha" and "omega" of God in these OT verses:

"And so [the] Lord (= Yahweh) will smite and wound (or: strike down with a fatal blow) the Egyptians, and then shall completely heal them – and thus they will be fully turned back toward (or: face to face with) [the] Lord (= Yahweh). Then He will listen unto them and thoroughly heal them" (Isa. 19:22, LXX, JM)

"For the sake of My own Name and Reputation, I will point out, show and demonstrate the fury of my rushing passion (or: wrath), and then will bring upon you My inner glory – to the end that I will

not destroy you out of the midst"  
(Isa. 48:9, LXX, JM)

"Because of this, I Myself am like  
(or: exist being as) a panther to  
(or: for; in) Ephraim, and like a  
lion to (or: for; in) the house of  
Judah: thus I Myself will tear, and  
then journey on; I will take (grasp  
in [My] hand; seize), and there  
will be no one to be rescuing and  
dragging [folks] out of [My  
grasp].

I will journey on and return into  
My place until they will be caused  
to disappear, and then they will  
search for My face, and seek My  
presence" (Hos. 5:14; 6:4, LXX,

JM).

In reference to vs. 26, Kirk rightly states that Paul "has placed the faith of justified humanity squarely on the faithful, atoning death of Christ as its material ground" (ibid. p 57).

**27. So then where [is] the loud-spoken boasting? It is shut out (or: was excluded). Through what kind of law, custom or teaching? Of works (or: The one concerned with, composed of and pertaining to acts; The one whose source and involvement is deeds and actions)?**

**No! (or: By no means!) But rather through Faith's law and principle**

(or: To the contrary, by means of a principle of trust and loyalty,

manifested in faithfulness and coming from confident reliance; = a law and custom which was displayed in the confident loyalty of Christ in His act of solidarity with the human condition)!

**Faith's law and principle** has the final say, and it excludes all pride and boasting from **works**. Or, boasting is shut out by means of a "principle of trust and loyalty, manifested in faithfulness which itself comes from confident reliance." The parenthetical paraphrase, following the "=" sign, brings Paul's thoughts into their historical context. This verse begins another diatribe with Paul's interlocutor (the Judaizing

teacher) asking Paul the questions in this verse, and Paul giving the answers. We will observe this dialogue from here on into chapter 4, as Paul builds his arguments for **faith** (from Christ's faithfulness) and against including **works of Law** as needed ethical behavior in the new arrangement in Christ.

So Paul has informed his listeners that a Law-observing practice of **boasting** was/is excluded from the new covenant. The Jewish Christians then asks Paul **what kind or law, custom or teaching shuts out boasting** – is it a law of works, or a custom involved with deeds or actions (i.e., is it an ethical system),

and if so, upon what basis is this claim made? Paul answers emphatically, **No!**, then adds that it is “a principle of trust and loyalty” – which is manifested in faithfulness, but which comes from the confident reliance produced by our inclusion and participation in Christ. Paul continues explaining his answer in the next verse.

28. **For you see, [some MSS: Now] we continue logically concluding (reckoning and reasonably accounting) a person (or: mankind; humanity) to continue being made right and freed from guilt, placed in solidarity in the Way pointed out, and kept in a right social bond of relationship (or:**

rightwised; justified; = eschatologically delivered and included in covenant) **by faith and in trust** (or: with [the] faithfulness and allegiance [of Jesus]), **apart from works of law** (or: [the] Law's deeds; or: actions which are a law; or: = observance of Torah, or acts associated with custom and habitual practice, or pertaining to ordinances made by authority).

Paul formulates a **logical conclusion**, in a restatement of what he has said before, that a **person** is placed in the new covenant, and in the called-out community, **by faith and in trust** – **apart from works of law**. Rendered another way, it can be read that

"humanity" or "mankind" is to **continue being made right, freed from guilt, and placed in the Way pointed out** (i.e., in Christ) with a **right social bond of relationship** by the faithfulness [of Jesus] – a reference, then, to Christ's obedience to the Father (5:19b, below) in dying on the cross. This "trusting faithfulness" being seen as the work of Christ has been Paul's constant theme. Do not overlook the verb's passive voice (God is doing the action) and present tense (continuous action of God upon humanity, through the faithful work of Christ on the cross). He ends by emphasizing, again, his statement of vs. 21, above, that the Law has no place in

the new arrangement that is in Christ – a covenant established through His faithful death (*cf* Lu. 22:20).

**29. Or, [is He] the God of [the] Jews only? [Is He] not also of the ethnic multitudes (nations; Gentiles; non-Jews)? Yes, of the ethnic multitudes (nations) also,**

(or: Or to the contrary, [is He not] the God of only Jews? [He is] not also [the God] of non-Jews, is He?

Yes! [He is the God] of non-Jews, as well,)

With these two potential readings of the second question, we can understand from the bold rendering that the

interlocutor is asking the first question, then Paul responds with the second, followed by the interlocutor admitting that Paul is right – He is the God of **the ethnic multitudes, also**. Or, following the parenthetical reading, the interlocutor asks the first one, followed by a doubting second one, and then Paul responds with an emphatic, “Yes!” It is this second reading that seems to lead more smoothly into vs. 30 where Paul bases his argument upon the reference to the unity of God – an OT premise.

30. **since indeed** (or: if after all; [other MSS: seeing that] **God [is] One** (or: [there is] one God; [it is the] one God; =

God [is; tends toward] Union; [Deut. 6:4, *Shema*]) **Who from out of faithfulness** (or: forth from [His] faith, trust and loyalty) **will, by rightwising [them], progressively make Circumcision right, just and free from guilt, placing them in the Way pointed out and setting them in solidarity within right relationships – and (or: as well as) Uncircumcision through means of the [same] faithfulness** (by means of this trust, faith and loyalty). Paul brings their focus back to the new reality in Christ, once again basing the oneness of mankind on the Oneness of God. All humans have one God, and thus are one humanity, and by Gentiles being

grafted into Israel's tree (11:17, below), all humanity now shares and participates in Israel's history and Root (11:18, below). As he pointed out in Gal. 3:28,

**"Within [Him; us], there is not (there does not exist) Jew nor Greek (or: Hellenist); within, there is not (does not exist) slave nor freeman; within, there is not (does not exist) male and female; for you folks all exist being one within Christ Jesus (or: are all one person in union with an Anointing from Jesus)."**

Here again we see that from the principle of **faith** (vs. 27), and based upon the loyal faithfulness of Jesus, **God**

**will progressively rightwise the Circumcision** (i.e., the Jews) from out of Christ's faithfulness, as He continues placing **Uncircumcision** (i.e., the Gentiles, the ethnic nations) in the new covenant (i.e., in Christ) **through means of the [same] faithfulness** [of Christ].

**31. Then are we habitually rendering inactive and useless** (idling-down and rendering unemployed) **law or custom** (or: [the] Law) **through the faith and trust** (or: by means of [God's] faithfulness)? **Certainly not** (May that not come to be)! **But rather, we are constantly establishing law** (or: a law; setting a custom in its fixed place and making a principle stand).

Here the Judaizing Christian asks a concerned question: are we doing away with **law and** custom? Paul answers an emphatic no. If Paul had said, "Yes, we **render** the Law, or the Torah, **inactive and useless,**" then he would have undercut all his arguments that are based upon it. Or, since there is no definite article before the word **law**, had he said that we are idling-down and rendering unemployed law, in general, then that would mean ignoring the law of Christ. So he says, **Certainly not**, the OT is a history of God's dealing with humanity and is the source for the very concept of the Messiah, and the prophecies of a new covenant. All this he is plainly

**establishing.** But does he imply Torah-keeping by this? I hardly think so. We must then interpret his statement here by the entire message of the letter, as well as by his other letters. Furthermore, recall what we saw in vs. 21, above: that God's fairness and equity is demonstrated in the Christ, who **has been manifested and remains displayed in clear light**, and that He continues being attested by the witness of the Law and the Prophets.

On this verse, Barth lends insight:

*"To make the law of none effect through faith* is to place faith side by side with the law as another, second, distinct thing, instead of

setting it within the law; it is to set Christ side by side with Moses instead of comprehending Moses in Christ. If we do not perceive God's judgment of every human movement and direction to be also that by which they are at once directed; if we do not see in the dissolution by God of all human conduct and desire the doing away of dissolution... we have concluded wrongly.... We demand the subjection of all human being and having and doing under the divine judgment, precisely in order that it may always and everywhere await the

divine justification, and because, seen from God and for God, nothing can ever be lost... And moreover, the law, rightly understood, bears witness to, justifies and reveals the faithfulness of God" (ibid p 115, 116; italics original).

We read in Heb. 4:2-3 that Israel did not enter into the rest that God had prepared for them because,

**"the Word** (or: message; thought; idea; Logos) **which they heard did not profit** (or: benefit) **those folks – [it] not having been mixed and blended together with**

**faith, trust or loyalty in (or: by; for; with) those at that time hearing [it]."**

God's word, which includes the Law, is established by the faith that sees Christ within it – even in its judgments.

Campbell makes an insightful observation at this point of Paul's letter, noting that despite what have been traditionally considered Paul's main "theses" statements (1:16-17; 3:21-31), he,

"... does not really pause at this point... A longer discussion ensues... [in which he] does not seem interested in all of the motifs that his theses have articulated.

Some seem to drop from sight, and a few new motifs are introduced" (ibid p 326; brackets mine).

In other words, Paul had another agenda: first the refutation of the Judaizing gospel that was being circulated among the Gentile congregations. After confronting these false teachers and their Law-observing version of Christianity, he would then present the core of his teaching, the humanity-wide work of the Obedient One (Christ) and its effect upon the entire creation, in chapters 5 through 8.



## Chapter 4

**1. What then shall we declare Abraham – our forefather according to the flesh (or: the first founder of our family, in line with natural descent) – to have found?**

(or: That being so, what will we be saying is to be discovered [concerning] Abraham, “our founding father,” in accord to flesh?

or: What, consequently, will we say? Is Abraham found [as] our preferred father on the level or sphere of *flesh*?)

The first reading would be Paul identifying with the Jewish part of his audience who, together with Paul, trace their natural lineage back to Abraham – and this could be part of his rhetoric: to elevate the place of the Jewish believers in the eyes of the Gentile majority who may have had a tendency to devalue everything Jewish. This understanding of Paul's words, here, would also lend weight to what he had just said in the previous verse. Another effect of the "we" in this first clause would be a unifying of the assembly – including the Gentiles in the discussion of **our forefather**.

Now Campbell considers this verse as a

continuation of the diatribe, and that the speaker is the Jewish-Christian interlocutor who is putting this question to Paul. If this is the correct reading, then this teacher would be setting the scene for making his claim about the Jew's right to boast, and in vs. 2, below, he will use the story of Abraham (from the Torah) as grounds for his position in this debate with Paul. Either my bold rendering, or the first parenthetical rendering can support this reading. Wright, however, prefers something like my second parenthetical rendering. Paul is now speaking from being in the new creation, so he is questioning the continued validity of the very founding

principle for Jewish identity: that of being fleshly descendants of Abraham. John the baptizer's words to the Pharisees and Sadducees that came to his baptism (in Mat. 3) are a foundational concept for both the preaching of Jesus and the teachings from Paul:

**9. "Furthermore, do not presume to be habitually saying among yourselves, 'We continue having Abraham [as] a father,' for I am now saying to you that God continues able (or: constantly has power) to at once raise up (or: awaken) children to Abraham (or: for Abraham; in**

Abraham) **from out of these stones!**

10. **"Now you see, the ax is already continuing lying [being focused] toward (or: facing toward) the root of the trees.**

**Therefore, every tree not habitually (repeatedly; = seasonally) producing beautiful (ideal; fine) fruit is customarily being cut out [of the orchard or garden], and is normally thrown into a fire. [comment: to be used for fuel]**

Paul's metaphor of the branches being broken out of Israel's "olive tree" (11:17ff, below) may have been inspired

by the story of John's words in vs. 10, here.

Wright notes that, "Abraham was the beginning of the covenant family.... But what kind of family is it?.... is this family... the ethnic, physical family of Abraham?" Wright's conclusion is that we are "related to him in some other way," and that this question "introduces the theme of the whole chapter." (ibid pp 65-66). He sees the core structure of this chapter as derived from Gen. 15, and that its main objective is to make it clear that Christianity is not "some kind of subset of ethnic Judaism, as defined by 'works of law.'" Read this way, Paul's rhetorical question expects a "No!"

answer.

Whichever reading of this verse we prefer, there is a definite rhetorical connection of this chapter with what has just preceded it, and what follows it. Campbell reads this chapter as having an “underlying template” of Christ, the ultimate faithful One, and he sees Paul’s development of the topic of “faith” in these first four chapters as “essentially participatory” – meaning that we participate in Christ’s faith and faithfulness; we are “being caught up into Christ’s story,” and it is eschatological in nature. In other words, our faith (which comes as a gift, by the Spirit) has the same form as Christ’s own

faith – and is in a one-to-one relationship with it – but it is derived from Christ's faith and faithfulness. (*cf* Campbell, *ibid* p 756-760)

**2. You see, if Abraham was rightwised, placed in right relationship, and declared just and in accord with the Way, from out of [his] works (or: made right, turned in the right direction and justified by actions; = included in covenant from [his] deeds), he yet holds something to boast about (a ground or right for boasting), but not toward (or: face to face with) God.**

Dodd brings up an interesting question here (*ibid* p 67-68): how could Abraham (who lived more than 400

years before the giving of the Law) have been in **right relationship** with God **from out of [his] works** [of Law]? He says that the current belief among the Jews was that Abraham "anticipated" the Law and cites the Apocalypse of Baruch 57:2, which is dated as being written only a short time after Paul lived:

"At that time [the time of the patriarchs] the unwritten law was named among them, and the works of the commandment were then fulfilled."

So this may have been the current tradition that Paul is addressing, answering a potential Jewish objection

before it can be lodged against his arguments which follow. He also is further exploring the idea of human boasting that he just said was negated, in 3:27, above, showing that even the father of God's spiritual family had no grounds for boasting in his own works. We can see the attitude of the Pharisees in response to Jesus saying that "the truth will proceed to set them free,"

**"The [Jewish leaders] considered and replied to Him, "We are Abraham's seed (offspring; descendants), and we have served as slaves to no one at any time. How are you now saying, 'You will progressively**

**come to be free ones'?"** (John 8:33)

They were "claim[ing] salvation on the ground of their ancestor' righteousness" (Stern, *ibid* p 353; brackets mine).

Paul had made his position clear in Gal. 3:7,

**7. Be assured consequently, by your experiential knowledge and insight, (or, as an indicative: Surely you are coming to know) that the folks [springing] forth from out of the midst of faithfulness (or: whose source is faith, trust and confident loyalty), these are Abraham's sons!**

Now considering the first part of this verse as the interlocutor's position (ending with "... **something to boast about.**), we would read the last phrase as Paul's swift retort to this claim,

**"But not toward (or: face to face with) God!"**

### **3. For what is the Scripture saying?**

**"Now Abraham believed and was faithful by God, trusted in and was loyal to God and from logical consideration it was and is entered into the leger of his story, in him, into participation in a generous act of right relationship within the path that [God] was indicating**

(or: it was considered, concluded and reasonably viewed for him and an account was credited to him [to have entered] into a right relationship with behavior in accord with the Way pointed out, which was comprised of fairness and equity from being turned in the right direction [progressing] into properly-ordered living of rightwised covenant-participation)” [Gen. 15:6]

My expansion of the phrase concerning **God**, in the first part of this quote,

shows that **God** was first of all the instrument (shown by the preposition **by**), or the means and ability, for Abraham to be able to **believe and be faithful**. Because of this, Abraham simply **trusted in God** and, because of the Word of God that was imparted into him, he was then **loyal to God**. This is a simple explanation of, and a definition for, kingdom life – or, in Paul's terms here, **right relationship within the path that [God] indicates**, which is based upon God's **generous act** in Christ; being turned in the right direction and empowered for properly-ordered living. This is Paul speaking – a continuation from his retort at the end of the previous

verse – using the teacher's own topic to affirm that new covenant inclusion is from Christ's loyalty, and that it is a life lived in the **trust** and **belief** that are granted to us by God's Spirit.

A term that has caused centuries of debate is what I have rendered “**from logical consideration it was and is entered into the leger of his story, in him, into participation in a generous act of right relationship within the path that [God] was indicating.**” It is the Greek *logizomai* which has the word *logos* as its stem. In secular Greek it was an accounting term, so it is often rendered something like "an account was credited to him." But this leads more

into a legalized understanding of Paul, for if Abraham amasses a large account on his ledger, then he would have something about which to boast, and Paul is obviously quite adverse to this kind of thinking. It does not represent **grace**, but instead glorifies human works. I suggest, here, that it represents an account of his life that is metaphorically entered into **the leger of his story**, written in his heart, and this entry recorded his coming **into participation** with what God was miraculously going to do in him and in Sarah. It was a **generous act** (grace) by God that would miraculously enable him to have a son. It showed God's **right**

**relationship** with Abraham (and pointed to His right relationship with humanity) that was centered **in the path** that God **was indicating**: the blessing of all the families of the earth.

The concepts inherent in the word *logos* are: thought, reason, logic, that which is laid out in an orderly fashion to reach a conclusion or present the thought, or record an event in words. It is because of these that I also emphasize the semantic range of the verb as being correctly understood to mean **considered, viewed or reasonably concluded**, in Paul's use of the verb, *logizomai*. We can look at Abraham's behavior and, in alignment with God's

view, consider or conclude that Abraham was living in accord with the very life of God, a life that God established, in solidarity with Abraham, which was based upon the covenant that God made with him via His promise to him.

Campbell reasonably argues that this verb must be understood in the meaning of “credit,” due, primarily, to the context of “working/pay/debt” in vs.4 & 5, below (*cf* *ibid* p 730ff). However, Paul puts this very context in CONTRAST, in vs. 5, to the interlocutor’s concept and use of this word in vs. 4. Paul has his opponent (the teacher) use this verb in its commercial sense in order to support

his system of merit (gained by works of Law) in vs. 4, but then has himself using it in the non-commercial sense in vs. 5 (as we also saw him use it in 2:3, 26 and 3:28, above, and will again see in 6:11; 8:18, 36; 9:8 and 14:14, below). We encounter the story of God's unilateral covenant with Abraham throughout most of this chapter. Wright makes the statement that "God called him into covenant, a covenant designed to deal with the problem of ungodliness itself and all its consequent human degradation, disintegration and wickedness (1:18-32)" – *ibid* p 67. It seems to me that this is reading the concept of "dealing with sin, etc." back

into the Genesis narrative, and thus into this entire passage about Abraham. We do not find any of the Hebrew words for "sin" associated with the covenant that God made with Abraham, neither when He first called him and made promises to him in Gen. 12:2-3, nor when He renewed the promises in Gen. 13:14-17, nor when the covenant was confirmed in Gen. 15, nor in Gen. 17 with the renewal of the promises and God's instituting the covenant marker of circumcision.

Everything was about God blessing Abraham, and about His blessing all the families of the earth through Abraham and his Seed. Sin was never the issue with God and His dealings with

Abraham. The issue of dealing with sin came in with the Law – and thus do we see David speaking of sin (vss. 6-8, below) because he lived under the Law. But Abraham did not.

In his survey of Jewish literature during the Palestinian period (200 BC to AD 200) and commenting on *The Psalms of Solomon*, E.P. Sanders quotes A. Buchler (*Types of Jewish-Palestinian Piety From 70 BCE to 70 CE*, p 160) as taking the term *dikaioσunē* as "refer[ing] to the actions of the righteous, in general... one's justice and love toward his fellows." Sanders goes on to say, "[t]hat this is the case in Philo and Josephus, and elsewhere in Hellenistic

Jewish literature..." (ibid p 398; brackets mine).

When discussing proper religious behavior in the *Tannaitic Literature*, Sanders informs us,

"It is noteworthy that the question 'how can one *become* righteous?' is not asked. Being righteous is not the goal of a religious quest; it is the behavior proper to one who has accepted the covenant..." (ibid p 205; emphasis his).

**4. Now to (or: for; with) the person habitually working (practicing a trade; accomplishing a work), the wage (or: pay) is not being credited (reckoned; put on an account; considered) as**

**corresponding to** (or: in accord with) **an undeserved, gratuitous gift** (or: grace; a favor), **but on the contrary, as commensurate with and coming down from a debt** (something owed; an obligation).

Paul is using his interlocutor to present a metaphor involving recompense, or money. He uses the word **credited** to argue from his system of earned merit. We don't consider a person's wage as a gift, something that was **graced** (*charis*) to him, but rather as an informally contracted **debt** that should be commensurate to what is owed to him. This statement is centered in the Judaizer's promotion of Torah-keeping:

the works of the Law that produce a debt from various accomplishments, and are thus a basis for boasting. It infers that God owes them praise – if not more.

5. **But to** (or: for; with) **the person not habitually working, yet constantly believing** (actively placing [his] trust and reliance) **upon the One [Who is] habitually delivering and making right the irreverent** (or: the One habitually rightwising, pointing in the right direction, putting in right relationship, justifying, and placing the profane person in the midst of the [covenantal] Way pointed out), **his faith** (trust; convinced, confidence and loyal allegiance) **is logically being**

**considered and viewed** (or: constantly reckoned and credited on account) **into** (unto; for) **right behavior in accord with the Way pointed out** (justice; fairness; right, equitable and well-ordered living).

Here Paul responds to the interlocutor's metaphor with a statement of the new reality: **rightwised behavior**, derived from covenant inclusion (in Christ), is **logically considered and viewed** as a manifestation of the **faith, trust, confidence and loyal allegiance** that comes from God, **the One [Who is] habitually delivering and making irreverent people to be right**. It is not dependent upon **habitually working**

(i.e., performing Torah rituals or keeping Jewish identity-markers). God places a profane person into the Way pointed out (Christ), giving him or her life and **belief**, and this placing of trust upon God's transforming work through Christ is the definition of covenant life in the called-out community. It is a life of faith, trust and faithfulness that one who has been made just normally lives – because this one has been joined to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17).

**6. Exactly as David also is telling of the happiness and blessedness of the person in whom (to whom; for whom) God is constantly counting (reasonably concluding; logically considering)**

**rightwised existence in accord with the Way pointed out** (justice; righteousness; solidarity; fair and equitable dealing), **apart from works** (or: independent of [Law] activities):

7. **"Happy and blessed [are] the people whose lawlessnesses** (transgressions; violations of the Law; lawless deeds) **were and are sent away** (dismissed; discharged; divorced; pardoned) **and whose failures** (errors; situations of missing of the target; sins) **were and are covered over** (concealed with a veil or lid)!

8. **"Happy and blessed [are the] adult males of whom** [other MSS: to

whom; for whom] **the Lord** (= Yahweh) **may by no means logically consider a failure** (take into account or conclude a missed target; reasonably calculate or reckon a sin)." [Ps. 32:1-2]

Paul reaches back to Israel's story and a psalm by David that prophesied of this kind of **rightwised existence**, which he again affirms is "**apart from works**," and which he characterized as **happiness and blessedness**. Verse 7 equates being **rightwised** with having one's times or qualities of **lawlessness** (state of being without or being adversarial to law) **sent away** from them; their lawless deeds dismissed;

their violations discharged and divorced from them. This is deliverance, release and cleansing.

The situation of having their "**failures, errors and sins covered over and concealed from view**" is the act of Atonement.

Verse 8 sounds like 2 Cor. 5:19. This is the counterpart of being **rightwised** and placed in covenant: the Lord not **considering a failure for a person**; not taking into account a situation where a person fell short of the goal (like failing to bear God's image); not reckoning a mistake as being a sin; not calculating up people's sins (as an account against them).

For the religious mind-set, this sounds too good to be true. This is why we have to "change our minds," and "exchange our thinking" for God's thinking – for the new age where God is now progressively making all things and all people new (Rev. 21:5, where the verb is in the present tense). As Campbell says, “These texts specifically disavow the notion of merit as the basis of God’s action...” (ibid p 731)

**9. So then, [is] this happiness (or: blessedness) upon the Circumcision, or upon the Uncircumcision as well (or: also)? Emphatically we are habitually reiterating,**

**"The faithfulness and trust in**

**and by Abraham were from logical consideration entered into the leger of his story: into a participation in a generous act of right relationship within the path that [God] was indicating**

(or: was considered, concluded and reasonably viewed for him and an account was credited to him [to have entered] into a right relationship with behavior in accord with the Way pointed out, which was comprised of fairness and equity from being turned in the right direction

[progressing] into properly-ordered living of rightwised covenant-participation)." [Gen. 15:6]

The interlocutor does not give up, but fires another question at Paul in regard to his inclusion of the non-Jews in this happiness and blessing, apart from works of the Law. Paul has had him bring up the topic which he had addressed in 3:29-30, above: the covenant relationship of God to the uncircumcised ethnic multitudes (the "nations"). Then Paul answers, affirming his position by once again citing Abraham's situation in relationship to **faithfulness and trust**, and its

equivalence to the **Way**, or **Path** (Christ): covenant inclusion in rightwised existence, occurring again by a **generous act of right relationship within the Path** that God had done in the Christ-event of eschatological deliverance and resurrection.

**10. How then is it or was it logically considered or calculated** (or: How then was it put to the account, credited and reckoned) – **with [his] being** (= when he was) **in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but on the contrary, in uncircumcision!** The Torah teacher presses Paul's point by questioning whether this **consideration-calculation** about

Abraham was before or after he was circumcised. Once again Paul gives an emphatic response, first a negation to the teacher's first part of the question, then responding positively to the second part. **This happiness and blessedness** came to Abraham when he was in the state of being **in uncircumcision** – the logical conclusion being that this is then also true of the Gentiles, now. They need no circumcision (a representative figure of, or shorthand reference for, Torah-keeping) to be included in God's new covenant. They need neither **works of Law**, nor fleshly covenant markers. The Law (a bilateral covenant) has nothing to do with either the unilateral covenant

(note: the language of Gen. 17:2ff, where Yahweh refers to the covenant as "My covenant" – "My arrangement") that God made with Abraham, nor with the unilateral work of God, in Christ, in making a new arrangement (or, covenant). The two covenants must not be either confused or combined. Paul's use of the interlocutor ends here, as he proceeds to flesh-out his arguments in this section of the letter.

11. **Then later he received** (or: took hold of; obtained) **circumcision as a mark and a sign** (or: circumcision's sign) – **a seal** (or: a stamped impression of a seal or signet ring which shows ownership, possession, identification or

authority) **of and from the accordance with the Way pointed out, which is faithfulness** (or: of a rightwised relationship with fair and equitable dealings from trust and which has the character and qualities of convinced fidelity; or: from faith's own righteousness), **pertaining to the [situation of being] within the uncircumcision** (or: = the right covenantal relationship corresponding to the faith he had while in his uncircumcised state), **in order for him to be a father of all the people habitually believing and trusting by way of uncircumcision [and moving them] into [the place for] the**

**accordance with the Way pointed out** (or: the rightwised relationships characterized by fair and equitable dealings; the well-ordered life that is pointed in the right direction; = covenantal inclusion) **to be logically considered in them** (or: reckoned and reasonably concluded to them; calculated, accounted and credited for them) **also** –

Both Abraham's state of being, in relation to the circumcision issue (vs. 9-10), and the time factor (**later**) are important elements of Paul's arguments that define the character of the new **Way pointed out**, or covenant life, that Paul proclaimed as the message of goodness,

ease and well-being. Circumcision was a physical **mark** that was a **spiritual sign** that Abraham's rightwised relationship with God was set apart, and that the **Way of living that God pointed out** to him was **faithfulness**, trust, conviction, loyalty and allegiance – these latter three definitions being developments of the first two. It was a **seal** – a stamped impression that showed ownership (by God), possession (by God), identification (with Yahweh) and authority (because of the covenant) – **of and from**. It did not create the rightwised relationship or the way pointed out to Abraham: **faithfulness and trust**. It represented something that

had happened before: God's covenant with Abraham; but it came **from** Abraham's rightwised existence of having been turned in the right direction (at that time: toward Yahweh) and **from** having been placed in this unilateral covenant **by** God.

And now Paul instructs them, and us, that all this was **pertaining to the [situation of being] within the uncircumcision**. This refers to folks who are Gentiles, for Paul's present argument. Now Paul tells us that God's timing had an eschatological purpose:

**in order for him to be a father of all the people habitually believing and trusting by way of**

**uncircumcision [and moving them] into [the place for] the accordance with the Way pointed out** (or: the rightwised relationships characterized by fair and equitable dealings; the well-ordered life that is pointed in the right direction; = covenantal inclusion).

The result of all this means for the Gentiles that covenant inclusion and rightwised existence will **be logically considered in them** (or: reckoned and reasonably concluded to them; calculated, accounted and credited for them) **also**. They are being made right by Christ's faithfulness in fulfilling the

Promise, just as Yahweh demonstrated faithfulness to Abraham by making and then fulfilling the promise that He had made to him.

**12. and as well, a father of [the] Circumcision, [yet] not to (or: for) those out of circumcision only, but rather also to (for; in; by; with) those continuously advancing in line with the elements of the faithfulness (or: walking orderly by the first principles which are faith, trust and reliant allegiance) – in the footprints of our father Abraham – within uncircumcision (or: in uncircumcision, in union with the footprints of the faith of our father Abraham).**

He restates his emphasis upon both Abraham's and the Gentiles' **uncircumcision**, while confirming that he was also a **father of the Circumcision**, with the qualifier:

**to (for; in; by; with) those continuously advancing in line with the elements of the faithfulness (or: walking orderly by the first principles of faith, trust and reliant allegiance) – in the footprints of our father Abraham.**

The last phrase can also be rendered: “in uncircumcision, in union with the footprints of the faith of our father Abraham.” The clause just prior to this

is also worthy of notice: “**those continuously advancing in line with the elements of the faithfulness.**” The verb here can also be rendered: “walking orderly by the first principles which are faith, trust and reliant allegiance.” Faith and trust (as well as faithfulness and reliant allegiance) are "first principles" or "elements" (*stoicheion*) of the covenant.

**The footprints of our father** is a phrase that gives us a graphic picture of **the Way pointed out, or, the Path to be followed**, which equals: a life to be lived. Justification has nothing to do with a legal status, but rather, involves rightwised existence in right relationship

with people, and leading a way of life that is fair, just, equitable and pointed toward bearing God's image. It is the state of having been raised from the dead and infused with Life – God's Spirit. It is BEING in Christ.

Barclay makes a bold statement here,

"A man may be a Jew of pure lineage and may be circumcised; and yet in the real sense may be no descendant of Abraham. He has no right to call Abraham his father or to claim the promises of God, unless he makes that venture of faith that Abraham made. In one short paragraph [vss. 11-12, above] Paul has shattered all

Jewish thought" (ibid p 66).

Recall what Jesus said to the Pharisees, **"You folks, in particular, are (exist and have your being) from out of, and have your source in, the ancestor who cast [an object] through [someone] (or: the father, the devil; or: the devil father; or: the father – the one thrusting [words or issues] through [folks/groups] and dividing them), and you are habitually wanting (willing; intending; purposing) to be constantly doing your father's passionate cravings (full-rushing over-desires). That one was**

**existing being a murderer** (a killer of humanity) **from [his/its] beginning** (or: from [the] start; from [its] origin; or: from headship, chieftainhood, government or rule), **and he/it has not stood and does not now stand within the Truth** (or: it had not made a stand in union with reality), **because truth is not** (openness and reality does not exist) **within him** (or: it)" – John 8:44.

13. **For not through** (a; or: [the]) **law [is/was] the Promise to** (for; in) **Abraham, or to** (for; in) **his seed** (offspring; posterity), **[for] him to be an**

**heir of [the] aggregate of humanity**  
(or: the one receiving and enjoying an  
allotted System of culture: the world of  
society), **but on the contrary, through**  
**a [covenantal]-rightwisedness by a**  
**generous act of [God's] eschatological**  
**intervention, which is faith and which**  
**creates faithfulness**

(or: faith's righteousness and  
justice; a placing in right  
relationship and a keeping in the  
Way pointed out which belongs to  
and comes from faith, reliance and  
trust; trust's way of life which  
results in just and equitable  
dealings; fairness and equity from  
conviction).

Building upon my words immediately above, this new life in Christ has nothing to do with **law**, or a legal standing with God. It is about God's **Promise to, for and in Abraham... [and] his seed**. It is about his inheritance: he was

**an heir of [the] aggregate of humanity** (or: the one receiving and enjoying an allotted System of culture: the world of society).

This presents us with the extensiveness of the Promise, and of this covenant: it is to bless **ALL** the families of the earth (Gen. 12:3). This also calls to mind Ps. 2:8,

"Ask of Me, and I shall give the nations (ethnic multitudes;

Gentiles) as your allotment  
(inheritance) – and your holding  
(possessions) the limits and ends  
of the Land."

Aligned with the perception of Abraham as a spiritual father, the Land promised to Abraham, and in this psalm, to the Messiah, should likewise be perceived in its figurative implications. Walter Brueggemann has made some significant insights, in his book, *The Land*:

"... the land functions as a prism through which other aspects of Israel's faith can be seen." (p xii)

"A symbolic sense of the term affirms that land is never simply physical dirt but is always

physical dirt freighted with social meanings derived from historical experience." (p 2)

"Our humanness is always about historical placement in the earth, but that... always includes excess meanings both rooted in and moving beyond literalism." (p 3)

"Place is space... which provide[s] continuity and identity across generations.... The land... is always a place with Yahweh..." (p 5)

"The Genesis narratives in a stark way present the radical demand of God that the way of faith requires leaving a land and accepting

landlessness as a posture of faith."  
(12:1; 15:7; – p 6)

"Land is governed by word. Word is embodied in land arrangements." (p 142)

"The understanding of land we have discerned in the Bible is never just about land, never only land possessed and managed. It is always a land of gift and promise, a gift given when it could never be taken or grasped or seized, a promise by a Promiser who stands outside history but has been found faithful in history." (p 191). –  
Fortress Press, 1977

The land, in Israel's story, stood as a

symbol for its people. Inheriting "the Land" meant more than getting possession of a geographic area.

Significant to the land is the concept of promise.

None of this came from the **Law**, nor from a legal relating to God,

**but on the contrary, through a [covenantal]-rightwisedness by an act of [God's] eschatological intervention, which is faith and creates faithfulness.**

Rendered otherwise these last phrases can read:

- a) faith's righteousness and justice
- b) a placing in right relationship and a keeping in the Way pointed

out which belong to and comes from faith, reliance and trust  
c) trust's way of life which results in just and equitable dealings  
d) fairness and equity from conviction.

**14. You see, if the ones out of law** (or: = those who have [the] Law as their origin) **[are] heirs** (inheritors and enjoyers of the allotment), **[then] the faith has been made empty** (void; vain) **and is now without content, and the Promise has been rendered useless** (has been permanently unemployed and idle; has been annulled and is inoperative).  
What a radical stand Paul makes here.

He is saying that if natural Jews who live out of a covenant of **law** inherit the Promise made to Abraham and his Seed (Christ), then the Promise is gutted of meaningful content and is **rendered useless**. This pretty well trashes the whole Jewish culture, ethnicity and religion – unless their covenant inclusion is derived from faith and trust, or as he says elsewhere, Christ's faithfulness; unless they participate in the new creation of the unified one humanity and the new covenant centered in the resurrected Messiah, and not in the Law. Paul continues his antithesis between law and faith, specifically demonstrated by Torah-keeping versus

faith's righteousness and way of life.

**15. For you see, the Law is by labor constantly effecting personal emotion from intrinsic fervor or natural propensity** (or: is progressively working-down anger and wrath, repeatedly producing indignation and by habit fully accomplishing a teeming, passionate impulse or a disposition of desire). **Yet** (or: Now) **where no law is existing** (or: where there is no custom), **neither [is there] a stepping to the side** (a transgression; a violation; a breach).

Paul does not say where this **personal emotion from intrinsic fervor or natural propensity** is being generated.

But from reading ahead, in chapters 5-7, a safe conclusion would be that it creates anger and wrath within human beings, e.g., 7:8, below:

**"Yet the Sin, taking a starting point (a base of operation; an occasion; a means of beginning) through the implanted goal (commandment [to Adam, then to Israel]), works (or: worked) down to effect and produce within me every full passion, strong impulse, over-desire and craving emotion upon things – for apart from Law (or: a custom; or: [Torah]) sin [is] dead."**

In this quote we have the device of personification – of Adam, even of Abraham (if considered in this present context) and of Israel. But specifically with Abraham, in Paul's argument here, there was **no law existing** yet, so there was not talk of transgression, violation, breach or of a **stepping to the side** from the covenant that God made with him.

That covenant was not dependant upon Abraham, but upon God, who is faithful first of all to Himself.

The first clause should be considered by itself: '**the Law is by labor constantly effecting**, or, is progressively working-down anger and wrath, repeatedly producing indignation and by habit fully

accomplishing a teeming, passionate impulse or a disposition of desire.' This was what it did to humans. The Law came from God, so it doesn't produce anger or wrath in Him. But it was designed to do so in us. It is obvious why Paul stood against relationships based upon cultic ritual works, religious observance (Torah-keeping) or even just "doing things just to be on good terms with one's friends." That would only irritate people. That displays lack of trust, and lack of true relationship. This topic was discussed in the context of 2:5, above, but here we see very plainly that **the Law** is the source of our anger and wrath. In fact Paul said in 1 Cor.

15:56 that "the power and ability of the Sin [is] the Law."

16. Because of this [i.e., there being no law, the Promise comes] out of [Christ's] faithfulness, (or: from faith/trust/fidelity), to the end that [it is] down from, in line with and according to grace: a joy-producing act of favor [leading] into the [situation for] the Promise to be continuously firm (steadily walked; secured, confirmed and established; guaranteed as valid and made sure) in all (or: to all; for all) the seed (or: = realized by all the offspring), not in the person (or: to or for the [group]) [coming] out of the Law only (or: by

that only from out of custom), **but rather also in the [seed]** (or: to the [group]; for the person; or: by that) **from out of [the] faithfulness and trust of Abraham – who is a father of all of us,**

The Greek of the first clause has no expressed subject or verb which would lead into the prepositional phrases that come before the infinitive, **to be**. So we must reach back to Paul's previous verses which in vs. 15 speak of **there being no law**, in Abraham's time, and then pick up his train of thought about **the Promise**, in vs. 14. Witherington simply says, "vs. 16-18 are grammatically difficult" (ibid p 127). Indeed! I believe that what I supplied in

the brackets represents Paul's argument, here. For the bold rendering, I added the adjective [**Christ's**] since it is His faithfulness, that we have seen all along, up to this point, that brought the Promise to us in a way that it came **down from God's grace, was in line with a joy-producing act of God's favor, and is according to grace.**

We see that he is speaking of **the Promise**, but grammatically this noun is in the accusative, the objection of the preposition **into**, so it is not technically the subject, but we see that this is what he is talking about. His point is that the Promise would not **be continuously firm, steadily walked, secured or**

**established** (etc.), if it had been based upon the Law – which led to anger, wrath, etc., and left people unable to enjoy Abraham's inheritance. **Grace, an act of favor**, was the only answer to bringing the promised salvation, resurrection life, new creation, health and wholeness, a new humanity that included everyone (not just religious people; not just one race of people) – where sinners are accepted and get into the kingdom before self-righteous theologians and the poor participate in God's reign and sovereign activities! (*cf* Mat. 21:31; Lu. 6:20b)

Here, he defines Abraham's **seed** as not only those who came out of Judaism and

Torah keeping to be joined to the Christ, **but rather, also the** folks who are covenant members, placed in Christ and are walking the Way pointed-out, **from out of Abraham's faithfulness**. So how did these others get Abraham's faith-trust and fidelity? **In accord with grace**, it came through the proclamation of the Word which is Jesus Christ.

This last clause echoes Gal. 4:26, "**the Jerusalem above is** (continues being) **free, who is** (or: which particular one continues being) **our mother**," who was allegorized by Paul as Sarah, Abraham's wife. So we have both a father and a mother in the couple that God used to found His plan to bring the blessing of

His life into humanity, which is composed of many nations.

**17. according as it has been and stands written,**

**"A father of many multitudes (nations; ethnic groups) I have placed (put; set; deposited) you"**  
[Gen. 17:5]

**[Now while he was being] down in the midst of and facing [the One] Whom he believed, which was God**

(or: down in a place that was in opposition, from which he trusted in [the message] which was God, and he relied upon [the idea] which [came] from God; or: in line with and in union with, yet

being on the opposite side of the matter, he gained confidence from God)

– **the One continuously (habitually; or: repeatedly; periodically) making the dead ones alive, and (or: even) continuously calling (or: repeatedly and habitually summoning) the things not existing as existing (or: = not being into continuously being) –**

Following the Genesis quote where God repeated the promise to Abraham (and then, in the original context, expands the description of the covenant), Paul describes Abraham as “[being] down in the midst of and facing [the One] Whom.” The preposition that defines

this scene is a joining of three prepositions: *kata* (down), *en* (in the midst of) and *anti* (in the place facing, or on the opposite side of). The parenthetical expansion offers more options for rendering this preposition. The One that Abraham **believed**, **was God**. The noun **God** is in the genitive case, which I rendered twice in apposition (which was God), and twice as an ablative (from God), while supplying possible ellipses in brackets. It was an encounter with Yahweh that created **belief** in Abraham, birthing faith, trust and confidence in God. Obviously God is the one that makes such encounters happen, or engender

such results. He trusted God's message to him (quoted here, above); he relied upon the idea which God shared with him, and then he gained confidence from God. Paul may have chosen Abraham's encounter with God due to the fact that his own belief, trust and faithfulness also was the result of His encounter with the risen Jesus, on the road to Damascus. Next, set off by brackets, Paul give qualifying characteristics of the God whom Abraham believed. He is "**One continuously** (habitually; or: repeatedly; periodically) **making the dead ones alive...**" Abraham was ninety-nine at the time of this proclamation from God, and both he and Sarah were too old to have

children (vs. 19, below). Paul speaks in terms of resurrection, here, because it would take resurrection life in both of their bodies in order to produce (from their “dead” reproductive systems) the one who would be Isaac – the beginning of the fulfillment of the promise. It would be a new creation, produced by the Word of Yahweh, Who is **“continuously calling** (or: repeatedly and habitually summoning) **the things not existing as existing** (or: = not being into continuously being).” Abraham trusted Yahweh’s proclamation about him, because he knew God to be such a One. This informs us about the relationship that he had with God.

Verses 18-21 describe what this belief and conviction about God looked like. Here we see the theme of resurrection which is tied to **trust, reliance and belief**. We can also observe Abraham being a physical father of multitudes, as a type of Christ being the Head of the multitudes that constitute the Second Humanity (1 Cor. 15:47).

18. **who, to the side of expectation** (or: more than or beyond expectation; beside hope; near the side of expectation), **trusted** (believed; relied; was faithful; put faith) **upon expectation** (or: expectant hope) **into the [situation for] him to become** (to bring himself into being) **a father of many multitudes**

(nations; ethnic groups), **in accord with** (down from and in line with) **that having been and still being spoken** (or: declared), "**Thus shall progressively be your seed** (or: offspring; descendants)." [Gen. 15:5]

The "**who**" that starts this verse is Abraham. We see that it was the Promise which was **spoken** to him that gave him that which was off-center of **expectation** – even more than expectation, yet perhaps, near, just at the side of the expectation that this Promise engendered. God's promise to Abraham that he would have an heir (a "seed" that would become like the number of the stars) gave him an expectation. It was

more than one could expect by natural means, but he placed his **trust** “**upon**” the expectation inherent in God’s Word to him. So he was empowered to **trust, believe, put faith in and rely upon and be faithful to this expectation** that God had imparted to him via the declaration that he would **become a father of many multitudes, nations and ethnic groups** (here we pick up the topic of 16b, above). Paul did not invent this concept about the **multitudes**. The LXX uses the same word, **multitudes**, “ethnic groups” – or Gentiles – in the Genesis account so this spoke of more than just the tribes of Israel. But the first **seed**, for Abraham, was Isaac (*cf* Gen.21:12), and this was

the immediate object for which he trusted God. We should not miss that the word **seed** is singular (a type of Christ) and yet it spoke of **many multitudes** (nations; ethnic groups). We will see the word **many** again in chapter 5.

Campbell (ibid p 742) points out that, in this verse, Paul connects Gen. 17:5 with Gen. 15:5. The rhetorical significance of this is that, by connecting them, Paul is joining the passage which includes the aspect of God's covenant with Abraham that involved circumcision (Gen. 17:10ff) with the previous giving of the Promise (where Abraham **trusted** God) that happened before Abraham was circumcised (Gen. 15:5). In this way

Paul has side-stepped his opponents potential objection that circumcision was involved in the Promise – while, in fact, it came later – so Paul’s argument in vs. 10, above, still stands. Campbell further observes that Isaac was the object of Abraham’s expectation in both of these passages.

**19. And so, not being weak** (without strength; infirm) **in this faith, trust and loyalty, he attentively considered** (studied, thought and perceived down upon) **his own body by this time** (or: already) **having been made dead** (or: deadened), **subsisting in the circumstances of** (or: beginning to be under the possession of) **about one**

**hundred years, as well as (or: also; and; even) the state of deadness (or: deadening) of Sarah's womb. [cf Gen. 21:5]**

Hear we have the reason why Paul said in vs. 17 that Abraham **believed the One making the dead ones alive**. The verb, "**having been made dead**" is in the perfect tense. It was already a completed action – that was Abraham's condition, and Sarah's womb was in a **state of deadness**, too. Their bodies had to be "raised from the state of reproductive deadness" in order to produce a son. Abraham **attentively considered** their situation, but Paul says that he was **not being weak in this**

**faith, trust, and loyalty** to God's Promise to him. Paul raises this topic again in 9:9, below, where he cites Gen. 18:14, “a son [Isaac] will exist in and by Sarah.”

Just as the Promise generated faith and strength in Abraham, and then generated life in his reproduction system – all of which was an eschatological, generous, giving act of God within which Abraham participated – so also our faith is generated out of our participation in the eschatological, gracious, giving act of God in Christ. (*cf* Campbell, *ibid* p 758) In both stories, God is the initiator and the doer of what is accomplished. There is no volunteering involved on our part,

even as there was not on the part of Abraham.

**20. So he was not divided in his judgment by unbelief with a view to God's Promise** (or: but by and in lack of trust he was not separated or undecided in view of, and with regard to, God's Promise; or: yet unto God's Promise he did not waiver or doubt in disloyalty), **but on the contrary, he was empowered and enabled by faith** (or: in trust; for conviction; with loyalty), **giving glory** (or: an opinion; an estimation; credit) **to God and a reputation for God,**  
**He was empowered and enabled by the faith** that was imparted into him by the

Promise that God gave to him. In 10:17, below, we read,

**"the faithfulness** (or: the trust and faith; confidence; loyalty) [**comes or arises**] **from out of the midst of, or from within, hearing, yet the hearing [comes] through a gush-effect of Christ, even through the result of a flow which is Christ** (or: through Christ's utterance; through something spoken concerning Christ; or: by means of a declaration which is anointed, or from Christ; through a word uttered which is Christ; [other MSS: God's speech])."

This is how Abraham got faithfulness, and how he came to believe. God spoke to him. Because of this, **unbelief** (or lack of trust or disloyalty) **did not divide his judgment**. So he did not waiver or doubt in regard to the Promise that God had made him. The **Promise** gave him the ability for conviction and equipped him with faith and loyalty.

The last clause, about **giving glory and a reputation to God**, stands in stark contrast to what is described about humans in 1:21, 23, above. The difference is the impartation of **faith**. That **empowered** him to trust God for a resurrection within his body, and also within Sarah's. It gave him inner ability

(*en-dunamoō*) in (or, within the midst or sphere of) trust. Trust became the realm within which Abraham lived, and made him faithful. These insights come from the potential functions of the prepositional phrase of **faith** (trust; conviction; loyalty) in the dative case, expressed by the prepositions **by**, **in**, **for** or **with**. Each of these readings make sense to the context and give us a fuller view of what God's **Promise** did for Abraham. By implication, Paul's argument implies that God's promises in Christ will do the same for us.

Kirk instructs us (*ibid*, p 73),

"Abraham's fatherhood comes through God giving Abraham a

seed by giving life to the dead....  
that through Abraham's 'dead'  
body new life came in the person  
of Isaac" – the child of Promise  
(Gal. 4:28, 29).

**21. and being carried to full conviction  
and assurance that what He had  
promised He continuously exists being  
capable and powerful to do (to make;  
to perform).**

Notice the passive voice of the  
participle: **being carried to full  
conviction and assurance.** This was  
Gods' Word, the Promise, which gave  
him the conviction and assurance that  
carried him forward in God's plan. It  
was the assurance that God was fully

**capable to do what He had promised.**

Verse 17b, above, informs us about what Abraham was assured that God would do in regard to his and Sarah's bodies: give life so that they could produce a son. But folks do not get that kind of faith and assurance without hearing a word from God. Because it was God that spoke this promise to him, Abraham became convinced and assured that God could be trusted.

**22. Wherefore** (or: Through which; For this reason), **also, from logical consideration it was and is entered into the leger of his story, in him, into participation in a generous act of right relationship within the path that [God]**

**was indicating**

(or: was viewed in him as having been brought into an eschatological deliverance; is reasonably credited into righteous existence; or: was accounted to him [to have entered] into right thinking and conduct; or: is concluded for him as being turned in the right direction; or: = was reckoned into rightwised covenant-participation).

Abraham's situation and condition, described in the verses above, instructs us concerning **participation in a generous act of right relationship within the path that [God] was**

**indicating** (etc.; note the parenthetical expansion; Gr.: *dikaio<sup>s</sup>une*). It is not a judicial pronouncement, but a state of being; it is a relationship with God and participation in His purposes. It is an action of God upon us that puts us on His Path (or: Way), which delivers us, turns us in the right direction and which then enables right thinking and well-ordered conduct. For Abraham it was a state of “being in covenant” because of God's Promise which created the covenant, and then God's faithfulness to that promise in imparting faith by His Word (which engendered faith in Abraham) and which gave birth to faithfulness and loyalty from being pointed in the right direction

(the purpose of God) and being joined to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17). For us, it is kingdom life within the new creation (or: within Christ). What God promised was an act of grace which put Abraham on the path toward its fulfilment. I see the **leger** (from *logizomai*) as the scroll of Abraham's life; it is the "account" of the encounter with God that is described in Gen. 15, which is inscribed in the core of his being. His personal story became participation, written as a prophecy, in God's intended generous act first to Abraham, and then the later fulfilment (the giving of His Son to us) which demonstrated His right relationship with His creation – via a

path that led to Christ. In Gal. 5:22 Paul lists faith-trust-faithfulness-loyalty-conviction-etc. as one of the qualities and aspects of the fruit of God's Spirit and Attitude. God is the source of faith and belief, which in turn "rightwise" us and places us within the covenant of His purposes.

God's Word always creates a new reality – for humanity, and for the universe. The Word of Yahweh came to Abraham in a vision (Gen. 15:1ff) and spoke what was going to happen. This speaking was an act of God. Its fulfillment would be, as Campbell puts it, "a life-creating event" – the birth of Isaac. Campbell connects this with the

term *dikaiosune* (which I render “**participation in a generous act of right relationship within the path that [God] was indicating, etc.**” here) and concludes that “Isaac *is* God’s righteous and saving act – His grace toward Abraham” (ibid p 749; emphasis his). God moved Abraham and Sarah into this new reality – the **rightwisedness** of God: His fair and generous dealing with Abraham. Suddenly, they are a family created by the Promise. Campbell views this story of Abraham as a type of Christ (an “underlying narrative” – ibid p 753): His faithfulness and God’s resurrecting power working in Him. It is not the story

of a Christian; the follower of Jesus does not follow the pattern of Abraham, but rather is included in the fulfillment of the Promise. Paul associates us with Isaac in Gal. 4:28 – “children of the Promise.”

The Promise made to Abraham, that his seed will be like the number of the stars (Gen. 15:5) and that he would be “fruitful” and that God would “make nations” of him (Gen. 17:6) echo the blessings of humanity and the directive to be “fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1:28). Paul picks up the theme of Adam in the next chapter. In Adam we have a story of creation, and then death. Abraham is chosen to be another picture of a father

of multitudes, but the Promise is fulfilled when he is in a deadened condition – unable to produce life (offspring) in the normal way. But from this death in his body God brings resurrection life: a son who will produce a nation, who in turn will produce multitudes. In Abraham we have a story of another “Adam,” starting a new race. Again, he is a type of Christ whose resurrection life begins a whole new creation and a new covenant. *Cf* 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 45-49.

**23. Now it was not written because of him only, that, "it was and is logically considered for him (reckoned, concluded and accounted to him; it was put to his account)," [Gen. 15:6]**

**24. but rather (or: on the contrary) because of us also, for whom, in whom, with whom and to whom it is constantly about to be logically considered (or: it continues being about to be put on account) for, in and to the folks continually believing, constantly trusting, habitually expressing covenant allegiance and progressively relying upon the One rousing and raising Jesus, our Lord, forth from out of the midst of dead folks –**

Now here is where Paul brings his argument home to the Roman community (and, to us). Kirk observes,

"The point of connection between Paul's audience and Abraham is

the God who raised Jesus from the dead. Only this act of God explains the language Paul uses to describe Abraham, Sarah and the God of Abraham's faith.

Resurrection is God's means of fulfilling his purpose to bless Abraham with a great family comprised of all nations" (ibid p 72).

But the story of Abraham, as read by Paul (in this chapter, above), shows us an event of God intervening in history to bring life from the dead procreative abilities of Abraham and Sarah, which Paul saw as a foreshadowing of the eschatological gift of "life from the

dead” for the whole of humanity, through the Messiah – the ultimate fulfillment of the Promise made to Abraham.

Note the corporate “us” – all those (Jews and Gentiles, alike) that now inhabit the promised new creation.

Campbell (ibid p 746) points us to the characteristics and life of a Christian “believer” that Paul describes in 24b (as I have expanded them): **continually believing, constantly trusting, habitually expressing covenant allegiance and progressively relying upon [God]**. But recall that this comes by, in and with God’s empowerment (vs. 20, above).

25. **[He] who was handed** (delivered)

**over through and because of the effects of our falls to the side (or: with a view to and for the sake of the results of our stumblings aside, transgressions and offenses), and yet was roused and raised up through and because of our eschatological deliverance, being placed in the Way pointed out and turned in the right direction**

(or: for the benefit of our being made to be just; or: on behalf of our justifying, leading to freedom from guilt; or: for the purpose of our being brought into equity and right relationship: a rightwising of solidarity in covenant inclusion and participation).

The first clause about the Messiah being **handed over** refers to the cross and the death of Jesus. This happened **through and because of us**. And then His resurrection happened **through and because of us**. Paul uses the same preposition in both clauses, but what do they signify?

In the first place, it was **the effects of our falls to the side** that brought about His crucifixion. In the first act of the new creation, it was **our eschatological deliverance** (being raised with Him), **being placed in the Way pointed out** (i.e., placed in Christ) **and turned in the right direction** (toward the Father, and following Christ) that brought about His

resurrection. This last seems inconceivable. What does Paul mean? Let us consider the alternate ways of saying this that are on offer. As to His resurrection:

- a) it was for the benefit of our being made to be just
- b) it was on behalf of our justifying, leading to freedom from guilt
- c) it was for the purpose of our being brought into equity and right relationship
- d) it was through a rightwising of solidarity in covenant inclusion and participation.

Was "solidarity" perhaps the real key here? Below, in 6:3, we read,

**"Or are you continuing to be ignorant (are you remaining without experiential knowledge; do you continue not knowing) that as many of we who are immersed (or: were at one point baptized) into Christ Jesus are immersed (or: were then baptized) into His death?"**

If we were/are (the aorist tense) immersed into His death, then that means that He took us to the cross with Him, it being our stumblings aside and off the path, our transgressions and our offenses that were the means **through** which He was delivered to the cross, over our situation. He entered into solidarity with

us, so that we would be in solidarity with Him. Thus, what happened to Him happened to us: we were already part of His body – He and all of humanity were one corporate Adam (1 Cor. 15:42-49). That being the case, since it was our Father's good pleasure and purpose to resurrect all of humanity into the Way pointed out, i.e., into Christ, Jesus was raised up **through** our being placed into the new arrangement. It was "a rightwising of solidarity in covenant inclusion." He was raised **because of** US.

Paul explained to the community in Corinth,

**"Now you folks are, and**

**continuously exist being, forth from out of the midst of Him – within and in union with Christ Jesus, Who came to be (or: is birthed) wisdom in and among us (or: to us; for us), from God: both a rightwising, eschatological deliverance into righted, covenantal existence in fair relationships of equity in the Way pointed out (or: likewise a just Act from God) and a being set-apart to be different, even a redemptive liberation" – 1 Cor. 1:30.**

**Christ Jesus came to be... a rightwising, eschatological deliverance into**

**righted, covenantal existence in fair relationships of equity in the Way pointed out** (or: likewise a just Act from God). He became that which was the reason and the means for us becoming this very same thing. Note, too, that we exist from the midst of Him, and are within and in union with Him. In another letter to Corinth, Paul instruct us,

**"for you see, He made** (or: formed; makes) **the One not at any point knowing failure** (sin; error; mistake) **by intimate experience [to take the place of; to be] failure over us and our [situation]** (or: He constructed

[as] a sin [offering], for our sake, the Person who was not at that point having an experiential knowledge of missing the target or making a mistake), **to the end that WE may be birthed** (come into existence being; come to be) **God's rightwised qualities** (God's right relationship with fair and equitable dealing which accords to the Way pointed out; God's justice; God's way it should be, with well-ordered living and right thinking; also: = participants in a covenant from God), **within Him and in union with Him"** (2 Cor. 5:21).

Here Paul says that the purpose was for US to come into existence being **God's rightwised qualities** (etc.).

The reason for our solidarity with, and our union in, Christ is:

**"For thus God loves the aggregate of humanity** (the universe; the ordered arrangement; the organized system [of life and society]; the world), **so that He gives His uniquely-born** [with other MSS: the only-begotten] **Son..."** (John 3:16a).

Kirk observes that "By casting the Abraham narrative in these terms Paul ties Abraham's righteousness together with faith in resurrection... Because

Paul articulates Abraham's situation as one of death, God's identity as resurrector is proven throughout Paul's renarration of the story" (ibid p 74, 75). He also points us to 8:10, below, where we see a similar construction to vs. 25:

**"But since Christ (or: Yet if [the Anointing) [is] within you folks, on the one hand the body is dead (lifeless) BECAUSE OF sin (through failure, deviation and missing the target), yet on the other hand, the Spirit, Attitude and Breath-effect [is] Life BECAUSE OF an eschatological act of justice that brought a rightwising deliverance into**

**equitable, covenantal relationships within the Way pointed-out** (or: on account of the liberating Turn into the Right Direction, [Its] rightness and [being indwelt with] Righteousness)."

Paul's correlation of "**handed (delivered) over**" with the topic of "**eschatological deliverance, being placed in the Way pointed out and turned in the right direction (etc.)**" may be an echo of Isa. 53:

5. Now He was wounded through and because of our failures (sins; deviations), and He was weakened and made sick through

our acts of lawlessness: child-training and discipline, which had a view to our peace, [came] upon Him; by His bruise we were suddenly and miraculously healed.

6. All we, like sheep, have wandered astray – humanity has strayed in, with and by his own road (path; way) – and so [the] Lord (= Yahweh) handed (or: delivered) Him over into our failures (by our errors; to our deviations; to be associated with our missing of the Target; for our sins)....

10. So [the] Lord (= Yahweh) continued purposing to cleanse

Him from the blow: If you folks would give [an offering] concerning [those] failures (deviations; sins; etc.), the soul of you folks (or: your corporate life) will see and perceive a long-lived Seed (or: offspring).

11. And yet [the] Lord kept on purposing to take away from the pain of His soul and then to point out and demonstrate Light in and by Him, and thus to shape and mold understanding.

And so He himself will continue bearing their failures (etc.) [in order] to bring eschatological deliverance (or: to institute the

Way pointed out; to demonstrate fairness and equity; to establish righted relationships) in and by [the] Just One ([the] Fair Person; [the] One who is pointed in the right direction) – the One continuously slaving-well for and among [the] Many.

12. Because of this, He himself will continue inheriting [the] Many and will keep on causing [the] Many to inherit, and thus will progressively divide the spoils of and from the strong folks, because His soul was handed (delivered) over into death and He was considered and

viewed (or: reckoned as being) among the lawless. So through and because of their failures (sins; etc.) He was handed (delivered) over, and thus He himself took up and carried [the] failures (sins; etc.) of [the] Many. [LXX, JM]

The fact that verse 5 of this passage in Isa. uses the noun “bruise” in the singular, along with the aorist tense of the verb (signifying punctiliar action that describes a snapshot of a point in time), I suggest that this is referring to His death on the cross – which would in one act of God bring healing to humanity’s condition and situation: His eschatological deliverance that instituted

the new creation. In discussing this with Lynda, she called to mind the “bruising” (or: “crushing”) of Gen. 3:15b (in KJV & Rotherham, respectively; the Tanakh reads “strike at” [one reading of the LXX reads “strike;” other LXX MSS read *tereō*: keep in view; watch; heed; or: guard; keep in custody; or: preserve; protect; keep intact]). Paul’s arguments bring much to our minds, as they would have to his first listeners. Campbell insightfully points out that he was not giving a critique of Judaism here, but is rather “supplying a Christian account of Abraham” (ibid p 759). Paul continues this argument in the next chapter.



## Chapter 5

1. **Being, then, folks that were eschatologically delivered and rightwised** (placed in the right relationship of [covenantal] solidarity in the Way pointed out and made fair, equitable, just, free from guilt and turned in the right direction) **from the midst of [His] faithfulness, out of trust and from conviction, we continuously hold and progressively have** [other MSS: let us (or: we can and should) habitually retain and enjoy] **peace and harmony face to face with God** (or: [directing and conducting us] toward God), **through our Owner and Lord, Jesus**

**Christ** (or: Master, [the] Anointed Jesus),

From 3:21 to this chapter, Paul has presented arguments concerning the new righteousness in Christ: the rightwised existence in the Way pointed out which also includes membership and participation in the new arrangement (covenant), which is the new existence of being "in Christ," the last Adam. The argument here begins from the reality of this new creation: **being folks that were eschatologically delivered and rightwised and place in the right relationship of covenantal solidarity in the Christ**, which includes being turned in the right direction, being freed from

guilt and made to be just.

But before moving on, take note of the passive voice of the participle, **being... eschatologically delivered and rightwised**. This was an act of God when He buried us within Christ, and then resurrected us, within Him. Also take in the fact that this came **from the midst of His faithfulness**, and **out of trust as well as from conviction** – all which was Christ's. As a result, we **continuously hold and possess PEACE and harmony: FACE to FACE with God**. What a staggering concept for anyone to consider. The preposition used here, in this phrase, is the same one used of the Word (Logos), in John 1:1,

**"And the Logos (the idea; the thought; the expression; the Word) was facing, [directed, and moving] toward, (or: continued being face to face with) God."**

Our new condition and existence came about **"through [being in] our Owner and Lord, Jesus the Messiah."**

This is what being in the new covenant means. It is the newly created Garden of Eden (the Paradise into which Jesus entered on the day of His death – Lu. 23:43); it is the heavenly (spiritual) holy of holies of God's many membered body where Christ, as the Anointed Chief Priest of the Melchizedek order, entered within our beings and sprinkled His

blood on our hearts (Heb. 10:22).

The **peace-and-harmony** describes our new inner condition because of being **one spirit**, which is the result of "**being habitually glued in intimate union with, and in ourselves continuously welded to and within the Lord**" (1 Cor. 6:17).

His presence creates this peace. This is what Jesus promised to His disciples in John 14:27,

**"I am continuously sending off (releasing away; hurling off) peace to (or: for; by; in; with) you people. My peace I am constantly giving to you (or: in, by, for you folks)..."**

Inward unity – the very unity which the

Son enjoys with the Father – is a quality of this new rightwised existence. It is the wholeness that attends our deliverance. And because of this union-based peace that is derived from the Lord, we can now transfer this peace and harmony to others. We become extensions of the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6), who is "**the Prince and Ruler of the kings of the earth**" (Rev. 1:5). His kingdom and reign is one of peace, for He is "**King of peace and harmony**" (Heb. 7:2). We see all of this in the words of Jesus in John 16:33,

**"I have spoken these things to you so that you may continuously have (hold; possess) peace centered in, within the**

**midst of and in union with Me. Within the System** (controlling world of culture, religion, economy and government) **you normally have pressure and stress** (or: continually have squeezing; repeatedly have tribulation and oppression), **but nonetheless, be confident and take courage! I Myself have overcome and conquered the System** (dominating world; organized arrangement of religion and society; aggregate of humanity) **so that it stands a completed victory!"**

This peace-and-harmony is also the result of God reconciling us to Himself, through the cross:

**"God was existing within Christ**  
(God was and continued being in  
union with [the] Anointed One)  
**progressively and completely**  
**transforming [the] aggregate of**  
**humanity (or: world) to be other**  
**[than it is]** (or: progressively  
bringing [the] ordered System into  
another level or state; repeatedly  
changing [the] universe to  
correspond with other [conditions;  
perceptions]; progressively  
altering [the] ordered arrangement  
of culture, religions, economy and  
government to be in line with  
another one; habitually and  
progressively changing [the]

secular realm [of humanity] from enmity to friendship; reconciling [the] world [of mankind]) **in Himself, to Himself, for Himself and by Himself, not accounting to them** (not putting to their account; not logically considering for them; not reasoning in them) **the results and effects of their falls to the side** (their trespasses and offences), **even placing within us the Word** (the Idea; the Reason; the message) **of the corresponding transformation to otherness** (or: the full alteration; the change from enmity to friendship; the conciliation)." – 2

Cor. 5:19

"Rom. 5:1-11 announces briefly what 8:1-39 develops more extensively" (Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 2, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968 p 305). Kirk see this as a transitional section from the past work of Christ to the present situation for the covenant community (ibid p 85).

**2. through Whom, also, we have had and now hold the conducted approach and access (or: the act of bringing toward to gain entrée), by [His] faithfulness (or: in this trust; with that confidence; for loyalty), into this grace and joyous favor within which we have stood and in union with which we**

**now stand, and so we keep on celebrating, speaking loudly and boasting upon the expectation (or: expectant hope) of God's glory (the manifestation from God which calls forth praise; from the splendor, which is God; and: from God's good reputation; of the opinion from God; from the imagination which has the quality of God).**

It was within the holy of holies that Moses met face to face with Yahweh (e.g., Ex. 34:34; Lev. 1:1), and this act of the Messiah conducted us to this same figurative place (within Him). Recall Rev. 1:6, that He "**made** (formed; created; produced) **us [to be] a**

**kingdom** (or: sovereign reign; [other MSS: constructed of us a kingdom which brings sovereign influence]): **priests in** (or: by; for; with) **His God and Father.**" We have face-to-face access to God, as did Moses,

"And Yahweh spoke unto Moses fact to face, as a human speaks unto his friend" (Ex. 33:11; *cf* Deut. 34:10).

It was as a "**faithful** (or: loyal) **Chief Priest**" (Heb. 2:17) – who "**continuously being faithful by and loyal to and in the One forming** (making; creating; constructing; establishing; producing; [in LXX the same word as Gen. 1:1]) **Him, even as**

**Moses [was loyal] within His (or: his) whole house" (Heb. 3:2) by [His] faithfulness** to undergo the death on the cross – that He brought us **into this grace and joyous favor**. And so it is this new state of being that **we now stand and keep on celebrating by boasting upon the expectation of God's glory**.

The imagery of **conducted approach and access** is also “kingship language” – we have audience with the King of kings. We **stand in favor** with the King of the universe. This brings to mind 8:31b, below. “Who or what can be against us?” This same noun is used in Eph. 2:18,

**“that (or: because) through Him we, The Both, continuously have (hold and possess) the procurement of access (conduct toward the presence; admission, being led), within one Spirit (or: in union with one Breath-effect and Attitude), to (or: toward; face to face with) the Father.”**

We find the verb used in 1 Pet. 3:

**18. because even Christ (or: considering that Messiah also) died [other MSS: suffered], once for all, concerning and in relation to failures to hit the target (about errors and mistakes; around and encompassing sins**

[some MSS: our failures; other MSS: your failures]) – **a Just One** (a rightwised One; One in accord with the Way pointed out; a fair and equitable individual) **over [the situation of]** (or: for the sake of) **unjust ones** (capsized folks; those out of accord with the Way pointed out; unfair and inequitable people) – **to the end that He at once may bring** (or: can lead; would conduct) **you folks** [other MSS: us] **to** (or: toward; to be face to face with) **God. [He], on the one hand, being put to death in flesh** (= a physical body), **yet on the other**

**hand, being made alive in spirit**  
(or: indeed, being put to death by  
flesh {or: = the estranged human  
condition}, yet, being engendered  
a living one by Breath-effect {or:  
[the] Spirit}).

In the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews we find  
the tabernacle/temple context clearly  
described:

**19. Therefore, having freedom,  
openness and boldness of speech  
which comes from being  
citizens, brothers (= fellow  
members), with a view to the  
Entrance of the set-apart places**  
(or: into the Pathway-into the  
midst, pertaining to the Holiest

Place, which is the separated ones and which pertains to the sacred folks) – **within and in union with the blood of Jesus...** [and]

**22. we can be continuously and progressively approaching with a true heart in union with full-assurance from the completed act of faithfulness** (or: centered within [the] full-carrying from [His] loyalty and fidelity), **the hearts having been sprinkled from a misery-gushed consciousness of what is evil or unserviceable** (or: a joint-knowledge full of labor; a conscience in a bad condition),

**and then the body having been bathed in and by clean water.**

Access into the holy of holies, in the tabernacle, was through the inner veil, upon which was embroidered cherubim (Ex.26:31:ff). We saw the cherubim for the first time in Gen. 3:24, where they were stationed to guard the entrance of the Garden of Eden, “to continuously guard, protect, preserve, watch over and keep in custody the Way (Path; Road) of the tree of the Life” (LXX, JM). The Garden can be figuratively seen as a proto-tabernacle/temple – and, throughout the Scriptures, gardens, trees, vineyards, and other agricultural metaphors are figures of humanity. Paul

again brings up this story in vs. 12, below.

When we see the word **expectation** (or: expectant hope) we think of something that is future, as we should. But this need not be some distant future. We read in 2 Cor. 3:18 that an ongoing process is happening to us in regard to **God's glory**:

**"But we all, ourselves – having a face that has been uncovered and remains unveiled [note: as with Moses, before the Lord, Ex. 34:34] – being folks who by a mirror are continuously observing, as ourselves, the Lord's [= Yahweh's or Christ's]**

**glory** (or: being those who progressively reflect – from ourselves as by a mirror – the glory of [our] Owner), **are presently being continuously and progressively transformed into the very same image, from glory into glory – in accord with and exactly as – from [the] Lord's Breath-effect** (or: from [the] Spirit and Attitude of [the] Lord [= Christ or Yahweh])."

We expect that this transformation will continuously and progressively happen, here and now. 1 Pet. 5:10 instructs us that God's glory is **within Christ Jesus**, or, "in union with" the Messiah, and we

now enjoy this union with Him. In 5:1 Peter tells us that he was then

**"a person of common being and existence from the glory (or: a partner of the manifestation which will call forth praise; a fellow participant who has a common share and fellowship which is the glory) being presently about to be progressively unveiled (revealed; or: disclosed)."**

Furthermore, Col. 1:27 informs us that the **expectation of glory** is Christ within and in the midst of us – which is a present experience. And in 2 Cor. 8:23 we find,

**"So whether concerning Titus –**

**my partner** (person of common being and existence) **and co-worker [dispensing] into you people – or whether our brothers** (= fellow believers), **[they are] those sent forth pertaining to the called-out folks: Christ's glory** (or: [these are] emissaries and representatives who belong to the called-out communities – a good reputation for the Anointed One and a manifestation which brings Him praise)."

The woman (Christ's bride) is the glory of the Man (the last Adam) – 1 Cor. 11:7. In Eph. 3:21, Paul explains that,

**"by Him** (to Him; for Him; in Him; with Him) **[is] the glory** (the manifestation which calls forth praise) **within the called-out community** (the summoned-forth congregation) **as well as within Christ Jesus: unto** (or: [proceeding] into) **all the generations** (births; progenies) **of the Age of the ages** (= the most significant, or crowning, Age of all the ages)!"

And then Jesus affirms,

**"I Myself have given to them** (or: in them), **and they now possess, the glory** (the notion; the opinion; the imagination; the

reputation; the manifestation which calls forth praise) **which You have given to Me**" (John 17:22).

With all of this in mind, it appears that a proper reading of the phrase, **the expectation of God's glory**, would be more in line with the ideas that we see in the alternative renderings, i.e., expectations:

- a) of the manifestation from God (i.e., something He will do) which calls forth praise;
- b) from the splendor, which is God (as He manifests Himself in us, and to us);
- c) from God's good reputation

(what we expect Him to do,  
because of who He is);

d) of the opinion from God (which  
will inform us about current  
situations);

e) from the imagination which has  
the quality of God (which will  
instruct us).

All of these potential expectations can  
be experienced and manifested in the  
here and now.

Mark Eaton comments, "I feel that it is  
an ever-expanding Glory that builds our  
expectation as we attempt to frame in  
our thinking the 'ever-increasing' that  
builds and builds, as the Way is pointed  
out, and... that Glory becomes clearer

and clearer."

**3. So not only this, but further, we also keep on celebrating, speaking loudly and boasting within the pressures, while exulting in ordeals, afflictions and tribulations, having seen and thus knowing that the pressure (or: the ordeal, affliction or tribulation) is habitually producing (working down; accomplishing) a relentless remaining (or: abiding and dwelling) under [situations and circumstances] (or: humble and persistent endurance and fortitude as we get through it, as well as the patient ability to give support).**  
Here Paul moves his argument to the area of ethics – behavior within our

experiences. What is produced from walking the Path through various **ordeals, afflictions and tribulations** is **glory** for, and praise to, God as these **pressures habitually produce** fruit from His Spirit. The first one he lists is **relentless remaining under** whatever He brings to us, as He enables us to endure and patiently give support to others who are likewise experiencing hard times or suffering.

4. **Yet the remaining and abiding under [produces] a quality of being approved by testing** (= maturity of character); **in turn, the quality of being approved by testing [produces] expectation and hope.**

Notice this beautiful chain reaction from the effect of His Breath in our lives. The expression of His life in **remaining and abiding under** (etc.) produces maturity of character as we are **tested** by God, and from being in union with Christ we experience **the quality of being approved**. This is the joy that has been set before us as we endure the "crosses" (or, crises) that He places in our paths. This encouragement from approval by testing, and its resultant mature character, produces in us **expectation** for the path that lies ahead of us. We are given **hope** for the days ahead, based upon His faithfulness to us in the days behind us. This is why Israel was given

feasts to celebrate: they provided memorials to the fact that humanity can depend upon God. And likewise now, with us, His success in bringing us through ordeals and afflictions engenders expectation.

**5. Now the expectation** (or: expectant hope) **does not habitually bring down shame** (disgrace; dishonor; thus: disappointment), **because God's love** (the urge toward reunion and the unambiguous, uniting acceptance from God) **has been poured out in a gush and shed forth so that it now floods within our hearts, permeating the core of our being, through the Set-apart Breath-effect** (or: Holy Spirit; Sacred

Attitude) **being given to us** (in us; for us).

Observe first of all that **the expectation** is related to what is continuously going on in our lives. Paul assures us that this expectant hope does not bring shame, disgrace, disappointment or dishonor to us. Next observe that he is relating all of this to one of the key ingredients of 1<sup>st</sup> century life in the Roman Empire: honor versus shame. No matter what outside groups may say about the covenant community, in Christ it is a life of honor and fulfillment of expectations in Him. The reason for this honor and fulfillment is **because God's love has been poured out in a gush and shed forth so that it**

**now floods within our hearts,**  
**permeating the core of our being.** This  
is the glory of God: His very being,  
Love, has filled and permeated us to our  
very core.

In the parenthetical expansion I have  
given the definitions for the word **love**  
(*agape*) gleaned from Paul Tillich's  
*Systematic Theology*: the urge toward  
reunion (with God and other people). In  
the second definition I rendered the  
word **God** as an ablative, so we get the  
reading, "the unambiguous, uniting  
acceptance from God." These qualities  
of and from God have been **poured out**  
**in a gush** into us. This is a part of what  
vs. 1, above, is speaking – it is a part of

being placed into Christ: the Way pointed out. He has placed us into Christ and filled us with Himself: love, the urge toward reunion, and unambiguous acceptance of others.

This was all done **through the Holy Spirit** (Set-apart Breath-effect) **being given to us**. Here, again, we see the other potential functions of the dative case: in us; for us. All three prepositions fit in this context, giving different aspects of God's gift of Himself to, in and for us. Since the word "spirit" can also mean an "attitude," we should consider the fact that we should now have a Sacred attitude (one that is set apart from enslaved living) – which

elsewhere Paul has termed "the mind of Christ."

**6. For during our yet existing [as] weak folks and continuing in being without strength** (or: [B reads: Since in fact] when we were infirm, and thus helpless), **Christ, still corresponding to and in accord with [the] appointed season** (or: down from a *kairos*; in the sphere of and down into the level of a fitting situation; in line with a fertile moment), **died for the sake of the ungodly and irreverent** (or: died over [the situation of] and on behalf of those without awe of God).

Notice the all-inclusive solidarity in the pronoun **our**. He calls to mind the

existence of humanity before the death of the Messiah on the cross. Here he terms people as being **weak** and **without strength, infirm**, and thus, helpless. But the end of the age came, the fertile moment and the fitting situation arrived. It was the **season** for the advent of the Messiah whose cosmic purpose and destiny was to **die for the sake of**, or on behalf of, these weak folks who, because of their infirm and helpless condition, were **ungodly and irreverent**. The parenthetical expansion gives a more literal picture, for the preposition is **over**. He died over our situation and condition. Being "dead in trespasses and sin" (Eph. 2:1), we were

"without awe of God."

This is the reason that He died. It was not to satisfy "God's justice," rather, it was "a just act of God." God's justice had already come upon humanity in the Garden of Eden, as well as is described in ch. 1:24ff. At the cross He died to change our condition and our situation: to liberate us, cleanse us and to give us life, by placing us in Him – in His new arrangement of the new creation.

**7. Now you see, with difficult toil and pain** (or: For hardly, scarcely or rarely) **for the sake of** (over [the situation of]; on behalf of) **a just person** (a righteous one; one in accord with the Way pointed out; someone in right relationship; a

rightwised one) **will someone** (anyone; a certain one) **proceed to be dying. For over** (for the sake of) **the good** (noble; virtuous) **person or cause, perhaps** (or: possibly) **someone** (or: a certain one) **may continue being brave enough** (daring; courageous) **to die.**

"Innocent and pious men had been martyred for their faith in the course of Jewish history (particularly during the Maccabean wars in the early second century B.C.), and Jewish thinkers had begun to interpret their deaths as a vicarious sacrifice. These exceptional acts of heroism could be understood as

being on behalf of others... [for] the righteous people of God.... to hasten the kingdom of God.... But Paul's argument has shown that there are no 'good men'..."

(Harvey, *ibid* p 514; brackets mine)

"How can Paul say this when the Bible is full of martyrs? What were they doing? In fact, the martyrs were not dying for other people but for God, and for him anyone would dare to die"

(Origen, CER 2:284, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, Vol. 6, p 133).

"The apostle makes a verbal

contrast between the *righteous* and the *good man*. But no hard-and-fast distinction should be drawn.... 'But now see what Christ has done. We were neither good nor righteous but still sinners when He died for us' (Barrett). Behind this display of saving mercy stands God's *love* which is proved to us by the cross" (F. Davidson, Ralph P. Martin, *The New Bible Commentary: Revised*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1970, p 1025, emphasis original).

**8. Yet God constantly stands together with His own love [flowing] into us**  
(or: But God continuously puts the urge

for accepting-reunion, from, and which is, Himself, together into the midst of us), **because during our still continuing to exist being** (= while we were yet) **failures** (folks deviating from the goal; ones missing the target and making mistakes; sinners; outcasts), **Christ died over our [condition and predicament]** (or: on our behalf; for the sake of us).

"What Paul says here makes no sense unless Jesus, in his life and death, was the very incarnation, the 'enfleshment' (that's what 'incarnation' means) of the living, loving God.... If the death of the Messiah demonstrates how much God loves us, that can only be

because the Messiah is the fully human being (how much more human can you get than being crucified?) in whom the living God is fully present" (Wright, *ibid* p 86).

"Here is Emmanuel, God with us; and God commendeth His love towards us – while we were yet sinners. That is to say, apart from our capacity to receive it, apart from our competence to hear the communication and to accept His love" (Barth, *ibid* p 162).

Verse 7 is simply setting a rhetorical backdrop to be in contrast with the extreme **love [flowing] into us** (vs. 8).

The former describes cultural or relational examples of how **someone may perhaps continue brave enough to die** for the sake of another person.

Then Paul nails home his point: **Yet God** (or: But God)... Verse 8 is the rhetorical device of restatement which is meant to emphasize his point. The first clause restates vs. 5b; the last clause restates vs. 6. But in vs. 8 he stresses that **God constantly stands together with His own love**, or, "continuously puts the urge for accepting-reunion from Himself, and which is Himself, together INTO the MIDST of us." This love comes from Him. He stands it together with our situation, and puts His love, His very

substance (for God IS love), INTO us. What a picture of making us "other than we were." This is eschatological deliverance: God inserts Himself into us and liberates us. What a "righteous" (*dikaio<sup>sune</sup>*) ACT!

Also, instead of terming us weak, infirm and without strength, Paul simply calls our prior existence as being **failures** – folks that deviated from the goal (of being God's image-bearers), etc.

9. **Much more, then – being NOW** (at the present time) **eschatologically delivered and rightwised** (turned in the right direction; placed in right relationships of solidarity; righted and made fair within the Way pointed out;

or: justified and made free from guilt;  
or: = placed in covenant) **within His blood** (or: in union with the blood from, and which is, Him) – **through Him we will continue being rescued** (saved; delivered; made healthy and whole; returned to our original state and condition; kept safe), **away from the [conditions or situations of] personal emotion** (inherent fervor; natural mental bent or disposition; teeming passion and swelling desire; or: [our] anger and [human] wrath).

Arguing from the lesser to the greater, Paul builds his argument with "**much more, then,**" and proceeds restating his grounding statement of vs. 1 with the

passive participle of the same verb, saying "**being NOW eschatologically delivered and rightwised** (etc.)." The **NOW** (*nun*) is used to stress "at the present time," as opposed to some future event. This is our condition in the present age, the age of the Messiah. The idea of "already, not yet" is the creation of theologians.

The phrase "**within His blood**" reaches back to 3:25, above, and the atoning aspect of the "**sheltering, cleansing cover** (= atonement) **through the faithfulness** (or: the trust, faith and loyalty) **resident within His blood.**" He is building this argument upon his previous one, and thus also calling to

their minds the Messiah's faithfulness in fulfilling the promises given to Abraham (ch. 4).

Where in vs. 5 God's love comes through the Holy Spirit, we see here that the **rescue, healing, salvation and safety** came to us in the Messiah's **blood** (in which is His life). We were rightwised from His faithfulness (vs. 1) and given peace with conducted approach and access (vs. 2) which brought us into a place of living with expectation (vs. 4) with His love flooding our hearts (vs. 5). I have followed A.T. Robertson in classifying the future tense as durative (or: lineal), along with the present and imperfect

tenses (*A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, Broadman Press, 1934, pp liii, 888). Thus I used the auxiliary (**continue being**) with the verb **rescued**. Deliverance, salvation, rescue, restoration to health and wholeness, being kept safe are all aspects of Christ's initial work upon people, but this initiates a process that **He will continue**.

But what are we **rescued FROM**? From **the personal emotion**. Whose personal emotion? Traditional theology has said this was deliverance from God's wrath. But the text does not specify this. My parenthetical expansion gives the

semantic range of the word **personal emotion**. So is God delivering us from His own mental bent, anger, wrath or inherent fervor? Or, is He delivering us from OUR own **personal emotions**? See the discussion on this topic under 1:18, above.

God gave us His Son because of His love for us (John 3:16). He died because of OUR situation, vs. 6 & 8, above. It was His passionate Love that caused Him to come after us in our lost and destroyed condition, until He finds us and returns us home (Lu. 15). Damaged personal emotions are a constant plague among humans.

10. **For you see, since (or: if) while**

**continuously existing being actively hostile ones** (or: enemies [of people, or of God]) **we were suddenly changed from enmity to friendship by God** (or: conciliated to God; or: changed to be wholly other and to be in line, consistent and compatible IN God) **through His Son's death, much more** (or: all the more, then) **we will continue being kept safe and will be progressively delivered** (rescued; saved; cured and restored to the health and wholeness of our original state and condition) – **being folks that were conciliated** (fully changed from enmity to friendship and made totally other than we were) **within His Life** (or: in union with the life

which is Him).

"We can hear the language of an internationally inclusive redemption from exile flowing heavily from Paul. Reconciliation and salvation, from out of exile, are components of the language of justification, and Paul continues to apply it liberally to all peoples, as he also continues his self-identification with Gentiles.... All peoples could now understand themselves to have stood in exile from the Creator God, in need of reconciliation, and this recognition is what would allow them to participate in their own

exodus, thus finding yet another way to join up with Israel's self-defining story and to relate to the covenant God. As we have seen, Paul understands that God has kicked down the doors and broken down the walls that had been used to restrict entrance into the household of Abraham, now offering His reconciliation to all peoples and folding them in to His covenant and kingdom purposes." (David Byrd, Pisteos International Daily blog, Believing in Him, pt 46, 12, 21, 2011).

On this passage, Sanders makes a cogent observation:

"There is no discussion of men *repenting* in order to obtain the reconciliation for past offences, nor even to their *accepting* reconciliation: they only *receive* it" (ibid p 470; emphasis his).

Now who was having the personal emotions, anger and wrath that made them **actively hostile**? That was US! We were **continuously existing being** enemies both of people and of God. Now through the faithfulness of the Messiah, **we were suddenly CHANGED from enmity to friendship BY God**. Or, reading the dative differently, **we were conciliated TO God**. So we now can see who had the

anger and the wrath as well as all the other personal emotions that were keeping us enslaved to moods, by pent up unforgiveness, and in disturbed states of mind.

This is something more that happened **through the death of His Son**. And since this is the case, "all the more" **will we continue being kept safe and will be progressively delivered** (it is a process, a journey into the Father – ch. 11:36). Note again that we **were conciliated** – "fully changed to be totally other than we were" – **in union with His Life** (which is just another way of saying "by **His blood**"). Kirk sees in this verse a summarizing of ch. 6, below

(ibid p 89).

The verb **changed** (along with its expanded meanings) in this verse is *kat-allasso*, and Sanders appropriately discusses this verb (and the associated noun, in vs. 11, below) in a section (on Paul's theology) which he categorizes *Transfer terminology* (ibid p 463ff). Paul uses this verb in 2 Cor. 5:18, 19 and 20. The main verb, *allasso* means to change, to alter, to transform, to make other (from the stem *allos*, "other") than it was. The preposition that is prefixed to this verb, *kata-*, can be seen as an intensifier (thus: **wholly changed**) or the meanings of the preposition can be seen a qualifiers that modify the verb, as e.g.,

"to be in line, consistent and compatible" in the parenthetical expansion in this verse and in the next verse. The work of Christ transforms, changes, makes other-than-it-was, and transfers humanity into another state of existence: that of being in the second humanity (1 Cor. 15:45-49) which is governed by the kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1:13, which speaks of His **drag[ing] us out of danger, or: rescu[ing] us, forth from out of the midst of the authority of the Darkness** and then **chang[ing] our position** into the sphere of the reign of the Son of the Love which is Him). Such a change and a transfer make us His friends, instead of

our being at enmity towards Him.

**11. And not only that, but further, we also are now folks constantly celebrating, speaking loudly and boasting within, and in union with, God, through our Owner (or: Lord; Master), Jesus Christ – through Whom we NOW receive (or: actively seize; grasp; take-down and hold by hand) the [aforementioned] act of being changed from enmity to friendship**  
(or: the full exchange of being changed to be in line, consistent and compatible, where we are totally other than we were; the reconciliation; the commensurate exchange; the change, [induced by

the action of God,] which came down [upon us]).

Paul keeps on stacking up rhetorical boulders in his argument to persuade the Romans about their present reason for **celebrating** in the work of God, their **Owner – Lord and Master**. The emotional impact of **not only that, but further**, is intensified by his again using **NOW** (*nun*) with the timeless aorist tense of **receive**, take in hand, grasp, and actively seize the new reality: the aforementioned (vs. 10) **act of being changed from enmity to friendship**, along with all that is given in the parenthetical expansions. Everything begins in the **NOW** and continues on into

the future as His reign intensifies and expands. Christ finished a work that is analogous to the scientific "Big Bang" theory. One spark of resurrection life ignited a whole new creation within us. We saw this word **act of being changed** when we already quoted 2 Cor. 5:18-19, above. In 11:15, below, we read,

**"You see, since (or: if) their casting away (or: their rejection [of the good news]) [is, means or brings the] conciliation of the aggregate of humanity (the changing of the universal system to another level of existence; the complete change for the arranged order to be other than it was; the**

world's change from enmity to friendship), **what [will be] the receiving** (the acceptance; the taking or drawing toward one's self as a companion or associate) **[of them, (or: the receiving of it)] if not life forth from out of the midst of dead folks?!"**

Note how Paul ties in the work of Christ to the theme of resurrection.

This noun in 5:11 and 11:15 is *kata-allage* (act of being changed) and the verb in 5:10 is *kata-allasso*. The stem of the verb is *allos* which means "other," or "another." So the verb means "to transform; to alter; to change to be other than it was." The prefix *kata-* can be

interpreted as being an intensifier, thus we have a "complete change," or "wholly change," as from enmity to friendship, or, it can carry the sense of "another level." In Eph. 2:16 and Col. 1:20, 21, Paul prefixes this verb with a second preposition, *apo-*, which adds the significance of "movement away from" what has been, into a situation or condition that is "completely different (or, other) than what was before." I also chose the rendering **conciliation**, since this English word has the sense of relationship which is inherent in the context both here and in 11:15.

**12. Because of and through this** (or: Therefore; That is why), **just as through**

**one man** (or: So it is that, even as through the act or agency of one person,) **The Sin** (or: the failure, miss of the target and deviation from the goal) **entered into the aggregate of humanity** (ordered system of religion, culture, society and government; or: world; cosmos), **and through The Sin** (failure; the mistake; the miss of the target; the deviation) **The Death [also], in this way The Death thus also passed through in all directions** (or: came through the midst causing division and duality; went throughout) **into all mankind** (or: into the midst of humanity; or: to all people), **upon which [situation, condition, and with the**

**consequential result that] all people sin** (or: everyone failed, missed the target, fell short of the goal; or: all make mistakes and deviate from the path)

The first phrase **Because of and through this** (giving a double rendering of the force of the preposition *Dia*) tells us that what he is about to say is based upon what he established in vss. 1-11. Now he moves into an analogy, accessing the Garden of Eden story in Genesis as one side of a verbal equation: the disobedience of Adam and the consequences that followed. We will see the full equation described and the two sides contrasted in vss. 15-19, below. But now he rehearses the

sequence of the cause and then the universal effects of the first, debilitating side that began with **The Sin**.

Sin, with the definite article, **The Sin** (which alerts the hearer to the eating of the forbidden fruit – The Disobedience, we might say), is personified as something that **entered into the aggregate of humanity** (or, the world, the ordered system, etc.). But the main point of this verse is that the Sin was the vehicle for **The Death** (also personified, or presented as a force or law) to enter and **pass through in all directions** (again, the preposition *dia-* prefixed to the verb "pass; came; went"). Since a central concept of the

preposition is "two" or "divide" (from *di-*) I expanded its significance with the rendering: "came through the midst *causing division and duality.*"

So **The Death** (of which Yahweh warned Adam) "went throughout **into all mankind,**" or, it came into the midst of humanity and to all people. The two prepositions that follow this statement have caused much theological debate, but when rendered literally with an explanatory insertion the picture is very clear. These prepositions make the following clause dependant upon what just went before: the dispersion of **death**. The prepositions are *eph'* (upon) and *h<sub>o</sub>* (which). Upon which what? Here

I inserted the bracketed "[**situation, condition, and with the consequential result that**]." Here Witherington admits, "*Eph h<sub>o</sub>* could certainly have a consequential force meaning 'with the result that'" (ibid p 146). **All people sin** because of the situation of death that has pervaded all humanity. The verb is aorist, so it can also be a simple past tense. Thus the expanded renderings:

- a) everyone failed, missed the target, fell short of the goal
- b) all make mistakes and deviate from the path.

As a "past tense," the action of sinning, etc., is pictured as having been done in Adam, of which all people are members.

The view of it as present gives us the picture of individuals so doing. So we do not have a doctrine of "original sin" being passed down, but death being passed down – and the result is universal sin. The death is the "disconnect" (from conscious union with God; of the branch from the Vine), and because of "the disconnect" from the flow of spiritual life, we "mind the flesh" – which Paul instructs us is "death" (8:6, below).

E.P. Sanders cites comments presented by Max Kadushin as he makes the point that, with the character of Rabbinic thought being a part of an "organic complex," the concepts are "woven

among themselves" in such a way that they "may yield different interpretations of the same experience." As an example, Kadushin says,

"At one time, the Rabbis declare that Adam's sin is responsible for the presence of death (not sin) 'until the end of all generations,' a view determined by the concept of corporate justice; at another, they say that each man dies because of his own sin, a view determined by the concept of individual distributive justice; and at still another time, instead of regarding death as a calamity, they state that it is a moral purgative for the

world, a view determined by the concept of chastisement (p 209)" (*Organic Thinking*, quoted by Sanders, *ibid* p 73).

I suggest that Paul was arguing in this verse from the position of Kadushin's first illustration. We find in 2 Baruch 54:15,

"... Adam sinned first and has brought DEATH upon all who were not in his own time..." (*The OT Pseudepigrapha*, Vol.1, Hendrickson Publishers, 2013, translated by A.F.J. Klijn, p 640; emphasis mine).

13. – **for until** (or: you see, up to the point of; for prior to) **Law** (or: custom),

**sin** (failure; missing of the target; deviation from the goal) **continued existing within the ordered System** (world of religion, government, economy and culture; or: organized societies; or: cosmos), **yet sin** (failure; missing; deviating) **is not continuing to be logically considered** (is not being taken into account; is not habitually being put on one's account or ledger; is not continually counted), **there being** (or: existing) **no law** (or: custom).

Paul inserts this clarifying note, and then continues with his argument in vs. 14. It was only the **Law** that held trespasses against folks: God did not (2 Cor. 5:19). The Law had its place and purpose, but

it was like what you have found in my translation: a parenthetical insertion. There is no Law needed in order to have a family relationship with God. So with the coming of grace and the new arrangement, there was no score to be settled – just people that needed to be cleaned up and set into the journey of God with the life of His Spirit pointing them in the right direction, which had to do with relationships, not rules. With love and acceptance, not ordinances and division. Abraham was God's friend (Jas. 2:23) – and God made a promise to him. But his failings were not tallied up against him. He was logically considered to be in a right relationship

with God – one of faith, trust and loyalty. But a law inserts a barrier and the letter kills the relationship: it is **the strength of sin** (1 Cor. 15:55).

Witherington provides us with an instructive insight that in Romans Paul infrequently refers to Moses, "because now is the era of the new covenant" (ibid p 144).

**14. But nonetheless The Death reigned** (or: holds royal and kingly rule) **from Adam as far as and as long as Moses [= Law], even upon those not sinning** (failing to hit the target; deviating from the goal) **upon** [B and other MSS: within] **the result of that which is conformed to** (upon the

occasion of the effect of the similarity of, or in the likeness of) **the stepping aside** (or: the transgression) **of Adam – who is, and continues being, a replication** (an impress; a pattern; a type; a prefigure) **of and from the One being repeatedly** (or: always; or: progressively) **about to ... [be (?) come (?) do something (?)]** (or: the One habitually impending)

(or: which exists being an impression made by a blow from the [situation; Person; creation; realm; arrangement] progressively being about to [exist]).

**The Death** is personified, and its sway over people is made analogous to the

reign of a king. There was no direct correlation between it and how folks failed to hit the target. We see, as we saw in vs. 12, that it is death that is the culprit that was in the cup given to Jesus (Mk. 10:38; Mat. 26:39) which "**was drunk down and swallowed into Victory**" (1 Cor. 15:54). He did this to rid us of death and give us His life.

Now Paul makes an interesting statement about Adam. Adam is, and continues being, **a replication of, and from, the One...** Like all OT figures, symbols and types that prefigured the Messiah, Adam was one of these. We see that he, like Christ, was representative of the masses of humanity. His one deed affected all

humanity – and so did Christ's work on the cross. Paul will make this association clearer in the following verses as he develops this equation of opposites. Adam was intended to be made in God's image and likeness (Gen. 1:26): he was made as an impress, a pattern, a replica. We can look at his place in the divine plan and see a corresponding reflection in the Messiah. But Christ became the last, or *eschatos*, Adam, the Second Humanity.

"Adam was a type of Christ... with respect to the effects of what he did. For just as Adam's sin spread to all men, so Christ's life also spread to all men" (Diodore,

Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church, *Ancient Christian Commentaries*, Vol.6, ibid p 142).

We see embodied in God's Anointed One the sense of the impending, the expectation, the One known to be always coming and going (Rev. 1:8, JMNT) who rides the clouds that are driven by the Wind of the Spirit. He is "**the One being repeatedly** (or: always; or: progressively) **about to.**" His purposes and plans bring excitement and a sense of expectation. He is Life.

**15. Yet to the contrary, [it is] not in the same way [with] the effect of grace** (result of favor; the thing graciously given) **as [it was with] the**

**effect of the fall to the side** (or: = the result of the stumbling aside and the offence is not simply balanced out by the result of the joyful gift of grace – the gratuitous favor). **For you see, since** (or: if) **by** (or: in) **the effect of the fall to the side** (the result of the stumbling aside and the offense) **of the one THE MANY** (= the mass of humanity) **died, MUCH MORE** (= infinitely greater) **[is] the Grace of God** (God's Grace; favor which is God), **and the gift** (or: gratuitous benefit) **within Grace** – a **joy-producing act of Favor** – **by that of the One Man, Jesus Christ, surrounded** (or: encircles) **into encompassing superabundance**

(extraordinary surplus and excess) **into THE MANY** (= the mass of humanity). Now Paul begins to paint the contrast, the new reality. With the Messiah and His age, it is "**not in the same way [with] the effect of grace** (result of favor; the thing graciously given) **as [it was with] the effect of the fall to the side.**" To the contrary, there is complete contrast. And now Paul sets up his equation, and with both sides of the equation we have the same group which he calls here: **THE MANY**. It is the same group in both cases, for as he says in 1 Cor. 15:22,

**"For just as within Adam ALL keep on (or: everyone continues)**

**dying, in the same way, also, within the Christ, ALL will keep on being made alive** (or: in union with the Anointed One, everyone will one-after-another be created with Life)."

Notice this comparable equation. The "equals" sign is the phrase, "**in the SAME WAY.**" Within the work of the cross (which moves **all** from Adam and into Christ) we see **the effect of the fall to the side** reversed. This is salvation, deliverance, the freeing of the slaves (which is all humans), and life from the dead.

But unlike a mathematical equation, **the Grace of God** (God's Grace; favor

which is God) **and the gift** (or: gratuitous benefit) **within Grace** – a **joy-producing act of Favor** far outweighs, or is infinitely greater than, what Adam's trespass did to all humanity. Or as Barth says, "there is no equilibrium" in this comparison, for the entire passage "is concerned with emphasizing a distinction" (ibid p 176). He continues,

"The dualism of Adam and Christ, between the old and the new, is not metaphysical but dialectical. The dualism exists only in so far as it dissolves itself. It is a dualism of one movement, of one apprehension, of one road from

here to there" (ibid p 177).

The work of the cross, **by that of the One Man, Jesus Christ, surrounded** (or: encircles) **into encompassing superabundance** (extraordinary surplus and excess). This is meant to shock the audience with this extreme expression. Pause and consider what Paul just said: the finished work of Christ **surrounded** (or: encircles) **into encompassing superabundance** (extraordinary surplus and excess). And what does this mean? His positive work of salvation achieved superabundantly more than what Adam's sin did. And not only that (to use Paul's rhetoric), **ALL** of this encircling abundance is imparted **into THE**

**MANY**, that is, INTO the SAME GROUP (all mankind) that was affected by Adam's sin. The picture could not be clearer.

"We can point out that Paul believed Jesus, as Messiah (King/Christ), embodied Israel (it was a common understanding that the King stood in for the people), which allows for the transition from Adam to Jesus, encompassing Moses (who was standing in for Israel in this construct) in the process.... Effectively, the covenant had been provided to all people through Adam, who represents all of

humanity. Though this is probably an uncommon way of looking at God's covenant dealings, and though it seems somewhat counter-intuitive on its surface, we can actually insist that God's original covenant had been made with the whole of humanity, with Adam representing the whole" (Byrd, *ibid*, *Believing in Him* pt 47, 12/22/11).

"But the grace of Christ has come to us all without our cooperation and shows that the grace of the resurrection is such that not only believers, who glory in their faith, will be resurrected, but also

unbelievers, both Jews and Greeks. Something which works in us against our will is therefore obviously greater than something which works in us with our cooperation" (Oecumenius, Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church, *Ancient Christian Commentaries*, Vol. 6, *ibid* p 145).

**16. And further, [it is] NOT [with] the effect of the gush and flow of the gratuitous gift as [it was] through one missing of the target (failing; deviating; sinning). For you see, on the one hand, the effect of the decision and judgment (result of the separating,**

evaluation and verdict) [was] from out of one [failure and deviation, which led] into a commensurate effect of a decision (a corresponding result of a negative evaluation which fell in line with the decision and followed the pattern which divided [us] down). **But on the other hand, the effect of the grace** (the product of the gratuitous favor and the resulting joyous benefit) [is] from out of the effect of many falls to the side (result of many stumblings-aside and offenses) into the effect of a rightwising deliverance into covenant inclusion in the Way and making things right

(the result of a liberating placing

into right relationships within the Way pointed out; or: the effect of an act of justice; an effect of equity; a just award; or: a result of fairness, removal of guilt, and justification, while being turned in the right direction; an amendment of what was wrong; a just-effect; = the effect of covenant inclusion and participation).

He now goes into a more detailed explanation of the two contrasting sides of the equation, adding **further** elements of God's gift to humanity. First of all, the **effect of the gush and flow** (note the picture of excess abundance in these words) **of the gratuitous gift** (which is

God's grace, His Spirit, our inclusion in Christ, life from the dead, freedom from slavery, the covering over of our nakedness and mistakes, as well as the cleansing through His blood) is **NOT** like the results of Adam's **one** failure (the disobedience of eating fruit that he was told to avoid). So, in what way was it different?

In humanity's case, **one** failure led into the separating, an evaluation and a verdict from God that would have a **commensurate effect** upon mankind. It was exactly what was in the warning that God gave to Adam: eat the fruit from this tree and you will die. The death was not a physical one, but rather

an eviction from the Edenic arrangement – in a watered garden with fruit at one's disposal and communion with God – into the harsh reality that existed outside this secluded paradise. Israel followed Adam's early pattern when God exiled them from their "land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex. 33:3).

Let us examine the terms **effect of the decision and judgment** (*kri-ma*) and **commensurate effect of a decision** (*kata-kri-ma*). The first is normally just rendered "judgment," and the second is normally rendered "condemnation." Judgment is the effect or result (indicated by the *-ma* ending) of an evaluation which leads to a decision.

The second word is the same as the first but with the added prefix *kata-*, which signifies either the direction "down" (and in the case of judgment would mean a decision "against" someone), or it means "on the same level; commensurate; corresponding to; along the line of; following the pattern of." These meanings are given in the parenthetical expansion. The effect of God's decision, and the resulting judgment upon Adam brought "a corresponding result of a negative evaluation which fell in line with the decision and followed the pattern which divided [us] down." This dividing us from the primal "holy of holies" brought

us, metaphorically, from heaven (enjoyment of God's immediate presence) to earth (the estranged, alien existence of pain, hard toil, and death). So what Paul is saying, here, is that God's grace is **NOT** like what we had up to that point experienced. So now let us look at Paul's great contrast to the prior human predicament:

**But on the other hand, the effect of the grace** (the product of the gratuitous favor and the resulting joyous benefit) **[is] from out of the effect of many falls to the side** (result of many stumblings-aside and offenses) **into the effect of a rightwising deliverance into covenant inclusion in the Way and**

**making things right.** In unpacking this rhetorical mouthful, observe that **the effect** of God's **grace** (the product of His gratuitous **favor**) came, and is, **from out of** a particular situation: humanity's **many falls to the side** – many offenses. The very predicament of our lost and destroyed state of being was the situation from which God made the Light (Christ) to shine forth from **out of** the darkness where humanity resided (*cf* John 1:4, 5; Gen. 1:3, 17).

And where did this effect of grace lead? **Into the effect of a rightwising deliverance into covenant inclusion in the Way, and the making of things to be right.** This is God's justice and His

redemption of mankind. Keep in mind that Paul is presenting his argument in terms of the whole of creation, and all of mankind. Individuals are of course included, but Paul is following the pattern that God created. God's dealing with Adam included every individual of whom he was the representative. His saving of Israel from Egypt included every individual. The lack of faith of ten Israelites kept all of Israel from entering the promised land for forty years. The sins of the leadership in Israel had effects upon the entire nation, leading to exiles. And likewise we will observe that the obedience of the One (Jesus) had commensurate effects upon **the Many**.

Paul uses parallel phrases: **into a commensurate effect of a decision, and, into the effect of a rightwising deliverance into covenant inclusion in the Way and making things right.** Once again, we see the contrast in Paul's equation. The one side of the "equal sign" is negative; the other side is positive. To give a clearer view of the positive phrase, let us ponder the alternate renderings:

- a) the result of a liberating placing into right relationships within the Way pointed out
- b) the effect of an act of justice
- c) an effect of equity
- d) a just award

- e) a result of fairness, removal of guilt, and justification, while being turned in the right direction
- f) an amendment of what was wrong
- g) the effect of covenant inclusion and participation.

The final option, g), I owe to N.T. Wright and to the writings of David Byrd. The perceptions of the aspect of deliverance and liberation for *dikaioσune* and its cognates I owe to Douglas Campbell (ibid). This view complements my literal rendering "the result of a placing into the Way pointed out." The Way (Christ) is the new arrangement (or, covenant) of rightwisened and right-relational living of the new

creation, into which we have been born.

**17. For since (or: if) by the effect of the fall to the side (or: in the result of the stumbling aside; with the effect of the offense) of the one The Death reigned (or: reigns; rules as king) through that one, much more, rather, will the peoples (= the masses of humanity) – in continuously receiving and seizing upon (taking in hand) the surrounding superabundance (encircling, extraordinary surplus and excess) of the Grace and of, from and which is the gratuitous gift of the liberated Rightwisdom (of the solidarity in fair and equitable treatment; from the placement in right [covenant]-**

relationship in the Way; of the justification and freedom from guilt while being turned in the right direction and made right) – **continue reigning** (or: ruling as kings) **within and in union with Life through the One, Jesus Christ.**

Paul continues his explanations of the human predicament, and then God's solution to our otherwise hopeless situation. Here he uses the analogy of an empire (one that the Romans could well understand) and the reigning and ruling of a king. Prior to the advent of the Messiah, **The Death reigned** (note the rhetoric of personification). There was no democracy of "FREE-will" under its

reign – there was only slavery. But now the better arrangement (*cf* Heb. 7:19, 22; 8:6; 11:35) has come with the resurrection of the Messiah, and Paul uses the contrasting terms, **much more, rather**. Rather what? **The peoples** – the masses of humanity – **will continue reigning within and in union with LIFE, through the One** who rightly bears God's image: **Jesus Christ**, the risen Messiah.

How will they reign? **In continuously receiving and seizing upon** (or, taking in hand – this implies living a life, walking the Path) **the surrounding superabundance of the Grace and of the gratuitous GIFT of the liberated**

**Rightwisenedness.** I also gave the ablative function of the noun: **from the gift of the liberated Rightwisenedness**, and the appositional function: **which is the gift of the liberated Rightwising**. This last phrase can also be rendered in the following ways:

- a) of the solidarity in fair and equitable treatment
- b) from the placement in right [covenant]-relationship in the Way
- c) of the justification and freedom from guilt while being turned in the right direction and made right.

Paul has restated vs. 16 informing us that the effect of the liberating Rightwising is the gift of liberated Rightwisenedness – or

the state and condition of having been rightwised by his grace. In terms of corporate membership, this signifies covenant inclusion and participation.

Soak in the phrase, **reigning within, and in union with, LIFE**. This is the state of being that He came to give us, and it is the present sphere of our existence,

**"For you see, within the midst of and in union with Him we continuously LIVE (or, as a subjunctive: could be constantly living), and are constantly moved about and put into motion, and continue existing (experiencing Being)" (Acts 17:28).**

Notice that Paul was not speaking to believers in that context. He spoke of the new reality of which even some Greek poets had a perception. This all came to be and exists **through the One: Jesus, the Messiah.**

"Jesus marks the transition of the ages. Whereas death reigned because of the covenant transgression of the first Adam, that age has been brought to an end. Life now reigns through the covenant faithfulness of the second Adam. In Him, a new creation has begun. A new humanity has been brought into existence..." (Byrd, *ibid*).

Kirk rightly describes "Paul's framework of justification as a function of union with Christ" (ibid p 226).

**18. Consequently, then, as [it was] through the effect of one fall to the side (or: the result of one offense) [coming] into all mankind ([permeating] into all humanity; = [extending] into the whole race) [bringing them] into a commensurate effect of a decision (a corresponding result of a negative evaluation which fell in line with the decision and followed the pattern which divided [us] down), **THUS ALSO and in the same way, through one just-effect and the result of one right act which set [all****

**humanity] right and in accord with the Way pointed out** (through the result of one act of justice, equity and solidarity; through a single decree creating rightwised relationships; through one effect of rightwising which turns [people] in the right direction) **[it comes] into ALL MANKIND** (all humanity; all people; = the whole race) **[bringing them] into a setting right of Life and a liberating rightwising from Life [including them in covenant community]**

(or: Life's turning [folks] in the right direction resulting in right relating, equity and justice which is in accord with the Way pointed

out; a making of situations and conditions to be right, which pertain to Life; an expressing of fairness and equity, which is LIFE; a rightly directed solidarity coming from Life; a just-acting deliverance having the qualities of life).

Again Paul hammers down this point in his argument! Now he is saying that the consequence of what he has just said is that just as we have seen the effect of the Genesis story, which is that Adam's failure came into **all mankind, THUS ALSO – in the same way, through one just-effect and the result of one right act** (Jesus dying on the cross to give us

His Life) **which set [all humanity] right and in accord with the Way pointed out... [it comes] into ALL MANKIND** (all humanity; all people; = the whole race) **[bringing them] into a setting right of Life and a liberating rightwising from Life.** This condition and state of being comes **from** the Life of Christ.

The whole of mankind was moved from the first Adam and into the last Adam (Who was birthed from death to be a Life-giving Spirit – 1 Cor. 15:45). That **rightwising act** came **from** the **Life** of God that was in the Messiah via His union with the Spirit of God. In the resurrection, this Life put humanity into

a new arrangement, and then turns them in the right direction, bringing equity and justice, and sets things to right. The resulting fairness and solidarity (which includes peace) is Life (as the appositional rendering offers, "an expression of fairness and equity, which is LIFE") – eonian life, the life of the Age of the Messiah.

**19. For you see, JUST AS through the unwillingness to listen, or to pay attention, resulting in disobedience (or: the erroneous hearing leading to disobedience) of the one person THE MANY (= the mass of humanity) were rendered (established; constituted; placed down and made to be) sinners**

(failures; ones who diverge and miss the target), **THUS – in the same way – ALSO through the submissive listening and paying attention resulting in obedience of the One, THE MANY (= the mass of humanity) will continue being rendered “set-right folks”**

(placed down and established [to be] just ones; constituted folks who have been rightwised to be people in the Way pointed out; made righteous ones who are guilt-free, fair, equitable, and rightly-turned in the solidarity of covenant relationships).

In my translation I have put some words

in all capitals to aid the reader in seeing the correlation that Paul puts into another restatement of his argument:

**JUST AS... THUS ALSO; THE MANY... THE MANY.** In the same way, and just as, **one person** (Adam) was **unwilling to listen or pay attention**, and thus was **disobedient**, so **ALSO**, **through the submissive listening, paying attention and ultimate obedience** of Jesus Christ, **THE MANY**, i.e., the mass of humanity, **will continue being set right** – "each person within the effect of his or her own class or division" (1 Cor. 15:23).

"This is, according to Paul, what has actually been effected by the

work of Christ. In Him men are lifted into a new order in which goodness is as powerful and dominant as was sin in the order represented by Adam; or, rather, it is far more powerful and dominant.... [and] His obedience will make all the rest actually righteous. The latter is his real point in the present argument" (Dodd, *ibid*, p 82, 83, brackets mine).

The **obedience of the One** refers to Jesus' death on the cross. On this passage of Rom. 5:12-21, Barth comments:

"Christ is contrasted with Adam

as the goal and purpose of the movement.... The life which springs from death is wholly pre-eminent over the life which engenders death and is enclosed by it. There is a death which is the death of death: and this is the theme of the Gospel (1:1, 16). The Gospel is the power of God, the power of the Resurrection" (ibid p 166).

In regard to vss. 18 and 19, Barth speaks of,

"... the secret of divine predestination, by which all human history is constituted anew and given a pre-eminent and

victorious meaning. As a consequence of the righteousness of Christ there comes – justification of life – unto all men. Here is the negation of all negation, the death of all death, the breaking down of all limitations, the rending asunder of all fetters, the clothing of men with their habitation which is from heaven (2 Cor. 5:2). For all men death is swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. 15:55) and mortality is swallowed up by life (2 Cor. 5:4).... In the light of this act of obedience there is no man who is not – in Christ. All are renewed

and clothed with righteousness...  
and placed under the affirmation  
of God" (ibid pr 181, 182).

20. **Now Law and custom at one point entered in alongside** (or: intruded into the situation by the side) **to the end that the effect of the fall to the side** (or: so that the result of the offense and the stumbling aside) **would increase to be more than enough** (should greatly abound and become more intense). **But where the Sin** (the failure; the divergence and missing of the target) **increases** (or: abounded to be more than enough; becomes more intense) **THE GRACE** ("the act producing happiness, which is granted as a favor" – Jim

**Coram) at once super-exceeds (or: hyper-exceeded) over and above, surrounding to excessive abundance and overflow,**

Notice the parallel of the first clause to the first clause of vs. 12, above. First sin entered into the aggregate of humanity and the system of the world, and then later **Law and custom** entered in **alongside**. The purpose of the entrance of this second (Law) was like the purpose of fertilizing a plant: **increase**. God's plan was to make the dark contrast even greater and darker, so that with the coming of the Light (**Grace**) and the Day (Christ) the new Reality would shine all the more. So if we want

to see **the effect of the fall to the side** and **the offense to INCREASE** and become "more intense," then just focus on and teach folks the **Law**. This was God's purpose – His **end** in view – for the Law: that the result of the offense and the stumbling aside would increase. But with all this fertilizer everywhere – with **the Sin increasing to be more than enough** – **The Grace at once super-exceeds** the sin; the act producing happiness, which is granted as a favor, "hyper-exceeded **over and above**" and surrounded humanity with an excessive abundance and overflow of **grace**. God's remedy was far greater than the illness, incomparably greater.

Here, Paul has restated his arguments of vss. 15-19, emphasizing again the "much more" and the "abounding" of vss. 15 and 17.

**21. to the end that JUST AS the Sin** (the failure; the erroneous act; the deviation and digression which issued in missing the goal) **at one point reigned** (or: ruled as king; exercised sovereign sway) **within, and in union with, the Death, THUS SO** (or: in THIS way) **also the Grace and joyous favor would reign** (should rule as king; can exercise sovereign sway) **through an eschatological deliverance that created rightwisdom** (or: by means of being rightly-turned into an existence

with equity in [covenantal] solidarity of right relationships which accord to the Way; through a liberating Justice- [expression]) [**which leads] into Life which belongs to, pertains to and has the characteristics of the Age** (or: eonian life; Life of the Age [of Messiah]; a life for the ages) – **through Jesus Christ, our Owner** (Lord; Master).

Consider the purpose phrase, "**to the end that.**" This is a continuation of his point in vs. 20. And here we see the correlating phrases, **JUST AS... THUS SO** (or: in **THIS** way), in Paul's parallel construction of comparison and contrast. Having just focused on **the Sin**, he

revisits his metaphor of a king ruling his subjects, and puts **the Sin** on the throne **within, and in union with, the Death** (and Barth adds here: "and we are dead" – ibid p 170). Just as these have co-reigned over humanity, in THIS way – that is, to the same extent and degree – **THUS SO** now **the Grace** (personified here, as a figure of thought) **and joyous favor** of God, brought by the eschatological deliverance through the death and resurrection of Jesus, **would reign and can exercise sovereign sway through rightwisedness**, or, covenant solidarity, the very opposite of the sin and the death. This is the kingdom of God on earth. This **rightwised**

**existence** is the **Life of the Age of the Messiah**, who is Lord of all. Carefully mark the final phrase **through Jesus Christ, our Owner**. We cannot achieve this on our own efforts, or by self-realization, or by anything else apart from Jesus the Messiah. That would be like trying to produce fruit while not being joined to the Vine, or trying to function as a member while be separated from the Head of the body. It just won't work – it will be like eating from the same tree of which Adam partook. God's wisdom that comes from union with Him/Her is the very opposite from wisdom gained by the experience of good and evil. The latter brings death;

the former brings Life.

Witherington notes that this section of Paul's arguments (as well as "the next three major sections") concludes "with a reference to the lordship of Christ... over the human process, eclipsing the lordship of sin, death and the Law" (ibid p 152).



## Chapter 6

1. **What, then (or: consequently), shall we continue saying (or: declaring)? Should we continue prolonging our remaining (or: May we stay longer, remain on, habitually abide or persist) in the Sin (with the failure; by the missing of the target; centered in the error; in relation to the deviation from the goal), to the end that the Grace and Favor may increase to be more than enough?** To committed followers of the Messiah, this rhetorical question must have almost sounded ridiculous. His suggestion sounds logical, on a certain level. But I suggest that this is a rhetorical defense

against potential critics of the implications of what he has just said in ch. 5, which to Jew and Gentile, alike, might sound difficult to accept. And so, in anticipation of this, he continues his arguments. Kirk sees this rhetorical question as "set[ting] the topic of discussion for the remainder of the chapter" (ibid p 107). Dodd stress the need to keep in mind that Christ is the "inclusive Representative" of "redeemed humanity, which constitutes in union with Him a sort of corporate personality..." (in chapter 5, above) in order to follow the argument in this present chapter (ibid p 86).

Witherington sees the opening phrase of

vs. 1, **What, then...**, as a look,  
"back to what has preceded. On  
the basis of what he has said in ch.  
5, Paul will set in motion a  
discussion punctuated by a series  
of rhetorical questions (1:1-3, 15,  
16, 21; 7:1, 13, 24) that will not  
be over until the end of ch. 7"  
(ibid. p 154-5).

From Campbell's apocalyptic reading of  
Romans, we can potentially hear the  
potentially accusing voice of the  
Judaizer in this question, to which Paul  
answers in the negative in the next verse.  
**2. Certainly not** (May it not come to be;  
May it not happen)! **We, the very ones  
who once died by the Sin** (or: died with

the Sin; die in deviation; died with reference to missing the target; died to failure; die in error), **how shall we** [other MSS: could we] **still** (or: yet) **continue living within it, centered in it, or in union with it?**

So he sets his listeners at ease, and his opponents at bay: this is in no way what he is suggesting. Then he asks another rhetorical question in order to build a strong position against anyone misunderstanding what he has said. The ethical/theological question presents us with more questions since Paul's secretary did not use a preposition in front of the words **the Sin** when writing down what Paul was saying. All we

have is the article and the noun in the dative case. Did we die **by the Sin**?

Well, yes, that is the narrative that Paul just explained in rehearsing the Garden story about Adam's sin.

Also, we can see that we "died with the Sin" – that makes sense. And since we were in Adam (following Paul's reasoning of what has been called seeing Adam as the "federal head" of humanity, thus representing the whole), we died with Him "in the Sin." So this describes the human condition, before the cross and resurrection of Jesus. We died "in error."

But there is another important view when reading this noun as a dative of

reference: we died TO, or, with reference to, failure and the missing of the target (that of being God's image bearer, through obedience to His arrangement). We are thus "dead to the old creation; dead to the old humanity; dead to living out of covenant and going our own way; dead to **the Sin** (personified, as we also see it in ch. 7, below).

Yet another insight involves 5:20, above. Since the Law makes the Sin increase, and is in fact the strength of Sin, is Paul also intimating here that we are dead to the old arrangement that was inserted alongside – i.e., the Law? Recall that he said,

**"the original things** (the beginning [situations]; the archaic and primitive [arrangements]) **passed by** (or: went to the side). **Consider! New things have come into existence** (have been birthed; or: It has become new things; or: He has been birthed and now exists being ones of a different kind, character and quality)" (2 Cor. 5:17).

This would speak to both the Jewish Christians in the community, and to the Gentiles with their old patterns of living with the "us and them" paradigms of Roman social stratifications. The ramifications of Paul's question reach

into all areas of life – both then and now.

**3. Or are you continuing to be ignorant** (are you remaining without experiential knowledge; do you continue not knowing) **that as many of we who are immersed** (or: were at one point soaked or baptized) **into Christ Jesus are immersed** (or: were then baptized) **into His death?**

Now here he presents a whole different thought: we not only just died by, with, in and to **the Sin** (vs. 2), but also we **were and are** (the aorist tense: the fact) **immersed into His death**. Standing for all humanity as the representative of the first Adam, He died with all humanity

placed

in Him, and thus dying with Him. Paul makes this very point in 2 Cor. 5:14,

**"[We are] deciding (discerning; judging) this: that [some MSS add: since] One Person (or: Man) died over [the situation of] all mankind (or: for the sake of all); consequently all people died (or: accordingly, then, all humanity died)."**

On the smaller representative scale, as the Messiah He took all of Israel into the grave. That is why he said in Col. 3:11,

**"there is no Greek [figure of the multitudes who are non-Jews, and of those who are cultured and**

civilized] **and Jew** [figure of a covenant people of God], **circumcision and uncircumcision** [figure for religious in-groups and out-groups; there is no longer a covenant people versus non-covenant people], **barbarian** [foreigner who speaks a different language], **Scythian** [figure or example of wild, uncivilized groups], **slave, freeman, but to the contrary, Christ [is] all, and within all**

(or: Christ [is] all humanity, and within all mankind; or: Christ [is] everything or all things, and within everything and all things;

[note: the Greek is plural, and is either masculine, signifying “mankind,” or neuter, signifying all creation, in these phrases]."

[Point of history on Pauline exegesis: "Gnostic theologians.... claim that psychic [= soulish] believers fail to see that Paul is not speaking here literally of a future bodily resurrection: instead he is speaking symbolically of the process of receiving gnosis. Irenaeus says that 'they maintain that the *resurrection from the dead* is knowing the truth that they proclaim.' The teacher of Rheginos alludes to such passages as Rom. 6:3-11 and Col. 3:4 as he explains the meaning of resurrection:

'The savior has swallowed up death.... we suffered with him, and we arose with him, and we went to heaven with him.'

For, he continues, the resurrection is 'the revelation of that which is the change of things, and the transformation into newness' (*cf* 6:4).... Theodotus cites this passage as he explains that 'baptism is called *death*, and an *end of the old life*'..." – Pagels, *ibid* p 29, brackets mine]

Here in vs. 3 we have a qualifying clause: "**that as many of we who are immersed** (or: were at one point baptized)..." Is Paul referring to the traditional ritual of water baptism, or is

he speaking in existential terms about those whose **"class or division, effect of place or appointed position or result of the ordered succession"** has arrived (1 Cor. 15:22, 23)? Or is he, in referring to individuals, speaking corporately? And is Christ the water into which folks are immersed, or is Christ the Spirit?

**"For we, ourselves – within the midst of one Spirit** (or: in union with one Breath-effect and Attitude) – **are all submerged into one body** (or: were all immersed into, so as to be enveloped by, one body) – **whether Jews or Greeks** (or: Hellenists), **whether slaves or**

**free folks – and we all are (or: were) made (or: caused) to drink one Spirit (or: spirit; Breath-effect; Attitude)" – 1 Cor. 12:13.**

And then in Eph. 4 we are instructed:

**4. [being] one body and one spirit** (attitude and effect of the Breath), **according as you folks were (or: are) also called within the midst of one expectation** (or: in union with one expectant hope) **of your calling** (or: invitation),  
**5. [with] one Lord** (or: Owner), **one faith** (or: loyalty, confidence, assurance, and trust; or: "one belief" – Bultmann), **one submersion and envelopment**

**which brings absorption and permeation to the point of saturation (or: baptism),**  
**6. one God and Father of all humans – the One upon all people and moving through all people, and within the midst of all humanity and in union with all people and all things.**

One baptism (vs. 5). Water, or Spirit?  
Paul speaks of corporate baptism as he draws on Israel's exodus story in 1 Cor. 10:

**1. So I am not intending (or: willing; wanting) you folks to continue being ignorant, brothers, that our fathers (=**

ancestors) were all continually existing under the cloud, and everyone passed completely through the midst of the sea, 2. and so they all immersed themselves into Moses (or: got themselves baptized [other MSS: were baptized] unto Moses), within the cloud and within the sea.

Here we see the whole nation being figuratively placed into Moses. This was a type of humanity being placed into Christ – it was all the work of God.

They passed through the opened passage through the sea, but did not get wet. They followed the cloud when it moved, but

they did not physically enter into it. It seems to me that Paul sees the spiritual reality as the significant thing, rather than the physical ritual.

**"I am continually thankful** [other MSS: I constantly thank {others add: my} God] **that I baptized** (immersed) **not one of you folks, except Crispus and Gaius....**  
**For you see, Christ did not send me off with a commission to be constantly baptizing** (immersing)..." (1 Cor. 1:14, 17).

Whether one views being **immersed** (or: baptized) **into Christ** as a sacrament that believers perform on individuals (as with Philip and the Ethiopian – Acts

8:36-39), or that Paul was speaking here of the larger picture which was inherent in the death of Christ, may simply remain a point of view.

Paul's discussion of our being immersed into Christ's death is one of the passages that has led Sanders to see Christ's death not as substitution, but rather as being a death in which humanity participates, and sees Rom. 8:3f, 2 Cor. 5:21 and Gal. 3:16 as "primarily participationist" (ibid, p 466-468; he also cites D.E.H. Whiteley as being of a similar view: a "salvation through participation" – *Theology of St Paul*, p 136).

**4. We, then** (or: consequently), **were buried together** (entombed together

with funeral rites) **in Him** (or: by Him; with Him), **through the immersion** (baptism) **into the death, to the end that just as** (or: in the same manner as) **Christ was roused and raised forth from out of the midst of dead folks THROUGH** (through means of) **THE GLORY** (the glorious manifestation of splendor which calls forth praise; the notion; the renown; the reputation; the imagination) **of The Father** (or: which is the Father), **thus also we can walk around** (or: we also should likewise conduct ourselves and order our behavior) **within newness of life** (in union with life characterized by being new in kind and quality, and different

from that which was former).

However we view **the immersion** – and note the definite article here, as with **the Sin** and **the Death**, above (is Paul personifying **the immersion** here?) – it is directly tied to **the death** of Christ, which was a historical, one-time event. So **the immersion** can thus also be seen as a historical, one-time event that happened corporately (inclusive of all humanity) through the death of Jesus as the death of the first Adam. Because of this, when an individual is awakened into this new reality (the Truth/Reality which Christ is) he or she **can walk around** -- i.e., live one's life, conduct herself/himself, order one's behavior –

**within newness of life.** He is speaking of the here and now, not some future event. Our life in God's kingdom is "in union with life characterized by being new in kind and quality (Greek: *kainos*), and different from that which was former," and this refers to behavior of the covenant community as it shines forth this newness of life to the world of darkness (ignorance, death) that surrounds it.

The language of **roused and raised forth from out of the midst of dead folks** speaks of His resurrection, and His newness of life that is associated with **the glory of the Father**. We should thus connect our new life in Christ as

"resurrection life." He IS the resurrection, as He told Martha in John 11:25.

If we understand the meaning of the word **glory** in this context as "the glorious manifestation of splendor which calls forth praise," we can perceive this as a description of the Father's work in raising Christ from the dead. Or, since this word and concept historically referred to God's presence (*cf* Ex. 40:34, 35 – when the glory filled the tabernacle), Paul can simply be saying that the Father's immediate presence resurrected Him. Another meaning of **glory** (Greek: *doxa*) is "imagination." Imagination is a function

of the mind, and is associated with "thought" – Logos, Word. God's creative imagination is capable of anything, including raising Jesus from the dead. Kirk considers vss. 3-4 as "form[ing] the first argumentative unit of ch. 6..." (ibid p 108) He further states that, "baptism into Christ's death is correlative with baptism into Christ himself... 'walking in newness of life' is the goal of this phase of Paul's argument" (ibid 108-109).

**5. For since** (or: You see, if) **we have been birthed** (have become; have come to be) **folks engrafted and produced together** (or: planted and made to grow together; brought forth together;

congenital) **in, by, to and with the result of the likeness of** (or: the effect of the similar manner from) **His death, then certainly we shall also continue existing [in and with the effects of the likeness] of The Resurrection**

(or: which is the resurrection; or: from, and with qualities of, the resurrection),

The perfect tense of the verb adds weight to Paul's argument of a past action that continues in its effect of a past "completed" action on into the future: **we have been birthed**, or have come to be, or have become people that are **engrafted and produced together** (a very picturesque agricultural image

for our union with Him – calling to mind the Vine metaphor of John 15) **in the RESULT of the likeness of His death.**

In Gal. 2:20, Paul informed us that,

**"I was crucified together with Christ [= the Messiah], and thus it remains** (or: I have been jointly put on the execution stake in [the] Anointed One, and continue in this state), **yet I continue living!"**

That is another way of saying what he says here. He used the perfect tense here, as well. This is a spiritual identification with a historical event that was also a spiritual event. This is why all of humanity can say the same thing that Paul said – as soon as they realize it

or become aware of it (through the proclaiming of the message!). We are called to tell this to the world: you were crucified with Christ, and you were buried with Him. We are to tell them,

**"Let the sleeper (the person continuously down and being fast asleep) be waking up, continue rousing, and then stand up (arise) from out of the midst of the dead ones, and the Christ will continue shining upon you (enlightening you)!"** (Eph. 5:14).

The durative aspect of the future tense informs us that **we shall also**

**CONTINUE existing** with and in the effects and results of the likeness **of the**

**Resurrection.** We are in this state now, and we have the expectation of continuing in this state on into the future. Christ is **the Resurrection** of the Second Humanity (1 Cor. 15:47) – the humanity that is "from out of the midst of heaven," or, from the Spirit.

**6. while constantly knowing this by intimate experience, that our old, former humanity is crucified together** (or: was simultaneously and jointly impaled and put to death on an execution stake) **with [Him], to the end that the body of the Sin** (the body belonging to the failure; the corporal manifestation that pertains to the deviation; the group of people [Adam] who missed the

target) **could and would be rendered useless and inoperative** (idled-down to be unproductive; made null, inactive and unemployed), **for us to no longer continually be a slave to the Sin** (or: perform as a slave in the failure, for the Sin, or by deviating and thus missing the goal),

The **old, former humanity** of the first Adam was simultaneously and jointly impaled and put to death on the cross, with Jesus. Paul is restating his point made in vs. 3-4, above, where he spoke of it as **immersion into His death**. Now he speaks of the purpose for our being included in His death: **to the end that** (this introduces the following purpose

clause) **the body of the Sin could and would be rendered useless and inoperative**. So, what is this "body of the Sin"?

Through the alternate functions of the genitive case of the noun, **Sin**, on offer in the parenthetical expansion, we have three possible explanations which will shed light on Paul's phrase:

- a) the body belonging to (the genitive of possession) the failure
- b) the corporal manifestation (= the body) that pertains to the deviation
- c) the group of people (metaphorical use of the term "body" – which I suggest is

"Adam" as the figure and representative of all of humanity) who missed the target.

Taken together, I suggest that these three present a fuller view of Paul's thought here. This can, of course, be applied individually (for the corporate body is made up of individuals), but I think that Paul's argument has the corporate view in mind. His "**us**" is first of all an inclusive **us**. He is speaking of the new reality, the new creation in Christ which involves the entire cosmos (John 4:42). Eph. 5:23 instructs us about **the body** being a corporate entity,

**"as also (or: even as) the Christ [is] Head (or: Source) of the**

**called-out community** (the ecclesia; the summoned-out assembly); **He Himself is** (continually exists being) [**the**] **Savior** (Deliverer; Rescuer; Restorer to health and wholeness) **of the Body."**

In regard to death, we find insights from the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews:

**27. And now, according to as much as it continues lying-away** (or: laid away; reserved-off; stored) **in** (or: with; for; to) **mankind** (or: people) **to die-away once, but after this a process of evaluating** (a separating and making a

distinction to be a judging and determining; a deciding),  
**28. so also, the Christ – being once borne (or: carried) close into THE MANY (or: being offered once unto and for the many) to carry failures (errors; sins mistakes; deviations; misses of the target) back up again – will continue being made visible (or: will be progressively seen) forth from out of the midst of the second [place (cf 9:3, 7 & 10:9; {comment: = the holy of holies})] – apart from failure (apart from sin; apart from a sin offering; apart from error in attempting to**

hit the target) – **in those** (or: by those; to those; for those)

**habitually receiving** (or: progressively taking) **from out of the midst of Him, [progressing] into a deliverance** (or: [leading] into a rescue; with a view to health and wholeness; into the midst of salvation).

[note: the Greek word translated "receiving from out of the midst of" is *apekdechomai*, which is *dechomai*, which means "to take and receive with the hands," with the preposition *apek*, a contraction of *apo*, "from," and *ek*, "out of the midst of" added as

a prefix. This verb should not be translated "looking for," or "awaiting"]

For a discussion which I have given on these verses in Heb. 9, see *John, Judah, Paul and ?*, Harper Brown Publishing, 2013.

Paul will further develop his argument on being a **slave to the Sin** in vss. 16, 17 and 20, below. His argument of the movement from the 1<sup>st</sup> Adam to the last Adam, and from the former age and covenant to the present age and covenant, is on offer in Gal. 4:1-7.

"In 6:6, Paul asserts a death to the old aeon, the world-order brought about in Adam, through

participation in the event on which the change of the aeons hinged – the crucifixion of Christ" (Kirk, *ibid* p 111).

**7. for you see, the One at one point dying** (or: the person at some point experiencing death) **has been eschatologically released and rightwised away from the Sin**

(or: set in the Way pointed out, away from the Failure; turned in the right direction, away from the deviation and missing of the target; placed into equity and right relationships, away from error; = has been delivered and moved away from The Sin, and has been

brought into participation in covenant relationship). [*cf* vs. 18, below]

The last clause calls to mind 1 Cor. 6:11, which follows one of Paul's lists of vices,

**"But now you folks bathed yourselves off** (took a bath to cleanse things away). **But further, you were set apart** (made holy; sanctified). **But also you were eschatologically delivered, rightwised and placed in the Way pointed out** (turned in the right direction, made fair and equitable, and then joined in right relationship with God and

mankind; = put in covenant) **in union with and within the midst of the Name of our Lord, Jesus Christ – even in union with and within the midst of the Spirit of** (or: Breath-effect and Attitude which is) **our God!"**

As we pointed out above, 2 Cor. 5:14 instructs us that since the One died, then all were dead in Him. The death was for the purpose of our being **eschatologically released and rightwised away from the Sin.** He entered into our death so that we would be resurrected into His Way that He pointed out: Christ, our path of **rightwisedness** (*cf* 4:25, above).

Sanders points out, "In Rom. 6 the general context of participation is Christ's death so the one may participate in life determines the meaning of *dikaoumai* [to be place in Christ and turned in the right direction of the Way pointed out]" (ibid p 503; bracketed definition mine), further noting that here in this verse this verb is "the equivalent of 'set free' from the power of sin by participation in Christ's death..." (ibid p 506). My paraphrase, in the final portion of the parenthetical expansion, shows how the redemption by Christ moved us from the slavery to sin that was inherent in the Death, and then placed us back into full sonship of the Father's house (*cf*

the story of the prodigal, in Lu. 15:11ff). Sanders suggests that,

"[T]he main conviction was that the real transfer was from death to life, from the lordship of sin to the lordship of Christ" (ibid p 500).

He also noted that,

"All of this can take place without reference to Christians becoming convinced of their transgressions, repenting of them and being forgiven for them... Repentance, no matter how fervent, will not result in a change of lordship. Man's transgressions... do not *constitute* the problem. Man's problem is not being under

Christ's lordship. [So]... the traditional language of repentance and forgiveness is almost entirely missing..." (ibid; emphasis his; brackets mine).

Sanders affirms that both Bultmann (*Theology*, Vol. 1, p 287) and Bornkamm (*Paul*, p 151) take similar views: "forgiveness is not used because of Paul's conception of sin as power" (ibid p 501). He further suggests that this was no accident and cites Mary E. Andrews, ("Paul and Repentance," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 54, 1934, p 125):

"When he made possession of the Spirit the *sine qua non* [the

essential element] of salvation as well as of a worthy ethical life, repentance was excluded by the simple expedient of being replaced by something more effective" (ibid; brackets mine).

In regard to the transformation depicted in this verse, Witherington cites the Babylonian Talmud *Shabbat* 151a as a parallel thought from Judaism,

"When one dies one is freed from the obligation of the Law and its precepts" (ibid p 161).

The connection between freedom from the Law and freedom from sin (the Law being the power and ability of sin – 1 Cor. 15:56) is instructive.

"Christ does not act as a private person but as a representative. Those who participate in his action do so not simply as individuals confronted by another individual, but as members of a 'world order' that Paul elsewhere refers to as new creation (*kainē ktisis*, 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15)" – Kirk, *ibid* p 114.

Stern points to Isa. 22:14 as an OT basis for Paul statement here,

"Surely there shall be no propitiatory-covering (*kaphar*) put over this iniquity for you, until you [folks] die, says My Lord, Yahweh of Hosts" (Rotherham;

brackets mine),

and says, "in union with the Messiah's death we died, and that atones for our sin" (ibid p 373).

Campbell stresses the sense of "release" in the verb *dikaioo* (**rightwised**, etc.) which Paul uses in this verse, and says, "The presence of *apo* [**away from**] here is an especially strong indicator of Paul's fundamentally liberative meaning..." (ibid p 663; brackets mine).

**8. Now since we died** (or: if we die) **together with Christ, we are continuously believing** (relying; trusting) **that we shall also continue living together in Him** (by Him; for Him; to Him; with Him),

Building upon the fact that he established in 3-5, above – that we (humanity) **died together with Christ** – he now affirms our expectation for continued life in the Age of the Messiah (eonian life): **we shall also continue living together in Him.** Our new identity is Christ. What is true of Him is now true of us. We do not need to wait until some future event to be living together in Him. This is all of humanity's present condition – although most have not yet been given the experience of life in Him and so are not yet aware of Christ being All in all, for,

**"because within Him was created the whole (or: in union**

with Him everything is founded and settled, is built and planted, is brought into being, is produced and established; or: within the midst of Him all things were brought from chaos into order) – **the things within the skies and atmospheres, and the things upon the earth** (or: those [situations, conditions and/or people] in the heavens and on the land); **the visible things, and the unseen** (or: unable to be seen; invisible) **things.... And He is before** (prior to; or: maintains precedence of) **all things and all people, and the whole has** (or:

all things have) **been placed together and now continues to jointly-stand** (stands cohesively; is made to have a co-standing) **within the midst of and in union with Him"** (Col. 1:16, 17)

But we shall also continue living **by** Him, as the Source of our life; and **for** Him, in the faithful allegiance of doing what we see Him doing to and for others; and **to** Him, with Him being the focus of our whole being and actions; and **with** Him as our Brother, Friend, Companion and Guide in the Way pointed out.

"Paul insists that we are now 'in the Messiah,' so that what is true

of him is true of us.... And what is true of the Messiah... is that he is alive again..." (Wright, *ibid* p 104).

**9. having seen and thus knowing and perceiving that Christ, being aroused and raised forth from out of the midst of dead folks, is no longer dying. His death is no longer exercising ownership** (or: Death is no longer being lord or exerting mastery pertaining to Him; or: Death, from Him, is no longer functioning as a lord),

"In solidarity with Him we have died and risen again" (Dodd, *ibid* p 88).

Barth here calls to mind 1 Pet. 3:18,

**"because even Christ** (or: considering that Messiah also) **died, once for all, concerning and in relation to failures to hit the target** (about errors and mistakes; around and encompassing sins) – **a Just One** (a rightwised One; One in accord with the Way pointed out; a fair and equitable individual) **over [the situation of]** (or: for the sake of) **unjust ones** (capsized folks; those out of accord with the Way pointed out; unfair and inequitable people) – **to the end that He at once may bring** (or: can lead; would conduct) **you folks** [other

MSS: us] **to** (or: toward) **God**.  
**[He]**, **on the one hand**, **being put to death in flesh** (= a physical body), **yet on the other hand**, **being made alive in spirit** (or: indeed, being put to death by flesh {or: = the estranged human condition}, yet, being engendered a living one by Breath-effect {or: [the] Spirit}),"

and he comments,

"The conception of resurrection emerges with the conception of death... The bodily resurrection of Christ stands over against His bodily crucifixion. Only in so far as He has been *put to death in the*

*flesh* is He *quicken*ed in the spirit (1 Pet. 3:18), revealed and perceived under a new heaven and a new earth as the new man" (ibid p 205).

And since we are in Him, what applies to Him applies to us. His resurrection meant that He is no longer in the form of a servant, nor in the state of existence as the first Adam. The personal pronoun in the second sentence, which I first render as a possessive, **His**, is in the genitive case. In this understanding, Paul is referring to Jesus: His resurrection; His death. Now most translators render it as though it was in the accusative case – as the direct object of the verb "to own; to

be a master over; to lord over" but it is a genitive or an ablative. The idea of Him being the object of death's lordship can be seen in rendering the pronoun as a genitive of association, "pertaining to Him."

In the last translation of the second sentence, I rendered **Him** as an ablative. In this construction, the phrase, "from Him," serves as the cause of "death no longer ruling as in the role of an owner, master or lord." From His being resurrected, death was dethroned. From His taking the throne, after being **aroused and raised**, the King took the throne over the kingdoms of the aggregate of humanity and all of the

systems of this world. We see this proclaimed in Rev. 11:15b,

**"The reign of the ordered System** (of the world of religion, culture, government and economy; or: of the realm of the religious and secular) **suddenly came to belong to our Lord** [= Yahweh or Christ] **and to the anointed of Him** (or: The kingdom of the arranged system at once became our Lord's and His Christ's; The rule as king which pertains to the world, was birthed to be the possession of [Yahweh], as well as of His Anointed), **and so He will continue reigning**

(ruling as King) **on into the ages**  
(or: indefinite time periods) **of**  
**the ages."**

So the situation which Christ's sent-forth  
folks proclaimed was, and is, "Jesus  
Christ is Lord!"

**10. for what He died** (or: You see, [the  
death] which He died) **He died for the**  
**Sin** (or: by the Failure; in the deviation;  
to the Sin; with the Error) **once for all**  
**[time]** (or: at once and only once); **yet**  
**what He lives** (or: Yet [the life] which  
He continues to live), **He continues**  
**living in God** (for God; to God; by God;  
with God).

The bold rendering, **for what**, is literal.  
The parenthetical option fills the ellipsis

in the Greek with the bracketed "[the death]." The second clause has **the Sin** in the dative and, once again, with no expressed preposition. So we have the multiple functions which all make sense:

- a) **for the Sin**
- b) by the Failure
- c) in the deviation
- d) to the Sin
- e) with the Error.

The presence of the definite article, "the," suggests that Paul is referencing Adam's story, and his arguments of chapter 5, above. Christ died the death of the cross as the first Adam, and it was **for** Adam's sin, in order to be the death **OF** sin. It was, with Adam as the

representative Human, a death **by** the Failure (of humanity, in Adam) which brought all humanity into death. It was a death "in the deviation" of humanity, into which Christ entered, taking on the form of a slave. It was a death "to the Sin," meaning that humanity would no longer have a relationship to Adam's sin. It was a death **with** the Error, for He buried the Error along with His own burial.

**11. Thus you folks, also, be logically considering** (reckoning, accounting and concluding) **yourselves to exist being dead ones, indeed, by the failure to hit the target** (or: in the Sin; or: to the deviation), **yet ones continuously living by God** (in God; for God; to God; with

God), **within Christ Jesus, our Owner** (or: in union with [the] Anointed Jesus, our Lord and Master).

This is the 15<sup>th</sup> occurrence of the verb **logically consider** so far in this letter. Paul last used it in ch. 4, where he used it 11 times. The idea of reckoning, accounting and concluding, and logically considering a situation takes an important role in Paul's arguments (a total of 19 times in the entire letter). As God considered the faithfulness which His promise engendered in Abraham to be an expression of the Way of covenant, so we are admonished to **consider [our]selves** as being dead people in relation to the old existence of the old

creation – and for the Jews, to the situation of the old covenant. In Adam, we were dead **by [His] failure to hit the target** (of obedience to God); dead in the Sin [because of the death spreading throughout into all of humanity, 5:12, above]; and dead **to** the deviation – the deviation, sin and failure no longer exist to us. To us, God is working everything into good (8:28, below). To us, the old creation is dead; the old covenant is dead; the old humanity is dead.

And so now, we are to be **logically considering** that we are people **continuously living by God, in God, for God, to God and WITH God!** This is

to be our attitude, our outlook, our horizon, our paradigm, our reality. Like the ancient Navajo prayer (as best as I can remember it), "With beauty [God] before me I walk, with beauty behind me I walk; with beauty above me I walk; with beauty below me I walk." Our whole existence is now "**within Christ Jesus, our Owner**" and King – or, in union with the Anointed Jesus, our Lord and Master. It can't get any better than this. This is how we should be considering our present life, here and now!

With this verse, Paul (as he often does in his letters) moves from the "indicatives" (the factual statements about the present

reality in Christ) to the "imperatives," his admonitions. He continues in this vein in vss. 12 and 13, then returns to another indicative in vs. 14. In a long presentation, the speaker (rhetor) would often give the audience a break by bringing a change in the form or direction of the oration. Paul may be employing this rhetorical device here, for his arguments have been quite intense.

**12. Do not, then, let the Sin to continue reigning** (or: Therefore, stop allowing the failure, the mistake, or the deviation from the goal to continue on the throne ruling as king) **within your mortal body, [leading] into the**

**continual listening in submissive obedience to its earnest desires** (or: its full rushing of emotions, passions and lusts).

Because of our new position and existence of being "in Christ," the reign of the Death and **the Sin** (i.e., the prior condition of humanity, until the exaltation of Christ to the throne where He now reigns, and we are there, seated with Him) being ended, we now have the power and ability of and from the Holy Spirit, as we are instructed in Eph. 2:5-6,

**"even US, being continuously dead ones by (or: in; to; with) the results and effects of stumblings**

**aside** (wrong steps; offences), **He made alive together by** (or: joins us in common life with, for and in) **the Christ – by Grace and joyous favor you continually exist, being folks having been delivered** (rescued and saved, so that you are now safe; made whole)! – **and He jointly roused and raised** (or: suddenly awakens and raises) **[us] up, and caused [us] to sit** (or: seats [us]) **together within the things situated upon [thus, above] the heavens within and in union with Christ Jesus."**

This addresses the same topics of our

passage in Romans: resurrection and the rule of the corporate Christ – which together are no longer subject to the rule of the Sin and the Death.

If we pick up Paul's thoughts of 4:13-16, above (re: works of the Law), and connect those with how he associates being "under Law" with "sin" not continuing with exercising mastery, in vs. 14 below, then perhaps the alternate rendering, above, "Therefore, stop allowing the failure... to continue on the throne ruling as king" might be speaking to the Jews, or any Judaizers, within the Roman community, about not letting the Law govern them. The Law was a part of the old creation which "failed" to

deliver humanity from the Sin and the Death. In 5:20, above, we saw that the Law's purpose was to cause **the Sin** to increase. It then stands to reason that **"the continual listening in submissive obedience to [the mortal body's] earnest desires** (or: its full rushing of emotions, passions and lusts)" would be in association with the Law and its solidarity with the passionate desires of the mortal body of the individual and/or the corporate body of the Circumcision.

13. **Also stop constantly placing your members** (or: body parts) **alongside** (providing and presenting them) **[as] tools** (or: instruments) **of injustice** (disregard for what is right; activities

discordant to the Way pointed out); **but rather, you folks at once place yourselves alongside for disposal to God** (or: stand yourselves with God, at [His] side; by and in God, present yourselves; set yourselves alongside [each other], for God) **as it were being folks continually alive forth from out of the midst of dead ones, and your members [as] tools (instruments) of fair and equitable dealing in the Way pointed out in and by God** (of justice and solidarity, for God; of being turned in the right direction, to God; of rightwised covenant relationships with God),  
Paul uses the same verb **place alongside**

in 12:1, below:

**"Consequently, brothers, I am repeatedly calling you folks alongside to exhort, implore and encourage you, through God's compassions to stand your bodies alongside (or: to set or place your bodies beside) [the] Well-pleasing, Set-apart (Holy; Different-from-the-usual), Living Sacrifice by God (or: in God; for God; to God; with God), [this being] your sacred service which pertains to thought, reason and communication (or: your reasoned and rational service; the logical and Word-based service**

from you folks)."

This equates to **place yourselves alongside for disposal to God**, or to the other options:

a) stand yourselves with God, at [His] side

b) by and in God, present yourselves

c) set yourselves alongside [each other], for God.

Even the old customs of the Law are now "activities [that are] discordant to the Way [that is now] pointed out" in the new arrangement. The old life – whether of Jews or Gentiles – was a tool of **injustice**, because of human weakness and the lack of power in the Law.

In contrast, we are to place ourselves as folks that have been resurrected, and our members of the community (our people) as **tools** or **instruments** of justice and solidarity, for God – because we have been placed **in the Way pointed out in God** -- this having been done **by God**. The members of our communities have been turned in the right direction: **to** God; and now we enjoy the inheritance of the Promise, which is rightwised covenant relationships – with God and others. Rightwised covenant relationships involve ethics – right behavior. We have been set into the Way of the Messiah to produce His fruit that has tangible and observable results for

those among whom we live our lives. As to the clause, "**as it were being folks continually alive forth from out of the midst of dead ones**," Kirk quotes C.E.B Cranfield as saying that these words "underline the fact that it is a resurrection that is in mind and make it abundantly clear that Paul does think that the people he is addressing have already been raised from the dead in some sense" (ibid p 117).

14. **for your sin** (your failure; your missing of the target) **will not continue exercising mastery** (or: You see, deviation from the goal shall not exert ownership and rule as your lord), **for you folks are not under Law** (or: do

not exist being subject to [Torah] or custom), **but rather under Grace** (or: the Act which produced happiness, which was granted as a favor).

Now he returns to the indicative, for a moment: stating the facts about our new existence in His resurrected Life. Our corporate failure, any missing of the target or our individual **sin**, will no longer continue to **exercise mastery, rule as our lord, or exert ownership** over us, for the situation has changed: people are no longer **under Law**. Paul's correlation between sin's lordship and existence under the Law tells the story of the old arrangement. Humanity (for the Gentiles are now included in the new

arrangement) is now, in extreme contrast, **under Grace**. We are under the rule of the Act (the obedience of Jesus Christ – 5:19b, above) which produced happiness, and which was granted as a favor to us (to humanity). Paul's arguments in the letter to the Galatians will inform this statement here. As Gal. 5:1 says,

**"For freedom, Christ immediately set us free (or: [The] Anointed One at once frees us in, to, for and with freedom)! Keep on standing firm, therefore, and do not again be habitually held within a yoke of slavery (or: a cross-lever [of a**

pair of scales] whose sphere is bondage)."

As you can see in the parenthetical expansion, the term "law" also meant "custom," as well as being a technical term for the Torah. John L. Berquist points out that in early Judaism,

"[L]aw existed in both oral and written form. The law had begun during monarchic Israel or earlier as an oral body of information about how communities should deal with certain problems.... literacy rates were so low that written law made little sense for most people. Laws were customs rather than written statements

demanding adherence to the letter"  
*(Judaism in Persia's Shadow, A  
Social and Historical Approach,*  
Fortress Press, 1995 p 137).

Paul was saying that Grace has brought a release from even what had been ethnic customs. It was truly a new arrangement.

15. **What, then? Should we** (May we; Can we) **occasionally sin** (miss the target; fail), **because we are not under law** (subject to [Torah] or custom), **but rather under grace** (the act yielding happiness, granting joyous favor)?

**Certainly not** (May it not come to be or happen)!

This is a variation of the rhetorical question of vs. 1, above, only here he

uses the aorist tense of the verb **to sin**, and adds the fact of **not** being **under law**, which equates for the Jew as not being subject to the Torah and its customs. This was good news for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews. But again, he passionately affirms that this does not give license for living without ethics – which would amount to behavior void of love. In the next verse he points out that such behavior would bring folks back into slavery to the Sin, once again.

**16. Have you not seen and thus know (Are you not aware) that to whom (for whom; or: in what) you habitually place yourselves alongside, presenting and**

**providing yourselves as slaves into submissive, obedient hearing, you folks are, and continue being, [his or its] slaves – to whom (in what; for which) you habitually submit in obedient hearing – whether of failure (of sin; of missing the target) into death, or of submissive, hearing obedience into fair and equitable dealings of rightwised relationship in the Way pointed out ([covenant] justice).**

Here we can hear an echo of Gal. 5:13,

**"For you folks were called upon the foundation of (on the basis of; for the purpose of) freedom, [my] brothers. Only not (or: Just not) the freedom [which is**

**leading] into a starting point** (or: unto an opportunity, occasion or incentive; to a base of operation) **for** (to; in; by; with) **the flesh** [comment: = circumcision with the flesh ordinances and ceremonial laws of Judaism; or: = personal license for the estranged human nature], **but to the contrary, through the Love** [*agape*: cf vs. 6b, above] **be continuously slaving for one another** (serving and performing the duties of a slave to each other)."

And we can also hear the teaching from Jesus speaking through Paul,

**"No one continues being able (has habitual power) to continue being, or performing as, a slave for two owners (lords; masters). You see, he will either proceed in hating (or: regarding with ill will) the one and will continue loving the different one, or he will continue holding firmly to and having instead the one, and will proceed despising (having a negative attitude and disposition toward) the different one..."**  
(Mat. 6:24).

"There has been a change of *kurioi* [masters; lords; owners], and the Christian... has become a

'slave of Christ'" (Fitzmyer, *Jerome Biblical Comm.*, *ibid* p 310; brackets mine; *cf* 1:1, above)

The character of the ethic for the new arrangement is **submissive, hearing obedience** which is another way of saying "faithful loyalty," which is an effect of being placed **into fair and equitable dealings of rightwised relationship in the Way pointed out** ([covenant] justice). Witherington points out that "Rome was the slave capital of the empire, a place where more domestic slave labor was used than probably anywhere else in Mediterranean crescent" (*ibid* p 170).

17. **But Grace by God** (or: Now [this

is] happiness granted as favor in God):  
**that you folks were existing,**  
**continuing to be slaves of the Sin**  
(slaves of failure; slaves belonging to  
the missing the target), **yet now you**  
**submissively hear and pay attention,**  
**so as to obey – from out of heart! –**  
**[the] type of instruction** (or: chiseled  
and imprinted pattern of teaching) **into**  
**which you are** (or: at one point were)  
**given over** (handed over and entrusted;  
given alongside).

Paul has used the word **grace** in 5:2, 15,  
17, 20, 21; 6:1, 14 and 15, above. To  
now render this same word as "thanks,"  
and render the noun God, in the dative,  
as "to God," making Paul speak a word

of thanksgiving to God, seems inconsistent with its contextual use up to this point in his arguments. The change in lords and the transfer from being **slaves of the Sin** to now being **submissive** to the Word of Christ all came about in the **Grace by God** – or, the "happiness granted as a favor IN God." Note, also, that the **attentive obedience** came **from out of the heart** – echoes from 2:15, 29 and 5:5, above – showing the effects of a change of heart. The final clause has been considered to involve "a difficult phrase... in the Greek text," as we read in Fitzmyer, who continues,

"The crucial word is *typos*, which

fundamentally means the 'visible impression'.... But it was also used to designate 'a compendious, terse presentation' of a subject (Plato, *Rep.* 414a, 491c). Coupled with *didachēs* (teaching), it would seem to be used by Paul in this sense..." (ibid).

But as well as something that had been "hammered out" for them, I suggest that Paul is referring to the **instruction** as something that was solid and which had been imprinted on their hearts, as in Heb. 8:10 and 10:16 – references to Jer. 31:31 and the new arrangement/covenant.

Fitzmyer offers us another insight, in

regard to **given over**:

"In this case, the verb 'handed over' would not refer to the transmission of traditional doctrine (*cf* 1 Cor. 11:23; 15:3), but to the transfer of slaves from one master to another, without any pejorative connotation (*cf* 1 Cor. 5:5; Rom. 1:24)" – *ibid*.

Campbell (*ibid* p 499ff) notes that Paul is inferring that the Roman Christians had already been given the true **instruction** and that he is here affirming their submissive attention and obedience to it. He reasons that we should thus conclude that Paul's arguments here in this letter would not be new to them, but

instead they are crafted to encourage them to stay with what their **heart** knows to be true and to pay no heed to the false teacher(s) of a different gospel. Campbell argues that "*the previous debates in Jerusalem are about to arrive in Rome*, with the arrival of the false teachers there" (ibid p 504; emphasis his), suggesting that the issues that Paul is addressing are the same ones that had also come up later in Syrian Antioch, then in Galatia, in Philippi (*cf* Phil. 3:2-19), and were soon to be in Rome.

18. **Now, being set free** (or: liberated) **from the Sin** (failure; error), **you folks are** (or: were suddenly) **enslaved** (made

slaves) **to justice** (= to covenant participation in solidarity)

(or: in the Way pointed out; for fair and equitable dealings; by the Well-ordered, Righteous Existence [in Christ]; to rightwised relationship and [covenantal] behavior).

Freed from slavery, into a new slavery which is, in fact, true freedom. Yet the responsibility to **justice**, fair and equitable dealings, well-ordered, righteous living, and rightwised relationships that mean covenantal behavior – are not to be taken lightly.

Paul says that **grace, by God and in God**, has transferred us to another Lord,

to be **enslaved** to Him.

"This verse makes explicit the idea contained in the foregoing verses, and indeed in the whole chapter. For the first time Paul speaks of Christian liberty, which from now on becomes an operative notion (6:20, 22; 7:3; 8:2, 21; *cf* Gal. 2:4; 3:28; 4:22-32; 5:1, 13). In reality, he has been speaking of some form of Christian freedom ever since 5:12" (Fitzmyer, *ibid* p 311).

Wright paraphrases the last phrase, which I render "**to justice** (etc.)," as "to God's covenant purposes," (*ibid* p 111) and this gets the idea across. I chose the idea of **justice** as Paul's primary

meaning, because of his commitment to ethics within the community and as regards how the community interacts with the society that surrounds it. His strong metaphor of enslavement rather shouts at his audience the place of importance that fair treatment of other people holds in his message of the good news. Being **enslaved** means a whole-life commitment to **justice** in the world, and a lifetime of living in the Way pointed out with participation and solidarity in the new arrangement (covenant).

19. **I am speaking humanly because of the weakness or sickness of your flesh** (or: = your human condition; or: = the

self that had been distorted by the System): **for even as you folks presented** (placed and provided alongside) **your members [as; being] slaves by** (for; in; to) **the Uncleanness and by** (for) **the lawlessness, [leading] into that Lawlessness** (or: in one illegal act to [another] illegal act) **in this manner** (thus) **now you folks must place** (provide; present) **your members alongside [as] slaves of the Way pointed out** (slaves of rightwised relationship in fair and equitable dealings; slaves of justice and righteousness) **[leading] into the quality and sphere of being set-apart** (or: into a holy consecration and a state

of being sacredly different).

Paul clarifies for them that he has been using a human, societal illustration (*cf* Gal. 3:15) when he is speaking of their being **slaves**. He knows by personal experience (*cf* Gal. 4:13) that the **weakness or sickness of the flesh** normally amounts to what he terms **slavery**, but what we, today, might call addictions, lack of character or weakness of will-power. In vs. 21, below, he points to their shame and embarrassment concerning what he terms here as their involvement in **the Uncleaness** and **the/that Lawlessness**. He does not point to any specifics, but apparently indicates that

he was aware of their former behavior and lifestyles. He is most likely speaking in regard to the Gentiles of the community, but it is not beyond possibility that some of the Jews had been drawn into some aspects of Roman society, of which they were now ashamed. But human weakness does not deter the work of the cross or the work of the Holy Spirit, so as to keep folks from hearing the message of goodness, ease and well-being which sets them free from slavery to the flesh. But being set free from our past now allows us to **place [our] members alongside [as] slaves of the Way pointed out** (and Paul is a chief example of this: from

persecutor of the called-out folks to being emissary to the nations with the message of Christ).

The string of prepositional phrases which I have rendered "**by (for) the lawlessness, [leading] into that Lawlessness** (or: in one illegal act to [another] illegal act)" have been variously translated or paraphrased by different translators. The idea may be what Wright offers as "to one degree of lawlessness after another" (ibid p 111). Or, it might be an idiom of progression, as offered by the NRSV, "to greater and greater iniquity." Barclay's version is similar to both Wright's and the NRSV. But Paul's use of the definite article

(which originally also functioned as a demonstrative pronoun – A.T.

Robertson, *ibid* p 754ff) falls here amidst personifications of sin, death, etc., and perhaps he is speaking in general terms of all shameful (and thus lawless or illegal) acts of humanity's slavery to the Failure which progressively sank people deeper and deeper into the collective sewer of **that Lawlessness** (or, human independence) that co-existed with **the Sin**.

The new kind of slavery brings us **into the quality and sphere of being set-apart**; it leads us into a holy consecration and a state of being sacredly different (a core idea of

"holiness").

**20. For when you folks were existing being slaves of the Sin** (slaves from failure; slaves of deviation from the goal), **you were existing [as it were] being free [as; with regard] to the Way pointed out** (= being not owned by rightwised relationships, fairness, equity and justice).

As Jesus said, you cannot be a slave to two masters at the same time.

Enslavement to one is freedom from the other. So when they were in the slavery from the failure of Adam, they had no responsibilities to keep the covenant. When being slaves of the deviation, they were not accountable to rightwised

relationships that characterize the new arrangement, but they were also free from the peaceable fruit that came with the Spirit of God inhabiting their midst.

**21. What fruit, then, were you having (did you used to hold or possess) at that time, upon which [situation or condition] you folks now continue to be ashamed and embarrassed? For, indeed, the outcome (the end; the goal; the fruition; the consummation; the destiny) of those things [is] death.**

And so, what fruit did they produce in the former arrangement and condition? All they produced was **death** – the characteristic fruit of the life of the first Adam. All that they had was **death**.

Their so-called honor was in reality shame. They were in need of God's covering and cleansing. They were in need of Christ's Life – of resurrection.

**22. But now being folks set free from the Sin** (from failure; from error; from missing the target; from deviation) **yet being enslaved by** (to; in; for) **God, you folks continue having** (habitually hold and possess) **your fruit unto the quality and sphere of being set-apart** (into a sacred difference). **Now the outcome** (goal, end and destiny) **[of this is] life which belongs to, is proper to, pertains to and is connected to the Age** (eonian life; Life of and for the ages).

But all has changed: the Messiah has

come and has overcome death, via resurrection, and has set at liberty the captives, the slaves, the dead. The new situation is that they **continue (presently) having – holding, possessing – fruit unto the quality and sphere of being set-apart.** Their lives are now producing a sacred difference. Being set free from the Sin, and being enslaved by God – and for God – as well as in God and to God, now **the outcome – the destiny – that has entered in to our existence is life which belongs to, is proper to, pertains to and is connected to the Age of the Messiah.** It is eonian life, resurrection life, the Life of Christ where our life is

hidden with the Christ, within the midst of God (Col. 3:3).

**“Now THIS is (or: exists being) eonian life (living existence of and for the ages; life pertaining to the Age [of Messiah]): namely, that they may progressively come to intimately and experientially know You, the only true and real (genuine) God – and Jesus Christ” (John 17:3).**

**23. For you see, the subsistence pay (the ration money; the allowance) of the Sin (failure; the missing of the target; the deviation) [is] death, but God’s grace-effect (or: the result of the joyous and gracious gift of and from God; the effect**

of the favor, which is God,) [is] **life which belongs to, is proper to, pertains to and is connected to the Age** (eonian life; Life of and for the ages) **within Christ Jesus, our Owner** (or: in union with [the] Anointed Jesus, our Lord). He switches metaphors from fruit to **subsistence pay** (as that which soldiers received), or ration money, an allowance. **The Sin** both produces and pays **death**. This is what Adam passed on to us. The Law intensified and increased the failure, the deviation and the missing of the Target (which was to be an image-bearer of God). But that is not the end of the story. **God's grace-effect** – the result of the joyous and

gracious gift of, and from, God, along with the favor which IS God – is and brings **life**. This life is the life that was and is in the Seed that was planted in death. It is now resurrection life that has sprung up from out of the midst of our **subsistence pay** that **the Sin** rationed to us. This **life** belongs to the Age of the Messiah. The eonian life is connected to this Age of the Messiah, and this Age, along with its life, is **within Christ Jesus, our Owner**. It is being "in union with the Anointed Jesus, our Lord." Sanders insightfully points out that,

"The basic insight was that the believer becomes one with Christ Jesus and that this effects a

transfer of lordship and the beginning of a transformation.... one participates in salvation by becoming one person with Christ.... [and yet] the experience of being 'in Christ' was not the same as the experience of being 'in Israel'.... [for] following the law does not result in being found in Christ.... Christ has put an end to the law and provides a different righteousness from that provided by Torah obedience (Rom. 10:2-4)" (ibid p 549-50; brackets mine).



## Chapter 7

**1. Or are you continuing to be ignorant** (are you remaining without experiential knowledge and insight), **brothers** (= fellow covenant members) – **for I am speaking to those having intimate experiential knowledge of Law** (= those who understand Torah) – **that the Law** (or: culture; Torah) **continuously performs as lord** (owner; master) **of the man for as long as he is living?**

Paul is continuing the argument of 6:15-23, turning to the **Law** and the part that applies to its marriage codes for an analogy. He is assuming that even the

Gentiles in the covenant community have a working knowledge of the Torah, for the OT is the Scripture of the early called-out groups. The message of the Messiah is rooted there. Wright states that, "the whole chapter is about the law of Moses" (ibid p 118).

This verse sets the stage. The **Law** is in the same place that he had put **sin** in 6:14, above: performing as the man's lord and master – but only **for as long as he is living**.

**2. For instance, the married woman** (the woman under subjection to a husband or to an adult male) **has been bound and remains tied up by Law and custom to the living husband** (or: has

been wrapped up and stands tied to law [= Torah; or: custom] by the living man). **Yet if the husband may die, she has been released from employment and stands idle** (or: has been brought down to living without labor and rendered inactive; she is discharged and brought down to unproductivity, being idled down) **away from the husband's law** (or: from pertaining to the law [= Torah] and custom of the adult man).

"A wife and her husband are one flesh (Gen. 2:24), hence the *wife* dies with the husband, but the *woman* remains" (Knoch, *ibid* p 236; emphasis original).

In this analogy, who does the husband

represent? For the Gentiles, it could be Adam (or, the old humanity), and when he died (as in 3b, below) in Christ and was buried with Him, humanity (the wife) became **free** to become a wife for a different husband, the Second Adam (the risen Messiah). For the Jews, the husband in this analogy would be Yahweh, for the OT describes Israel (to whom applied the Law) as His wife (Isa. 54:5, 6; Ezk. 16:8, 32; Hos. 2:2, 19, etc.). Since God (Yahweh) was in the Christ (2 Cor. 5:19), He died with Jesus on the cross. Thus, the "woman," Israel, **has been released... away from the Husband's Law** (Torah).

"In 7:1-6 Paul interweaves two

arguments: (1) The Law binds only the living (7:1, 4a).

Consequently, the Christian who has died 'through the body of Christ' is no longer bound by it.

(2) A wife is freed by the death of her husband from the specific prescriptions of the Law binding her to him... The second argument is only an illustration of the first..." (Fitzmyer, *ibid* p 311).

Dodd sees Paul as considering that a person was married to the Law – which (Dodd concludes) is the equivalent to being married to Sin – but through death a person has been freed to be married to Christ (*ibid* p 101).

Some read Paul's analogy allegorically, seeing the husband as a figure of the fallen, or estranged, spirit, and the wife as a figure of the soul. And so, **"the person continually joining himself to (or: in; with) the Lord exists being one spirit"** (1 Cor. 6:17): a picture from marriage.

**3. Consequently (or: Accordingly), then, [with the] continued living of the husband, she will be dealing as an adulteress (or: bear the title "adulteress") if she should become [attached] to, or [a lover] for, or [involved] with a different man (or: husband); but if the husband may die, she is free (she exists in a state of**

freedom) **from the Law** [= Torah], **not to be an adulteress, pertaining to her becoming [a wife] for (or: to) a different man** (or: husband).

Israel's history is blighted by many occurrences where she turned away from Yahweh and turned to other "gods" of the surrounding nations. But she remained tied to her Husband (Yahweh) by the Law (Torah). To be free from **the husband's law** (Torah), Yahweh had to die, and this happened in the death of the Messiah on the cross. Now she is free, **pertaining to her becoming [a wife] for (or: to) a different man** (or: husband): Christ and His law of the spirit of the Life within Him (8:2,

below).

**4. So that, my brothers (= fellow covenant-believers), you folks also were made dead to the Law (or: were put to death by the Law [=Torah] and with the Law), through the body of the Christ, [proceeding] into the situation to become [the wife] for (or: to; in; with) a different One – in (to; for) the One being roused and raised forth from out of the midst of dead folks – to the end that we may bear fruit by God (or: produce a harvest in, for, to and with God).**

"Those united to Christ under law died with Him to the law. Union with Christ in resurrection is a

new relationship beyond the sphere of the law" (Knoch, *ibid*).

So Paul is telling his Roman brothers that **THEY**, like the wife in his analogy, **were made dead to the Law** (this is why they **are not under Law**, but under grace – 6:14, above). This happened **through the body of the Christ** (when He, representing and embodying God – Emmanuel – died on the cross).

"... the death Paul refers to as a past event has released the believer from being under the power, control or jurisdiction of the Mosaic Law" (Kirk, *ibid* p 176).

**" You see, I myself through [the]**

**Law died by [the] Law (or: to [the] Law; in [the] Law; with [the] Law), to the end that I could and would live by God, in God, for God, to God and with God!"**  
(Gal. 2:19)

Now we have come **into the situation to become [the wife] for** (or: to; in; with) **a different One (Christ): the One being roused and raised forth from out of the midst of dead folks!** The last clause carries on the marriage analogy, which normally results in the births of children. But this also may be Paul echoing Gen. 1:28, God's blessing that humanity would be fruitful and fill the earth. Notice the last phrase: **by God**

(not by self-works or ritual observance), **in God** (in the realm of Spirit – or, in Christ), **for God** (to fulfill His purposes), **to God** (our harvest is to be presented to Him, fulfilling all the OT types of "the offerings") and **with God** (through union with Him, as a wife does with her husband; or, as co-laborers with Christ).

5. **You see, when we** [= Adam/Israel] **were existing within the flesh** (or: = in the old alienated Adamic existence, with the flesh sacrifices and markers of the Law), **the effects, impressions, emotions and impulses from the experiences, passions and suffering of the failures** (from the sins and

deviations which caused misses of the target) – **the things through means of the Law** [the Torah] – **were continually operating** (working within; energizing and effecting) **within our members into the condition to produce fruit by Death** (in death; to death; for Death).

In my translation, I inserted the brackets to assist the reader. The **we** of the first clause is Paul's normal inclusive pronoun, both to show solidarity with his audience and to refer to the whole of humanity. Thus, this **we** can be speaking of Adam (his figure for humanity in these arguments) which would include the Gentiles in the covenant community in Rome, or it can refer to Israel as the

people who had the Law, and would include both himself and the Jews in Rome.

He is using the term **the flesh** figuratively (perhaps another personification). My parenthetical expansion suggests two possible meanings:

- a) the old alienated Adamic existence – termed "the old humanity" (6:6, above)
- b) the flesh sacrifices and physical markers (e.g., circumcision) of the Law

Notice that he speaks of this as a past existence (the imperfect tense). This is where we were prior to the death and

resurrection of Christ.

The next phrase is expanded to give a broad picture of the Greek word which is the subject of the main clause of the verse: **the effects, impressions, emotions and impulses from the experiences, passions and suffering.** It was all of these that **were continually operating** (working within; energizing and effecting) **within our members.**

This is a description of the human predicament apart from existentially experiencing being alive in Christ, in the new creation. These experiences and suffering were **of the failures**, and the **effects**, etc., came "from the sins and deviations which caused misses of the

target." Now observe the phrase, set off by dashes for clarification, that he uses to describe the realm and sphere through which these things operated within and among us: **the things through means of the Law** [the Torah]. Once again, the culprit – the medium and environment – is **the Law**. Through Israel, the Law/Torah exacerbated the human situation.

The result of these **effects of sins** (etc.) **continually operating within our members** (both individually and corporately) brought us **into the condition to produce fruit by Death** (in death; to death; for Death). This is the opposite of **bearing fruit by God** (vs. 4,

above). Once again Paul presents us with before and after pictures that are separated by the cross. Again observe the four functions of the dative case (**by, in, to, for**) that are potential, and make sense, with regard to the noun **Death**.

That death would produce fruit may seem counter-intuitive to our way of thinking, but it is logical to the thrust of Paul's argument. The death that he speaks of is an existential reality, but he is using the term metaphorically.

6. **But now** (at the present time), **we** [= Israel] **are** (or: were instantly) **rendered inactive** (brought down to living without labor, released from employment, made unproductive;

discharged) **away from the Law** (= the Torah; [some MSS add: of Death]), **dying within that in which we were constantly being held down** (held in possession and detained), **so that it is [for] us to be habitually performing as slaves within newness of spirit** (a newness pertaining to spirit and has its source in the Breath-effect; freshness and new quality of attitude) **and not in oldness** (obsoleteness; outdatedness) **of Letter** (or: not in outwornness of what is written).

Due to the reference to **the Law** it would seem that the **we** refers specifically to Israel. However, the MSS that add the phrase "of Death"

might reflect a reading of Paul as referring to the Death that came through Adam.

The participle phrase, **dying within that in which**, is a literal rendering and refers to the condition and situation of being "held in possession and detained" by **the Law** – in relation to which we were, and now **are, rendered inactive** and released from employment. We no longer labor in or for the Law. The law of Death also kept us **constantly being held down**.

Being made to be unproductive in, and the release from employment by, the former age of the first creation, it is now possible for **us to be habitually**

**performing as slaves within newness of spirit** within the new creation. It is a "newness pertaining to spirit," not **the flesh** (vs. 5, above). But we should mark Paul reference to **performing as slaves**: we are still to be active and working the new works of God, as we rest in Him. His yoke is easy, and His burden is light, but there is a Way to be followed; a Path to be trod. The source of this newness is God's Breath-effect blowing anew across the waters of humanity, as in the beginning (Gen. 1:2).

The last phrases, **not in oldness of Letter**, is a clear reference to the Law and the outwornness of what is written in the Jewish Scriptures, or perhaps to

other writings containing the wisdom of humans. The cross and the resurrection, and the giving of the Spirit, brought a **newness of spirit and attitude** to all of humanity. The new Age had dawned with the new creation.

**7. What, then, shall we say (or: declare)? [Is] the Law (or: custom) sin (error; failure to hit the target; deviation from the goal)? Certainly not (May it not come to be)! Instead (or: But rather) I did not (or: do not) at any point experientially and intimately know the Sin, if not through Law ([= Torah]; or: custom). For besides, I had not seen and thus had not known (become conscious of) the full passion (earnest**

desire; lust; coveting; emotion upon something) **if the Law and the custom were not continuously saying** (or: except the [Torah] kept on saying),

**"You will continue not putting strong emotions upon something** (or: You shall not repeatedly have a strong impulse or desire; You will not constantly crave or covet [other folks' possessions or their gods])." [Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21; comment: the "I" of this passage = Adam (Gen. 3)/Israel (Ex. 32)/Paul (in his pre-Christian experience)]

Here he repeats the same rhetorical question of 6:1, asking his audience

what all this, from 7:1-5, is leading to.

**Is the Law, itself, sin?** – Pau's interlocutor asks. **Well, of course not!** – Paul answers. And now begins a new phase of his argument: impersonation with the "I" and personification of "**the Sin**". In the comment which I attached to vs. 7, I present three possibilities for this impersonation of the "I."

Witherington notes that John Chrysostom (mid 4<sup>th</sup> cent. to early 5<sup>th</sup>),

".... took [this section of vss. 7-13] to be talking about those who lived before the Law and then those who lived outside or under the Law. In other words, it is about Gentiles and Jews outside

Christ" (ibid p 180; brackets mine).

Dodd remarks that at first glance it appears that this section is autobiographical, and points to other letters where Paul's "I" actually refers to himself (e.g., 1 Cor. 8:13, where he concludes that if food is a hindrance to another person's welfare, "I will never eat flesh as long as I live"). He also notes 1 Cor. 13:1-3, 11-12, the "I" does not really differ from the "we" with which it alternates. In discussing vss. 9-11, below, which he see as potentially an allegorical interpretation of the story of the Adam's fall, he notes that Philo of Alexandria (Paul's contemporary)

interprets this Genesis account allegorically, and in detail: "Pleasure (the serpent) seduces the Senses (Eve) and so Reason (Adam) is led astray..." (ibid p 105). He also quotes another first-century writer who said, "Each of us has been the Adam of his own soul" (*Apocalypse of Baruch* 54:19; ibid 105).

Another view is that the "I" impersonates Adam, and this would be the most extensive application of Paul's argument here. A third view sees the "I" as Israel or a person recalling childhood experiences of growing up under the Law. Each of these views unwraps helpful insights into Paul's intent. Let us

keep them all in mind as we proceed.  
"This [section] is the outworking of the contrast of Adam and Christ in 5:12-21" (Witherington, *ibid* p 186; brackets mine).

Adam did not experience **the Sin**, until after God's prohibition came to him. Israel did not have intimate knowledge of sin until they were given the Law. A youth does not come to experientially know disobedience until he has been given the instructions on right behavior by the parent.

Now Paul gives an example from the Law, quoting Ex. 20:17, showing how **the full passion** (earnest desire; lust; coveting; emotion upon something)

either comes into being, or is increased (5:20, above), by the fact that "the [Torah] kept on saying" that "**you will not put strong emotions upon something.**" The point is that the Law continues to be the instigator of sin and failure. Vs. 8 expands this thought:

8. **Yet the Sin** (or: the failure; the error; the mistake; the missing of the target; the deviation from the goal), **taking** (receiving in the hand and thus, getting) **a starting point** (a base of operation; an occasion; a means of beginning) **through the implanted goal** (impartation of the finished product within; inward directive; commandment [to Adam, then to Israel]), **works** (or: worked) **down to**

**effect and produce within me every full passion, strong impulse, over-desire and craving emotion upon things – for apart from Law (or: a custom; or: [Torah]) sin (error; failure; missing the target) [is] dead (or: [was] lifeless).**

**The Sin**, personified as awaiting "an occasion," has its "base of operation, means of beginning, and **starting point**" in the "impartation of the inward directive." When a commander gives orders to his soldiers, the finished product – the end in view for their actions – is **implanted** into their understandings and becomes their inward directive to achieve the **goal** that

their commander has in mind. Once **the implanted goal** (for Israel, this was the Law) was given and took root, **the Sin worked down to effect and produce every full passion** (etc.) within Adam, in Israel and in the heart of every individual. And this became humanity's predicament. Eve lusted for wisdom and to be like God; Israel became self-centered and misunderstood the concept of being set-apart (or: holy) and viewed God's choice of them as something for themselves; humans saw God's gifts as something to be possessed, managed and used for themselves. Lynda Mitchell, making a note from p 97 of Walter Brueggemann's *The Land*, writes,

"The offense (of taking land) is oppression of the land as well. It takes land out of covenant and reduces it to control."

God's gift of the land came to be something that king Ahab craved (in particular, Naboth's vineyard – 1 Ki. 21),

"Ahab regarded the land as a tradable commodity: 'Give me your vineyard....' In contrast, for Naboth land is not a *tradable commodity*, but an *inalienable inheritance*: 'The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance....' which means it is

held in trust from generation to generation.... [but] the queen [Jezebel] *uses* the Torah for her own ends" (Brueggemann, *ibid* p 93, 95).

This is just one example from Israel's history of the Torah (**the implanted goal** for Israel) being a base of operation for **the Sin**. More recently in their history, we find Jesus accusing the Pharisees of doing the same sort of manipulation (*cf* Mk. 7:11).

Next Paul instructs us that **apart from Law** (or: a custom; or: [Torah]) **sin** (error; failure; missing the target) **[is] dead** (or: [was] lifeless). He does not say the sin does not exist, but that it had

no power – it was lifeless. Here recall 1 Cor. 15:56, **"the power and ability of the Sin [is] the Law."**

"It is highly significant that Paul has chosen for his example the one prohibition of the Decalogue which deals with the inner life, and not with overt action" (Dodd p 110).

**9. Now I was at one time** (or: formerly) **habitually living apart from Law** (or: I was once alive, independent from custom and [Torah]); **yet, in connection with the coming of the implanted goal** (of the impartation of the finished product within; of the inward commandment and directive), **the Sin**

**becomes alive again** (or: deviation, failure, error and the missing of the target revived and comes back to life), **but I die** (or: and I died; yet I die).

We could say that Paul here describes the life of a happy childhood – for Adam; for Israel before Moses; for a youth in Israel. This could also describe the Gentile, before coming in contact with the Law. Note the retro inference from the word **again**. Once more, Paul is not saying that sin did not exist before the Law, but that the implanted promise and directive revived error and brings the deviation back to life. The serpent was always in the garden, and it does not say that it was cast out of the garden

– although it left with Adam, and we have seen it in humanity ever since.

The result was that Adam, Israel, all of humanity died – and yet still **die**.

### 10. **Also, the implanted goal**

(impartation of the finished product within; inward directive; commandment)

– **the one [meant to lead] into Life** –

**this was found by me** (for me; in me; to me) **[to be leading] into death.**

God gave the inward directive to Adam so that he would live. The Law was given so that Israel would choose life – Deut. 30:15, but because of weakness it only brought death. God's purpose, planned from His first thought about creation, was to have all humanity bear

God's image (Gen. 1:26) and this would be done via death and resurrection. But God Himself had to do this, and He did it in, through and with Jesus Christ who took humanity into Himself and brought us all through the completed process, so that we all,

**"are** (you continuously exist being) **folks having been delivered** (rescued; kept safe; saved; made whole; restored to your original state and condition) **so as to now be enjoying salvation through** [some MSS add: the] **faithfulness** (or: loyalty; trust; faith; confidence), **and this not forth from out of you folks,**

**[it is] the gift of and from God** (or: the gift which is God; or: the gift whose source is God)" (Eph. 2:8).

But what Paul is referring to here in 7:10 is that interim process that we call **death**. But it is neither the goal, nor the end. We can also observe in Paul's rhetoric an answer to the Judaizing teachers: don't bring the Law into Christianity – it will cause death to the congregations!

11. **For the Sin** (failure; error; the miss when shooting at a target; the deviation from the goal), **taking a starting point** (receiving an occasion and base of operation) **through the implanted goal**

(impartation of the finished product within; inward directive; commandment [to Adam, then to Israel]), **completely makes me unable to walk the Path** (made me incapable to walk out [customs of the Law]; thoroughly cheats and deludes me, making me lose my Way; deceives me; [comment: reference to Eve in Gen. 3:13]) **and through it kills me off** (or: slaughtered me).

The first half of this verse is a restatement (a rhetorical tool, to firmly set his thought on this into the minds of his audience) of vs. 8, above. Now he shows us what the result of the giving of the Law had on Israel: **the Sin... completely makes [us all] unable to**

**walk the Path** that God pointed out to us. Said another way, it "made [us] incapable to walk out [customs of the Law]." Or, it "thoroughly cheats and deludes us, making [us] lose our Way (and thus be in need of the Way, the Truth and the Life)." And, it "deceived [us]" – a reference to what happened to Eve.

The intermediate effect was that **the Sin killed [us all] off** – it slaughtered us. We were led like sheep to the slaughter (*cf* Ps. 44:22; Jer. 12:3; also, 8:36, below).  
12. **And thus** (or: Consequently) **the Law** [= the Torah], **indeed, [is] set-apart** (holy; sacred; consecrated) **and the implanted goal** (impartation of the

finished product within; inward directive; commandment) **[is] set-apart** (holy; sacred) **and in accord with the Way pointed out** (fair; equitable; just; = related to covenant) **and good** (virtuous).

He affirms that **the Law and the implanted goal** are **set-apart** to be used by God for His purpose and "plan of the ages" (Eph. 3:11). They came from God and therefore they are holy and sacred. They set Israel apart from all other nations to be a light in the darkness of that past era. They are His first tools for carving His image in humanity, and were the flesh and stone models that pointed ahead to the Messiah, and to a time

when God would make humans His temple and would enter into our hearts as He inwardly circumcises us by the inward presence of His Spirit. They are both **in accord with the Way that He has destined** for Israel, who was a type of His corporate son – the one animated by the soul (1 Cor. 15:44). Furthermore, they are **good and virtuous** – and **spiritual** (vs. 14, below). They are a part of the whole creation of processes that He declared to be "very good" (Gen. 1:31).

**13. Then did the good come to be death for me (in me; to me)? Certainly not (may it not come to be)! But rather, the Sin (failure; error; the miss; the**

mistake; the deviation) – **to the end that sin** (failure; error; etc.) **may be brought to light and made visible** (or: in order that it may be made to appear and be shown as being sin) – **is constantly producing** (or: working down) **death through the good** [i.e., the commandment], **to the end that the Sin** (failure; the miss; error; the deviation), **through the implanted goal** (impartation of the finished product within; inward directive; commandment), **may come to be in accord with a throwing-beyond that is missing the target**

(or: may happen according to excess which is failing; may

become extremely erroneous; should come to be in line with a deviating shooting over the goal; or, substantively: may become an exceeding failure, an excessive sinner or a total outcast).

Paul's Jewish teacher interjects another incredulous question. Again Paul reassures all the Jews that this was all part of God's plan, and then he makes a clear distinction between **the Law** (together with **the implanted goal**) and **the Sin**. The former are God's Word, and His word is always life. So **the good** (Law and implanted goal) did **NOT come to be death** for humanity (or, later, for Israel). No, it was **the Sin**,

i.e., the disobedience, which did that. The purpose – **the end** in view – was **that sin** (failure; error; etc.) **may be brought to light and made visible** (or: in order that it may be made to appear and be shown as being sin). And so, **the Sin is constantly producing death through the good** (i.e., through the Law and the commandment); but this, too, has an **end** – or purpose – in view: so **that the Sin** (etc.) **may come to be in accord with a throwing-beyond that is missing the target**. In archery we would say that it is over-shooting the target. And this happened **through the implanted goal** (the **good**, which God laid out for Israel, and by extension, through observing

Israel, for instruction to humanity). This is a restatement of his thought in 5:20, above – the Law entered in to make the Sin increase and be more than enough. The parenthetical expansions at the end of the verse color in the picture with other vivid paints, giving added views into Paul's expression. Viewing the adjective as a substantive together with the nouns that precede and follow it, the final offer is, "so **that the Sin** may become an exceeding failure, an excessive sinner or a total outcast," and this happened: **through the implanted goal, or, commandment**. And, indeed, the Law came to be an excess of rules that Jesus referred to as being burdens:

loads or cargoes that needed to be carried (Lu. 11:46). Paul's narrative describes life under the Law: it was gave power to failure, which **constantly produced death**.

14. **For you see, we have seen and are aware** (or: on the one hand I recognize and know) **that the Law** (= Torah; or: law; custom; principle) **constantly exists being spiritual** (is pertaining to spirit; is having the qualities of a Breath-effect; is relating to attitude), **yet** (or: on the other hand) **I** [= Israel? or, Adam] **myself am** (or: exist being) **fleshly** (composed of flesh; carnal; flesh-oriented; or: = affected by the alienated self), **being one having been**

**and now remaining sold under [the power and control of] the Sin** (under failure and the miss of the Target [of Torah?]).

No law is fleshly. It is something of words and ideas – a creation of the mind which operates in the realm of spirit – even if it be chiseled in stone, or becomes the letter that has been written. Principles can be observed in action, but the principle itself cannot be seen – it is spirit. The Law came from God, who is spirit. The Law applies to the spirit of a human, but judges the actions of both his flesh and his spirit (such as the words that he speaks).

Yet we are **fleshly**. Note that Paul did

not say that we are "flesh." We are composed of flesh, and so are weak. We are carnal, in that our orientation is toward our flesh. Metaphorically, we are "affected by the alienated self." In other words, Adam was not in tune with spirit. Why? Because Adam, and then Israel, including the individual, is **one having been, and now remaining, sold under the power and control of the Sin.** We were slaves of the Sin. We (as the first Adam) became prisoners under the reign of the failure – the miss of the Target. Again, Paul is speaking of the situation in the first creation, the old age and the old covenant. He is describing the stark predicament of humanity before

the advent of the Messiah. We were lost sheep. We were dead in our trespasses and sins. But:

"As a new Adam, Jesus marks a new beginning for a new type of people---those that are animated by the Spirit, which is the power of the Resurrection in the world in which the kingdom of God is a reality.

"This struggle in the old age, even with the law and its commandments as a guide to proper image-bearing, which was perhaps intended to be a sign-post (much like the ministry of Jesus and His church following Him) of

the in-breaking of the always-expected age of God's proper rule over creation, is well-articulated by Paul's famous and much-debated words in chapter seven of Romans. He writes 'For we know that the law is spiritual' (7:14a). That is, the law is related to the new age and expectation of God's kingdom and God's rule (age of the empowering Spirit), 'but I am unspiritual, sold into slavery to sin' (7:14b)" – (Byrd, Law and the Turn of the Ages, pt 1, *ibid*, 10-15-12).

Here I would suggest that the Law "was" related to the new age, in that it

pointed to the new age and it was the womb the gave birth to the Messiah. But like Rachel in giving birth to Benjamin (Gen. 35:16ff), the Law died in giving birth to the Christ.

**15. For what I am constantly producing** (habitually working down to accomplish; [= keeping customs of the Torah]) **I do not intimately know** (experience in my understanding). **You see, that which I continually will** (habitually intend and purpose), **this I do not habitually practice. But rather, that which I constantly hate, this I continue to do or repeatedly perform!** Again David Byrd shares instructive insights that we should keep in mind,

"We must resist the temptation to reductionism, hearing this as Paul's personal, spiritual experience. Instead, because Paul operates within a story that shapes his theology, his soteriology, his ecclesiology, his sociology, his politics, his economics, his psychology, his philosophy, and his missiology (though we don't pretend that these are necessarily separate categories for Paul), we must hear Paul echoing the plaintive cry of all those, prior to the cross and against the powers at work in the old age, that have been called to carry the covenant

and to reflect God's glory into the world" (Byrd, *ibid*).

Paul is now impersonating the situation of the old man that he describes in 8:20, below, as,

**"the creation... placed, arranged and humbly aligned under subjection in emptiness (or: subordinated to vanity; subjected by futility; arranged under, in unprofitableness, for frivolous idleness; made supportive to futility)..."**

Here in vs. 15 he pictures human frustration and uselessness. People do the opposite of that which they want to do. Their wills are overcome and

subjected to existential futility. Free will? Only a frivolous dream of the delusional. People do not even understand what they **are constantly producing**. The Jew that was habitually working down to accomplish the cultus of the Law did not **intimately know** what he was doing – He did not yet see the Christ. His heart remained veiled (2 Cor. 3:6-15).

16. **Now if what I am not continually willing** (not habitually intending), **this I am habitually doing or producing, I am constantly concurring with** (conceding; agreeing with; a prophetic voice with) **the Law [= the Torah], that [it is] ideal** (fine; excellent; beautiful).

If a human being of the old age is **habitually doing or producing** things that he or she is "not habitually intending" to do, this person is still constantly agreeing with **the Law**, that it is **ideal**. The very fact that folks did what is contrary to their wills showed that their will **concur[ed] with the Law**, but the Law's weakness (Heb. 7:18), and humanity's, left people in slavery to the Sin. Folks were dead and unable to do otherwise than to fail and break the Law. But the **implanted goal** made a Jew to be a prophetic voice with the Law – and thus, they could not gainsay it.

We need to keep in mind that this is still Paul's rhetorical impersonation of Adam

and/or Israel. It is a part of his argument against those who were promoting Law-observance, and the setting was the 1<sup>st</sup> century – before AD 70. Paul is showing the futility of Law-observance, and his argument continues in the next verse.

17. **Yet now** (= as the case really stands) **I myself am no longer habitually producing** (continuously working down and effecting) **this, but rather the Sin** (the failure; the personified error of missing the Target; the deviation [from Torah and its boundary markers]) [**which is**] **continuously housing herself** (or: making its home; inhabiting; dwelling; = living) **within me.**

Now Paul reveals the cause of

humanity's problem: it is **the Sin which is continuously housing itself within [us]**. In this argument using impersonation and personification, Paul is distinguishing the failure from us. The personified error of missing the Target and the deviation from the Torah and its boundary markers are not us, but are an alien personality, the false persona, or the law and principle of the sin and the death (*cf* 8:2, below).

"He has exonerated the law from blame in the catastrophe that has overtaken Israel. He has even exonerated the 'I'; there was nothing wrong with being Israel, nothing wrong with wanting to

keep God's law (think of Ps. 19 and 119, with their almost mystical longing and love for the law). The real problem was sin" (Wright, *ibid* p 129).

So something was added to Adam that was not a part his originally created essence, and thus Paul says here, **I myself am no longer habitually producing this.** A law (a **different principle**, vs. 23, below) entered in when Adam partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (the law of sin and death). Now this "other principle" was from then on operating within humanity. Jewish thinkers had wrestled with this human predicament.

The book of 4 Ezra is considered to date around AD 100, but its oral traditions would likely have been current during the time of Paul. The thoughts expressed about the situation with Adam are telling,

"For a grain of evil seed was sown in Adam's heart from the beginning, and how much ungodliness it has produced until now, and will produce until the time of threshing comes.... When heads of grain without number are sown, how great a threshing floor they will fill!" (4 Ezra 4:30-32; translated by B Metzger, *The OT Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1,

Hendrickson Publishers, 2013 p  
530-531).

We find this "threshing floor" imagery  
used by John the Immerser,

**"He, Himself, will proceed  
immersing (or: baptizing) you  
folks within the midst of set-  
apart Spirit (or: set-apart spirit;  
sacred attitude; Holy Breath-  
effect) and (or: even) Fire –  
"Whose winnowing shovel (or:  
fork) [is] in His hand to  
thoroughly clean [other MSS:  
and He will thoroughly cleanse]  
His threshing floor and to gather  
together [with other MSS: He  
will collect] the grain into His**

**storehouse** (granary; barn) – **but then He will progressively burn down** (or: up) **the chaff** (husks and straw; = the useless remains of the dead plants) **with** (or: in) **an inextinguishable Fire."** (Lu. 3:16b-17)

John announced that the time had come for the harvest, and God's fire would clean things up. The purpose of the fire was to get rid of what in this case was not a part of the goal of the harvest (i.e., the grain). Paul uses the metaphor of fire in 1 Cor. 3:12-15 to describe God's cleansing away the results of worthless or inferior works from a person's, or a community's, life. In both cases what is

burned up is the result of a part of a person's life-experience (but not a part of the person) that is not a part of the goal for humanity, which is to be bearing the image of God (the Good).

**18. For I have seen and thus know that good (or: virtue) is not habitually making its home (housing itself; dwelling; = living) within me – that is, within my flesh (= alienated self; or: = life under Torah) – for the [ability or condition] to will (or: intend; purpose) is continually lying near beside me, but the [ability, condition or circumstance] to constantly produce (work down, effect and accomplish) the ideal (the fine; the excellent; the beautiful) [is] not.**

Paul continues in his expansion of the human situation in the old Adam, and with Israel as being under the Law.

Ambrosiaster commented here,

"Paul does not say that the flesh is evil, as some think, but that what dwells in the flesh is not good, i.e., sin" (*Ancient Christian Commentary*, ibid p 193).

Viewed from the perspective of the new creation, what Paul means is that Christ and God's Spirit (the Good) is not dwelling in the "I" of pre-Christ existence. He clarifies his statement by adding, **that is, within my flesh**. The flesh is used metaphorically by Paul in his letters to indicate that realm or state

of being which is opposite to the Spirit of the new creation – both in the individual, and in the corporate humanity (or Israel, as a people). His use of the word here could be an inference to the "alienated self," or to the old arrangement for Israel of "life under the Torah." The flesh was involved in the purity codes, the performance of cultic requirements and the corporate identity markers – circumcision, a flesh ritual, being foremost. So in Paul's argument, the **flesh** could personify existence in the old person, or to the old system of the Mosaic covenant. A key to understanding him here is his

explanation in 8:9, below, concerning the folks who are in the new system and arrangement,

**"Yet you folks are not constantly existing within the midst of flesh (or: you are not in union with nor centered on [the alienated human condition, or Torah-keeping with flesh sacrifices]), but rather within spirit, in union with Breath-effect and centered on [His] attitude, since indeed God's Spirit (or: if so be that [the] Breath-effect which is God; or: if as is the fact that an attitude which corresponds to God) is continuously housing Itself**

(making His abode; residing; dwelling; by idiom: cohabiting; living together as husband and wife) **within and among you folks"**

But this is not the case for the person of the old order which he sets as a contrast in this present passage.

Here he focuses on the Jew's (or any person's) **will**, intent and purpose:

**"for the [ability or condition] to will (or: intend; purpose) is continually lying near beside me, but the [ability, condition or circumstance] to constantly produce (work down, effect and accomplish) the ideal (the fine;**

the excellent; the beautiful) [**is**]  
**not.**"

This statement describing the situation for the pre-Christian **will** clearly demonstrates the fallacy of the concept of an unbeliever having a "free will" – especially in the area of being able to “choose” Christ as one’s Savior, or “volunteer” to be a Christian. Everyone has a will, but only those that have been placed into Christ have a "free" will. The old will can't produce any desires except those that are congruent with slavery and death. The **ideal** (life in Christ) cannot be produced by anyone who is existentially in the first Adam or in the first covenant. We must be

transferred into the second, the new, to be able to produce (through the Spirit) the fine, the excellent, the ideal or the beautiful. This required God's eschatological deliverance – the Christ event. Individually, this must be existentially performed within a person by the Holy Spirit – everyone must be given birth by God, through the womb of the Jerusalem which is above (Gal. 4:26), who becomes our “mother.” (cf Gal. 4:19)

**19. For that which I constantly intend** (will; purpose) – **a good thing** (a noble deed; a virtuous act) – **I do not normally do** (or: I am not consistently doing what I continually will, intend and

purpose: [something] good), **but rather, that which I continuously do not intend** (or: will) – **a worthless** (ugly; ignoble; base; bad; evil) **thing – this I habitually put into practice!**

This is restatement and amplification – rhetorical tools to make the point strike home in the audience. This alienated and "old school" person can only do what he or she does **NOT intend, will or purpose** to do. So instead of producing the beautiful, he practices what is ugly, ignoble, base, worthless, bad and even evil. This is the weak, helpless state of the old, Adam existence, and of the person under the Law.

**20. Yet if that which I am not willing**

(intending), **this I am constantly doing, I, myself, am no longer producing** (working down and effecting) **it, but rather, [it is] the Sin** (the failure; the error; the missing of the Goal; the deviation [from Torah-keeping]) **continuously housing herself** (making its home; dwelling) **within me** [= Adam, or an Israelite, personified].

Here again is the argument and explanation from vs. 17. The culprit is **the Sin** which is **continuously housing herself** (the noun and the present participle are feminine, so I rendered it literally for those who might want to think metaphorically of this topic) **within** this impersonated "me." **The Sin**

is alien to the natural state of the human – it is not a part of us. It had invaded humanity and brought us into slavery to it. This is how it reigned (5:21; 6:12, above) – within people (not in some spiritual or metaphysical or mythic realm). It also reigned within the old covenant system.

"This is the experience of one who does not realize his death to sin and the law, but who is endeavoring to keep the letter of the law. He finds that the law of sin in his members is far more potent than the law of God which appeals to his mind" (Knoch, *ibid* p 237).

[Point of history on Gnostic, Pauline exegesis: "Valentinian theologians (2<sup>nd</sup> century) give great attention to this passage: each of the major writers whose work remains has described the experience of the conflict that makes Paul cry out in despair that 'it is no longer I who act, but sin that dwells in me.' In their view Paul here expresses the conflict inherent in the pneumatic's (the spiritual person's) experience. For the pneumatic perceives intuitively the 'pneumatic (spiritual) law' within himself, but finds himself bound in materiality; he finds his actual condition hopelessly 'sarkic (fleshly)' (Pagels, *ibid* p 32; parenthetical explanation

mine)]

**21. Consequently I keep on finding the principle (or: this law) in me – in the person normally willing (purposing; intending) to habitually do (perform; produce) the ideal (the beautiful; the fine) – that in me (or: with me; for me) the worthless (the ugly; the ignoble; the base; the evil) is constantly lying close by.**

This applied to the Greek, the Roman and the Jew alike. It is what theology has called unregenerate humanity. Many people have desired to live good lives, and many still do today. But Paul makes it clear that if a person is not is not “in Christ,” which is the same as being

"joined to the Vine" or "born into the kingdom" or placed into the covenant Way of Christ, **the worthless** (etc.) **is constantly lying close by.**

The Jewish writing of 4 Ezra again gives us a glimpse of the thinking of Paul's day,

"For an evil heart has grown up in us, which has alienated us from God, and has brought us into corruption and the ways of death, and has show us the paths of perdition and removed us far from life – and that not just a few of us but almost all who have been created" (7:48; *The OT Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1,

Hendrickson Publishers, p 538).

Stern comments, "... of all Jewish writings, 4 Ezra comes closest to expressing the idea that the whole human race shares in Adam's sin" (ibid p 372).

**22. For habitually I am pleased with** (take enjoyment and delight with) **the principle and law which is God** (or: the principle of God; or: the Law from God), **down in** (or: in correspondence with; on the level of) **the inner human** (or: the interior person within; the inside humanity),

This is because Adam was made to love and to delight in God. Our deepest yearning is for fellowship and union with our Creator. Our interior person

wants freedom from the estranged and alienated self that has been our false identity and which has been the pawn of **the Sin**. The lost sheep really wants to be found. The prodigal has an inner realization of the goodness of his Father's house, but in his wretched condition he is not sure that he will be welcome there, and so he begins to plan his own way of re-entry, which is a way of contrite humility (or, some have suggested, was a scheme of pretended humility and presumption). But he finds the Father requiring nothing from him – neither asking for his repentance, nor even that he affirm his desire to return or receive the Father's acceptance: the

Father simply acts. He demonstrate His acceptance of His “lost” son and honors him even while a sinner (and would have been treated as an outcast by the village – for so shamefully dishonoring his Father as he had by asking for his inheritance be given before his Father had died).

**23. yet I constantly see (or: observe) a different principle (or: law), within my members, [which is] by the Law (or: custom; or: [= Torah]) repeatedly taking the field to wage war against my mind (or: warring in opposition to, and in the place of, the law of, and which is, my mind), and repeatedly taking me prisoner and leading me**

**into captivity within the principle** (or: in union with the Law) **of the Sin** (the failure; the error; the miss of the Target; the deviation from [Torah-keeping]) – **the one continuously existing** (or: now being) **within my members.**

We addicts know our weaknesses. They are by this **principle of the Sin** constantly taking us captive to their ugly or childish desires. But Paul is speaking of more than these, for **the Law** is being used by this **different principle** to **repeatedly take the field and wage war against** the human **mind.** The **Law** is making sin increase (5:20, above), and this **principle of the Sin** is **repeatedly taking** [the old Adam; the

old-covenant individual] **prisoner and leading** [him or her] **into captivity** (read: addiction) – and it is using the power and ability of **the Law** to do it (1 Cor. 15:56). Can we not see why the Messiah came to end the Law (10:4, below)?

24. **I [am] a wretched** (callous-weighted [from hard work], miserable, distressed, enduring-severe-effort-and-hardship) **man** (or: human)! **What will be progressively rescuing me from out of the body of this death** (or: from out of this body of the death; out of this body which pertains to death and which has its origin, character and qualities in death)?

The impersonation seen as the first Adam is the most inclusive way to interpret the "I." This is not just the "spiritual man" talking, as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century Valentinians thought, but all of humanity who have not yet been resurrected into the Christ. It is the cry for **rescue from the body of this death.** As you observe in the parenthetical expansion of the last phrase, it can also be rendered "this body of the death," etc. The Death that Paul referred to in ch. 5 was the interior, spiritual death which spread throughout the midst of humanity. This is what he is citing again here, for this has been the co-problem (along with **the Sin**) that has cause humanity's

predicament of estrangement and alienation – from God and from one another. The conciliation, through the imparted life of Christ, is the antidote to both problems: to **death** and to **the Sin**.

I suggest that the term **body** is a reference to our existential existence (all life in the natural world must have a body) within the first Adam. Thus, **this death** would refer to,

**"continuously existing being dead ones by (or: to; with; in) the results and effects of your stumblings aside (offences; wrong steps) and failures to hit the mark (or: mistakes; errors; times of falling short; sins;**

deviations)" – Eph. 2:1.

The expression, "the body of this death" would refer to the corporate body of the first Adam. And so, Paul begins to close his impersonation of Adam and Israel, and in the next verse gives the answer to his rhetorical question – the answer which is the message of God's goodness, ease and well-being:

**25. Grace! The Grace of, and the joyous favor from, God! – through Jesus Christ our Owner (Lord; Master)!**

[other MSS: The grace of {the} Lord; other MSS: Yet {there is} grace and favor in God (or: by God; with God), through Jesus Christ our Lord (or:

Master); other MSS: I habitually give thanks to, and speak of the goodness of grace in, God!] **Consequently then, I myself in** (or: by; with) **the mind, indeed** (or: on the one hand), **continuously perform as a slave to and for the principle and law which is God** (or: in God's Law; by and with God's principle), **yet in** (or: on the other hand by and to) **the flesh** (= with the self which is oriented to society and the System; or: = customs and cultus of the Torah), **to, for and in a principle of failure** (with a law of sin or error; or: for a law from missing the Target; or: by Sin's law).

**Grace! The Grace of, and joyous**

**favor from, God** bring us resurrection life which raises us up from this corporeal existence of death, and from out of the body of the first Adam, and places us in the new creation to be a part of the **body** of the Second Adam (Christ), a member of His covenant community, which is Christ's body. My first rendering of the first clause is a conflation of two MS traditions (the reading, **Grace!**, alone, follows the *Concordant Greek Text*; cf p 25 for a discussion of the MS variations), and an expansion which gives the two readings, “grace,” and “favor.”

Here he is still impersonating humanity – the rhetorical "I." He spoke in vs. 24

of **progressive rescue**, and he is here still expressing solidarity with those who are yet in the form of a slave. Grace initiates a new existence that is a Way to walk, a Path to follow. But the "I" in the mind is no longer a slave to **the Death** or **the Sin**. There is now a new Lord that reigns, and those who are resurrected, like Paul, are now **slaves to and for the principle and law which is God**. They perform as slaves "in God's Law (the law of Christ), by and with God's principle" of faith, expectation and love (1 Cor. 13:13).

The contrasting clause that ends this verse speaks to two levels, both of which impersonate wretched humanity.

The first level refers to "the self which is oriented to society and the System" of the world (or, at that time, the Empire), and speaks to the continued slavery **to, for and in a principle of failure** – or, to a law (notice the absence of the definite article: the **mind** has been freed, so **the Sin** no longer controls it) of sin and error; or, for a law from missing the Target. This can also be rendered as a possessive genitive: by Sin's law.

Witherington sees the apparent tension between the two halves of this verse as, "between the inner person which is now being renewed and the outer self or body which is not, and between flesh or sinful

inclination and the leading of the Holy Spirit" (ibid p 204).

The second level would be that **flesh** which pertained to the old covenant.

Some Jewish Christians were still living culturally as Jews. This was in the realm of **the flesh**, and not the resurrected life in the spirit. Was Paul simply recognizing the weak within the Roman community, i.e., the Jews who had not yet come into complete freedom, yet in their spirits were following Christ? Paul will address some of these issues in ch. 14.

We should also consider that elsewhere Paul spoke of living like the un-resurrected of any culture, in order to

serve the gospel to them, as he said in 1 Cor. 9:

**19. You see, continually being free from out of the midst of all things and from all people (or: from everything), I enslave myself to all people (or: everything and everyone), to the end that I can (may; would) gain [all] the more folks.**

**20. So I come to be (or: became) as a Jew for (or: to; with) the Jews, to the end that I can (would; may) gain Jews; as under Law for (or: to; with) those under Law, to the end that I can (or: would; should; may)**

**gain those under Law;**

**21. as without law** (or: as lawless) – **[though] not continually being without a law pertaining to God, but to the contrary, within a principle which is Christ** (or: Christ's law; the custom which has the character and quality of Christ; or: [the] law which is [the] Anointing) – **to those without law** (for and with the lawless ones), **to the end that I will progressively** [other MSS: can; may; would] **gain the folks without law** (the lawless ones).

**22. To** (For; Among) **those without strength** (the weak ones),

**I become (or: came to be) as without strength (weak), to the end that I would (can; may) gain those without strength (the weak ones). I have become and continue to be all things for (to; among) all folks (or: peoples), to the end that I can (would; may) by every means (in every way; under all circumstances) save (rescue; deliver; restore to health, wholeness and their original condition) anybody!**

So it is possible that Paul ended his impersonation in vs. 24, and was speaking personally in vs. 25, referring in the "flesh" section to his actual

manner of living among those for whom he was a missionary.

"The true self, which is the true human being of a renewed humanity animated by the Spirit of God, has come to life with Christ in the new age of the Spirit, in which the true law of God (love and sacrifice as manifested by Jesus) is served. The flesh of the old age died with Christ on the cross. This epic struggle, though it may not always appear to be the case, has now been set right in the new age of life in the Spirit, which, among other things, does away with the law and its

covenant boundaries and creates a united humanity as a new family of God, capable of rightly bearing the divine image and of reflecting the glory of God into the world" (Byrd, *ibid* pt 2 of 3, 10-16-12).



## Chapter 8

1. **Nothing, consequently, [is] now a result of condemnation in** (or: a commensurate effect of a decision for; a corresponding result of a negative evaluation which falls in line with a decision or follows the pattern which divides [folks] down, with) **those within Christ Jesus**

(or: In that case, therefore, [there is] now not one thing [that is] really an effect of a downward-judging to, in or with the folks in union with or centered in [the Anointing of Jesus])! [A, D & later MSS here add: {They} are not

habitually walking around (= living their lives) in accord with (or: corresponding to) flesh] [Aleph2, D2 & later MSS here add: but to the contrary, in the sphere of spirit and attitude (or: Breath-effect; or: {the} Spirit).]

This is a continuation of the same argument in chapter 7, above. The word **consequently** points us back to vs. 25 which answered the question of vs. 24: **What will be progressively rescuing me...? The answer: Grace! – joyous favor of and from God! – through Jesus Christ our Owner (Lord; Master)! The consequence of God's Grace that delivered us from the Death**

that was inherent in Adam is that **now NOTHING is a result of condemnation in [us]**. Everything in Adam's distorted nature was a result of God's condemnation in the Garden of Eden: death pervaded the whole of us and brought us into slavery to **the Sin**. But that is no longer the case with **the folks within Christ Jesus**. We have been brought to life and have been placed into His rightwised state of being.

The parenthetical expansion for **condemnation** gives other ways of rendering this word, such as "a commensurate effect of a decision," etc. Consider the final translation on offer:

"follows the pattern which divides [folks] down." This description suggests "the Fall of Adam" as being a "pattern" for the rest of humanity. The word **those** is in the dative case, so the various renderings present the options **in**, for and with. It is possible to "mix and match" these with the semantic range given along with **condemnation**.

My first rendering followed the emphasis in the Greek, but it is also possible to translate this verse, "In that case, therefore, [there is] now not one thing [that is] really an effect of a downward-judging to, in or with the folks in union with or centered in [the] Anointing of Jesus." Stern suggests that

this "sums up the first seven chapters" (ibid p 380).

The idea that the various other MSS added is that this statement applies to those that are not living in the old Adam, or the old covenant, but to the contrary now exist and live their lives in the new creation of the Breath-effect, or, the Spirit. Other folks who have not yet awakened to come alive in this new creation are still living under Adam's original condemnation, and need to be rescued from that Death.

This verse is one of the main points of the chapter, and vss. 2-4 develop this thought. It describes the eschatological change that came with the death of the

old and the resurrection of the new, via God's just act of deliverance for humanity.

**2. For the principle and law of, from and which is the spirit and attitude of 'The Life within Christ Jesus'**

(or: For you see, the Law of Life's spirit, joined with [the] Anointing of Jesus; or: For the Spirit's law of life within Christ Jesus; or: the Law [= Torah] from the Breath-effect, which is Life in union with [the] Anointed Jesus)

**frees you away from the Law of the Sin** (or: the principle of failure and the missing of the target; the code of behavior that produces error; the

principle of deviation from the goal)  
**and the Death** (or: immediately set you  
[other MSS: me] at liberty from the law  
that deals with and has the character of  
sin and death). [comment: = the  
principle of the old Adamic life, and  
Israel's Torah]

This verse is a continuation of Paul's  
thought in vs. 1, and explains the reason  
for the absence of **condemnation**. The  
first clause is a restatement and an  
amplification of what he just said in vs.  
25, above, "**Consequently then, I  
myself in** (or: by; with) **the mind,  
indeed** (or: on the one hand),  
**continuously perform as a slave to and  
for the principle and law which is**

**God."** The law of God, and (expressed appositionally) which is God, is this same **principle and law of, from and which is the spirit and attitude of 'The Life within Christ Jesus.'**

Life has its own law, its own principle: life. This is the complete opposite of **the Law of the Sin and the Death** which operated in the first Adam, and also in those that lived under the Law of the Mosaic covenant. This is a picture of resurrection: life from out of death.

Putting the alternate renderings of the first and final clauses together, we have:

"For you see, the Law of Life's spirit (or: the Spirit's law of life) joined with [the] Anointing of

Jesus (or: within Christ Jesus) immediately set you at liberty from the law that deals with and has the character of sin and death."

The first clause can also render the subject (Law) modified by "the Breath-effect" as an ablative:

"You see the Law (or: principle) from the Breath-effect (or: Spirit), which is Life in union with the Anointed Jesus, frees you away from the principle from **the Sin** and **the Death**."

This is resurrection life within the new creation that has a new arrangement (**life**) in the Way which is Christ. All of

these renderings give us Good News! They express the eschatological (i.e., end-time) deliverance of God invading the world via the Christ event (His death and resurrection) and changing everything (in the realm of spirit – i.e., God’s kingdom, and in terms God’s economy in His relations with mankind.

**3. You see, [because of] the powerlessness and inability of the Law** (from the written code; = associated with Torah) – **within which it kept on making [folks] weak and feeble** ([note: the active voice]; but as an intransitive: in which [incapability] it was constantly falling sick and continued being without strength) **through the flesh** (= the

alienated self oriented toward the System; or: = Torah culture and cultus, with boundary-marker observances) – **in sending His own Son** (or: by sending the Son, Who is Himself) **within a result of a likeness of flesh that is connected with sin** (or: in an effect of being made similar to sin's flesh; = in union with a result from being made like the alienated existence that came from failure), **and concerning sin**

(or: encircling failure and error; to address a missed target; surrounding deviation; [note: or, as a technical term for the sin offering: = to be the sin-offering; see: Lev. 4:32; 5:6-9; 2 Chron. 29:24; Ps. 40:6; Ezk. 42:13, LXX]),

**God gives a commensurate decision from a corresponding negative evaluation which falls in line with and follows the pattern which divides down (or: condemned; gives a down-oriented verdict; passed down a sentence on and gave judgment against) the Sin within the flesh [system]**

(or: the failure, the error, the miss of the target and the deviation [which is] in union with the human condition; or: = the mistake of the estranged, System-dominated self),

The Law had no power or ability to deliver humanity from the effects of **the Sin with the flesh**, nor to overcome it or

remove it from dwelling within the flesh. The human predicament, rather than being solved by the Law, was exacerbated by the Law. So God sent **His own Son** to rectify the situation. Paul tells us that **the Son** was sent in a specific way:

- a) **within a result of a likeness of flesh that is connected with sin**
- b) in an effect of being made similar to sin's flesh
- c) in union with a result from being made like the alienated existence that is marked by failure.

Paul's point is not just that the Son came as a human, which, in fact, He did.

Rather, Paul is associating the Son with the human condition of alienation which is the result of **the Sin** which dwells in **the flesh**. He was made to be similar to sin's flesh. He came into union with (He joined and became one with) a result of being made like the alienated existence that is marked by failure, deviation and the miss of the target of bearing God's image. He entered death and took on a **likeness** that was the result of **flesh that is connected with sin** (or, sin's flesh). He became,

"a Man of pains and sorrows, and acquainted with grief and knowing illness.... [He] carried our sorrows and illnesses, and our

pains burdened Him... He was wounded because of our transgressions, and crushed because of our depravities... and with His welts comes healing for us..." (Isa. 53:3-5; expanded).

And thus, God's Son was also sent **concerning sin**. The parenthetical expansion following this phrase gives added insights:

- a) encircling error and failure – this was His grace surrounding and covering us with Love
- b) to address a missed target – He came to right our aim so we could bear God's image
- c) surrounding deviation – He

enclosed us all to give mercy to all, 11:32, below.

And, of course, He took care of the sin issue – taking **the Sin** to the grave.

Consider the note that I inserted about the technical use of the term "sin," that it was used in the OT to refer to the "sin offering," as well.

I inserted a note in my translation, pointing out that the verb **making weak** was in the active voice: **the Law kept on making [folks] weak and feeble** – and thus did it cause sin to increase. But the Greek construction can be read as intransitive, as well, so we can understand that it was constantly falling sick and continued being without

strength **through the flesh**. Again, this term **the flesh** can be understood in more than one sense:

- a) personally, as equivalent to the alienated self oriented toward the System
- b) referring to the Torah culture and cultus, with boundary-marker observances.

The result of God sending His Son was that **God gives a commensurate decision from a corresponding negative evaluation which falls in line with and follows the pattern which divides down the Sin within the flesh [system]**. Put more simply, this long expansion could read,

"God condemned the failure  
[which was] in union with the  
human condition."

But what does this mean? Is it like God saying, "Bad dog! Bad sin! "? Well, of course not, but let us consider what the expanded rendering might unfold. The Greek verb literally means "to judge down," but as we unpack the word "judge," we see that it involves dividing the issues and separating them in order to evaluate the situation and make a decision. And the prefix *kata-* contains the connotations of being "commensurate, corresponding or following the pattern," as well as the direction of "down."

God's gift is a **commensurate decision from a corresponding negative evaluation**. The decision (the verdict; the sentence) was fitting to the situation and corresponded to the evaluation of the situation, which came out negative. But the decision **falls in line with and follows the pattern**. This means that it was just and in accord with God's purposes. There was a pattern – His rightness, justice, fairness and love which is the very DNA of creation and will produce the destiny that He has in mind. Here, it was necessary to **divide down the Sin within the flesh**. This is His Divine surgery, removing **the Sin** from the midst of humanity, dividing it

away from its attachment to us. When God condemns something, it is for our good. He divided down the failure and error from us, as He raised us up to be in union with Him. He separated "the mistake of the estranged, System-dominated self" from us. What a wonderful decision! We are now free from that slavery. In Christ, He solved our predicament – which was **the Sin**.

**4. to the end that the effect of the just Deed of deliverance in which wrong was set right, resulting from being liberated and turned in the right direction within the Way pointed out, which is the principle, (or: so that the effect of the fair relationships which**

come from [His] law and custom; or: in order that the result of the equity and rightness of the Law) **can** (would; could; may) **be fulfilled and become full within us – in those habitually walking about** (or: = for the folks ordering their behavior/living their lives) **not in accord with flesh** (or: = not corresponding to the human condition; or: = on the level of Torah-keeping boundary-markers), **but rather in accord with spirit** (or: down from [the] Spirit; corresponding to [His] Attitude; on the level of and in the sphere of Breath-effect).

Paul described "**the just Deed of deliverance**" in Gal. 3:13,

**"Christ bought us [back] out (or: redeems and reclaims us out [of slavery] and liberates us) from the midst of the curse (or: adversarial prayer; imprecation) of and from the Law, while becoming (or: birthing Himself to be) a curse (or: accursed One; an [embodied] adversarial prayer) for our sakes (or: over our [situation])..."**

Here Paul brings His purpose (the sending of His Son to rid us of the Sin) into a clearer focus. I have three renderings of the first clause on offer:

**a) to the end that the effect of the just Deed of deliverance in**

**which wrong was set right,  
resulting from being liberated  
and turned in the right direction  
within the Way pointed out,  
which is the principle, may be  
fulfilled.**

The fair and equitable Deed was the obedience of Jesus to die on the cross. It set right that which was wrong. It resulted in liberating humanity and turning it in the right direction within the Way pointed out. This is **the principle**, and His plan was that **the effect** (indicated by the *-ma* ending of the noun) of this **Deed** and its **principle** of life would be fulfilled in creation.

b) so that the effect of the fair

relationships which come from  
[His] law and custom would  
**become full within us.**

His law is to have fair relationships.  
The Law of Moses was constructed  
around this principle, but it could not be  
kept due to the weakness and flesh  
described in vs. 3, above. The last  
phrase that has reference to “the effect”  
of “fair relationships” becoming **full**  
calls to mind other thoughts from the  
Writings:

Ps. 16:11, "In Your presence is  
fullness of joy."

Col. 1:9, "**to the end that you  
may (or: would) be filled full  
with the entire contents of the**

**accurate, full, experiential, intimate knowledge and insight of His will** (His design, purpose, plan and intention; or: so that you may know and experience all that He wants you to know and experience) **within the sphere of all wisdom and spiritual understanding** (comprehension; a junction of that which is sent together; discernment; being able to make the pieces fit together)."  
Eph. 3:19b, **"so that you folks would be filled unto all the effect of the fullness of God and the result of the filling from God** (or: could be filled up, unto the

saturation point, with the result from the entire contents of God; or: into all God's full extent; or: unto all the effects pertaining to God's filling [you])."

These thoughts spring from **the principle** that is **the Way pointed out**: the Life of Christ.

The clause, "**those habitually walking about** (or: = for the folks ordering their behavior and living their lives) **not in accord with flesh**" refers to folks who have been made alive in the new creation – the new covenant community. They no longer live "corresponding to the human condition" or "on the level of Torah-keeping boundary-markers," but

rather "**in accord with spirit** (or: down from [the] Spirit; corresponding to [His] Attitude; on the level of and in the sphere of Breath-effect)" – all of which speaks of the characteristics of the resurrected life within the Age of the Messiah, which is life in Christ Jesus.

c) in order that the result of the equity and rightness of the Law **can be fulfilled in us.**

Christ was the goal of the Law (10:4, below), and Christ was the equity of the Law – the Anointing within the OT Scriptures pointed to the prophesied Messiah and spoke of Him. It was this equity and rightness in human living that was the Law's goal, but it needed the

Spirit of Life to overcome human weakness.

Vss. 3-4 encapsulate the purpose for the coming, death and resurrection of the Messiah. And we live in His completed work.

**5. You see, those continuously existing in accord with flesh** (or: = in correspondence to Torah-keeping and cultural boundaries; or: = the human condition) **habitually think about, have an understanding and outlook based upon, are inclined to, set their mind on and are disposed to the things of the flesh** (= the human condition with its cultural traditions, religious cultus and national boundary markers), **yet those**

**in accord with spirit** (or: down from [the] Spirit; on the level of Breath-effect; in line with [His] Attitude) [**think about; have an outlook from**] **the things and matters of the spirit** (or: the Spirit; Breath-effect; the Attitude).

Now Paul builds his argument with a contrast of the two opposite ways of living, spheres of life, mental focuses and attitudes – the two ages, the two covenants and the two Adams. I

expanded and conflated the semantic range of the present participle

**"habitually think about... are disposed to"** to present the broad areas of our living that this verb encompasses. The pre-Christian Romans of the community

would have had their interior focus on life in the Empire along with physical and emotional needs. The pre-Christian Jews of this called-out group would have been putting all their attention on Torah-keeping, as well as the human condition. But all has changed for those who now live their lives **in accord with spirit**, or, down from the Spirit and on the level of the Breath-effect, which brought them in line with His Attitude. They now **habitually think about, have an understanding and outlook based upon, are inclined to, set their mind on, and are disposed to the things and matters of the spirit, the Breath-effect and His Attitude.**

What a contrast of ways or spheres of existence. The first clause is an echo of 7:14, above: **I** [= Israel? or, Adam] **myself am** (or: exist being) **fleshly** (composed of flesh; carnal; flesh-oriented; or: = affected by the alienated self), **being one having been and now remaining sold under [the power and control of] the Sin** (under failure and the miss of the Target [of Torah?]).

It is a whole different world now, and this is because of what he said in 6:14, above: **for you folks are not under Law** (or: do not exist being subject to [Torah] or custom), **but rather under Grace** (or: the Act which produced happiness, which was granted as a

favor).

**6. For the result of the thinking** (mind-set; effect of the way of thinking; disposition; result of understanding and inclination; the minding; the opinion; the thought; the outlook) **of the flesh** (= the human condition or the System of culture and cultus; or: = outward Torah ceremony) **[is; brings] death, yet the result of the thinking** (mind-set; disposition; thought and way of thinking; outlook) **of the spirit** (or: the Spirit; the Breath-effect; the Attitude) **[is; brings] Life and Peace.**

This should give us insight into the situation of Eve contemplating the fruit of the tree that gives knowledge and

experience of right and wrong (the Law), and listening to the wisdom of carnal thinking. Paul is saying that the **result** of what he spoke of in 5a, above, is **death**. Trying to comply with the Torah and keeping the outward ceremonies brings death. The effect of the way of thinking, that is inherent in the human condition, is death. The disposition of the controlling System is death. The opinion of **the flesh** (in all of its manifestations) brings death. Yet **the result of a mind-set from the Spirit brings Life and Peace**. The disposition of the new creation is Life and Peace. The outlook, opinion and way of thinking of the new covenant are

**Life** and shalom (harmony). Having one's thought-life centered in Christ is resurrection from the death of the old way of life and resurrection into His **Peace**.

**7. Because of that, the result of the thinking** (disposition; thought processes; mind-set, outlook) **of the flesh** (= attention to Torah boundary-markers, custom and cultus; or: = the human condition) **[is; brings] enmity, alienation and discord [streaming] into God** (or: hostility unto, or active hatred with a view to, God), **for it continues not being humbly aligned and supportive** (habitually placed under and submitted; or, as a middle: subjecting,

humbly arranging or marshaling itself) **to the principle and law which is God** (or: in God's principle; by the Law from God), **for neither is it able nor does it have power.**

Wright notes that,

"Paul explains in verses 7 and 8, looking back once more to 7:14: the mind characterized by 'flesh' is bound to be not only hostile to God but incapable of submitting to the law or pleasing God" (ibid p 141).

So of course there was discord from the Jews who did not yet see the Light of the New Day. The whole NT is full of the **enmity and alienation** between the

followers of Jesus and the old covenant religion. But Paul says something more here: the **flesh-thinking** brings its hostility **into God** (in Whom we live, are moved and exist – Acts 17:28). Old covenant, Torah-keeping thinking and mind-set create hatred with a view to God – because it is divisive (it creates the "us and them" perspective of that old arrangement) and it proved to cause alienation with other cultures. But, most of all, it is **enmity** because **it continues not being humbly aligned and supportive** (habitually placed under and submitted; or, as a middle: subjecting, humbly arranging or marshaling itself) **to the principle and law which is God**

(or: in God's principle; by the Law from God). This thinking which comes from the old covenant, like the Law itself, has no **power or ability** to align itself or be supportive of Christ's law, which **principle is God Himself**. So Paul is saying that both humanity and specifically Israel had no other hope but failure and a falling short of the Goal.

**8. Now the folks continuously existing in the midst of** (or: So people being in union with, or centered in,) **flesh** (= the alienated human condition; or: = the religious system involving flesh sacrifices, Torah boundary-markers/customs) **have no power and are not able at any point to please**

**God** (or: to fit or adapt to God; or: to be content with God; or: to be acceptable in God).

Paul simply states the facts regarding both the first Adam and those who cling to Israel's old covenant. Not only do they bring enmity into God's presence here on earth, they bring hostility unto Him. They are unable **to please God**. Now let us consider the other options for the infinitive of this last clause: they have no power "to fit or adapt to God," and He has moved on after changing everything, making old things to pass away (2 Cor. 5:17). With the old thinking there is no way to adapt to what is new. They are unable "to be content

with God" – they still need their religious ceremonies and performance of the old cultus. They are unable "to be acceptable in God": they are thrown out of the celebratory feast of the Messiah (Mat. 22:11-13), for they have not attired themselves with the clothing (figure of a way of living) suitable for the new arrangement in the Messiah – they are cast back into the "outer darkness" of the old covenant, and gnash their teeth in anger towards the new. They need a season (an indefinite period of time) of His refining and pruning fire (read: His presence) to burn off the self-centeredness so that they can receive the new nature in Christ (be re-sown with

good Seed after their field has been cleansed of weeds and briars – Heb. 6:7-8; 1 Cor. 3:12-15) and then feed the hungry, visit the sick and imprisoned, clothe the naked (Mat. 25:41-46).

Observance of the old covenant does **NOT please God.**

**9. Yet you folks are not constantly existing within the midst of flesh** (or: you are not in union with nor centered on [the alienated human condition, or Torah-keeping with flesh sacrifices]), **but rather within spirit, in union with Breath-effect and centered on [His] attitude, since indeed God's Spirit** (or: if so be that [the] Breath-effect which is God; or: if as is the fact that an attitude

which corresponds to God) is **continuously housing Himself** (making His abode; residing; dwelling; by idiom: cohabiting; living together as husband and wife) **within and among you folks.** **Yet if anyone is not continuously having, or not habitually and progressively holding, Christ's Spirit and [the Messiah's] Attitude** (or: So if a certain person is not regularly possessing a Breath-effect which is Anointed), **this one is not habitually existing from Him as his Source** (or: is not now having His character or qualities; or: presently is not His). In Gal 2:20, Paul describes our existence this way:

**"I was crucified together with Christ [= the Messiah], and thus it remains (or: I have been jointly put on the execution stake in [the] Anointed One, and continue in this state), yet I continue living! [It is] no longer I, but it is Christ continuously living and alive within me! (or: No longer an "I" – now Christ constantly lives in the midst of, and in union with, me). Now that which I, at the present moment, continue living within flesh (= a physical body), I am constantly living within [His] faithfulness – in and by that [faithfulness] which is the Son of**

**God** (or: in union with the trust and confidence that is from God's Son [with other MSS: in the faith and fidelity belonging to God and Christ]), **the One loving me and giving Himself over to another for the sake of me** (or: even transmitting Himself, over my [situation and condition]; or: also passing Himself along for me).

With this first clause, we have plain evidence that we have been reading Paul correctly – he is not talking about physical flesh, but is speaking metaphorically. He is assuring his listeners that they are neither under the Law in the old covenant, nor are they

living under the dominance of the fallen, alienated nature of the first Adam.

**Rather** than those aspects of the old creation, they were (and we are) **constantly existing within the spirit** (a term representing the new arrangement of grace that came with the sending of God's Spirit to humanity to indwell them), and are **in union with Breath-effect** (God's activities on the earth), **and are centered on His attitude.**

And why is this the case for us? The answer: "**Since indeed God's Spirit – the Breath-effect which is God – and the attitude which corresponds to God, is continuously housing Itself within and among [us].**" What a statement.

Pause and let the reality and the implications of this sink deep into our hearts and minds. We are His temple (1 Cor. 3:17; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21) and He is continuously **making His abode in and residing with us!**

Yet there are those who are still not existentially **having or holding Christ's Spirit or the Messiah's Attitude** – they are still in the outer darkness; they have not yet heard the message; they have not yet been given eyes to see, or ears to hear, or faith to believe. Their particular order and rank (1 Cor. 15:23) has not yet arrived; they have not yet been birthed into His kingdom. They have not yet been awakened to receive His Life.

Their present existence is still in the first Adam; they yet cling to the Mosaic covenant (e.g., 11:23, below; 2 Cor. 3:11:16). Such a person is **not habitually existing from Him as his Source** (or: is not now having His character or qualities; or: presently is not His).

Observe that here Paul equates **God's Spirit** with **Christ's Spirit**.

10. **But since Christ** (or: Yet if [the] Anointing) **[is] within you folks, on the one hand the body is dead** (lifeless) **BECAUSE OF sin** (through failure, deviation and missing the target), **yet on the other hand, the Spirit, Attitude and Breath-effect [is] Life BECAUSE**

**OF an eschatological act of justice that brought a rightwising deliverance into equitable, covenantal relationships within the Way pointed-out** (or: on account of the covenantal Faithfulness of a liberating Turn into the Right Direction of the Living Way/Path). This new life in Christ is an inward life, the Life of the Spirit. The outward, physical body does not participate in the new creation, for **the body is dead because of sin** (etc.). Paul said it this way in 2 Cor.4:16b,

**"even if** (or: since also) **our outside person** (or: outer humanity) **is being progressively wasted away** (is constantly being

decayed and brought to ruin and corruption), **certainly our inside [person]** (= inner humanity or self) **is day by day** (or: from day to day; on a daily basis) **being progressively made new again** (or: renewed) **in kind and quality so as to have a different character that is fresh and effective."**

In the last clause where he says, **"because of justice (etc.),"** we can hear an echo of 4:25b, above, **"yet [He] was roused and raised up through and because of our eschatological deliverance, being placed in the Way pointed out and turned in the right**

**direction.**" Here, I have adopted Wright's rendering "covenant faithfulness" in the parenthetical rendering, since we have seen that it was the faithfulness of Jesus, in God's arrangement (covenant) for humanity, that liberated us, rightwised us and turned us in the right direction (toward the Father, following Christ) in the Way (Himself) that Christ pointed-out to us. Repetition is one of Paul's oft-used tools. All of his new arguments are woven back into previous ones as he creates this detailed tapestry. There may be a second level of understanding in Paul's declaration. The **body** could refer to the old, corporate

Adam, or to the "body of Moses," as in Judah (Jude) 9, metaphorically referring to the body of Israel that was buried with her representative, the Messiah. With this view, then, **the Spirit** could be a reference to the entire new existence in Christ, who was birthed (via resurrection) into being "a life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45). In the next verse (46) of that passage, Paul instructs us that the first Adam lived an existence that pertained to, and had the qualities and characteristics of, the soul (was soulish, or, like an ordinary "person" – the frequent OT use of the term), and the Adam (Christ) that came afterward was the **spiritual One** – and this is the **Life**,

because of being turned in the right direction of the Way, which we saw, above, was the reason for His resurrection – to put us in this new sphere of inward existence.

**11. Now since the Breath-effect (or: Spirit; Attitude) of the One arousing and raising Jesus forth from out of the midst of dead folks is continuously housing Himself (making His abode; residing; making His home; by idiom: living together as husband and wife) within, and in union with, you folks, the One raising Christ Jesus forth from out of dead ones will also continue progressively giving Life to (or: will even habitually make alive)**

**the mortal bodies of you folks** (or: your mortal bodies) **through the constant indwelling of His Spirit** (or: the continual in-housing of His Breath-effect; the continuous internal residing of the Attitude, which is Him,) [other MSS: because of His habitually-indwelling Spirit] **within and among you folks.**

Rendering the future tense as a progressive durative – since he has just affirmed that God's Spirit is continuously housing Itself within us (vs. 9, above), and thus, it is Life within us (vs. 10) – it is reasonable to conclude that the Spirit is now presently giving Life (the Christ Life) to our mortal existence (in **mortal bodies**), even

though the outward person continues perishing – because it is **mortal**. He is assuring us that what is now progressively happening will go on happening, as Eph. 4:13 informs us,

**"[to go on] until we – the whole of mankind (all people) – can (or: would) come down to the goal (or: attain; arrive at; meet accordingly; meet down face-to-face): into the state of oneness from The Faithfulness (or: the unity of, that belongs to and which characterizes that which is faith; or: the lack of division which has its source in trust, confidence and reliability, and has the character**

of being loyal), **and of the full, experiential and intimate knowledge** (or: recognition; discovery; insight) **from** (or: of) **the Son of God, [growing] into [the] purposed and destined** (or: complete; finished; mature; full-grown; perfect; goal-attained) **adult man – into** (or: unto) **[the] measure of [the] stature** (full age; prime of life) **of the entire content which comprises the Anointed One** (or: which is the result of the full number which is the Christ; of the effect of the fullness from the [Messiah]; of the effect of that which fills and

completes that which pertains to the Christ; of the result of the filling from, and which is, the Christ)."

This is happening "**through the constant indwelling of His Spirit** (or: the continual in-housing of His Breath-effect; the continuous internal residing of the Attitude, which is Him,) [other MSS: because of His habitually-indwelling Spirit] **within and among you folks** [or: us]." God is the same in the present as He will be in the future (Heb. 13:8), so we can expect His **constant indwelling** to be progressively doing now what He will continue doing in the future. This would apply to both the individual and,

as Eph. 4:13 instructs us, to the corporate body of mankind.

**12. So then brothers** (or: Consequently then, fellow believers), **we do not continue being debtors to the flesh** (or: we are not folks under obligation in the [alienated human condition, or by the system of flesh sacrifices and Torah observance]), [i.e.,] **of the [situation] to be continually living down on the level of and in accord with flesh,** We are no longer in **debt**. Note the metaphor: a person who could not pay his debt would often, in those times, sell himself into slavery to settle the debt. Paul used the metaphor of “slavery” in 7:25b, above – slavery “**in, by and to**

**the flesh, to, for and in a principle of failure** (with a law of sin or error; or: for a law from missing the Target; or: by Sin's law)." The concept of eschatological deliverance was God entering the human situation and liberating us from slavery. Our **debt to the flesh** has been paid. Any debt to be under the Law (Sin's law) has been removed.

No, that situation **down on the level of and in accord with flesh** no longer exists for us, because, as we read in Eph. 2:4-6,

**"But God, continuously being wealthy and rich in mercy, because of His vast Love in (or:**

with) **which He focused love on us – even us, being continuously dead ones... He made alive together by** (or: joins us in common life with, for and in) **the Christ... and He jointly roused and raised** (or: suddenly awakens and raises) **[us] up, and caused [us] to sit** (or: seats [us]) **together within the things situated upon** [thus, above] **the heavens within and in union with Christ Jesus."**

Yes, this is resurrection life – even life in the heavens – within and in union with Christ. We no longer need to be **living down on the level of flesh** – either

Adam's flesh, or Israel's flesh. Both have been buried with the death of Christ.

Byrd (following a different translation) comments,

"So then, brothers and sisters, we are under obligation' (8:12a). To whom or to what? 'Not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh' (8:12a), for that is the old age of division and a fractured humanity. Emphasizing the seriousness of the new obligation of the new covenant, Paul expands upon and punctuates that statement with '(for if you live according to the flesh, you will die)' (8:13a).

Further elaboration has Paul offering the contrasting position: 'but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live' (8:13b). This business of God's kingdom come to earth is a matter of life and death" (ibid, pt 3, 10-17-12).

In 13:14, below, Paul admonishes his listeners,

**"clothe yourselves with** (or: enter within and put on) **the Lord, Jesus Christ, and stop** (or: do not continue) **making forethought** (constructing provision; planning ahead; performing provident care) **into excessive desires of the**

**flesh** (= into rushing upon emotions which pertain to the inner self or the estranged humanity; = into the setting of feelings and longings upon something of the human nature that is oriented to the System)."

And in Col. 3:9-10 he admonishes them to,

**"[Be] folks at once stripping off from yourselves** (undressing yourselves from; or: go out and away from) **the old humanity** (the old human; = the old Adam), **together with its practices, and then [be] suddenly clothing yourselves with** (or: entering

within) **the new one** (the fresh one which existed only recently), **the one being continuously** (or: repeatedly; habitually; progressively) **renewed** (made back up new again, in kind and character) **into full, accurate, added, intimate and experiential knowledge and insight which is down from and corresponds to the image** (an exactly formed visible likeness) **of its Creator** (of the One framing and founding it from a state of wildness and disorder)."

**13. for you see, if you folks are**

**continuously living down on the level of, and in accord with, flesh** (= the alienated self, or, the system of flesh sacrifices and Torah observance), **you are progressively about to be dying away. Yet since** (or: if) **in spirit** (or: by [the] Breath-effect; with [His] Spirit; for [the] Attitude), **you folks constantly put to death** (or: deprive of life; extirpate) **the practices and activities of the body** (= works of flesh traditions; Torah cultus) **you will continue living** (or: will be continuously living and progressively possessed of vitality).

Keep in mind that he is speaking to the believers in the Roman called-out covenant community. They have been set

free in Christ and now have the power of the Spirit to make choices, and so he sets forth the two contrasting options before them: **continue living** (notice: these folks are alive in Christ) **on the level of and in accord with flesh**, or **constantly put to death the practices and activities of the body**. Do the former and it will be like not abiding in the Vine (John 15:1 ff); it will be like being tossed into His purging fire; you are **progressively about to be dying away**. Do the latter (cut off former lifestyles of the first Adam; stand-off and fall away from Judaism) and **you will continue living** – being progressively possessed of vitality!

Many of the fiery darts from our adversary come from within – in our mind-set, and from the things upon which we focus. Paul's admonitions in Eph. 6:10-18 would well apply here. (Cf 6:12-13, 19; 7:5, 23, above)

**14. For as many as are being continuously led by God's Spirit** (or: habitually brought or conducted in [the] Breath-effect which is God; progressively driven along with an attitude from God), **these folks are God's sons** (these continuously exist being sons of God; or: = these are folks who have the character and qualities of God). [comment: echo of the Exodus]  
This verse is birthed out of 13b. **Being**

**continuously led by God's Spirit** will automatically **put to death activities** from flesh traditions or the Torah cultus. They will also keep one's focus away from any death-producing involvements. Wright points out,

"This is the point at which he begins to echo passages in the OT which speak of the children of Israel travelling through the wilderness towards the promised land.... Instead of the pillars of cloud and fire, Christians are given the spirit as the personal presence of the living God..."  
(ibid p 145)

This definition of **God's sons** (recall

that God called Israel His son – Ex. 4:22, 23; Hos. 11:1) distinguishes the new covenant from the old. The new definition of the people of God is not ethnic or religious. It is a life in **the Spirit**, being **continuously led by God**. The Firstborn among many brothers (vs. 29, below) informed us that,

**"the Son continues unable to do anything from Himself except He can continue seeing something the Father is in process of doing.... for the Father likes the Son and habitually points out to Him everything which He is constantly doing"** (John 5:19,

20).

As Moses led God's son out of Egypt (slavery), so has Christ led God's corporate son, the newly re-defined Israel, out of slavery to the Sin, slavery to the Death and slavery to the Law.

**15. For you folks did (or: do) not receive again a spirit of slavery to fear (or: get slavery's spirit or breath-effect again, unto fear; or: take an attitude which personifies being a slave [in Egypt or under the Law, leading] into fear again), but rather you received a spirit of being placed as a son (or: a Breath-effect which set you in the position of a son; or: you receive an attitude of one having been adopted [in**

accord with Greek or Roman law]),  
**within which** (or: in union with Whom)  
**we are habitually crying out, "Abba**  
**(Dad), O Father!"**

Notice the word **again**. Here we have echoes of Gal. 4 where Paul discusses being moved from a position (childhood; being under the Law) that he equated to slavery to the position of being placed as a son – with all of its attending freedom (Gal. 5:1, 13). The Romans are not children of the slave-girl (natural Jerusalem, which was a figure of the slavery to the Law/Sinai – Gal. 4:24-25) but of the free woman – the Jerusalem which is above (i.e., the heavenly one), the woman who gave birth to the

Promise – and we are tied back in to ch. 4, here, and Abraham's story.

We should not pass by the phrase **a spirit of slavery to fear**, or slavery's spirit and attitude. John was given insight on this topic,

**"Fear does not exist within the Love, but rather perfect love (mature love; love having reached its goal) repeatedly (habitually; progressively) throws the fear outside, because the fear constantly has and holds a pruning (a curtailment; a checking; restraint; a lopping off – thus, a correction). But the one habitually fearing or dreading**

**has not been perfected within the Love** (has not been brought to the destined goal of maturity – in union with love)" – 1 John 4:18.

Ponder the theme of maturity in John's words here. This correlates to Paul's movement of a child from being a minor, under the Law, to being mature and placed as a son. It's all about **Love** – and the only mature love is Christ's love. It is this level, or sphere, of Love that casts out the spirit of slavery to fear. Now consider Paul's language here: our change came about by **RECEIVING** (i.e., being given) **a spirit of being placed as a son**. This is the whole difference between "Law and grace." It has to do

with being given God's Spirit, which gave us resurrection life and placed us into the Path that a son of God walks as he or she does what is being observed of the Father acting, and (just as with Jesus in Mary's womb) births His son in us. Paul alluded to this when he told the Galatians,

**"I am progressing, again, in childbirth labor (travail; labor pains) until Christ may be suddenly formed (= until the Anointing would be at some point birthed) within you folks!" (4:19)**

All of this is something of the Spirit and in the realm of spirit (note the frequency of this word in this verse and

discussion, as well as in the next verse), not any aspect of the flesh.

We know when we have been birthed into the realm of Christ: when our spirits habitually relate to God as **Abba – Dad; O Father!** (*cf* Gal. 4:5-6; Mk. 14:36)

16. **The same Spirit** (or: spirit; or: The Breath-effect Himself; or: This very attitude) **is constantly witnessing together with our spirit** (is continuously bearing joint-testimony to our spirit; is habitually co-witnessing for our spirit; is progressively adding confirming testimony and evidence in our attitude) **that we are, and continuously exist being, God's children** (ones born of God; children

from God [not of the child-escort {Gal. 3:24}], by natural descent).

The adjective *auto* can mean **same**, or the reflexive **Himself**, or the emphatic “This very.” It is the **same spirit of being placed as a son** (15), or it can refer to the Person of God, or Paul could simply be emphasizing that this spirit that placed us as a son abides and witnesses with our own spirit. Or else, God Himself continues bearing joint-testimony to our spirit about our new existence. Now note that the spirit of son-placing makes us **God's children** (born-ones). The Greek *tekna* signifies one born by natural descent (*cf* John 1:12). Paul could be speaking

ontologically, referring to our spirits being "children from God," or – as often – he could be using the word metaphorically in the more common sense of being a part of God's family, as Israel was termed His son. No matter which, it's all good : )

But the point in the argument is that a new birthing has come into being with the new creation that climaxed from the resurrection of Jesus. We are no longer as we were. We relate to God as our Father – not just our Creator. We are now Family with Him, and Jesus is our brother (vs. 29, below). There is a new spiritual reality that had never before existed. Talk about a message of

goodness! Talk about news of ease and well-being in God! This is the apex, folks.

17. **Now since children** (or: Yet if ones born by natural descent), **also heirs** (possessors and enjoyers of an allotted inheritance; those who hold sway over the allotted portion): **on the one hand, God's heirs, on the other, Christ's joint-heirs**

(or: indeed possessors and enjoyers of an allotment pertaining to God and from God, yet possessors and enjoyers together in an allotment pertaining to Christ and belonging to Christ) **if so be** (or: provided) **that we are continually affected by sensible**

**experiences together – feeling together; receiving impressions, undergoing passion or suffering together – to the end that we may also be glorified together**

(or: can be given a shared appearance; would together receive a manifestation of that which calls forth praise; should be given a joint-approval and a joint-reputation; may be thought of and imagined together [in covenant relationship]).

Now he is tying in the thread of the Promise, and Abraham's story (4:13, above) – but this time it is not just to be heirs of the world, but **God's heirs**, and

**Christ's joint-heirs.** This is a little hard to wrap our minds around, so just let the Spirit that is constantly giving evidence to your spirit continue speaking to you and let it soak in like the gentle rain on thirsty soil. Wright points us back to Ps. 2:8 – the prophetic verse that speaks of "the nations," or ethnic multitudes (Gentiles) being the Messiah's inheritance. They all come into the Messiah's family – all humanity is included.

The root idea of being an **heir** is that of a possessor and an enjoyer (not our modern heir-apparent) of an allotted portion. Unpacking the genitive case of the noun **God**, we see that we are **God's**

(the genitive of possession) **heirs**. This means that we inherit and enjoy an allotment of what belongs to God. That would be everything. On the cross God (in Christ – 2 Cor. 5:19) died (in relation to the former ages) and Christ (and we, in Christ) inherited everything that was God's. Something to ponder. But it also is an allotment “pertaining to God” which also is “from God” (the ablative function). This all applies – just different facets of the passing of the inheritance. This same inheritance belongs to Christ, so we are His **joint-heirs**, and this is because we are part of the Family, and inherit along with Him. Paul attaches a stipulation to this whole

scenario: it is **provided that we are continually affected by sensible experiences together – feeling together; receiving impressions, undergoing passion or suffering together – to the end that we may also be glorified together.** This is simply like Jesus saying that in order to produce His fruit you must stay attached to Him, as the Vine. Those who wander away (like Israel did, a few times) will move out of the condition of being able to **enjoy and possess** what God and Christ have to share with us.

Israel's story portrays this. They were given an inheritance (the Land), but when they broke covenant God sent them

into exile. So Paul is painting a glorious picture (as the last half of the verse states), but vital, active participation in the covenant community (the "body" of the Vine) is necessary in order to enjoy God's fruit. Listening to the serpent can still get us exiled from His Garden. But all the stories tell of His eventually bringing us back – if you just trace them out.

I gave an expanded and conflated rendering of the semantic range of the word normally just translated "suffer." But the word means much more than just "suffer." The suffering of Jesus (in a physical body) has ended – once and for all. But because of His solidarity and

union with us, and keeping in mind that His Spirit dwells with us, and that we are joined to Him so that we are one spirit (or, one Spirit – 1 Cor. 6:17), Paul speaks of us doing all this **together**. We (He and us) **are continually affected by sensible experiences TOGETHER – feeling TOGETHER; receiving impressions, undergoing passion or suffering TOGETHER**. He does all this with us, so that **WE** can share His glory. This last part has a number of possibilities:

- a) can be given a shared appearance
- b) would together receive a manifestation of that which calls

forth praise

c) should be given a joint-approval and a joint-reputation

d) may be thought of and imagined together [in covenant relationship].

We are not in this alone, folks.

**18. You see, I have come to a reasoned conclusion** (or: I am reckoning and logically considering) **that the effects of the sensible experiences – sufferings, impressions, passions or feelings – of the current season** (or: of the situation fitted to the present time) **[are] not equivalent** (do not balance the scales; are not of equal value or worth), **[being] face to face with the glory** (or:

[are] of insufficient weight when put in balance to the manifestation which calls forth praise as well as the reputation and good opinion) **which is progressively about to be disclosed unto us, and for us** (or: unveiled into our midst; revealed to and [enter] into us).

Paul spoke of his own **experiences** and **sufferings** and their purpose in Col. 1:24,

**"I am at this moment continuing to rejoice within the effects of experiences and the results of my sufferings over your [situation] and on your behalf, and I am progressively filling back up in turn – so as in [His]**

**stead to replace, supply and balance out, within my flesh** (or: = with the means of my natural situation) – **the deficiencies** (or: results from what is lacking; effects from need) **with regard to the pressures** (or: from the squeezings, tribulations and tight spots) **that pertain to the Anointed One** (or: that belong to and affect Christ; or: from the Christ) **over [the situation of] His body, which is the called-out community."**

Here, he assigns everything in vs. 17 to **the current season** (not to some far-off tribulation). It is simply all the various

aspects of Life in the Spirit, as vs. 14 pointed out. Likewise, **[being] face to face with the glory** (which we are to understand far outweighs any suffering) is also not something far-off. Look at Jesus, our Sign (Lu. 2:34): glorification (resurrection) immediately followed suffering. He is our pattern. The **glory** was in Paul's day **progressively about to be disclosed to [them] and for them**. It was "to be unveiled into [their] midst." It was soon to be "revealed to [them] and [enter – Greek, *eis*] into [them]."

**19. For the looking away and watching with the head stretched forward alertly** (or: peak expectation;

premonition; intuitive opinion; or: = the concentrated and undivided focus) **of the creation is constantly receiving and taking away from out of the unveiling of God's sons**

(or: = the uncovering and revealing of folks who have the character and qualities of God; or: the disclosure pertaining to the sons of God; or: the unveiling and revelation which belongs to God's sons; or, as an ablative: **the disclosure from God's sons**).

The conjunction "**For**" ties what follows to what was just said: what was **progressively about to be disclosed to [them]** was something that **the creation**

was at that time "**constantly receiving and taking away from-out-of.**"

Creation was receiving life and understanding from **the unveiling of God's sons**. It was the message of the Messiah, His death and resurrection, the advent of the new creation and the new arrangement, the giving of God's Spirit to humanity in a new way, and here in this letter, the awareness of who God's sons are: those who are continuously led by His Spirit (vs. 14). All of this brought the whole creation Light, Life, Grace, Peace, Joy and an Expectation. Let me make clear what I rendered **constantly receiving and** (etc.). The Greek word translated is *apekdechomai*,

which is *dechomai*, which means "to take and receive with the hands," with the preposition *apek*, a contraction of *apo*, "from," and *ek*, "out of the midst of" added as a prefix. This verb should not be translated "looking for," or "awaiting."

Now to unpack the phrase, **the unveiling of God's sons**. The following will give variations based upon noun case functions and different meanings of the words used:

a) paraphrasing one cultural use of the word **son**: = the uncovering and revealing of folks who have the character and qualities of God"

b) the disclosure pertaining to the sons of God

c) the unveiling and revelation which belongs to God's sons

d) as an ablative: **the disclosure from God's sons**

Option d) would mean that everyone is getting something **from** the message (**the disclosure**) that the sons have been given and are publishing – the message of Christ.

With this in mind, consider Gal. 1:15, 16,

**“Yet when God... thought well to unveil** (reveal; uncover; disclose) **His Son within the midst of me** (or: in union with

me), **to the end that I in myself** (or: for myself; by myself; of myself) **would announce and proclaim the message of goodness, [which is] Him, within the ethnic multitudes** (or: may bring and tell the message of ease and well-being: Him [now] among the nations)...”

Another possible reading of this final phrase of the verse could understand the situation of God’s Son’s being the same as the condition that Paul’s describes of Israel in 2 Cor. 3:14-15:

**“... for until this very day the same head-covering (veil) continues remaining (dwelling;**

abiding) **upon the reading of the old covenant** (arrangement; thorough placement) – **it** [i.e., the reading of the old, or the old covenant itself] **continues not being uncovered or unveiled – because it** [i.e., the old covenant and arrangement] **continues being progressively and fully unemployed and brought down to doing no work and being made useless, ineffective and nullified within Christ** (or: = the old arrangement and covenant is nullified in union with [the] Anointing, and in the midst of Christ). **Still furthermore, until**

**today, whenever Moses should be repeatedly read [e.g., in the synagogue], a head-covering (veil) continues lying upon their heart (= the innermost being of the group). Yet whenever the time should be reached when it [= the heart] would (or: can; may; should; or: shall at some point) twist and turn upon, so as to face toward, [the] Lord [= Christ], “the head-covering (veil) is by habit progressively taken from around [it].”**

Many of God's sons have a veil over their hearts, and they need to have their hearts unveiled to see Christ and to see

who they are in Christ. Until this happens, creation is not being delivered from its bondage. Paul prayed for people that God,

**“... might give (suddenly impart) to you a spirit (or: breath-effect; attitude) of wisdom and revelation (UNVEILING; uncovering; DISCLOSURE) within the midst of a full, experiential and intimate knowledge of Himself (or: in a full realization of Him; or: within and in union with His full, personal knowledge; or: centered and resident within an added insight from Him, and which is**

Him), **the eyes of your heart** (= the insights and perceptions of the core of your being) **having continued being enlightened** (or: being progressively illuminated into a state of enlightenment) **into the [situation for] you folks to have seen and thus perceive and know what is the expectation”** (Eph 1:17-18a).

20. **For you see, the creation** (or: that which was formed, framed and founded) **was placed, arranged and humbly aligned under subjection in the emptiness** (or: subordinated to vanity; subjected by futility; arranged under, in unprofitableness, for frivolous idleness;

made supportive to futility), **not voluntarily or willingly** (from out of [its] being), **but rather because of** (through; on account of; for the sake of) **the One** (or: the one) **placing [it] under and arranging [it] in subjection** (or: in supportive alignment) – **based upon an expectation** (or: expectant hope) – Paul now makes a disclosure to the Roman community that presents all of us with an overview of God's purpose in sending humanity out of His Garden and **into the emptiness and futility** of humanity's fallen state of being, and **placed, arranged and humbly aligned under subjection** the whole **creation** into vanity, unprofitableness and

frivolous idleness. Mankind did not choose this – we did not come into this predicament **voluntarily or willingly**, but rather **because of the One** (God) **placing [it] under and arranging [it] in subjection** – who did it **based upon an expectation** of what we would gain from the entire experience. In 11:32, below, Paul reveals another piece of God's plan:

**"God encloses, shuts up and locks all mankind** (everyone; the entire lot of folks) **into incomppliance** (disobedience; stubbornness; lack of being convinced), **to the end that He could** (or: would; should) **mercy**

**all mankind."**

The term **the emptiness** – which certainly describes humanity's inner state of being, before the filling by the Spirit – is in the dative case and has no expressed preposition, so I have on offer the potential functions of this case, evidenced by the prepositions given in the parenthetical expansion. It is in the emphatic position, beginning the sentence in the Greek. Paul is pointing his listeners to the desolate, frustrating condition of the "death" that came into the first Adam, due to the disobedience, and the effect that this act of unrighteousness had upon all creation. As we have seen in his earlier

arguments of this letter, Paul again uses the passive voice (normally an indication the God is the actor, in such cases) indicating that what is described by the verb *happened* to **the creation**. But there was another actor in the Genesis story. Adam (“the one” – in this verse, for Paul does not definitely identify this “one” as God; that is our common assumption) knowingly acted in disobedience to God’s command. We are told in 1 Tim. 2:14 that, “**Adam was not seduced and deceived**” as Eve was. So why did he follow Eve into the act of disobedience? It has been suggested that Adam was a proto-Christ, entering into the now dying state of humanity in order

to produce a seed that would eventually produce the Seed – so that no one would be lost. He laid down his life for her, based **upon an expectation**. Had he not done this, he would have lived, but in dying she would die. I think that we can conclude that **the One** was behind it all, and had a plan in Mind.

We get a glimpse of the **expectation** in the next verse:

21. **because** (or: that) **even the creation itself will continue being progressively set free** (will be habitually liberated and constantly made free) **from the slavery of, and from, decay – even the bondage of deterioration which leads to fraying**

**and ruin – [and released] into the freedom of the glory and splendor of God's children**

(or: into the liberty of the manifestation of that which calls forth praise from, and a good opinion which pertains to, God's born-ones; or: unto the freedom coming from God's imagination pertaining to God's children; or: into the midst of the freedom of the glory from the children [who] belong to God; or: toward centering in the liberty from the glory, which is God, [and] belongs to the children).

I rendered the durative future tense of

**set free** first as a progressive, with the idea of the "increase of His government" (Isa. 9:7), and then as a habitual occurrence that is part of the function of the new creation that is releasing the old creation from its prison of **the slavery of, and from, decay – even the bondage of deterioration which leads to fraying and ruin.**

The liberation is **into the freedom of the glory and splendor of God's children.** Breaking down the parenthetical expansion of this last phrase, we have these views presented:

- a) into the liberty of the manifestation of that which calls forth praise from, and a good

opinion which pertain to, God's  
born-ones

b) unto the freedom coming from  
God's imagination pertaining to  
God's children

c) into the midst of the freedom of  
the glory from the children [who]  
belong to God

d) toward centering in the liberty  
from the glory, which is God,  
[and] belongs to the children.

These are the semantic possibilities of  
what Paul has said, but what is **the  
glory and splendor** of God's children?  
We have one answer in, "**Christ within  
you folks, the expectation of and from  
the glory**" (Col. 1:27b). It may be that

our answer also lies in the condition and situation embodied in the term **freedom** (*cf* Gal. 5:1) – the very opposite of the situation described in vs. 20, above – as well as Paul's ongoing theme of deliverance and liberation.

Byrd observes:

"Any talk of God's children is an indication that the story of Israel as the covenant people of God, historically, as summed up in Jesus, and as continued by those that believe in Jesus, looms large in the background. 'For we know that the whole creation,' like Israel, 'groans and suffers together until now'" (Believing in Him, pt

54, *ibid*, 1-8-12).

22. **You see, we have seen, and thus know and are aware, that all the creation keeps on sighing, groaning or querulously moaning together, and yet progressively travailing together as in childbirth** (continues suffering common birthing pains) **until now** (to the point of the present moment).

Paul's use of the word **creation** may well be literal, and this verse sees it as alive and **sighing** in groans as it **travails** in bringing forth the new, restored earth or universe. But he could also be using the term metaphorically to be a figure for the totality of humanity which will, one after another, be given birth into

being **God's children** (inferred in vs. 21, above). Whichever his meaning, and perhaps he left this enigmatic statement to indicate both, it is a beautiful expectation that was already **progressively** continuing in his day. Paul lived in a time of transition from the old to the new. He had insight to see what was then presently happening and vision to perceive the end of the process.

The birth of a child is a figure that we find from Gen. 3:15, then the stories of the births of Isaac and Jacob, on through the birth of Moses (the deliverer), to the need for Israel's rebirth (John 3:7 – Jesus spoke this to Nicodemus, saying

**“It is necessary and binding for you folks to be born back up again to a higher place {or: for YOU PEOPLE to be given birth from above} ...”**), then on to the birth of the man-child in Rev. 12:5 (the Messiah and His body). We have Paul using this metaphor in regard to the folks of the province of Galatia (Gal. 4:19). All births come with **travailing** – pain and pressure – and we find all the called-out groups of the 1<sup>st</sup> century experiencing this.

**23. Yet not only [this], but further, even we ourselves – constantly holding (or: having; possessing) the firstfruit of, and which is, the Spirit (or: the Firstfruit whose source is the**

Breath-effect; or: the first offering, or first portion, which is spirit and breath, and is from the Attitude) – **we ourselves also continually sigh and groan within (in the center of) ourselves, continuously accepting and with our hands taking away from out of a placing in the condition of a son (or: [the] deposit of the Son; a setting in place which is the Son; a constituting as a son; a placing in the Son): the process of the release of our body from slavery**

(or: [and] the loosing from destruction pertaining to the [corporate] body, which is us; or: = the unbinding and release of the

body [of Adam; of humanity],  
which belongs to us).

Now Paul turns to the Firstfruit (Christ; *cf* 1 Cor. 15:23) and His body – the covenant communities. He notes our solidarity with the physical creation, or with the rest of sleeping humanity, observing that **we ourselves continually sigh and groan within, or in the center of, ourselves.** The process is happening and we are participants. Ponder again his use of the term *apekdechomai* (*cf* vs. 19, above): **we are continuously accepting and with our hands taking away from out of a placing in the condition of a son.** Recall in vs. 15, above that the placing in the condition of

a son has already happened, for it says, **rather you received a spirit of being placed as a son.** And those who are led by the Spirit **are** – continuously exist being – God's sons (14). We do not need to wait in order to participate in this condition. The expansion of this phrase gives other perspectives of the term *huiiothesia*:

- a) [the] deposit of the Son [in us]
- b) a setting in place which is the Son
- c) a constituting as a son
- d) a placing [of us] in the Son.

Next, let us consider the last phrase. He uses the word **body** in this chapter in vss. 10, 11, 13 and here. We also

discussed the use of this word in 7:24, above. Here I gave two parenthetical additional options:

- a) [and] the loosing from destruction pertaining to the [corporate] body, which is us
- b) the unbinding and release of the body [of Adam; of humanity], which belongs to us.

These renderings also offer alternates to the bold rendering **our**. With a) we have the personal pronoun as apposition, "which is us." With b) we have the genitive of possession, "which belongs to us." In the bold rendering I used the colon to suggest that the **placing in the condition of a son IS the process of the**

## **release of our body from slavery.**

The first parenthetical alternate renderings can add to our understanding of what Paul is saying here:

"[and] the loosing from destruction pertaining to the [corporate] body, which is us."

The "loosing from" speaks to the bound condition prior to the work of Christ on the cross that set the "captives" free (7:23, above; Lu. 4:18; Eph. 4:8). The term "body" can refer to the corporate body of Christ or of humanity and with the genitive personal pronoun **our** rendered as apposition, "which is us," this can be referring to the work of the cross upon our inner humanity.

The paraphrase with the added bracketed interpretation, "the unbinding and release of the body [of Adam; of humanity], which belongs to us" is another possible way of reading this phrase as referring to Adam (referencing 5:12ff, above) as humanity's representative, or, again simply referring to the corporate body of humanity. Here, with the personal pronoun rendered as possessive, "which belongs to us," it shows our solidarity with Adam and all of humanity.

During the proof reading process, my sister, Rebecca, wrote a comment in the margin in regard to the **placing... of a son:**

"[This is pictured by] the prodigal, upon returning and rejoining his father's family and received the 'first robe,' the ring (showing authority as a son), [and the sandals (slaves went barefoot)]; and then: 'This my son was dead and is alive' – [the pronouncement and] the honor of the placing as a son again, the feast of the fatted calf and rejoicing (no more to desire pig food)." (brackets mine)

As well as Paul tying his narrative to the story of Israel groaning for deliverance from their slavery in Egypt, as David Byrd suggests, another passage where

Paul speaks of groaning may be instructive here:

**1. For we have seen, and thus know, that if our house, of the tabernacle which is pitched on the land, would at some point be dismantled (or: that whenever our house, which is this tent upon the earth, should be loosed down), we constantly have (continuously hold; presently possess) a structure (a building) forth from out of the midst of God: an eonian house (a house having the qualities and character which pertain to the Age; a house for the ages) – not made by hands –**

**resident within the heavens** (or: in union with the atmospheres).

**2. For you see, even within this one we are continuously groaning, utterly longing and constantly yearning to fully enter within and to clothe upon ourselves** (to dress upon ourselves) **our dwelling-house** (habitation) – **the one [made] out of heaven** (or: the one from, or made of, atmosphere; the [dwelling-house, or habitation] from out of the midst of [the] sky)

—

**3. since, in fact, also being folks at some point entering within**

**and clothing ourselves (or: being dressed, also), we shall not continue (or: proceed) being found naked.**

**4. For we also, being (continually existing) within the tent, are continuously groaning, being the ones constantly weighed down (burdened). Upon which [situation] we are not wanting to go out from (to unclothe; to strip; to undress) but rather to fully enter within and to add clothing upon ourselves, to the end that the mortal (or: this mortal thing) may be drunk down and swallowed under (or: by) The**

## **Life.** (Gal. 5)

Paul's reference to clothing ourselves and not being found naked may be an allusion to Gen.3:10-11, 21.

**24. For in the expectation and with hope we are suddenly made whole and healthy**

(or: You see, by the expectation we are delivered and saved; or: For we were at one point rescued to expectation; or: To be sure, we were kept safe for this expectation)!

**Now expectation (or: expectant hope) being continuously seen or observed is not expectation or hope, for who continues hoping in expectation for what he also constantly sees or**

**observes?**

The word **expectation** is used three times in this verse: twice as a noun, and the third time as a verb. In Col. 1:27 we have a revealing statement,

**"the riches of the glory of this Secret** (or: the wealth which has its source in this sacred mystery's manifestation which calls forth praise) **within the multitudes** (among the nations; in the Gentiles; IN UNION WITH the swarms of ethnic groups), **which is** (or: exists being) **Christ within you folks, the expectation of and from the glory**

(or: which is [the] Anointed in union with you people: the [realized] hope of the

manifestation which called forth praise; or: which is [the] Anointing within the midst of you folks – the expectation which is the glory)."

Christ is already **within the multitudes** and is IN UNION WITH the swarms of ethnic groups through their being taken into his death, and then He was poured into them through the proclamation of the gospel, and thus do we have these letters to the Gentile communities. This **expectation** has already been realized in the firstfruits of His race-wide harvest.

In vs. 24, here, **we are made whole and**

**healthy – in the expectation** (the advent of the Messiah) **that was manifested in Jesus**. We WERE (aorist, simple past tense) delivered and saved (passive voice – the action took place UPON us) by this same expectation. We were at one point rescued TO this expectation (Christ). And, looking back to the time before He encountered us, we were kept safe for this expectation. But our presently being in Christ does not eliminate expectation. 1 Cor. 13:13 informs us,

**"So at the present time trust** (or: faith; loyalty; trustworthiness), **expectation** (or: expectant hope) **[and] love** (unrestricted

acceptance which overcomes  
existential separation – Tillich) –  
**these three – continue  
remaining and habitually dwell  
[with us]..."**

In fact, again, where we were "rescued  
TO expectation," in our condition before  
Christ there was nothing to hope for  
(outside of the hope given to the Jews in  
the Prophets), but now we continuously  
have expectation for what God is  
continuously doing and progressively  
going to do. There is much that we do  
not yet see, so we have an expectation  
for God's creative and corrective  
activities. Having Christ GIVES us  
expectation. We LIVE with expectation

because of our present state of deliverance and our expectation in the faithfulness of God. We can see nothing beyond the moment, but we have expectation because of the life of Christ presently dwelling within us.

**25. Yet since (or: even if) we continue expecting what we are not seeing (or: observing), we continue taking away and accepting from out of it through remaining under [our present situation and circumstances] (or: through patient, humble, persistent, supportive endurance).**

This is the life of faith, trust and reliance – and again, we are participants of this process. **We continue taking away and**

**accepting from out of** our expectation from and of Him **through remaining under [our present situation and circumstances]**. Our remaining under (endurance) is the fruit of the Spirit that indwells us, and this is a part of our participation – the taking and partaking of His Fruit that He is growing within us. We are His Garden.

26. **Now similarly** (or: likewise; in like manner), **the Spirit also** (or: even the Breath-effect; the Attitude) **habitually takes hold together on the opposite side of a situation so as to assist in our weakness** (or: joins with a helping hand in our lack of strength and infirmity), **for we have not seen, and thus do not**

**know nor are aware of, the thing which we should think, speak or do toward having things go well unto goodness – to accord with what must be** (or: can pray commensurately to what is necessary and down from what is binding), **but rather the Spirit Himself** (the Breath-effect Itself; this Attitude itself) **from above constantly and repeatedly hits the target within us** (or: falls in on our behalf; instead of us hits within; falls in for and over us; or: makes hyper-intercession) **with unexpressed, unutterable or inexpressible groanings**

(or: in sighs too deep for words; with wordless and inarticulate

battle cries of deep emotion; in shouts of victory from the core of His Being).

This is *koinonia*, common being/existence and partnership with **the Spirit**. Just as we are involved with community life and partake of the Spirit "through patient, humble, persistent, supportive endurance" (vs. 25), the **Breath-effect also habitually takes hold together [with us] on the opposite side of the situation so as to join with a helping hand in our lack of strength. We have not seen – but we draw from the inner expectation for strength in upcoming situations – and thus do not know the thing which we should think,**

**speak or do**, in our present situation, **toward having things go well unto goodness** (this clause expresses the Greek elements of the verb normally rendered “to pray,” as given in the parenthetical expansion).

This need (what it is binding to be done), or **what** (because of God’s plans and purposes) **must be**, is met by **the Spirit Himself – from above** our situation **constantly and repeatedly hitting the target** of our need or problem **within us** (whether individually or in the group). The verb of this clause is in the present tense (linear action: constantly; habitually; progressively; repeatedly) and is an expanded form of

*tugchano* (to “hit,” as in hitting a target) with two prepositions prefixed which modify its meaning: *en* (in; within the midst; in union with) and *huper* (over; above). The word *entugchano* can be rendered “to meet and fall in with,” as I offer in the parenthetical expansion, here rendering *huper-* as signifying “on our behalf; instead of us; for and over us.” In choosing to use this word, I am wondering if Paul was envisioning God’s love “over” us in the sense of the “covering” aspect of His atonement for us (*cf* Atonement, at the end of these comments on Romans).

The Breath-effect both sees and knows **what must be** (i.e., the plans and

purposes of the Father in regard to our lives) and so "wordlessly gives battle cries and **inexpressible groaning**" that **accords** with the Father's will. The Spirit's groaning expresses intimate solidarity with **all the creation** (vs. 22, above).

David Byrd suggests that Paul's reference to **groaning** is an echo to Israel in Egypt:

"As we move on to verse twenty-six of chapter eight, we see that Paul continues the theme that is at work, which is the enfolding of all peoples within the defining narrative of the covenant people of God.... The context for this

statement is still Israel's groaning under Egyptian bondage. The context for this is still the crying out of verse fifteen, the bondage of decay of verse twenty-one, the groaning of creation expressed in verse twenty-two, and the inward groaning of verse twenty-three. As we saw in verse twenty-five, and in the hoping for what cannot be seen, Israel hoped for what it could not see when in Egypt.... Fusing the story of Israel's groaning with Paul's words, and making what seems like appropriate parallel analogies to the end of the effort of seeing the

united, worldwide covenant family of God and its shared story as they live in this world with an understanding shaped by God's kingdom purposes, and asserting without hesitation that Paul has the Exodus account in mind as he pens these words, we can say that Israel did not know how to pray. In the midst of their bondage, which could most certainly be referred to as their 'weakness,' they groaned....

"What was God's will for Israel? It was liberation from subjection into the glorious plan and role that God had for His covenant family,

as they were to become a light to the nations---blessing all peoples. What is God's will for the covenant family that has been and is being brought together by belief in Jesus? It is the same as Israel---to be light to the nations.

Continuing the analogy, Paul has said that 'our present sufferings,' like Israel's suffering in Egypt, 'cannot even be compared to the glory that will be revealed to us' (8:18b)" (Believing in Him, pt 53, *ibid*, 1-7-12).

**27. But the One continuously searching** (tracing; exploring; trying to find out [concerning]) **the hearts has**

**seen, and thus knows and is aware of, what [is] the effect of the mind-set and way of thinking of the Breath-effect** (or: the Spirit's opinion and thinking; or: the frame of mind and thought of the [person's] spirit and attitude), **that** (or: because) **down from God** (or: in accord with God; on the level of and commensurate with God) **it** (or: It; He) **continually hits on target within** (encounters and falls in union; obtains within while interceding), **over [the situation of] and for the sake of [the] set-apart folks** (saints; holy ones; sacredly different people).

"Search me out, O God, and know my heart; Test me, and know my

disquieting thoughts"

Ps. 139:23.

Perhaps Paul was thinking back to David's prayer as he spoke these words in vs. 27. God is **constantly searching [our] hearts**. This should give us pause, to consider what our heart is feeling and thinking, and the attitude of our inner core (yes, our heart is our second brain). He lives with us and nothing is hidden from Him. He **has seen, and thus knows and is aware of** "the frame of mind and the thought of [our] spirit and attitude." It is not clear whether Paul is referring to God's Spirit or our spirit in the second part of the first clause. The last half of the verse seems to indicate

the former, since here it seems that Paul is describing the Spirit's assistance (as in vs. 26) when He **continually hits on target within** (encounters and falls in union; obtains within while interceding – *entugchanō* – without *huper-*prefixed, as in vs. 26), **over [the situation of] and for the sake of [the] set-apart folks** (saints; holy ones; sacredly different people). That He continually does this is one aspect of our expectation of Him. The Holy Spirit is not only off somewhere cruising His universe, but is also right here with us, and within us, partnering with the Life of Christ that has become us. He is our *Paraclete*.

To **hit on target** is to accomplish His aim and purpose for which He is "shooting." This is the exact opposite of "missing the target," or, "sinning." This verb is a combination of the verb *tugchano*, which means "to hit an object" (such as a target), and the preposition *en*, which signifies "**within**," or "in union." So Paul is saying that the **effect of God's Breath** hits the target of His intention within us. Put another way, His Spirit "encounters [our situation] and falls in union [with us]" to address the situation in an effectual manner. An extended meaning of this verb has been used in the sense of "obtaining" a goal, which in this case may be "interceding"

(i.e., entering into our situation to give assistance) **for the sake of [God's] people.**

In the phrase "**the effect of the mind-set and way of thinking of the Breath-effect**" I have given an expansion of *phrone-ma*. If we turn this phrase around and make it a statement we see that "**The Breath-effect's (or: Spirit's) mind-set and way of thinking has an EFFECT (or: a RESULT – [from the *-ma* ending of the noun]) which is in accord with God.**" God has seen and thus knows (*oida* – perfect tense) what the Spirit will do within humanity. He also knows what His **OPINION** and **THINKING** will bring about in humanity. No wonder

Paul breaks forth in the next verse with such firm expectation for what we, the called-out community, **have seen, and thus know:**

**28. Now [look], we have seen, and thus know and are aware, that to those habitually or progressively loving God – to the folks being called and invited according to [the] purpose**

(or: for, in and with the people progressively experiencing love for God – in, with, by and for the people being invited down from an advanced placing, congruent with a design and corresponding to a before-placing and a prior setting forth) – **He is constantly working**

**all things together into good and is progressively working all humanity together into that which is advantageous, worthy of admiration, noble and of excellent qualities.**

[with other MSS: Yet we know that God is continuously joining everything together (or:working together with everything) into goodness by those continuously loving God...]

This must be the apex of all of his arguments: this statement of what Paul (and he presumes all followers of Christ – the **we**) has **seen**, and thus **knows**. It is not just hearsay. He has received this revelation from the risen Christ, and he

has seen it in all the patterns of the OT.

Byrd comments:

"How do we know this? We know this because a groaning Israel, with a promise of something akin to resurrection, received liberation from Egypt. God heard, God understood, and God acted" (ibid).

Lawrence Garcia shares:

"This is where Romans 8 and 1 Corinthians 15 become understandable, that a resurrected humanity will not necessarily be occupying some vague heaven, but rather God's new world. 'Glory' is what Adam had (Ps. 8) as co-

regent of creation. Our 'glorification' in the eighth chapter of Romans corresponds to the creation being set free from corruption in a cosmic exodus, notice the context is the oft quoted 'all things work together for good' (Rom. 8.28), again an echo of the creation pronouncements in Genesis when God called his work 'good.' Though this passage can be used for our individual problems, we cannot forget the surrounding context, that being, God is going to set his 'world to rights' (N.T. Wright) and all things will work together for good. This

makes total sense seeing Abraham is put forth in the fourth chapter as the inheritor of the world and us being co-heirs with Christ in chapter 8. Thus, we are incorporated into the Abrahamic world-wide blessing plan of God through the Messiah Jesus."

(personal email)

Now what Paul and we have seen is expressed with the term **those** (the people; the folks) in the dative case, with no expressed preposition (this happens a lot, doesn't it). I think that the bold rendering **TO THOSE... TO the FOLKS** is the most important. It is TO us – to our perception, to our way of

thinking, to our understanding – God is working all into good. He has opened our eyes to see His plans and purposes: to restore the entire universe, and to bring all humanity into the life of Christ, i.e., into Himself. To US, what He is doing (which was once a secret) is now revealed. His plan makes sense of all the chaos and ruin which characterize the world of the first Adam. His plan is LIFE from out of the Death. We saw His plan in the death and resurrection of the Author and Finisher of His faithfulness to God and to His own (humanity).

Our **call and invitation** – why we were picked out to be a part of the firstfruit of God's great harvest – was and is

**according to [the] purpose – His purpose:**

**"Within and in union with Whom we were (or: are) also chosen (or: appointed) by lot (or: were made an allotted portion; or: received an inheritance), being previously marked out (or: being before designated) in keeping with (or: down from; corresponding to; in accord with) a before-placed (or: predetermined-by-setting-forth) aim and design of the One continuously operating (effecting; energizing) all things (or: the whole) in accord with**

(or: down from; in line with; in correspondence to) **the deliberated purpose** (intent; design; plan; determined counsel) **of His will** (or: resultant decision of His resolve; effect of His desire)" Eph. 1:11.

**"to the end that now** (at this present time), **in union with the highest heavens, God's greatly diversified** (exceedingly varied in colors, as a tapestry that depicts a scene; or: = many-phased) **wisdom could be made known – through the called-out community – to the governments** (or: rulers; sovereignties; chief

ones) as well as to the authorities and folks with privilege among those situated upon elevated positions, in accord with (or: down from; corresponding to) a purpose of the ages (a fore-designed aim, plan and object [which He is bent on achieving] of the unspecified time-periods) which He formed (forms; made; constructs; produced) within the Christ by our Lord, Jesus" Eph. 3:10-11.

Byrd ties the idea of a call for a purpose to Israel's story, again:

"Israel was most certainly a people called according to God's

purpose. The creation itself was called into existence for a purpose. The worldwide covenant family that has been made so through believing in Jesus has definitely been called out for a purpose. As Israel routinely suffered in the midst of their being called, as the creation continues to suffer, and as those that have confessed their allegiance to the kingdom of God through their confession of the Gospel of Jesus continue to suffer, there is groaning" (ibid).

The second rendering conflates the other functions of the dative case, as well as

expressing other words of this clause differently and conflating their meanings:

"for, in and with the people progressively experiencing love for God – in, with, by and for the people being invited down from an advanced placing, congruent with a design and corresponding to a before-placing and a prior setting forth."

Notice some key phrases: an advanced placing; a design; a before-placing; a prior setting forth. This sounds a lot like the sovereignty of God in action upon humans. Not much about our choosing anything here. He has a plan for every

human – we all fit somewhere in His giant puzzle.

But wait, there is more:

**"He is constantly working all things together into good and is progressively working all humanity together into that which is advantageous, worthy of admiration, noble and of excellent qualities."**

I almost want to quote all that again. The word **all** is both masculine and neuter, so both implications should be expressed: not just **all things** but also **all humanity** (this is what the masculine implies – and the word **all** is primarily used in reference to people in the NT). I could

not help but conflate the other meanings of the word **good: that which is advantageous, worthy of admiration, noble and of excellent qualities.** This is what He is transforming humanity to be. Following other MSS, I have one more translation on offer:

"Yet we know that God is continuously joining everything together (or: working together with everything) into goodness by those continuously loving God, [i.e.,] by the folks being called and invited according to [His] purpose."

Can I hear an Amen?

**29. because those whom He foreknew**

(whom He knows from previous intimate experience), **He also marked out beforehand** (determined, defined and designed in advance) **[as] copies** (joint-forms) **of the image** (material likeness; portrait; mirrored image) **of His Son** (or: He previously divided, separated and bounded conformed patterns from the image of His Son) **into the [situation for] Him to be** (or: to continually exist being) **the Firstborn among, within the center of, and in union with many brothers** (= a vast family of believers)!

And this is why vs. 28 is true, **because...** This is now saying something about His firstfruits: **those**. Jacob/James spoke of

this in his letter,

**"Being purposed** (intended; willed), **from pregnancy He brought us forth by a Word** (collected thought; message) **of Truth and Reality – [placed] into us – to be** (or: to continuously exist being) **a specific firstfruit of His created beings** (or: of the effects of His act of creating; or: from the results of the creation which is Himself)" – 1:18

But let us import Paul's words from 11:16, below,

**"Now since** (or: But if) **the Firstfruit [is] holy** (set-apart and consecrated; sacred), **the**

**kneaded mixture** (the result of the lump which is mingled and reduced to a uniform consistency by treading, kneading or beating) **also [is]; and since** (or: if) **the Root [is] holy** (set-apart, sacred, different from the norm), **so also [are] the branches** (the shoots; the boughs)."

The **Firstfruit** is the Messiah plus His many-membered body. The **Root** is rooted in the OT. The branches of a tree or a vine are the place of harvest. The Christ (with His body as a part of Him) fulfilled the type and pattern in Israel's ceremony of the "waving of the Sheaf" (Lev. 23: 11, 12, 15). This sheaf

represented the whole harvest (all mankind). It was "a sheaf of the firstfurits" (Lev. 23:10). We have in all of these examples the principle of the One representing the Many (as in ch. 5, above).

But let us return to the first portion of the verse to unpack more goodies:

**"whom He foreknew** (whom He knows from previous intimate experience), **He also marked out beforehand** (determined, defined and designed in advance) **[as] copies** (joint-forms) **of the image** (material likeness; portrait; mirrored image) **of His Son** (or: He previously divided, separated

and bounded conformed patterns from the image of His Son)."

The word **foreknew** is *pro-ginosko*. From the prefix *pro-* we get the **fore-** and the "previous." The verb means "to know by intimate or personal experience." From this word some folks see human pre-existence, since this can be implied from the phrase "whom He knows from previous intimate experience." However, we could also see this foreknowledge of our person in the situation described in Isa. 44:2 & 24,

"Thus says Yahweh, your Maker and Former from the belly...."

Or, as in the case with Jesus choosing His disciples, His Father knew them

over the period of their growing years, as well as when they were in the womb.

"When Israel was a youth [Yahweh] loved him (and after knowing Israel for 400 years, during their stay in Egypt) [He] called [His] son out of Egypt" (Hos. 11:1). The point is: God knows whom He chooses to be His instruments for His work (even Pharaoh and Cyrus). And as Wright rightly observes, "They did not choose God, but he chose them..." (ibid p 156).

So it was these that **He also marked out beforehand** – or, determined, defined and designed in advance. Sure looks like an operation of His sovereignty, doesn't it! Paul uses the participle form of this

same verb in Eph. 1:5a,

**"In love [He was] marking us out beforehand** (or: definitively appointing us in advance; before-setting our boundaries and defining us, with a designation) **[and directing us] into a placing in the condition of a son** (or: a deposit of the Son; a setting in place which is the Son; the constituting as a son; a placing in the Son)."

And these folks were marked out **[as]**, or to be, **copies** (literally: joint-forms) **of the image of His Son**. This is a refinement of God's original purpose, "Let us make humanity in our image."

These are chosen to be the material likeness, a portrait, the mirrored image of the Son.

Reading **image** as an ablative instead of a genitive (both functions have the same spelling), this last clause can read,

"He previously divided, separated and bounded conformed patterns from the image of His Son."

It's all good : )

The purpose of this is to create a body of Anointed brothers of Christ to bear His image to all the world and in every succeeding generation. And so we hear Paul giving this purpose in the words,

**"into the [situation for] Him to**

**be (or: to continually exist being)  
the Firstborn among, within the  
center of, and in union with  
many brothers (= a vast family of  
believers)!"**

And here Dodd makes an insightful  
comment,

"[I]t is enough to know that Christ  
is to be the firstborn of a great  
brotherhood – a brotherhood  
which, as we are to be told later,  
will ultimately include all  
mankind (Rom. 11:32)" – *ibid* p  
142.

Once again David Byrd anchors Paul's  
ideas within the historical context of the  
story of Israel, and considering the

subject of the upcoming chapters of 9-11, I think that he is right on target:

"Again, if we trace the context of the passage, its connection to the exodus of Israel, and its placement within the whole of the letter that seems to have to do primarily with the family of God and its representation of the kingdom of God in and for the world, we realize that thoughts about predestination, in the sense of determining "who's in and who's out," are simply not on the field. Once we put that out of the way, what we see---and this seems to be far more appropriate---is that

the passage is about the covenant faithfulness of the Creator God, that faithfulness that is recorded in the narrative of Israel that runs back to the story of Adam, and the impetus for the unified covenant family that is composed of all peoples to take up its role. The passage is about what God is going to do for His creation, how He has been doing it, how He is going to do it, and about the people of the covenant getting on board with and participating in that plan" (ibid).

**30. Now [in fact, consider this]: those whom He at one point before-marked-**

**out** (or: designates beforehand; [A reads: knew from prior intimate experience]), **these He also at once called** (or: calls; invited), **and whom He called** (or: calls; invites), **these He also in one stroke rightwised by an eschatological deliverance** (or: makes and sets right, frees from guilt and liberates from bondage, while making them fair and placing them in covenantal relationships in the Way pointed out). **Now further, those whom He rightwised** (or: liberates and turns in the right direction; or: = included in covenant), **these He also instantly glorified**  
(or: makes of reputation which

calls forth praise; gives a splendid appearance; gives honorable thoughts and imaginations; clothes with splendor).

Here he continues to give more information about this firstfruit body of believers (those in the earth, in each generation, who represent all of humanity – the ultimate harvest). We become the Jerusalem who is above (Gal. 4:26), the ongoing community that continues giving birth to babies in the kingdom. So **these**, whom He has raised up into the heavens in Christ, **He also at once called**, who are also the ones that **He also in one stroke** (conveying the punctiliar action of the aorist tense of

these verbs) **rightwised** by the **eschatological deliverance** (etc.) through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In the two uses of the verb **rightwised** (*dikaioo*) I present the wide scope of the meaning of this verb which Paul uses here to express the wide scope of God's deliverance in setting humanity free and the liberating action which Christ performed for all that were in Adam.

Campbell comments on vss. 30-34 that,  
"... to construe there that God has released humanity from its Adamic slavery by an irreversible eschatological verdict of liberation makes excellent sense"

(ibid p 664).

Wright concludes,

"The whole passage seems designed to remind us both of the sovereignty of God and of the fact that this sovereignty is always exercised in love" (ibid p 157).

Witherington rightly see that,

"If vss. 29-30 stood alone then Paul would indeed sound like the most deterministic of early Jews, such as we sometimes find in some of the early Jewish literature at Qumran and elsewhere" (ibid p 231).

**Now further** (Paul adds), these same folks who He has delivered and placed

in covenant within the Christ, **He also instantly glorified**. Being in Christ, in the new creation, in the Way pointed out, this last phrase can be rendered:

a) makes of reputation which calls forth praise

b) gives a splendid appearance

c) gives honorable thoughts and imaginations – now isn't this wonderful!

d) clothes with splendor (Christ, or "white robes" – His rightwised, liberated existence).

This is here and now, not off in the future or in space somewhere!

But another of Paul's themes may be in view here: resurrection and

enthronement. We are instructed in Eph. 2:5-6,

**"even us, being continuously dead ones... He made alive together by** (or: joins us in common life with, for and in; [p46, B: within; in union with]) **the Christ – by Grace and joyous favor you continually exist, being folks having been delivered** (rescued and saved, so that you are now safe; made whole)! – **and He jointly roused and raised** (or: suddenly awakens and raises) **[us] up, and caused [us] to sit** (or: seats [us]; = enthroned [us]) **together within**

**the things situated upon [thus, above] the heavens within and in union with Christ Jesus."**

**31. What, then, shall we say to (or: declare in the face of) these things? Since (or: If) God [is] over, and above, us (or: on our behalf; for us), who or what [is; will be; can be; will appear] (or: [is] anyone) down against us? [Nobody! Nothing!]**

Wright terms the following paragraph (31-39) as "a summary of the whole theme of chapters 5-8.... as a thrilling rhetorical statement" (ibid p 159).

Witherington sees "**these things**" as pointing back to what he has just said, and considers "these verses as the

climax of the entire first part of the letter" (ibid p 231).

With such a grand plan that God has for humanity, that He works everything into good, and is **progressively working all humanity together into that which is advantageous, worthy of admiration, noble and of excellent qualities**, how could anything or anyone be **down on us or against us**? Nobody can; nothing will!

Once again, the picture that Paul has created by using the preposition *huper* (**over us; above us**) is that of a sheltering cover (Atonement; *cf* Ezk. 16:8). In 1 John 2:2 we read,

**“And He Himself exists**

**continually being a cleansing, sheltering cover around our mistakes and errors, sheltering us from their effects so that we can be in peaceful and rightwised relationships** (or: being the act by which our sins and failures are cleansed and made ineffective, effecting conciliation [to us]), **yet not only around those pertaining to us** (or: having their source in us), **but further, even around the whole ordered System** (secular realm and dominating world of culture, economy, religion and government; or: universe; or:

aggregate of mankind)!”

32. **Surely** (or: Actually; In fact; Certainly), **He Who at one point did not spare** (or: spares not) **His own Son**, **but further, over [the situation] of us all** (or: on behalf of all of us), **He at one point handed Him over** (or: gives Him up [into the hands of another]), **how will He not also, in grace and joyous favor, freely be constantly and progressively giving all things** (or: The Whole) **to us, together with Him?**

Paul is basing his argument of "blessings" to us on the history of the Christ event. If God did not **spare His own Son** on our behalf, but **handed Him over** (note that Paul is saying that God

did this – he is not blaming either the Jews or the Romans), **how will He not also...** This is an argument from the greater to the lesser – the audience is expected to respond in regard to Paul's conclusion, "Well of course He will!" In keeping with the previous echoes of Israel's story, Wright sees this verse as an allusion to the incident where Abraham took Isaac, now his "only" son, to be offered.

And so what will God do? **In grace and joyous favor, He will freely be constantly and progressively giving all things** – that is, The Whole of all that is – **to us, TOGETHER WITH Him!** He gives us Christ and all that is – this is

our inheritance in God. And it is here and now, as well as in the ages that keep on coming.

Paul now continues with a flourish of rhetorical question, and supplies affirming answers that instill confidence.

**33. Who will bring charges down on (institute proceedings against) God's selected and chosen ones (the folks picked out by God; the ones gathered out and laid in order, who belong to God)?**

Again, the expected answer is, No one! Then he points to God and the One who is both transferring and transforming them (note the corporate "plural" of this noun, **selected ones**):

**God [is] the One continually and**

**progressively rightwising [them]** (or: constantly liberating and turning [humanity] in the right direction, repeatedly placing [folks] in the Way pointed out and keeping them in righted relationships, or: = now freeing [them] and including [them] in covenant).

The just Deed, or Act, of God – which was done in the Christ event and was a completed work on behalf of all humanity – comes into being existentially within individuals, one after another, as they are first born into this earth existence, and then in their own class or order (1 Cor. 15:23) are given birth from above (via the Jerusalem which is above, and the Seed

of the enthroned Christ).

In reference to the term "**selected and chosen ones**," Witherington cites OT, Apocryphal and Qumran literature which show that, "The concept of 'the elect' applies to the group" and that they do not support the idea, "that the elect individuals have some sort of advance guarantee of salvation" (ibid p 232). God delivered Israel from Egypt as a corporate group, but this does not exclude personal relationship with Him, or as Jesus put it, each individual branch abiding in the Vine. Jesus was Israel's Messiah, and His liberating death included the whole nation (if One died over all, then all died – 2 Cor. 5:14).

But that death also included the first Adam: all humanity.

**34. Who [is] the one habitually bringing commensurate evaluations or corresponding decisions (or: constantly condemning and giving a verdict down against; or, as a future: will be separating by following the patterns so as to be indicting or passing sentence)?** Again, it can be, "No one!," because: **Now Christ Jesus [is] at the same time the One dying, yet very much more being aroused and raised [some MSS add: forth from out of dead ones], Who also exists (or: is) within God's right side (at God's right hand or position; [note: the place of honor, power and**

offensive weapons, yet also the place of acceptance and receiving]), **Who also continuously hits on-target within** (or: falls in with the situation and addresses the concerns) **over our [situation and predicament]** (and: on our behalf)! [or as a question, and with other MSS:

{Will; Would} Christ, the One dying... for us {do this}?)

As I pointed out in the added brackets in the last clause, this can either be read as an affirmation, as I give in my bold rendering, or it could be another rhetorical question that expects the same negative reply. This second reading follows MSS that omit the beginning “**Now,**” the term, “**at the same time,**”

and the name, **“Jesus.”** Either way, the implication is that because of **the Love of, and from, and which is Christ** (vs. 35, below) there is now no **one habitually bringing commensurate evaluations or corresponding decisions or constantly condemning or giving a verdict down against** us! This participle can also be a future tense, and thus we see that no one "will be separating by following the patterns so as to be indicting or passing sentence" on us! Both speak such good news. Paul has made an eschatological pronouncement with this rhetorical question. The end of condemning and judging has arrived in Christ!

We should also note here the eschatological themes of resurrection (**being arouse and raised**) and enthronement (**within/at God's right side/position**), and we see **Christ Jesus** doing exactly the same function for us as the **Breath-effect/Spirit** is described as doing in vs. 26-27, above.

**35. Who or what will be separating, dividing or parting us away from the Love of and from Christ** (or: the separation-overcoming love which is Christ; [other MSS: the God's love within Christ Jesus])? **Pressure** (squeezing; affliction; tribulation; oppression), **or confinement in a**

**narrow, tight place** (distress; difficulty; trouble), **or pursuit** (the chase of persecution), **or famine** (or: hunger; deprivation of food), **or nakedness** (lack of sufficient clothing; deprivation of necessities), **or danger** (peril; risk), **or sword** (or: large butcher knife; or: curved weapon for close combat)?

Paul calls to mind the primary categories that society normally fears – hard times, restrictions, immobility, persecution or being pursued, loss of provisions or shelter, all dangers, in general, or physical attack. Nothing that can happen to us **will be separating, dividing or parting us away from the Love of and from Christ**. Consider the

alternate rendering, "the separation-overcoming love which is Christ!" And then the other MS readings: "... the **God's love**" that is "within Christ Jesus." Sounds like John 3:16, "For in this way God loves the aggregate of humanity (and the universe)..." Wright considers this as God's plan of including Christ's followers (His body) as those who continue to fulfill the role of "the suffering servant," an echo of Isa. 50:4-10, etc. Cf 16:4, below; 1 Cor. 4:11; 15:30; 2 Cor. 11:23-27

**36. Accordingly as it has been written,**  
**"On Your account (For Your sake; By reason of You) we are progressively being put to death**

**the whole day! We are logically considered (accounted) as sheep which belong to slaughter (are associated with slaughter)." [Ps. 44:22]**

So he brings up a possible objection from the Scriptures – "**This** is what is happening to us!," they may say. Here Stern comments,

"In quoting one verse [Paul] implicitly is applying the entire psalm to those who have come to trust in the Gospel, thus expanding on what he wrote in vs. 18, above" (ibid p 384; brackets mine).

Yes, this is all covered in the list in vs.

35, but such things will not separate us from God's love. When bad things happen they are simply part of the plan for this life here – they do NOT mean that God does not love us. Paul knew that the Roman community would likely face danger and persecution – these things were common for all called-out groups, and Jesus prophesied such things for His disciples (e.g., Mat. 20:23; Lu. 21:12). But we are not to fear, for He has overcome the dominating System (John 16:33), and He is Lord.

**37. But rather** (or: On the contrary), **within all these things we are habitually over-conquering** (we are remaining completely victorious; we

continue more than overcoming)  
**through the One loving us.**

This is because we have been placed within the Overcomer who overcame the System (John 16:33) through resurrection from the dead – and so do we. This is the only NT occurrence of the verb "to overcome, be victorious" with the preposition *huper-* prefixed to it, which seems primarily to be used as an intensifier of the verb. Paul uses the verb without the prefix in 3:4 and 12:21, in this letter, and uses the noun in 1 Cor. 15:54 (in quoting Isa. 25:8),

**"The Death was drunk down and swallowed into Victory (or: overcoming)!"**

Then in vs. 57 of that same chapter he informs us of our current situation:

**"But grace and joyous favor [is] in God (or: by God) – the One presently and progressively giving the Victory (or: the overcoming) to us, in us and for us through our Lord (Owner; Master), Jesus, [the] Christ!"**

In 1 John we find the verb in 2:13, 14; 4:4; 5:4, 5. The present participle is used numerous times in the letters to the called-out communities in Rev. 2 and 3 and it is connected with enthronement in 2:27 and 3:21, the latter reading,

**"To (or: In; For) him who is habitually conquering**

(repeatedly overcoming; normally victorious) **I will continue giving** [the right? the ability? the honor?] **to sit** (or: be seated) **with Me within My throne, as I also conquer** (or: conquered; overcome; overcame and was victorious) **and sit** (or: sat down) **with My Father within His throne."**

We find the noun in Mat. 12:20 (quoting Isa. 40:11). In Rev. 12:11 we read,

**"And they at once overcame** (or: at some point overcome; conquer) **him because of the blood of the little Lamb, and** (or: even) **because of the word** (or:

message; Word; Logos) **of their witness** (evidence; testimony) – **and they love not** (or: did not love) **their soul** (soul-life; inner self; personhood) **even to** (or: until) **death.**"

And in Rev. 21:7 we are told,

**"The one habitually overcoming will proceed inheriting** (acquiring by lot) **these things, and I will continue being a God for him** (in him; to him) **and he will continue being a son** [Griesbach reads: the son] **for Me** (in Me; to Me)."

**38. For you see, I have been persuaded and now stand convinced**

**that neither death, nor life** (or: living existence), **nor agents** (or: messengers), **nor sovereignties** (rulers; those in prime position; or: beginnings), **nor things being now here** (being placed within, at present), **nor things about to be** (impending, or about to consecutively come), **nor powers** (or: capabilities), 39. **nor height** (effect of being high), **nor depth** (or: deep places), **nor any other or different created thing** (or: founded thing; institution) **will be having power or be able to separate, divide or part us from God's Love** (or: from the acceptance from God; from the urge toward reunion which is God) **which is within Christ Jesus, our Owner** (Lord;

Master; Possessor).

There is little that is left out here, if anything. The big one is **death**. We need to emphasize this to everyone: **death does not separate, divide or part [people] from God's Love**. Neither does any situation or condition in this life. God does not change: He loves the aggregate of humanity (the world at large).



## Chapter 9

Witherington sees 9:1 through 11:36 as one argument, which he titles "God's Justice and Israel's Future," and says of these chapters that they should be considered, "the climax of the theological portion of the letter" (ibid p 237). Kirk feels that "these climactic chapters contain the most direct and extensive wrestling with the theodicy theme [the question of God's faithfulness to Israel] that has underlined the entirety of the letter" (ibid p 161; brackets mine). Dodd titles this section "The Divine Purpose in History," and Harvey labels it similarly. Fitzmyer heads this

section with, "The OT Shows That the Plan of Salvation Does Not Contradict God's Promises to Israel." Barclay describes it, "The Problem of the Jews." Davidson and Martin call it, "The Problem of Jewish Rights and Privilege." Barth gives three successive labels for this section, "The Tribulation of the Church, The Guilt of the Church and The Hope of the Church." We all tend to read Scripture with our own pair of glasses : ) Witherington sums up that, "Paul seeks to justify the ways of God... [as being] fully consistent with what Scripture says and what Paul preaches" (ibid p 240; brackets mine). Campbell, however, views this section of the letter

“as part of an ongoing debate with the Teacher” (ibid p 771), and sees the majority of chapter 9 as again addressing the question that was raised in 3:29, above – namely, are the Gentiles included in Israel’s story? (cf ibid p 775)

With these considerations in the background, let us proceed to the text and see what we find:

**1. Truth I presently speak within Christ** (or: I am constantly speaking reality in union with [the] Anointed One; centered in [the] Anointing), **I am not now lying** (or: I do not habitually lie), **my conscience** (my joint-knowing from having seen together) **habitually giving**

**joint-witness** (testifying together; giving corroborating evidence) **to me** (in me; for me; with me) **within [the] Holy Spirit** (or: in a set-apart spirit and attitude; in union with a Sacred Breath), Paul returns to the diatribe (a philosophical conversation) for this argument, and these opening, emphatic statements follow the conventions of this type of rhetoric, especially considering the crescendo of the last paragraph. There is great emotion in these words as he draws his listeners hearts, as well as their minds, into what he is about to lay out for them. He is swearing to them that what he is about to share is true, and that **[the] Holy Spirit is habitually giving**

**joint-witness with his own conscience** to the verity of his words. Note, once again, the possible functions that accompany my rendering **to me**. He assures them that the Sacred Breath is "in" him, and that the Set-apart Spirit is with him, and thus in this letter. He is also writing with a "set-apart and holy attitude." He is **presently speak[ing] within Christ** – and thus, "centered in the Anointing." What greater commendation could a speaker have?

2. **that to me** (or: for me; in me) **a great distressing sorrow** (or: an annoying grief), **as well as unintermittent** (unceasing) **consuming pain, continues**

**being in my heart.**

He has now made himself vulnerable to them, publicly revealing his inner emotions of **great distressing sorrow** and the constant **pain** that he is experiencing, in regard to what is to follow:

**3. For you see, I kept on claiming, while having goodness, holding well-being and possessing ease, that I myself am to be (or: to continuously exist [as]) a result or an effect of something set up as an offering devoted to God (= a sacrifice; [comment: this would correspond to Jesus telling His disciples to follow Him, bearing their crosses]), forth from**

**the Anointing** (or: = [thus being separated] from [the body] of Christ; or: arising from the Christ) **over [the situation of]** (or: for the sake of) **my brothers, my relatives** (kinsmen; joint or commonly born ones; fellow countrymen) **according to flesh** (= in the sphere of natural human birth),  
Rendering the first verb *euchomai* (**claiming... having... holding... possessing** – together with its modifier, *eu-*) as I did, and the direct object *anathema* in accord with its earlier meaning (which may well have continued, even though in some circles it became degraded), we get a different picture – and to my thinking, one that is

more logical and in accord with Paul's anointed communicating. Paul has just said that nothing can separate us from God's love. So would he now “almost wish himself accursed from Christ” (as the common translations offer)? I think that his words have been grossly misunderstood.

What I offer, in regard to the object of the verb, is the literal meaning of the noun: from *ana-* (up) and *thema* (the result or effect of setting or placing). This was used in situations of setting or placing an offering or a sacrifice up on an altar before God (or, in paganism: a god). It was a time-honored technical word (*cf Theological Dictionary of the*

*NT*, Vol. 1, WM. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1977, p 354). Paul was claiming – while having God's goodness and ease about it – that he was to follow Christ in being **an offering to God – forth from the Anointing – over the situation of [his] brothers**, his fellow Jews or Israelites. We see this happening with Paul and his associates in 2 Cor. 4:

**11. For we, ourselves – the continuously living ones – are ever being repeatedly handed over into death (or: = continuously delivered into life-threatening experiences) – because of Jesus – to the end that the life, also, of Jesus (or:**

so that also the life which comes from and is Jesus; or: so that Jesus' life) **can** (may; could; would) **be set in clear light and manifested – within our mortal flesh!**

12. **So then** (or: Consequently), **the Death is repeatedly and progressively operating and inwardly working within us, yet the Life [is constantly operative] within you folks.**

And we read in 2 Tim. 4:6, "**You see, I, myself, am already being progressively poured out as a drink offering**" and the words of Jesus in John 15:13 come to mind,

**"No one continues holding (or: having) greater love than this: that someone should place (set; lay; lay down) his soul (or: soul-life; inner being; self; person) over [the situation or circumstances of] (or: on behalf of) his friends."**

Furthermore, in 16:4, below, Paul commends Pricilla and Aquila, **"who, over my soul (= person, or, life), placed their own necks under the axe."**

Paul's, words here, in vs. 3, call to mind the response of Moses to Yahweh in Ex. 32:32 where in light of Israel's sin (the golden calf), Moses offers to have himself removed from the scroll of

God's plan for Israel's story. He essentially offered himself as a sacrifice to cover the sin of the people. But it was not God's plan to take him up on the offer.

**4. the very ones who are Israelites, whose [is/was] the placing in the condition of a son (or: the deposit of the Son; the setting in place which is the Son; the constituting as a son) and the glory (the things which call forth praise and bring a splendid reputation) and the arrangements (or: covenants; [other MSS: the Covenant) and the placing of the Law (or: even the setting of custom and legislation by/as [Torah]) and the sacred service and the promises,**

It is noteworthy that, corresponding to his references and allusions to Israel's history in his arguments, he calls his **brothers** Israelites – and not Jews. His topic is the ancient people of God, the nation of Israel. This is also an inclusive Name that includes all the tribes.

The seeds and roots of all that is in Christ are in Israel. The **placing in the condition of a son**, the constituting as a son, and the deposit of The Son came via Israel (Ex. 4:22; *cf* 8:14-15, above). Note that I supplied the ellipsis with the copula as either past (**[was]**), which would reference their position within the Mosaic covenant, or (**[is]**), which speaks to their inclusion in the new

covenant. They embodied the age of the Law. God's **glory** (= His presence) had been manifested in and upon Israel (e.g. in the pillar or column of cloud, Ex. 13:21, 33:9; Deut. 31:15), and as Paul informs us in ch. 11, below, they were the root, stock and branches that manifested, and were used to produce, the Anointing. But even with the change in the arrangements (covenant), it was the Gentiles being grafted into Israel's olive tree, not vice versa.

The **Law**, or Torah which defined the **sacred services** for that age and those **arrangements** within and for the people of Israel, belonged to them as the path which would lead to the **promises** that

were made to Abraham, and were fulfilled in the Messiah.

**5. whose [are] the fathers (= ancestors) and forth from out of the midst of whom [is] the Christ (= the Messiah), the [descendant] down the line of flesh (or: on the level of the human realm) – the One continuously being upon all mankind: God, worthy of praise and blessing on into the ages! It is so**

(or: – corresponding to natural descent – [is] the Anointed One [= the Messiah] who exists being God: One with a message of goodness, ease and well-being – superimposed on all things – on

into the indefinite time periods!

Amen – count on it)!

On top of everything, **the Messiah** came forth from out of [their] midst, down the line of flesh, or, by natural lineage (a reference to the pedigree of Jesus as listed in the genealogies in Mat. & Lu.). This **line of flesh** is a reference to the history of Israel, a succession of generations that descended from **the fathers**: i.e., Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Then Paul makes a bold affirmation about Christ: He is **the One continuously being upon all mankind**. What did Paul mean by this? The preposition before the word **all** is *epi*, whose root meaning is **upon**. But further,

something that is place upon something else is "added" to it, or it covers it (a figure atonement and Love that covers). He is the Anointing that is added to all mankind, just as "He was and continued being **the True and Genuine Light which is repeatedly enlightening every person [that is] one after another continuously coming into the world**" (John 1:9).

But Paul uncovers another reality: Christ is **God, worthy of praise and blessing on into the ages**. Wright renders this "who is God over all."

The word **all** is also neuter (all things), and the Greek elements of the adjective, **worthy of praise and blessing**, are *eu-*

(goodness, ease, well-being) and *logos* (word; message), so I gave the parenthetical alternate translation,

"the Anointed One [= the Messiah] who exists being God: One with a message of goodness, ease and well-being – superimposed on all things – on into the indefinite time periods!"

What a proclamation! What an expectation!

**6. Yet [it is] not such as that God's Word has fallen out** (fallen from the midst, or: fallen out [of line]; or: drifted off course; or: = failed in its purpose), **for in consideration of all the folks [springing] forth from out of Israel –**

**not [all] these folks [are] Israel!**

Paul addresses God's faithfulness: His Word has not failed in its purpose. He begins his explanation with the revelation that **not [all] these folks [are] Israel!** He is picking up the argument of redefining Israel which he began in 2:28, 29, above,

**"the Jew is not the one in the visibly apparent or outwardly manifest** (or: For not he in the outward appearance is a Jew)... **but rather, a Jew [is] the one within the hidden [place]** (or: [that which is] in the concealed [realm]) **and circumcision [is] of [the] heart** (= core of our being)

**– in union with Breath-effect**  
(or: within [the] spirit; in  
attitude), **not in letter...**"

Once again note the contrast of the two covenants: the new one is the one of the Spirit; the old arrangement was that of obeying the letter of the Law.

**7. Neither because they exist being  
seed of Abraham [are] all children!**

**But rather** (or: To the contrary),

**"In Isaac shall a seed (= a  
descendant) continue being  
called in you** (or: For you, a seed  
will continue being named in  
Isaac; To you, offspring will  
continue being invited in union  
with Isaac)." [Gen. 21:12]

8. **That is**, [some MSS: That is because] **the children of the flesh** (= those born physically by humans; or: = the self that is produced by influence from the alienated System) – **these [are] not the children of God! But rather, "the children of The Promise" is He continually considering into [being] seed** (or: He is constantly counting into [the] Seed; [that] is habitually reckoned and reasonably concluded for a seed). Weaving Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Ishmael back into his arguments again, he now moves the unbelieving Jews into the category of Ishmael. As we see in Gal.4, Ishmael, the son of the slave-girl, was not to inherit along with the son

who came via the Promise (Isaac, who would continue the lineage of "the faith of Abraham," and bring the Promise: Christ). He is saying through this analogy that as Abraham had a child through his own efforts with Hagar, what he produced was a child of and from the flesh – and the descendants of Ishmael did not become **the children of God**, because this category was for those who were chosen to represent "faith" and **Promise**, which is the work of the Spirit in distinction from what would later become "works of the flesh," or, "works of the Law."

Israel was the spiritual designation for Jacob, who was Isaac's son. None of

Ishmael's descendants were a part of Israel – they were a different branch of Abraham's seed; they were **the children of the flesh**, to be contrasted with **the children of God** (those who came through Isaac, who was produced through the work of the Spirit in both Abraham and Sarah, and then his son Jacob (who's name was changed to Israel), during the period of the types and shadows of the old covenant. These types and shadows (Heb. 8:5; 10:1) were signs pointing to the Age of the Messiah and the Age of the Spirit (figured by what came by Promise). So Paul, reinterpreting Israel's history from the perspective of the new creation

of life in the Spirit, is saying that those who are not joined to the Messiah are virtually Ishmaelites – children of the flesh, rather than of the Spirit. Thus, **"the children of The Promise"** are equated as being the true **children of God**. He means by this, as regards the new covenant and the new arrangement, that **the folks of [the new] Israel** – the **children of God** – are those who are in Christ, the Promise, who have also been produced by the Spirit and are therefore **the children of The Promise**, just as was Isaac.

The Messiah (Christ) is the antitype of the literal fulfillment (Isaac) of the of the Promise made to Abraham (resurrection

life in order to produce seed: Isaac), and recall Paul's identification of the "singular" **seed** (Christ) in Gal. 3:16. Christ moves from being typified by Abraham (in ch. 4, above) to being a fulfillment of what was typified by Isaac (the Promise), and thus becomes the origin of the redefined Israel. So the Israel of the age of the Spirit is composed of sons from the Isaac of the Spirit: Christ and the body which He produced. And, they follow (are led by) their Father, the Spirit, and are thus **God's sons** (8:14, above). And as Campbell points out (ibid p 775), there are no "works" involved in any of this.

**9. For the Word** (or: message) of

## **Promise [is] this:**

**"Corresponding to (or: At; In line with) this season (or: In accord with this fitting situation and fertile moment) I will be coming, and then a son will be existing for Sarah (or: shall progressively be by Sarah and will be existing in Sarah)." [Gen. 18:14]**

Again Paul grounds his argument in the Torah and Israel's story. Fifty-two years ago a friend gave me a pamphlet by Bill Britton called "Sarah Shall Have a Son," and this was the beginning of opening my eyes to see that Paul was talking about a different Israel than those

represented by the physical Jews of his day (or ever since), even though he opens this section in speaking about physical Israel, **[his] brothers, [his] relatives** (kinsmen; joint or commonly born ones; fellow countrymen) **according to flesh** (= in the sphere of natural human birth), in vs. 3, above.

This will seem confusing if you miss the fact that he begins with the physical, but then switches (via a story from his physical heritage) to a spiritual understanding of the Christ, and where He has brought people in His resurrection. He used the same principle by referring to Adam and his transgression (ch. 5), but showing that

spiritually he represented all humanity. So now, **Sarah's son** is a spiritual figure for the Christ and all of His branches (His body). In Paul's thinking Sarah of the old is now seen in the Mary of the new. As Isaac became a nation through his son Jacob/Israel, so now Jesus has become a spiritual nation and the fulfillment of that type, with Mary now "the Jerusalem which is above" (Gal. 4:26), who is the mother of us all – the new Eve, "the mother of all living" (Gen. 3:20). It has all come full-circle, but from death into life and from the earth into the heavens (realm of spirit). We will see Paul weave physical Israel back into his argument in ch. 11, below,

with an analogy about a fig tree.

**10. Yet not only so, but further, Rebecca, also, continued having a marriage-bed** (= was habitually having sexual intercourse and conceiving children) **from the midst of one man, Isaac, our father** (= ancestor).

Paul's storied argument moves to the next generation and focuses on Rebecca and Isaac, and their two sons.

**11. For you see, not as yet being born ones, nor ones practicing** (performing; accomplishing) **anything good or vile** (mean; sorry; careless; bad [p46 reads: worthless; of bad quality; corrupt; evil]) – **to the end that God's purpose and aim, which He designed and set**

**beforehand, may continually remain** (abide; dwell) **down from** (corresponding to and in accord with) **election** (a selection; a choosing-out; a choice), **not forth from out of works** (or: actions), **but instead from out of the One repeatedly calling** (or: from the continual summoning) –

**12. It was said (or: declared) to her that,**

**"The greater** (by implication: the older) **will continue performing as and be a slave to and for the smaller** (by implication: the younger; the inferior)." [Gen. 25:23]

Pagels notes that Origen, "considers the

basic issue [of this passage, from 10-18] to be the question of free will" (ibid p 38; brackets mine). It is quite obviously a strong statement of God's sovereignty over human beings. But let us bear in mind his critical statement which instructs us about God's purpose for doing what He did in this story, which is central to Paul's argument here:

**"to the end that God's purpose and aim, which He designed and set beforehand, may continually remain (abide; dwell) down from (corresponding to and in accord with) election (a selection; a choosing-out; a choice), not forth from out of works (or: actions),**

**but instead from out of the One repeatedly calling** (or: from the continual summoning)."

Reaching the goal as being an image-bearer of God, and of being united with His Spirit, was not something that works of Law, or human effort, could ever achieve. His **purpose and aim** was that all would be accomplished from the work of the Messiah, "**the One repeatedly calling** (or: from the continual summoning)" through Whom "[He] **will progressively drag** [note: drag as with, or in, a net; or: draw, as drawing water with a bucket, or a sword out of a sheath] **all mankind** (or: everyone) **to [Himself]**" (John 12:32b).

The whole creation and all of God's plans and purposes – what **He designed and set beforehand** – was all about Him and His choice for humanity and the creation. Central to His **purpose** is His activity of **electing**, selecting, and choosing-out. This all comes **down from** Him and corresponds to what He has chosen as far as using people, or a People, to bring about what He **set beforehand** to be.

In the state of humanity's being "**under subjection in emptiness** (or: subordinated to vanity; subjected by futility; arranged under, in unprofitableness, for frivolous idleness; made supportive to futility)" – 8:20,

above, a person's "**practicing** (performing; accomplishing) **anything good or vile** (mean; sorry; careless; bad [p46 reads: worthless; of bad quality; corrupt; evil])" is insignificant. When it comes to God's purposes for someone's life (which is the point in view, here) He does what He chooses to do. His choice of Jacob, who would later become Israel and carry both the lineage of the Christ and the prophecies and types that proclaimed Him, came before Jacob was born, and Paul is making this a parallel argument to His choice of Isaac to represent the Seed (Christ) that was going to come.

Witherington makes a cogent

observation here: "The discussion of election in chs. 9-11 is a discussion of corporate election..." (ibid. p 246)

Campbell notes that Paul uses,

“... the principle of ‘election’ that is implicit in Israel’s patriarchal origins, in the exodus, and in the repeated scriptural motif of God as the potter and humanity (or Israel) as his lump of clay” (ibid p 775).

**13. Just as it has been written,**

**"Jacob I love** (participate in and accept as on the same ground), **yet Esau I regard with ill-will** (detach from; hate; am unfriendly to; esteem with little affection)."

[Mal. 1:2-3]

And again Paul anchors his argument in Scripture, this time from one of the prophets. Malachi was instructed by the Word of Yahweh that He loved what He was going to do with Jacob, yet Esau was going to portray what was **ill** to His **will**, and what He hated – what He socially detached from and esteemed with little affection when it came to human behavior or character. These two men – sons of the same father and mother – represented the two levels of existence: spirit and flesh, and thus represented the two covenants, once again, in two people of the same lineage. But foremost here, Paul is pointing out

that God operates according to His own choice and in the realm of **Promise** (vs. 8, above), not personal achievement. Jacob was chosen to bear the Promise. The Promise had been made to Abraham and was first embodied in his son, Isaac. Isaac's son, Jacob, would inherit the Promise and God would change his name to Israel. The title Israel would then be applied to his descendants who would corporately be called God's **son** (Ex. 4:22).

**14. What, then, shall we continue saying? Not [that there is] injustice (behavior contrary to the Way pointed out) with God? Of course not (May it not come to be)!**

The questions (according to Campbell's reading – *cf* *ibid* p 776) would be from Paul's interlocutor. Paul, then, is the one giving the emphatic negative response, and then he proceeds in the following verse to ground his argument in the Torah – the source of the Jewish teacher's own arguments.

The human without insight (*gnosis*) or personal knowledge of God's over-arching purpose will always cry, "Unfair!" Paul expects this carnal response (and, this objection from his opponent) and heads it off with the interlocutor's rhetorical questions, and then responds: No way! Next Paul gives another witness from Israel's story:

15. **For He is saying to Moses,**

**"I will continue being merciful to (will progressively relieve the distress and misery of) whomever I should presently be merciful (or: I may continuously relieve of distress and misery), and I will continue being compassionate to whomever I should (or: may; would) be continuously compassionate."** [Ex. 33:19]

Here Witherington makes an insightful comment,

"The quotation... says nothing about 'I will judge those whom I will judge.' Both phrases speak of mercy. 'Mercy' could be

said to be the theme of this and the following two chapters" (ibid p 256).

We have the advantage of knowing his later disclosure of 11:32, below, which his original audience did not have. But they would have recognized this verse from the Torah. Contrary to those of us who have grown up under the attending influence of the Enlightenment, the folks of the first century, and before, seemed to grasp the concept of the sovereignty of God (or, to the pagans, the gods) and would have both realized and accepted that which we read elsewhere of God, that He operates,

**"in keeping with** (or: down from;

corresponding to; in accord with)  
**a before-placed** (or:  
predetermined-by-setting-forth)  
**aim and design of the One**  
**continuously operating**  
(effecting; energizing) **all things**  
(or: the whole) **in accord with**  
(or: down from; in line with; in  
correspondence to) **the**  
**deliberated purpose** (intent;  
design; plan; determined counsel)  
**of His will** (or: resultant decision  
of His resolve; effect of His  
desire)" Eph. 1:11.

God's economy, His operating in the  
affairs of humans, is one of "altering the  
eras and stated times, causing kings to

pass away and causing kings to rise" (Dan. 2:21) – *cf* vs. 17, below.

**16. Consequently, then, [it is] not of or from the one constantly exercising [his] will** (or: [it does] not pertain or belong to habitually intending or designing), **nor of the one constantly rushing forward** (or: nor does it pertain or belong to the one continuously running or habitually racing), **but rather of, from, pertaining to and belonging to God, the One constantly being merciful** (or: but from God's habitually and continuously relieving from distress and misery; or: but to the contrary, [it is] from the One repeatedly dispensing mercy, which is God).

"[T]his selection of individuals is made with a view to the ultimate elevation of all mankind into the new order.... " (Dodd, *ibid* p 157; brackets mine)

Two themes can be observed here:

1) an athletic metaphor: **rushing forward**; running; racing – We will see more athletic terms in Paul's arguments, below.

I owe these observations to Campbell (*ibid* p 790) who sees Paul resuming these metaphors in 11:11, below. He used the figure of the stadium games in 1 Cor. 9:24-26 to describe a believer's behavior within the Christian life that will benefit the message of goodness

(vs. 23, there) and well-being that Christ brought. Characterizing how the folks of Galatia were living, in regard to how they were taught, in 5:7 Paul says,

**“You folks have been running beautifully (finely; ideally)! Who (or: What) cut in on you folks, to hinder or thwart you, [for you] not to continue to be persuaded (convinced) by (or: in; with) the Truth and this reality?”**

In 2 Thes. 3:1 he instructs them to continue praying,

**“...to the end that the Word of the Lord (or: the Lord's idea and message) would continuously run (move quickly) and may**

**constantly be made glorious** (or: be characterized by a manifestation which calls forth praise; be of good reputation), **according as [it is and does] also with you.**”

Paul’s point in our present passage would thus seem to say that God’s choices for human lives are not tied to human behavior, but rather to God’s will and purposes. Thus, they also are not tied to Torah-keeping or any merit system that seeks to gain God’s favor by “works.”

2) kingship/sovereignty – **but rather of, from, pertaining to and belonging to God.**

Deliverance and salvation were seen as the work of God as King, especially in the Psalms. E.g., in Ps. 44:5 (LXX, JM) we read,

"You Yourself are my King and my God: the One habitually imparting destined acts of deliverance (giving inner directions and commands for rescues and acts of salvation) for Jacob."

Ps. 49:6 (LXX, JM),

"And so the heavens (or: atmospheres; skies) will continue declaring His delivering way that has been pointed out (His rightwised fairness and covenantal solidarity; His justice

and right action), because God exists being [the] Decider (the Evaluator; the Sifter and Judge)."

Furthermore, His description as **being merciful** fills the Psalms. Examples:

Ps. 6:4,b (LXX) "... save (deliver; rescue) me for the sake of Your mercy."

Ps. 25:10 (LXX) "All the ways (paths) of [the] Lord (= Yahweh) [are] mercy and truth to (or: by; for; with; among) those habitually seeking out His arrangement (or: covenant) and His testimonies (witnesses; evidences)."

Ps. 89:14 (LXX) "The way of fairness, right, solidarity and

covenantal liberation (or: justice), along with the effect of decisions and judging [are] a provision from (or: of) Your throne; mercy and truth will continue journeying before Your face (or: in front of You)."

Ps. 136:1b, through 26b (LXX) repeats the refrain, "... because His mercy [is] on into the midst of the Age [of the Messiah and the new creation]." (JM translations)

In regard to things that are ultimate (e.g., salvation or deliverance; life; destiny) this verse flatly refutes the theological doctrine of "free" will. Paul clearly affirms that "[it is] **not of or from the**

**one constantly exercising [his or her] will."**

**17. For the Scripture is saying to Pharaoh that,**

**"Into this itself (or: For this very thing) I roused you forth (I awakened and stirred you to come out), so that I may (or: would) display and demonstrate in you My power and ability, so that My Name would be thoroughly proclaimed (preached and published far and wide) within all the land (or: in the entire earth)."**

**[Ex. 9:16]**

Witherington cites Josephus (*War* 2.8, 14) as saying that, "[The] Pharisees

ascribe everything to destiny and to God..." (ibid p 248; brackets mine)

Paul's quote is to give his reason for his statement in vs. 16, as we see by the referential conjunction **For** which ties these two verses together. God awakened and stirred up Pharaoh **so that [He] would display and demonstrate** to the whole land of Egypt, and to those of the neighboring countries who heard of it, His **mercy** upon Israel as an example of Who He was, and what He was like. His act in delivering Israel from slavery (note this continued thread in his tapestry, as well as that of resurrection, for deliverance of Israel from captivity was always viewed as a

kind of resurrection from the dead – *cf* Ezk. 37:1-14) **proclaimed His Name** in the entire earth. This would give Him a reputation of being merciful to the downtrodden and abused, and as One who delivered people in such circumstances. We see the same message in Jesus' words and deeds in regard to the poor and outcasts – the kingdom of God belonged to them. Deliverance of all of humanity is the reality to which the OT signs and figures pointed.

**18. Consequently, then, on whom He from time to time wills** (or: to whom His will is presently directing) **He is continuously merciful** (He constantly relieves from distress and misery). **Yet**

**whom He from time to time wills** (intends; designs), **He continues progressively hardening.**

Not only does this affirm His sovereignty, it reveals the purpose of why He sometimes **hardens** some people. It was for the purpose of bringing about the cross and the salvation of the world (John 4:42; 1 Tim. 4:10; 1 John 4:14) that Jesus applied Isa. 6:9 to the Jewish leadership of His day,

**"For the heart of this people WAS MADE thick and fat, and thus has become impervious, dull and insensitive... LEST at some time they might see with [their]**

**eyes and should then be listening and hearing with [their] ears, and with the heart they could make things flow together so as to comprehend – and they might turn about! And so, I will progressively cure and heal them! (or: and I will continue healing them!)" – Mat. 13:15.**

The passive **WAS MADE** is an example of what has often been used in Scripture as a circumlocution for a reference to God (via use of the passive voice) without naming Him.

**19. You will ask me (or: protest to me), then, "Why, then, is He still blaming and continuing to find fault? For who**

(which one; what) **has resisted** (stood against or in place of) **His intention** (the effect of His deliberated purpose and resolve) **and is yet still so standing?"**

Paul assumes his interlocutor objection, and states it in the first rhetorical question. The second question, put in the mouth of Paul's imaginary (or perhaps, known) protestor, affirms the prevailing view of the sovereignty of God. So the first rhetorical question presents the current deterministic assumption (Paul has his protestor reach this conclusion about God's sovereignty – the buck stops with Him, it's all God's fault, so why is **He still blaming us and finding fault?**)

**20. O man** (or: human)! **On the**

**contrary, even more, what (or: who) are you – the one habitually answering back to God (or: replying against God; from a position of standing instead and in opposition, judging for God; disputing with God)?**

**"The thing molded and formed will not proceed to be saying to the One molding and forming, 'Why do you make me thus (or: did you create and construct me this way)?"** [*cf* Isa. 29:16; 45:9; 64:8]

Take note that Paul does not say that these questions in vs. 19 are based upon an erroneous assumption or perception. He simply cuts the objection short by

giving an example from the Scripture that shows that it is inappropriate to ask God such questions. And in so doing, he calls to mind the picture of how God, in working upon humanity, can be compared to a potter working on clay (a figure of the human), as he points out in the following verse. As we read in Isaiah,

“But now, O LORD, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You are the Potter, we are all the work of Your hands.” (Isa. 64:7, Tanakh)

**21. Or does not the Potter hold authority or have a right pertaining to clay, forth from out of the same**

**kneaded mixture** (effect of uniform mixture) **to make the one a container** (a vessel; an instrument; a utensil) **into honor and value, yet the other into an unhonored one** (a worthless one; one without value; one deprived of privileges; or: = one for common use)?

The theme of **honor** versus a lack of value or a condition of being **not honored** echoes the subject of God's election and choosing, in the previous verses, and also would hit home with those of the Roman community, for one of the core values of Greco-Roman culture was that of honor versus shame (or lack of honor, which equaled a lower social status). So not only is Paul

affirming God's sovereignty with another storied metaphor from Isaiah 29:16, but he is speaking to the social considerations of the mixed-race makeup and the mixed-social environment of the covenant community – which he will address in following chapters. For the Jews, the **unhonored ones** would have been those of the nations who had been “deprived of [Israel’s] privileges.” But note how Paul points out that both categories are formed (by God, is implied) **out of the same kneaded mixture**. What begins as one ultimately ends as one, since all return to the same place: their origin (Gen. 3:19; ch. 11:36, below).

Paul may also be referencing Jer. 18:3-6 where God puts Himself as being in the role of a Potter who can make a pot that He has marred into another pot (note that this happens via destruction of the marred pot, and its subsequent “resurrection” on the wheel, again).

Thus also, the “worthless” Gentiles, can now be transformed into valued, honored and privileged containers of God’s glory.

We can also call to mind this same metaphor in Isa. 45:9, just following Yahweh’s calling of Cyrus, His anointed one (who “had not known [Yahweh],” vs. 4b – Cyrus being the king of Persia, thus, a Gentile) whom He informed

about His being the One that is both “Former of light and Creator of darkness; Maker of good and Creator of evil” (vs. 7, CVOT).

We find in Wis.15:7 a similar comparison of two sorts of containers, made by the same potter, that are made from the same clay: some for “clean uses,” and others for “contrary uses.”

This simply adds to our understanding of the Jewish thought of the day which Paul expresses here: that God always has a purpose and a plan – for everyone – and the implication is, that He can be trusted. Campbell considers Wis. chapters 10-19 as potentially being related to the arguments that Paul has set up here in

Rom. 9. (*cf* *ibid* pp 777-779)

22. **Now since** (or: So what if) **God – habitually willing** (or: repeatedly intending) **to display and demonstrate inherent fervor, natural impulse, propensity and disposition** (or: teeming passion; swelling desire; or: anger, wrath and indignation), **and also to make known by personal experience His power and ability – in much long-suffering** (long-breathing; forbearance) **bears and carries** (or: brought forth and produced; or: enduringly supports while moving) **containers** (vessels; instruments; utensils) **of natural impulse** (belonging to a passionate disposition; displaying inherent fervor; from teeming

passion and swelling desire; or: of anger; having the character of wrath; owned by indignation), **being folks having been fully outfitted, thoroughly prepared and made correspondingly adequate for loss** (or: having equipped, adapted and adjusted themselves down into ruin, waste and destruction [of their well-being]), **and now continuing in this condition,**

This verse needs first to be read straight through with vss. 23-24, but after doing that, return here as we consider some specifics of this verse. Note that I set off with dashes the dependent clause which describes one aspect of what God is doing in treating people as He does. So

now, let us read through the independent clause to see the reality of what He is doing:

**God, in much long-suffering**  
(long-breathing; forbearance)  
**bears and carries** (or: brought forth and produced; or: enduringly supports while moving)  
**containers** (vessels; instruments; utensils) **of natural impulse**  
(belonging to a passionate disposition; displaying inherent fervor; from teeming passion and swelling desire; or: of anger; having the character of wrath; owned by indignation).

What a statement! Read it through again,

now focusing on the parenthetical expansions. Normally, due to theological constructs or doctrinal bias, the verb **bears and carries** (one of the core ideas of the verb) is rendered "tolerated" (NWT; NEB), "endured" (KJV; NRSV; NASB), "put up with" (Nyland; Wright), etc. Rotherham gave the simple, and literal, rendering, "bare." The Concordant Literal NT gives the aorist (timeless fact tense) as "carries." Wilson, in his *Emphatic Diaglott* renders the interlinear "bore," and the side-bar translation, "did carry." Ponder the different pictures we get from first seven versions to the last three (and mine). Furthermore, look at my

parenthetical alternatives of the literal meaning of the verb:

a) "brought forth and produced" – this is putting God as their source, and He is the source of all, "the Father of spirits" (*cf* Heb. 12:9; Acts 17:29a)

b) enduringly supports while moving (*cf* Acts 17:28).

The core idea (the bold rendering) calls to mind Mat. 5:45 (sends His rain on the just and unjust) and Acts 14:16-17. God **bear and carries** all of creation and all of humanity – and He does it with **long-suffering patience and forbearance**. All of humanity, in being given over to futility, emptiness etc., are **containers of**

**natural impulse.** We see this in children, adolescents, young adults and the old as well. Only when we are apprehended ("seized," as was Paul, Phil. 3:12) do we become containers of, and controlled by, His Sacred Spirit. Prior to that we are,

- a) vessels belonging to a passionate disposition
- b) instruments displaying inherent fervor
- c) utensils from teeming passion and swelling desire
- d) or: pots of anger; having the character of wrath
- e) tubs owned by indignation.

Note: this list gives various functions of

the genitive case, with c) reading the noun as an ablative.

And that pretty well describes the human predicament of folks that are not experiencing union with God. But Paul does not stop there, He stated that God (indicated by the passive voice, and describing humanity's judgment in the first Adam) did, and does, something more. All were folks:

**"being folks having been fully outfitted, thoroughly prepared and made correspondingly adequate for loss."**

Or, since the participle is also a middle-voice form, they were people:

**"having equipped, adapted and**

adjusted themselves down into ruin, waste and destruction [of their well-being]."

Wright is simply wrong in paraphrasing this as, "created for destruction." No, in His judgment on humanity (the Garden of Eden story) mankind was fully outfitted and thoroughly prepared for the journey of "walking through the valley that is death-shadowed" (Ps. 23:4). We were all given pain and hard work for the life of death and separation from His intimate presence. And keep in mind that the Good Shepherd came to rescue the lost and destroyed sheep of the house of Israel (Mat. 15:24). This ruined condition is not humanity's final destiny.

The Shepherd will go after the lost sheep "**until He finds it**" (Lu. 15:4, 8). You **outfit** people when you have plans for them to do something or to experience something. You **prepare** people when you want them to ultimately succeed, or ultimately fail, in what lies before them. You make them **correspondingly adequate** when you want them to make it through the ordeal or be suited for the challenge. You "adjust" them when you care about how their "equipment" is fitting. You adapt them for the upcoming environment when you want them to survive – and humanity is "**now continuing in this condition**" (the verb is in the perfect

tense). Our heavenly Father had planned and took all the necessary steps – even to the slaying of the Lamb from the point of the casting-down of the ordered System, universe, or aggregate of humanity (Rev. 13:8). He has everything in control. We can trust Him – in fact, that is the whole point of this human adventure. He is the same, He does not change (Heb. 13:8), so just as Jesus promised to never leave or forsake His followers (Heb. 13:5), God never left or forsook humanity – even though it seemed so, even to Jesus, on the cross – as with us as we bear and carry our crosses (Mat. 16:24).

Now let us consider the dependent

clause that describes God as he is involved in all of this:

**"habitually willing (or: repeatedly intending) to display and demonstrate inherent fervor, natural impulse, propensity and disposition (or: teeming passion; swelling desire; or: anger, wrath and indignation), and also to make known by personal experience His power and ability."**

Whose **inherent fervor, natural impulse, propensity and disposition** is He **habitually willing and intending to display**? His own, or ours? I think that we can say, "Both!" His love that is

demonstrated in **bearing and carrying** us displays His "teeming passion and swelling desire" for us. But this also brings out His "**much long-suffering** (long-breathing; forbearance)." Both His judgments (which teach us righteousness, etc. – Isa. 26:9) and His deliverances reveal His **disposition, His propensity and His natural impulse**. And by experiencing Him in every aspect of our loss and destruction, humanity is also made to **know by personal experience His power and ability**.

At the same time our experience as a part of the first Adam has revealed to us the death and damage which negative

expressions of all these aspects of our personal human emotions can inflict upon ourselves and other people.

**23. [it is] to the end that He could and would (or: may) also at some point make known by intimate experience the wealth of His glory (or: of His manifestation of that which calls forth praise; of the glory which is Him; which pertains to His reputation; from His imagination and opinion) upon containers of mercy (instruments of mercy), which He beforehand prepares into [being] (or: made ready and provides into the midst of) a manifestation of [that] glory**

Again Paul emphasizes that "purpose" is in what God has done and continues doing, as we saw in vs. 22, above. We have experienced both ourselves and Him, **to the end that:**

a) **He could and would also at some point make known by intimate experience the wealth of His glory, or**

b) so that we can gain insight of the riches "of His manifestation of that which calls forth praise, or

c) so we should be intimate with wealth of "the glory which is Him," or

d) so that we would be acquainted with the riches "which pertain to

His reputation," or  
e) we would gain insight into the  
wealth "from His imagination and  
opinion."

Campbell has observed in this passage a dynamic of "preference" (*cf* *ibid* p 776) in what Paul has been relating. Those Jews in Rome who were listening to this letter being read would likely have identified these **containers of mercy** as being Israel, and thus, as being themselves – or other Christians.

24. – **even us, whom He calls** (or: at one point summoned; invites), **not only from out of the Jews, but further, even from out of the nations** (or: out of the ethnic multitudes, also; forth from the

Gentiles, too).

Now he shows the inclusiveness of God's calling and invitation: **from the ethnic multitudes out of the nations** as well as **from out of the Jews**. Here Paul turns to the perceptions of the physical races and cultures. He has returned to the topic and sphere of vs. 3. He is reminding the Roman community that they are composed of both, and that God calls everyone to this new creation of the Spirit. All can now participate in the new covenant. It is no has identification markers of race or of anything pertaining to the realm of flesh. And so now even **the Jews** have to be summoned into what God is presently

doing. Israel was not replaced, but the category that defined the term was changed. Campbell sees this verse as springing a rhetorical trap for his opponents (ibid p 777) which he has been building in the previous passage about it being God's right to do whatever He wants to do. Neither Jews nor Judaizers can object to this – God can save whomever He wants to save, and in any way that He wants to do it. He can also include them in the new covenant apart from their having to observe the Law. It all comes just as did His election of Israel and His call to Abraham – it is all a divine action which God does upon, and for, humans.

**25. And so, as He is saying in Hosea, "The one [that is] not My people, I will be continually (or: one-after-another) calling, 'My people,' and her being one that had not been loved, 'Beloved one;'**

**26. "and it will proceed being in the place where it was declared to them, 'You folks [are] not My people,' there they will continue being called 'sons of [the] Living God.'" [Hos. 2:23; 1:10]**

Paul again reaches back into the story of Israel. The original context was Yahweh's judgment upon Israel and Judah, where they were no longer going to be called God's

people. Then, it would seem, that they would later be restored to being His people once again. What Paul is apparently drawing upon is God's mercy in which He will make folks that were NOT His people to now BE His people, and he ties this in with Hos. 1:10 where it uses the phrase "sons of [the] Living God" as an echo of 8:14, above, and this now includes everyone that was not His people, which now includes all the Gentiles, as well as the Jews. We find Peter, who is writing to the dispersed exiles, tying mercy and being His people together in 1 Pet. 2:10,

**"[you] who [were] once (or: formerly) "not a people," but now [are] "God's people;" [formerly] being the ones having "not been given mercy," yet now [are] "folks being mercied (being given mercy)."**

Campbell views the quotes from Hosea as summing up Paul's arguments from vss.6-24, above (ibid p 782).

**27. Now Isaiah is repeatedly crying out over Israel,**

**"If ever (or: Even if) the number of the sons of Israel may (or: should; would) be as the sand of the sea, [even] the destitute remainder (or: the fully forsaken;**

[even] the minority under the effect of lack; the subjected, left-behind surviving group; the failing part left below) **will continue being delivered** (saved, healed and made whole; rescued);

28. **"for the Lord [= Yahweh] will progressively produce a Word of bringing ends together**

(or: will repeatedly construct a thought of completing combinations; will continue doing an accounting of combining goals together; will continue creating [the] message of finishing things

together; will habitually perform [the] Logos of combined maturities and joined destinies) **and of cutting things together** (of combined or summary cuttings) **upon the land** (or: earth)." [Isa. 10:22-23]

Through quoting this passage Paul introduces the topic of deliverance and salvation for Israel, through the term of what has often been translated "a remnant," and which I have rendered **the destitute remainder**. Some versions (e.g., NIV, NRSV, Wright) add the word "only" in front of this term, but this is not in the Greek text and may lead to

misinterpreting what Paul is saying here. Instead of **the destitute remainder** referring to "a small number," I suggest that it rather signifies those who remained faithful to Yahweh. It is true that this was usually a small number, but number is not the point. My parenthetical expansion offers the renderings: the fully forsaken; [even] the minority under the effect of lack; the left-behind, surviving group; the failing part left below. These descriptions may well describe the poor and the socio-religious outcasts to which Jesus brought the kingdom.

The faithful are the branches of 11:17, below, that were not broken out of the olive tree. They are the ones that are "in

Christ," who are joined to the Vine and who have been given the Holy Spirit. It is "THE remnant that will be saved," as the NASB rightly renders it [emphasis mine]. The masses of the sand of the sea (figuring those who are Israel by bloodline and race – Jews in the physical sense) are those of whom Jesus said,

**"It is necessary and binding for you folks to be born back up again to a higher place (or: for you people to be given birth from above),"**

i.e., into the Jerusalem which is above.  
*cf* Heb. 12:22

Wright thinks that vs. 28 speaks of

judgment upon the earth, and he may be right. But the picture in the Greek is of tying up loose ends, and the **cutting things** could refer to the **pruning** of the Jews (the immature kids that were not full of love and mercy) to which Jesus referred to in Mat. 25:46, "**an eonian pruning**

(a lopping-off which lasts for an undetermined length of time; an age-lasting correction and rehabilitation; a pruning which brings betterment and which has its source and character in the Age; a cutting off during the ages)."

**29. And further, just as Isaiah before declared,**

**"Except the Lord [= Yahweh] of Hosts left a seed down within for us (or: conserved a seed in or by us), we would become as Sodom, and we would be made like as (or: likened to) Gomorrah."** [Isa. 1:9]

The Seed is the Messiah (*cf* Gal. 3:16), which was germinated and resurrected to produce the new plant (or, body) of the next Age. He was the representative Faithful Remnant that brought continuity from the old into the new, transformed existence of heaven (the air, the atmosphere, the sky) being joined to the earth (where the roots remained to **bear**, support and carry the stalk, the branches

and the fruit – 11:18, below). Without the Seed, there would only be desolation.

**30. What, then, shall we continue declaring? That [the] nations** (ethnic multitudes; Gentiles; non-Israelites) – **the ones *not* constantly pursuing** (pressing forward rapidly after) **rightwisedness** (eschatological liberation and covenant inclusion, which is right and fair relationship with equitable dealings in accord to the Way pointed out; a being turned in the right direction on the Path) – **overtook, seized and took-down this rightwisedness as a possession: yet [it is] a rightwising, eschatological act of**

**deliverance** (a “being turned” to equity and justice in the Way; = liberation with covenant membership and participation) **that [is] forth from out of the midst of faithfulness** (or: having its source in [God's] faithfulness/[Christ's] faithful act; or: from loyal trust and confident faith; from having been centered in fidelity)!

Campbell suggests that Paul has put this question, and the following amazed exclamation, in the voice of the interlocutor (ibid p 789). The reason for this is that Paul is addressing this Jewish Christian teacher's complaint against Paul's gospel. At the same time, Paul can fully state the truth of this statement

even though the Judaizers may complain. The nations – the ethnic multitudes of the Gentiles, or non-Israelites – have obtained the Promise, even though they did not know to be seeking it so naturally were ***not constantly pursuing rightwisdom***. Most would not have even been aware that God had a new covenant to which they could belong or in which they could participate. But the ethnic multitudes were, and have continued being, born into this kingdom/covenant in Christ's new creation where there are no race, gender or socio-economic categories. And once the Gentiles were informed of this new arrangement, they began pouring in –

having **overtaken, seized and taking this rightwisedness** into their **possession**, as heirs of the Promise.

Campbell sees an athletic metaphor from the Hellenistic culture in Paul's use of the verb "**pursuing** (pressing forward rapidly after)" in this verse, and in the verb "**precede/outstrip/reach ahead,**" in vs. 31, and then, "**dash against, trip and stumble,**" in vs. 32. He comments,

"So clearly a race of some sort is involved.... Israel, however, is... [in] pursuit of a teaching concerning righteous activity and so toward the law... [with] the discipline and sincerity of this race (see the zeal of 10:2)" (ibid p

790; brackets mine).

We saw a different verb, but the same metaphor, in vs. 16, above. The end of the race is described in 10:4, below.

The **nations** (Gentiles; non-Jews) had not even entered the competition but won the prize. That is what we call "grace." (*cf* Matt. 20:1-16)

The rendering of the final phrase "**forth from out of the midst of faithfulness,**" and the parenthetical expansions, "having its source in [God's] faithfulness/[Christ's] faithful act" and "from having been centered in fidelity" seem to be the best fit with Paul's view of the work of Christ as presented in this letter. It was their lack of fidelity and

trust in God that kept the first generation of emancipated Israelites from entering into God's rest (Heb. 3:19). Only the Son of God could be the Faithful Israelite that could lead humanity into the Promise.

**31. However Israel, habitually pursuing a Law which was a rightwisedness from right activities** (or: pertaining to fair relationships with equitable dealings in accord to the way [which the Law] pointed out [to them]; or: of a the path to eschatological deliverance) **did not precede [the others] into [that] principle or custom** (or: did not outstrip or sooner arrive unto [such] a law or custom) **of**

## **rightwised, eschatological deliverance**

(or: which is comprised of being turned in the right direction)

(or: = did not reach, ahead of other folks, the righted results of what the Torah had promised).

Here, continuing the response begun in vs. 30 (Campbell puts this verse as a dismayed question, in the mouth of the interlocutor), Paul refers to the physical Israel of the old covenant – his brothers, according to the flesh. They had looked with anticipation to the Age of the Messiah (which IS this **rightwisedness** that would be derived from an eschatological deliverance), but as Jesus said to the ranking priests and elders of

the Jews,

**"the tax (or: tribute; toll) collectors (or: tax farmers; businessmen who bought the contract to collect taxes for the government) and the prostitutes are constantly preceding you men into God's reign (or: the kingdom of God; the sovereign activity of God)!"** – Mat. 21:31.

The last phrase follows the MS traditions which include *dikaiousunē* a second time, with the second occurrence of “principle/law/custom.” As Campbell points out (ibid p 789, 1134 n 59) this completes the parallelism between vss. 30 and 31 while keeping the same goal

in both instances: **rightwised,**

**eschatological deliverance**

(*dikaio<sup>u</sup>ne*) which Paul is arguing has come through the faithfulness of Jesus (the Christ event).

**32. Through what cause (or: Why)?**

**Because [the pursuit was] not forth from out of a source of faithfulness**

(or: fidelity, trust, conviction or faith),

**but rather as from out of a source of works (actions). They dash against,**

**trip and stumble on (or: by) “the Stone that caused the Stumbling-effect,”**

[Isa. 8:14; Lu. 2:34; Hos. 14:9; 1 Pet. 2:7-8]

The interlocutor now asks why this is so. Paul replies that it is because they

attempted to bring the kingdom of God and the Age of the Messiah by observing the Law, also implying that they had ignored the **faithfulness** of Jesus to die for them and so they stumbled just shy of the finish line of eschatological deliverance. Jesus said to the religious leaders of Judaism,

**"So He said, 'Tragic will be the fate for you men versed in the Law (Torah lawyers), too, because you are constantly burdening people (humans) [with] cargos (or: loads) [that are] hard to bear (= intolerable burdens), and yet you folks are continuing to not even lightly**

**touch the loads with one of your fingers!" (Lu. 11:46).**

Their religion was full of works and multiplied rules, the “works of the Law” – *cf* 10:5, below, and the quote of Lev. 18:5 – Jesus had caused them to stumble as they ran their “race” (vs. 30, above). The children of Israel who remained in the wilderness with Moses kept the Law during that time, but because of their lack of trust in God to bring eschatological deliverance upon facing the “giants” of Canaan (and here I suggest that God withheld the needed trust from them, in order for them to be a type and an example of the desolation and lack experience by human existence

that is void of trust and dismissive of God's faithfulness) they did not enter into the promised land (a type of the Promise). As a type, Moses (figure of the Law) was not allowed to enter into the Promised Land with the new generation, just as in the fulfillment of that type the Law does not come into the Promise or the new arrangement in Christ. It was Joshua (Hebrew equivalent of Jesus – the savior) that took them into Canaan. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews wrote of the foreshadowing event in Israel's history, which is a type of this situation, in 4:1, 2,

**"With [the] announced promise**

**to enter into His rest.... For you see, we are people having been addressed with goodness.... the Word (or: message; thought; idea; Logos) which they heard did not profit (or: benefit) those folks – [it] not having been mixed and blended together with faith, trust or loyalty in (or: by; for; with) those at that time hearing [it]."**

We are instructed in Gal. 5:4b,

**"... you who are now in Law trying to be rightwised (also = be included in the covenant of eschatological deliverance) and are basing your fairness and**

**relationships on the way it points out – you at once fell from out of the grace and favor!"**

Paul then continues on in Gal. 5:5,  
**"For in spirit** (or: by [the] Breath-effect; **with** [the] Spirit) – **forth from out of FAITH and TRUST** (or: [Christ's] faithfulness) – **we continuously** (or: progressively) **receive by taking away, as with our hands, from out of [the] expectation which belongs to and whose source and reality is the fairness, equity and freedom from guilt in right relationship within the Way pointed out."**

We get a further uncovering of Paul's thoughts here through what he continues explaining in 10:1-3, below.

**33. Just as it has been written,**

**"Look and consider! I am repeatedly placing in Zion a 'Stone of Stumbling,' and a 'Rock of a trap-snare.' And the one habitually believing upon Him (or: It) will not continue being brought to shame, disgrace, or disappointment."**

**[Isa. 28:16]**

Zion was another name for Jerusalem. The Stone of Stumbling is a figure for the Messiah, as is the Rock of a trap-snare. Jesus caused the Jewish

leadership to trip over Him and to stumble aside and not be able to enter into His kingdom. But folks who were enabled by the Word and through the Spirit to habitually believe and trust Him, moved from a state of shame to a place of honor in His kingdom.

Disappointment was replaced with a living expectation. (*cf* Ps. 118:22; Mk. 12:10; 1 Pet. 2:4-8)

In Lu. 2:34 we find Simeon speaking to Joseph and Mary concerning Jesus:

**"Then Simeon spoke good words to (or: blessed) them, and said to Mary (Miriam), His mother, "Look and consider! This One continues lying down into the**

**midst of a fall, and then a standing back up again, of many people within Israel – and into a sign being constantly spoken in opposition to, and being repeatedly contradicted!"**

The **fall** and then **standing back up again** is echoed in Paul's olive branch metaphor in 11:17-24, below. Both speak figuratively of a death and then a resurrection (*cf* 11:15, below).



## Chapter 10

1. **Indeed, brothers** (= family, or, fellow believers), **the good thinking** (pleasure; consuming desire; good will; delightful imagination) **of my heart, and the request** (plea; petition) [**directed**] **toward** (or: face to face with) **God over them** (or: for their sake) [**is; leads**] **unto deliverance** (salvation; health and wholeness; restoration to their original state and condition) [**for them**].

Paul is speaking of the unbelieving Israel, here (the "**them**," in this verse), and specifically the leadership of the Jews in his day. He has returned to the topic of 9:1-4, above. His **request** is, or

leads, **unto deliverance**. There is no verb expressed in between **them** and this prepositional phrase (the preposition is *eis*: unto; into; into the midst; an extended meaning: for). Most translations give the extended meaning, "for." But the central meanings, "unto; into" is primarily a directional preposition where the action of the verb is leading "unto, or on into the midst of" its focus – in this case "[their] **deliverance**" Paul believes that his request is in line with God's will and so will come to pass (as we see him affirm in 11:26, below). This is the **good thinking and pleasure** (or: delightful imagination) of his **heart**. Campbell

rightly observes from this verse that Paul does not consider the unbelieving Jews (those who were at that time not trusting that Jesus is the Messiah) to be in the state of being “saved” – thus are not presently enjoying the life of God’s eschatological deliverance. (*cf* *ibid* p 785).

**2. For I am habitually testifying and giving evidence among them, because they continue possessing a zeal from God** (or: For you see, I can repeatedly bear witness to and for them that they constantly hold God's zeal and they continuously have a boiling jealousy and hot aspiration concerning God), **but however, not down from** (or: on the

level of and in accordance with) **full and accurate experiential knowledge, recognition or insight** (*epi-gn<sub>o</sub>sis*).

The first rendering (bold) reads the dative plural **them** with the locative (location) function: **among them**. The Jews **continue possessing a zeal from God**, but it is **not down from full and accurate experiential knowledge** of God's purposes for the Age of the Messiah. Yet Paul is habitually **testifying and giving evidence** by proclaiming the message of God's goodness, ease and well-being that applies to all humanity. However, their zeal is not "on the level of **recognition**" that came with the giving of the Holy

Spirit. Part of the recognition was the inclusion of the Gentiles in the covenant, without their having to adopt all the Jewish identity markers and without anyone having to observe the Torah. Reading **them** as a relational dative, and **God** as a genitive of possession and then as a genitive of association, rather than as an ablative (**from**), we have the second rendering:

"For you see, I can repeatedly bear witness to and for them that they constantly hold God's zeal and they continuously have a boiling jealously and hot aspiration concerning God, but not in accordance with [the] 'added'

(note: one application of the preposition *epi*-) **insight.**"

The central insight was that Jesus was the Messiah and had taken the position in God's economy as being Lord of all. They were unaware that the old age had passed away and that the new age, which put humanity into a new creation (where there was neither Jew or Gentile) with a new arrangement between God and humanity which the Messiah had established by God raising Him from the dead. They were ignorant of all this, and so they fought the followers of Jesus.

**3. For they, being continuously ignorant of God's rightwising act of**

**deliverance** (or: habitually failing to recognize the rightwiseness and fairness of the Way pointed out, which is God, and the right relationships from God in His covenant justice of eschatological liberation) **and constantly seeking to establish** (to set and make to stand) **their own way pointed out with a view to eschatological deliverance** (or: plan of right cultic activity and relational dealings [that are informed by the Law]), **were not placed under to be humbly and supportively aligned to God's rightwising act of deliverance in the eschatological liberation that came from God** (or: subjected to God's

just path and Way of fairness, or arranged under the rightwisdom from God [= brought into God's covenant participation in resurrection life]), So continuing in being ignorant of **God's rightwising act of deliverance** – i.e., of Christ and of God placing all of humanity into Christ to take us all to His grave and then resurrect us with Him (God's eschatological liberation of humanity) – they continued **constantly seeking to establish their own way** (i.e., the Torah which belonged only to them, and not to the rest of the world; it was the way that established them as a nation). They continued trying to establish their covenant, along with the

plan of "right relationships" and the "right cultic activity" which it had established, as informed by the Law. Yes, they were trying to be "righteous," but personal righteousness was not the point. They thought corporately, but each group (Pharisees, Essenes, Sadducees, or possibly other sects) was trying to establish its own understanding of proper compliance to the Torah. They were "habitually failing to recognize the rightwisdom and fairness of the Way pointed out, which is God, and the right relationships from God in His covenant justice of eschatological liberation" (all of which was in their crucified and risen Messiah). This parenthetical rendering

of the first clause of this verse renders the noun “God” first in apposition (which is God), and then as an ablative (from God). Reading *dikaio<sup>sune</sup>* as a **rightwising act of deliverance** (or, as “eschatological liberation”) fits well with both of these readings of “God” in this phrase. The act of deliverance was “God in action.” The liberation came from God, not from human action – or even from human response. When Peter was released from the jail/prison (Acts 12:4-10), the liberation was “happening by means of the agent” (vs. 9) – just as humanity’s liberation was “God’s rightwising ACT of deliverance.” Thus, as a result, these particular Jews

(or, branches of Israel – 9:31, above; 11:17, below – in Paul’s arguments) **were not placed under to be humbly aligned to and supportive of God's eschatological act of deliverance** (the Christ event); they were not subjected to God's just path and Way of fairness, nor were they arranged under the rightwisdom from God. Note the “divine passive” in this verb: God did not act upon them (His choice) as He did with those into whom He chose to impart the Word of trust/faith/belief/fidelity. They were NOT brought into God's new covenant participation – at that time. For God's purposes (the engrafting of the Gentiles

into their olive tree – ch. 11, below) "their minds were blinded" (2 Cor. 3:14) and so they didn't understand that the Messiah would end the Law by being its fulfillment, and then would include both Jews and Gentiles, together, into Himself.

Campbell (ibid p 785) rightly points out that the *dikaio<sup>u</sup>nē theou* (**God's rightwising, eschatological act of deliverance**) referred to twice in this verse is identical to his expression *dikaio<sup>u</sup>nē ek piste<sup>o</sup>s* (**a rightwising, eschatological act of deliverance from [Christ's] faithfulness**) in 9:30, above.

4. **for you see, Christ [is] an end of Law** (or: for Christ [is] Law's goal and

destiny; for [the] Anointing [is]  
termination from [the] Law; for Christ  
[was the] final act of [the] Law)  
**[leading] into the Way pointed out in  
fair and equitable dealings, and  
rightwised [covenant] relationships of  
justice in eschatological liberation, to,  
for and in everyone habitually trusting  
and believing**

(or: because Christ [entering] into  
the pointed-out Way – in everyone  
normally exercising faith with  
conviction, and with each person  
remaining loyal – [is; brings]  
Law's climax).

The phrase, "**an end of Law,**" can also  
be rendered, "Law's goal and destiny."

The first rendering means that Christ ended the Law; the second means that the Law pointed to Christ and that Christ was its goal and destiny. Having reached its goal, the Anointing on Jesus – and which was extended to His body via the Holy Spirit's coming – brought the termination **of** the Law, and in both Jesus and His covenant communities, it meant "termination **from** the Law." Here an eschatological hermeneutic of the Christ event gives us a clear picture of Paul's meaning in this verse (*cf* Kirk's discussion, *ibid* p 210-213).

Another meaning of **end** (*telos*) is "the final act." The crucifixion of the Messiah was the final act of the Law,

and so Jesus took the Law to the grave with Him. This happened at the conjunction of the old age and the new age (Heb. 9:26), so in ending the old age this termination of the Law led **into** the new age which Paul here describes as **the Way (Christ) pointed out in fair and equitable dealings, and righwised covenant relationship of justice in eschatological liberation.** We find Paul's reasoning behind this statement in Gal. 4 where the Law was a child-conductor until the Messiah came and brought all of humanity to the goal within Himself (the Second Humanity; the last Adam). This meant inclusion in the Christ; inclusion in the new creation;

participation in the new covenant (or: arrangement) – all of which was attained via the liberation that came in the resurrected Christ. This **end** came with the maturity that Paul calls "being placed as a son" (8:15, above; Gal. 4:1-7), and its purpose had been to lead humanity – by being a light unto the ethnic multitudes – until the next stage of God's plan arrived: the Age of the Messiah, which would liberate humanity and bring folks **INTO the Way pointed out**. Campbell sees a melding of these meanings by reading this eschatological statement of vs. 4 in terms of Paul's oft-used metaphors of athletic competition (e.g., 9:16, 30-32, above) and the

racecourse (*cf* 1 Cor. 9:24; Phil. 3:2-16; Col.2:1; 1 Thes. 2:2; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7; Heb. 12:1):

"... the real competition is already finished. If the Christ event is the end of the race for the law, in the sense almost of being the finish line, then the key point is that the race is over. Any subsequent racing on the part of the Jews is therefore misdirected..."

(*ibid* p 791).

The final prepositional phrase is in the dative case, so we have the prepositions which I have conflated to read: **to, for and in everyone habitually trusting and believing**. Now folks can only trust

or believe when **the effect of the gush from The Faith** (vs. 8, below) has been implanted in them, and vs. 17, below, instructs us that,

**"the faith** (or: the trust; confidence; loyalty) [**comes or arises**] **from out of the midst of, or from within, hearing, yet the hearing [comes] through a gush-effect of Christ, even through the result of a flow which is Christ** (or: through Christ's utterance; through something spoken concerning Christ; or: by means of a declaration which is anointed, or from Christ; through a word uttered which is Christ)."

Through the proclamation of the Word, Christ and faith are implanted into a person's spirit, heart and mind, and then they believe because of the faith/trust/Christ/faithfulness that has been given to them through the favor of His grace. Then such folks, having been raised from their state of inner death and simultaneously been given the Life of Christ, begin **habitually trusting and believing**.

The optional rendering offered in the parentheses gives us another view:

"because Christ [entering] into the pointed-out Way – in everyone normally exercising faith with conviction, and with each person

remaining loyal – [is; brings]

Law's climax."

This treatment of the present participle (believing; exercising faith; remaining loyal; trusting) emphasizes the fact that Paul uses the active voice here: the object of the preposition, **everyone**, is doing the action of **believing**, etc. The picture that Paul paints here is a living existence of participation within this new arrangement, which Paul has emphasized ever since chapter 4, above, is one of faith, trust, belief, fidelity, etc., and is **within your mouth and within your heart** (vs. 8, below), and which is further confirmed by his quote of Lev. 18:5 in the next verse.

**5. For Moses is writing [about] the way pointed out (the equitable dealings, right relationship and cultic observance) [which is] out of the Law [= Torah; some MSS read: from the midst of law], that,**

**"The person (human) doing (performing) the same things (or: these very things) will be constantly living (passing his existence; exercising functions of life) within them (or: in union with them [other MSS: it] he shall continue living and will be possessed of vitality)." [Lev. 18:5]**

This is the third of four times that Paul

mentions Moses (who is always associated with the Law, or the Torah) in this letter, drawing upon this fact given in Lev. 18, which was for those who were under the Law. As we noted in the comments on vs. 4, being in covenant brought the expectation that these folks were to live out the characteristics and arrangements of that covenant. Likewise, the new creation is called a Way, or a Path, because those **living within** it are supposed to "walk it." It is a life to be lived – but now, in the Spirit, not in the Letter (above: 2:27, 29; 7:6).

Stern notes that, "Verses 3, 4 and 5 each start with the word '**for**'; thus there is a set of nested explanations – vs. 3

explains vs. 2, vs. 4 explains vs. 3, and vss. 5-10 explain vs. 4" (ibid p 395). But another way of interpreting this verse and the Lev. quote is that Paul is having his interlocutor interject this interpretation of what Moses said. Read this way, the Judaizer would be giving evidence from the Torah that it is necessary for Christians to observe the Law. Paul would then counter with the quote from Deut., in vss. 6-8, below, then adding the witness of Isa. in vs. 11. Paul cited quotes from the Law in his arguments to Galatia in 3:10 and 5:3-4 of that letter.

**6. Yet the rightwised act of eschatological deliverance (the**

condition of being liberated and turned in the right direction in the Way pointed out; the fairness and equity of [God's] justice and right relationship; or: = covenant inclusion/participation) **[coming] from out of the midst of faithfulness** (or: trusting fidelity; [Christ's] confident loyalty) **is constantly saying thus** (is habitually speaking in this manner):

**"You should not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend (climb back up) into the Heaven (or: the sky; or: the atmosphere)?"**

**– that is, to lead, convey, carry or bring Christ [= the Messiah] down;** Paul's point in making this contrast is

that no one needs to have spiritual experiences or reach some great height of perfect performance of the Law in order to cause God (figured here by "heaven") to send the Messiah. No, the Messiah was given as a favor, in grace, from God's love of humanity (John 3:16); it is not a matter of human effort or performance.

It had come to be a common belief among some of the Jewish sects that if the Law was perfectly kept – if their performance caused Israel to ascend into God's presence – that God would then send the Messiah. It was for this reason that the Pharisees were so frustrated by those who were lax in observing the

Law (e.g., the sinners/outcasts; the ritually unclean; the folks who had dealings with the Gentiles or ate with them or visited them, etc.), and thus, with Jesus for associating with them and for allowing His disciples to break their purity codes, for their laxness or failures could delay the Age of the Messiah.

This and the following two verses are taken from Deut. 30. There the subject was the Law (Yahweh's instructions and statutes in the Torah) and the Word of God. Moses tells them that "it is neither in the heavens"... "Nor is it across the sea..." Here Paul uses these verses to refer to Christ (which John 1 tells us is the Word made flesh), and just as the

Word was "near at hand," so is Christ. We do not need to **ascend into the Heavens**, as Deut. 30:14 says, "the Word is exceedingly near you." We do not need to bring Christ down from heaven! Jesus has already come down from heaven (John 6:38; *cf* Phil. 2:6-8) so that,

**"The person progressively coming toward (or: to; or: face to face with) Me may by no means at any point hunger (or: would under no circumstances be hungry), and the one constantly trusting (or: habitually believing) into Me will by no means continue thirsting (under no**

circumstances be repeatedly  
thirsty) **at any time.**" (John 6:35)

He was the True Manna from heaven,  
and the Rock that gave them "spiritual"  
water (1 Cor. 10:4).

7. **Or,**

**"Who will descend (climb  
down) into the Deep (the  
Abyss)?"**

**– that is, to lead, convey, carry or  
bring Christ back up again from out of  
the midst of dead ones.**

In Deut., this passage speaks of going  
"across the sea," which was often  
referred to as **the Deep** (e.g., Gen. 1:2,  
LXX). But Paul has reinterpreted the  
passage to be referring to Jesus' death

(among the **dead ones**) and resurrection (**bring Christ back up again**).

Campbell (ibid p 797) points us to the work of M. Jack Suggs and Elizabeth Johnson who noted that Jewish scholars had applied these verses from Deut. to wisdom and insight, in Baruch 3:29-30,

“Who has gone up into the sky and taken her and brought her down from the clouds?

Who has crossed over the sea and found her...?” (N.E.T.S.)

We read in Deut. 33:13,

"And to Joseph he said, 'His land is of the blessing of the Lord of the seasons of sky and dew, and from springs of the Deep (Abyss)

below.' " (LXX)

In Ps. 104 we see some interesting descriptions that broaden our understanding of how the Jews used this word "Abyss,"

"Wrapping Yourself with light as a garment ....Who covers His chambers with waters; Who makes the clouds His chariot ....The Deep (Abyss), as a garment, is His covering..." (vss. 2, 3, 6; LXX).

Ps. 106:9, "...so He led them through the Deep (Abyss) as through the wilderness." (LXX)

Ps. 107:23-26,

"They that go down to the sea ....

these have seen the works of the Lord, and HIS WONDERS IN THE DEEP (Abyss)....They go up to the heavens, and go down to the Deeps; their soul melts because of troubles." (LXX)

So the “Abyss” might not be a “bad” place to go (*cf* Rev. 9:1, 2, 11 – its figurative use there may need fresh interpretation).

**8. But rather, what is He (or: it) saying?**

**"The result of the flow (the gush-effect; or: the saying; the declaration; that which is spoken; the speech) is (or: exists) near you – within your mouth and**

**within your heart!" [Deut. 30:11-14]**

**– that is, the effect of the gush from  
The Faithfulness**

(or: the result of the Flow which is the saying that pertains to the conviction of trust; the effect of the flux and movement of that Faith; or: that which is spoken which is trust; or: he speech and declaration which comes from [Christ's] Fidelity) **which we are**

**habitually announcing publicly**  
(proclaiming extensively),

**9. namely that whenever you can  
speak the same gush-effect (or:  
because if you would agree with the**

result of the Flow) **within your mouth,**  
**that "Jesus Christ [is] Lord,"**

(or: because if at any time you should confess in your mouth the declaration that Jesus [is] Lord; [with other MSS: because if ever you should suddenly avow in your own mouth, "Lord Jesus!"]) **and then can trust, in union with your heart,** (or: could believe and

have confidence within the core of your being) **that God raised** (or: because God aroused and awakened) **Him forth from out of the midst of dead folks,** **you will proceed being healed and made whole** (or: will keep on being

delivered, kept safe, rescued, saved, and will progressively be restored to your original state and condition).

Paul quotes this verse from Deut. 30 to ground his argument that the Messiah has come, the Word of God has been incarnated, and now with the message of the Christ being proclaimed, **the result of the flow (the gush-effect) of the Spirit into the folks that have been created as His body has created the effect of the gush from The Faithfulness (of Jesus, in dying for us).** The Word which is within "that which was spoken" is the Incorruptible Seed of God which has given us birth (1 Pet. 1:23) from having been implanted in the

womb of our hearts and minds. This declaration – that was a gush of living water from the person speaking the Word to us – created in us "the result of the Flow which is the saying that pertains to the conviction of trust." The message brought "the effect of the flux and movement of that Faith." "That which was spoken" was itself trust, for "the speech and declaration" came from Christ's "Fidelity" and had been implanted in the person bringing the message of the Christ. And so it was in his or her mouth as he or she spoke. Because of this flow of events, The Word (which contains **the Faith/Trust**) is **within your mouth and within your**

**heart!** Christ is now within you! The Spirit is now within you, for Jesus said, in John 6:63,

**"The declarations** (gush-effects; spoken words; sayings; results of the Flow) **which I Myself have spoken to you folks are** (or: continue to be) **Spirit** (or: spirit; Breath-effect; attitude) **and they are** (or: continue being) **Life."**

Therefore, **whenever [we] can speak the same gush-effect** (or: because if you would agree with the result of the Flow) **in [our] mouth, that "Jesus Christ [is] Lord"** (or: you would confess in your mouth the declaration that Jesus [is] Lord), **and then can**

**trust, in union with [our] heart, (or: could believe and have confidence within the core of your being) that God raised Him forth from out of the midst of dead folks, [we] will proceed being healed and made whole (or: will keep on being delivered, kept safe, rescued, saved, and will progressively be restored to your original state and condition)! The effect of God's love and life having been "poured out in a gush and shed forth so that it now floods within our hearts" (5:5, above) is that this love, life, faith, trust, belief, joy, goodness, etc., is a flow of the Spirit of God coming from out of our hearts and through our mouths. Because**

this love is within our hearts, we trust God, for within our hearts we experience the evidence of His having raised Jesus from the dead. We have become “one spirit” with God from having been “joined to the Lord” (1 Cor. 6:17) in His death and burial. It was an eschatological joining that brought deliverance that is existentially experienced in our present lives. This experiential event is a life of progressive salvation (stressing the durative quality of the future tense used in the last clause of vs. 10) involving continuous and progressive transformation (12:2b, below). And a person is able to do this because

the Word (Christ) has been implanted so as to conceive and give birth to His Son in us, by His Spirit – and therefore,

**"You see, from out of the midst of the effect of the excess from the heart's surrounding abundance, the mouth is continually speaking"** (Mat. 12:34).

Because Christ has been put into the heart, from this "surrounding abundance" of Christ that is within the heart, we can **speak the same saying** as that which has been imparted to us, and we can agree that in fact **Jesus Christ [is] Lord**. The verb here is *homo-* (the same; like) and *logeō* (to speak; to say). From "to

“speak like” we get the word “confess.” It can mean to confess that something is true, or to simply agree. “To say the same” means to speak the same thing. When we speak like Christ, we will see His deliverance – within ourselves, and within others. When we speak like Christ, our words confess that He is in us, because the words that we speak will be Spirit (or: spirit) and Life (or: life) – on all levels of our existence. Speaking in a manner that reflects “Jesus being the Lord” of our life brings healing and wholeness to us. It brings us to our original state and condition of being His image-bearer and transports us into His presence, as being in a Garden with

Him. "This word of faith is something utterly different from the long and exacting discipline of 'doing' the law" (Harvey, *ibid* p 528).

Note the connections of **Jesus Christ** being **Lord**, His **resurrection**, and the progressive **salvation and deliverance**. (*cf* Kirk, *ibid* p 177)

We also should not miss Paul's associations of the term "Lord" used here as an identifier of Jesus, the Messiah, with his use of it in vs. 12 where the term is in direct association with the OT quote in vs. 13 where "Lord" is the LXX rendering of "Yahweh" in the Hebrew text. We see the same in vs. 16, and the "I" in vss. 19,

20 and 21 is Yahweh speaking.

The statements by Jesus about His "acknowledging/confessing or denying" before and in the presence of His Father (Mat. 10:32-33) have traditionally been assumed to be speaking of a situation after Jesus' resurrection. But in both vss. 34 and 35 he says, "**I come** (or: came)," and also, in vs. 34, "**I do** (or: did) **not come**." The context of the entire chapter was referring to the time of His earthly ministry, then and there, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. The Father was within Him right then and there (*cf* John 17:21, 23). The conversation between Jesus and the Father was ongoing. This was not speaking about a post-mortem judgment.

Note the durative action in both the present and future tenses in this Matthew text:

**32. "Everyone, then, that will keep on acknowledging union with Me and speaking in accord with Me in front of (before and in the presence of) humans (mankind), I, Myself, also will continue to acknowledge union with him and will keep on speaking of him in the same way (saying the same thing of him) in front of (before and in the presence of) My Father – the One within and in union with the heavens (or: in the midst of the**

atmospheres).

**33. "Yet, whoever may refuse [to acknowledge] Me, or can disown and deny Me, in front of humans (mankind), I, Myself, also will continue refusing [to acknowledge] him, and will keep on disowning and denying him, in front of My Father – the One within and in union with the heavens (or: in the midst of the atmospheres).**

This describes the simultaneous actions of our Lord in ongoing existential relations to people as they are living their lives here and now. It helps our understanding if we think of heaven as

the atmosphere of spirit that surrounds us. In God we live and are moved and exist (Acts 17:28).

Furthermore, in his first letter to Thessalonica, Paul affirmed to those folks that when they had first heard the preaching of the gospel,

**“you welcomingly accepted not a word of or from people (or: a human message), but rather, according as it really and truly is, a word of God (God's message; an idea from God; a thought which is God), Which (or: Who) also (or: even) is continuously in-working (being active; operating; energizing)**

**within and among you folks...”**

(1 Thes. 2:13b).

10. **You see, in** (or: by; with) **[the] heart** (= core of your being) **it is progressively believed and trusted** (or: a person is repeatedly made loyal and given confidence) **[leading] into a rightwised, eschatological deliverance** (or: unto being turned in the right direction – with equitable dealings and right relationships – from having been placed within the Way pointed out, which includes covenant inclusion and participation), **yet by** (or: in; with) **[the] mouth the same thing is being repeatedly said** (or: it is agreed and habitually confessed and professed)

**[leading] into the midst of health and wholeness** (a rescue; salvation; deliverance into safety).

This verse contains the rhetorical devices of restatement and summation: Paul tells us straightforwardly what he has just said, minus the OT quotes. The **heart** is the place, the means and the member of our being **in, by and with** which we **progressively believe and trust**. But notice the voice of the verb: it is not active, but passive – **it is progressively believed and trusted**. Or, as the alternate rendering offers: "a person is made loyal and given confidence."

Once it has been caused to believe and

trust, then the second member of the body can enter into the transaction: the **mouth can repeatedly say the same thing** as that which was spoken into the heart. This living cooperation between the Spirit (within the midst of our being) and our mouth will continue leading us **into the midst of [situations or areas of] deliverance** and wholeness.

Paul put it this way in 1 Cor. 2:

10. **Yet** [other MSS: For] **God unveils [them] in us** (reveals [them] to us; uncovers [them] for us; discloses [these] among us) **through the spirit** (or: the Spirit; the Breath-effect), **for you see, the spirit** (or: the Spirit; the

Breath-effect; the Attitude)  
**constantly and progressively  
searches, examines and  
investigates all mankind, and all  
things – even the depths of God!**

**11. For who, of humanity (from  
mankind), has seen so as to know  
the things of the human (or: the  
[matters] pertaining to a person),  
except the spirit of the human  
(or: the person's spirit) – the one  
within the midst of him? So, too,  
no one (or: not one)  
experientially or intimately  
knows (or: came to know or have  
insight and exercise "*gnosis*"  
regarding) the things of God**

(God's matters), **except the Spirit of God** (or: God's spirit; the Breath-effect which is God).

**12. Now we did not receive** (or: do not accept or take to ourselves; do not take control of or grasp hold of) **the spirit of the System** (the world's spirit and atmosphere; the attitude of the secular or religious realm), **but to the contrary, that spirit** (or: Spirit; Breath-effect; attitude) **[which is] from out of the midst of God – to the end that we can see and know the things being freely and joyously given to and for us in grace** (or: being

graciously bestowed, and favorably given in us) **by God...**

**15. Yet the spiritual person** (one dominated by and focused on spirit or the realm of the Spirit, and characterized by the qualities of spirit: the Wind which continuously moves across the land; or: the pneumatic person) **is, on the one hand, continuously sifting and re-evaluating** (habitually separating and deciding from above on; progressively holding things up for close examination of) **all things and all humanity, yet, on the other hand, he is being sifted**

**and held up for close examination or decision by no one.**

**16. For,**

**"Who intimately knows (or: experientially knew) [the] Lord's [= Yahweh's] mind? Who will proceed to co-habit with (mount, as male with female; come together so as to unite with and be knit with) Him?"**

[Isa. 40:13, LXX; note: for **mind** the Heb. text has Spirit]

**Yet we, ourselves, are continuously holding (or:**

progressively having) **Christ's mind** (a mind which is Anointed, and which is Christ)!

Thus we observe that our “believing, trusting and being loyal” is the work of the Spirit of God both upon and within us. Prior to the coming of the Spirit into us, we have “**the thinking and disposition of the flesh**” which is what brought us into “**death,**” and this mindset and disposition brings “**enmity, alienation and discord [streaming] into God** (and hostility with a view to God), **for it continues not being humbly aligned to the principle and law which is God, for neither is it able nor does it have power**” to do so, and those

**“existing in the flesh have no power and are not able at any point to please God.”** (Rom. 8:6-8). A human who has not yet been existentially born into the life of the new arrangement and new covenant cannot simply decide to believe the gospel or have faith. In fact, **“no one is able (normally has power) to say, “Jesus [is] Lord (or: Lord Jesus)!” except within and in union with [the] Holy Spirit”** (1 Cor. 12:3).

So what we say, confess or profess is the work of God’s Spirit. Or, as Campbell puts it, “Faith, in a Christian, stems from participation in the faithful one.... *It is a marker of divine*

*involvement, not the fulfillment of a contractual condition”* (ibid. p 820; emphasis his).

**11. For the Scripture is saying,**

**"Everyone habitually believing (putting trust) upon Him will not continue being disgraced, put to shame, humiliated or be disappointed." [Isa. 28:16]**

Mankind's future is not its past. The deliverance and rescue puts an end to disgrace and shame. The healing and making whole that attend salvation stop the humiliation and disappointment. Being empowered to put our trust **upon Him** covers the shame of Adam's nakedness, but keep in mind what we

discussed, above, about how belief, faith and trust get into the mind and heart. This process is laid out in vss. 14, 15 and 17, below. We should also note that in this prophecy Isaiah points folks to a life of belief, trust and faith: not to “works of the Law.”

"Paul's addition of *pas* [Everyone] to the beginning of the Isaiah citation creates a precise verbal parallel with 'all who believe' (*panti tō pisteuonti*) in 1:16 and 10:4.... Isaiah has been transformed by Paul's gospel into a witness of the resurrection-faith that Paul is preaching" (Kirk, *ibid* p 176; brackets mine).

**12. You see, there is no distinction or separation made by putting asunder in order to define or distinguish between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord (Owner; Master) of everyone (or: for the same One [being] Lord of all) is continuously being enriching unto**

(or: is constantly abundantly furnishing [Himself] into; or, reading ploutwn as a gen. pl.

noun: You see this very Owner of all treasures [is proceeding] into the midst of) **all the**

**folks habitually, in and for themselves, calling upon (or: summoning) Him for help and assistance.**

Here Paul grounds his leveling message

for the local Roman community, putting all its members on equal footing, while again affirming the inclusiveness of **Everyone** (or **All**) into one redefined humanity in which **there is no distinction** of cultures or people groups: this is a new creation. There is no **separation made by putting asunder in order to define or distinguish**: there are no more categories of "in" or "out," of "holy" or "profane," of "clean" or "unclean," of "God's people" or "not God's people," for,

"Lo! As for all persons, Mine they are!" (Ezk. 18:4; Rotherham)

"Behold, all souls, they are Mine!" (CVOT). "Because all the

souls (= everyone) are Mine...

Mine they are..." (LXX, JM)

And, that context affirms, God will judge those who do not live in accord with the Way that He points out to them. Nonetheless, ALL belong to Him, and He "is constantly abundantly-furnishing [Himself] into **all the folks habitually calling upon Him.**" Many who do not know Him still call upon Him in their times of need.

**"He is repeatedly making His sun to rise back up again upon bad (evil; wicked; worthless) folks as well as [upon] good (virtuous) folks, and He is habitually sending rain upon fair**

**and equitable people** (those in right relationship; those within the Way pointed out; just ones; rightwised ones) **as well as [upon] unfair and inequitable people** (those not in right relationship; those not in the Way pointed out; unjust folks)" – Mat. 5:45.

"He [i.e., the Messiah] shall descend like rain on the grassland, like showers drenching the earth. Righteousness shall bud in His Day, and abundant peace until the moon is no more" (Ps. 72:6-7; CVOT).

It is to Ann Nyland (*The Source New*

*Testament*, Smith and Stirling

Publishing, 2004, p 293, notes 2-4) that I owe the additional idea of also considering *ploutwn* as a plural noun as well as a present participle. This reading informs my second parenthetical rendering, “You see this very Owner of all treasures [is proceeding] into the midst of,” which aligns well with Paul’s gospel of Christ in us, the expectation of a manifestation that calls for the praise (Col. 1:27).

The participle in the final clause is in the middle voice, thus my rendering: **in and for themselves**. Here again I concur with Nyland that this voice indicates a call or summons for personal

assistance or help. (*cf* 1 Cor. 4:8; 2 Cor. 8:9; Prov. 2:2-4; 3:13-16; 8:18-19, 21))

**13. For thus it follows,**

**"Everyone – whoever may at some point call upon the Name of the Lord [= Yahweh] – will proceed being healed and made whole (delivered; kept safe; rescued; saved)!" [Joel 2:32]**

There is no time limit and no limit as to sphere of existence placed upon this proclamation: **Everyone... will proceed being delivered, healed and made whole**, as each one, in his or her own class (1 Cor. 15:23), is made alive (1 Cor. 15:22) to **call upon the Name of**

## **the Lord.**

Campbell (ibid p 803) points out that **disgrace, shame, humiliation and disappointment**, mentioned in the in the Isa. 28 quote, above, is also a topic of the immediate context of Joel 2:32. In Joel 2:26-27 it is stated that Israel,

“... shall continue eating and being satisfied and will keep on praising the LORD your God Who did (performed; produced) wonders and marvelous things with you. And thus My people will in no way continue being disgraced, shamed, humiliated or disappointed – on into the Age.  
“Then you will fully realize and

continue accurately and experientially knowing that I, Myself, am and continue existing within the midst of Israel – even I, Myself, [the] LORD (= Yahweh), your God – and there is none in addition (or: exists not yet another one), except Me! And so, My people will in no way continue being disgraced, shamed, humiliated or disappointed.”  
(LXX, JM)

Following this, in Joel 2, are the verses that Peter proclaimed were fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16-21), which end with vs. 32 that Paul has quoted here. The wonders and the

marvelous things which Yahweh did in Israel's midst was the crucifixion of her Messiah and the subsequent resurrection of Jesus which inaugurated the new Age and the new arrangement with Christ enthroned in the kingdom of God – right in their midst. Yahweh is seated on the figurative Mt. Zion (Heb. 12:22-24), and Christ reigns from the new Jerusalem. We see this figuratively pictured in Rev. 21-22. God has come in person to both Israel and the ethnic multitudes of humanity (which are now one “new humanity” – Eph. 2:15; 2 Cor. 5:19).

**14. How, then, can** (may; should; would) **they at some point call unto** (= invoke) **One Whom** (or: that which)

**they do not trust or believe** (or: did not have faith in)? **And how can** (may; should; would) **they believe where they do not hear** (or: trust in Whom they did not hear)? **And how can they at any point hear apart from a person continually making public proclamation** (habitually publishing and extensively heralding)?

Following Campbell's reading (ibid p 804-806), here we see the interlocutor interjecting a series of complaints about Paul's reference to calling on God, in vs. 13. If the Jews did not trust or believe that Jesus is the Messiah, how should they be expected to call unto Him? And what about the Jews of the

Diaspora who have never even heard of Jesus? There has to be **public proclamation** and extensive heralding in order for them to hear that the Messiah has come, and what God has done through Him. This requires human participation, under normal circumstances. Even Paul himself had the risen Man, Jesus, proclaim the Truth to him when he was on the road to Damascus. It indeed calls for personal interaction, and the awakened response of **calling upon the Name**; it suggests individual relationship between the caller and the One called-upon.

**15. Yet how can they publicly proclaim unless they may be sent forth as**

**representatives with a mission** (or: as emissaries)? **Just as it has been and stands written,**

**"How timely and seasonable [are] the feet of the folks continually bringing and announcing goodness** (or: the good news of ease and well-being): **the good and excellent things!"** [Isa. 52:7]

Here Paul has his interlocutor ask one more question, and then Paul gives his first response in this quote from Isa. 52. **The folks continually bringing and announcing [God's] goodness, and excellent things,** are on the scene – their presence (their feet) can be

observed and this is both **timely and seasonable**. Paul also substantiates his own mission as well as the mission of the entire body of Christ. God sends His representatives both near and far, and He does so today through many means. Paul sent the Word to people even after he was later imprisoned. The reference to **the feet** in the quote from Isaiah speaks both to the fact that folks traveled to make the **announcement**, but also to the life (or, walk) of those **sent forth**. And our Father sends them out at the right **time** and in the right **season**. And what they **proclaim** is not fear or warnings about bad things, but to the contrary, the message is about God's

**goodness, and involves the good and excellent things.**

*Cf* Isa. 52 and 53 for the contexts of the quotes in vs. 15 and 16, here.

**16. But, to the contrary, everyone did not put the ear under hearing obedience** (or: However, not all listen in obedience) **to the good news** (or: message of goodness, ease and well-being). **For Isaiah is saying,**

**"O Lord [= O Yahweh], who believes** (which one adhered and trusted) **in our hearing** (or: by our hearing; in the thing heard from us)?" [Isa. 53:1]

This Jewish Christian teacher points out that the Jewish leadership did not listen

in obedience when Jesus announced that the kingdom of God had come (it was so near that they could touch it; it was available to them). Neither did they hear what the disciples had heard and continued reporting – that Jesus is the Messiah and that He is now both Lord and King. The majority of the Jews followed their teachers. We see in 2 Cor. 3:14-16 that the **good news** was not caused to enter into their hearts so that they would believe, for it was not their time or season:

**14. But further, the results of their mental conceptions, intellectual workings and thought processes were**

**petrified** (made to be a stony concretion; were hardened and made callous [note: the word became a medical term for being covered with thick skin]), **for until this very day the same head-covering (veil) continues remaining** (dwelling; abiding) **upon the reading of the old covenant** (arrangement; thorough placement) – **it** [i.e., the reading of the old, or the old covenant itself] **continues not being uncovered or unveiled – because it** [i.e., the old covenant and arrangement] **continues being progressively and fully**

**unemployed and brought down to doing no work and being made useless, ineffective and nullified within Christ** (or: = the old arrangement and covenant is nullified in union with [the] Anointing, and in the midst of Christ).

**15. Still furthermore, until today, whenever Moses should be repeatedly read [e.g., in the synagogue], a head-covering (veil) continues lying upon their heart** (= the innermost being of the group).

**16. Yet whenever the time should be reached when it [= the**

heart] **would** (or: can; may; should; or: shall at some point) **twist and turn upon, so as to face toward, [the] Lord [= Christ],**

**"the head-covering (veil) is by habit progressively taken from around [it]."**

[note: a quote of Ex. 34:34 LXX, where Moses would enter in to speak with Yahweh; the same act was performed by the husband, on the bride, after the wedding ceremony]

So Paul writes to Corinth that what Isa. 53 had foretold had come to pass.

17. **Consequently, the faith** (or: the

trust; confidence; loyalty) [**comes or arises**] **from out of the midst of, or from within, hearing, yet the hearing [comes] through a gush-effect of Christ, even through the result of a flow which is Christ** (or: through Christ's utterance; through something spoken concerning Christ; or: by means of a declaration which is anointed, or from Christ; through a word uttered which is Christ; [other MSS: God's speech]).

So here Paul responds to the interlocutor, giving the sequence laid out. First there is **a flow (a gush-effect that is expressed in words of a declaration) which is Christ**. Here I

rendered the genitive case in an appositional function. This utterance is **from Christ**, or, is "anointed" by the Spirit, and it enters into a person's **hearing**. And **from out of the mist of – and from within – that hearing** comes or arises **the faith, the trust, the confidence and the loyalty** or allegiance. There has been a communication, and that communication caused belief. It instilled trust. We saw this acted out in the incident involving God speaking a promise to Abraham, as Paul related it in ch. 4, above. It is a very simple, but potently creative **effect of the gush of God's Spirit** into us. It is just like a woman becoming pregnant.

She do not believe to make it happen, she believes because it HAS happened. There is good MS witness for each reading of the last noun: **Christ**; God; and either reading is true. For Paul's arguments against Torah-keeping, the reading "**Christ**" seems to fit best. Also, the word **faith** has the article, "**the faith**," which would seem to point toward the "faith-faithfulness" of Christ. We can also see a reference here to Christ's "loyalty" to the Father's will, as He continually "heard" what the Father was speaking to Him.

**18. But, I ask, isn't it rather that they didn't pay attention or hear? On the contrary!** (or: However, I am saying,

they do not fail to hear, do they? Most certainly!):

**"Their clear, distinct sound** (as vibrations of a musical string; = their voice; = their utterance) **comes out into all the earth** (or: went out into the entire land), **and their gush-effects** (results of the flow; or: sayings; the things spoken by them; their declarations) **into the boundaries** (limits; extremities) **of the inhabited area."** [Ps. 19:4]

The Greek allows for both readings of the interlocutor's retort, which Paul then answers with an exclamation to the contrary, followed by the quote from the

Psalms to ground his argument. He picks up his line of argument concerning non-Christian Israel from vs. 16, above.

Witherington suggests that Paul believes that the message about Christ has, by the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, gone out into the majority of the Roman Empire, as 15:19, below, suggests (ibid p 264).

Jesus prophesied of this period in Mark 13:10,

**"Further, it continues necessary for the good news (the message of goodness, ease and well-being) to be publicly proclaimed into the midst of all the ethnic multitudes (unto all the non-Jews and the nations), first."**

*Cf* Ps. 19:1-6 for the context of Paul's quote of vs. 4, as well as 1:19-20, above. Another insightful verse is Tit. 2:11,

**"For God's saving grace**

(the salvation-imparting influence and boon of undeserved kindness, favor and goodwill whose source is God and which brings deliverance, rescue, restoration and health)

**has been fully set in clear Light for all mankind**

(or: was fully manifested to all humanity; has been made to completely appear **in** all

people; or: has additionally shined **within** all humans) [other MSS: You see, the joyous favor of God: a Savior for (to; in) all mankind, has been fully displayed; or: So you see, the grace, which is God, was made to suddenly appear {as} a Savior for all humans]"

The **sound** that Ps. 19:4 speaks of is the Voice of God (see the context in the Psalm); likewise the **gush-effect and result of the flow** of the Spirit (in vs. 17, above), is Christ having come via His Word and “vibrations.”

**19. But further, I am asking, isn't it rather that Israel did not recognize,**

**come to know or gain insight** (or: However, I say, did not Israel fail to experientially and intimately know)?

**First Moses is saying,**

**"I will progressively bring rivalry, envy and jealousy alongside you folks (or: I will provoke you to jealousy) upon [the situation of] a non-nation (a no-nation; upon one not a multitude); upon [the situation of] an unintelligent (stupid; unable-to-put-things-together) ethnic multitude I will proceed bringing an impulsive mental attitude, anger, a vexing indignation and inherent fervor**

**alongside you folks."** [Deut.  
32:21]

Paul has his interlocutor raise one more protest: Israel simply **did not recognize or gain insight** concerning Jesus (and neither did Saul/Paul, until the road to Damascus encounter). Using Israel's story from the OT, Paul cites the prophecy of Moses to explain what had indeed happened to them in his own time: God had turned to the **ethnic multitudes** (to whom Paul had been sent). The Gentiles (non-Israelites) were **a non-nation** – God was no longer dealing with a specific nation or with a particular multitude of folks. He was dealing with "Everybody." And it did

not have to be learned or instructed folks – they did not even have to know or possess the Law. **Upon the situation of God now including an unintelligent ethnic multitude** (i.e., all humanity) into His new covenant, He was **bringing an impulsive mental attitude, anger and vexing indignation and inherent fervor alongside** the Jews. Campbell points out that for there to be **jealousy, envy and rivalry**, there must needs be an awareness of what is going on (*cf* *ibid* p 806).

By making this point, Paul now begins setting the stage for his arguments in ch. 11.

**20. Yet Isaiah is daring and risking**

**without restraint, and is saying,**

**"I am (or: was) found by, among and within those not seeking or trying to find Me; I become (or: became; was birthed) apparent (visible; obvious to sight; manifest) in (or: by; to; with; among) the ones not inquiring about Me."** [Isa. 65:1a]

This is a second witness to the point that he has just made. The Gentiles – the stupid, unable-to-put-things-together ethnic groups of the Empire and the world at large – were **not seeking or trying to find [God]**. But all of a sudden (through the dispersal of the Light of Christ) God was **becoming apparent,**

**visible, obvious to [their] sight and manifest to the ones not inquiring about [Him].** This was happening through folks being sent out to proclaim the Truth of the new creation. It was all a work of God, and He used human instruments as His tools in making humanity into a new pot (Jer. 18:2-6).

**21. Now toward Israel He is saying,**  
**"The whole day I stretch and spread out my hands toward a consistently disobeying**  
(noncomplying; refusing to believe) **and habitually contradicting** (refuting; speaking instead-of; speaking back against) **people."** [Isa. 65:2]

And this was God's message concerning Israel. We do not know just when the Spirit showed Paul to apply this prophecy to the Jews of his day, but we read Luke's enlightening report in Acts 13:46,

**"Continuing bold, expressing the inherent right to speak the whole truth publicly with freedom from reprisal, both Paul and Barnabas said, "It was a matter of constraint, compulsion, and pressed indispensability [for] God's Logos (Word; message; idea) to be spoken to you folks first! Yet since you folks continue to**

**push it away from yourselves, and are repeatedly judging (or: deciding) yourselves [to be] not worthy of the eonian life (the life pertaining to the Age [of Messiah]; the life whose source and character is from the Age), look! We are now being turned (or, as a middle: progressively turning ourselves) unto the nations (the ethnic multitudes; the Gentiles; the non-Jews). "You see, thus has the Lord [= Christ or Yahweh] directed to us:**

**'I have placed (or: set) you unto [being] a light of**

**nations** (ethnic multitudes; non-Jews), **[in order for] you to be [placed] into the midst of a deliverance** (a rescue and a return to health and wholeness; a restoring to the original state of being and condition) **as far as [the] last [point] of the earth!"** [Isa. 49:6]



## Chapter 11

**1. I am asking (or: saying), then, God does not (or: did not) thrust away His people, does He (or: did He)? [cf Ps. 94:14] Certainly not (May it not happen)! For I myself am also (or: also exist being) an Israelite, forth from out of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe Benjamin.**

The Judaizer gasps another question regarding God's faithfulness to Israel. Paul emphatically answers, "No!" What a demonstration of God's grace and mercy! Even though they were "a **consistently disobeying** (noncomplying; refusing to believe) **and habitually**

**contradicting** (refuting; speaking instead-of; speaking back against) **people**" (10:21, above), **God does not** (or: did not) **thrust away His people**, because, "**there is no distinction or separation made by putting asunder in order to define or distinguish between Jew and Greek** (10:12, above)." God is treating all the same, welcoming ALL into the new arrangement, which is Christ. He is treating Israel just like He is treating the Gentiles. And Paul is a perfect example of one who had refused to believe and did not hear or obey the Good News that Jesus Christ is Lord (Acts 9). God overruled his decision, making him a paradigm of Israel: struck

to the ground and caused to be blind (Acts 9:8, 18). Saul, the one who had been born free as a citizen of Rome, was now a slave of a crucified Messiah. As Witherington suggests, this now begins the third section of Paul's argument in chapters 9-11. He suggests that it also "reflects his major concern" (ibid p 264), but Campbell considers it a continuation of the letter's main purpose: to thwart the false gospel of the Judaizers, represented by his interlocutor.

**2. God does not (or: did not) thrust away His people – whom He by experience intimately foreknew! Or have you not seen, and thus perceive,**

**in [the passage of] Elijah, what the Scripture is saying as he is repeatedly encountering in God (or: hitting on target when conversing with God), concerning the sphere and condition of (or: down against) Israel?**

No, Israel is not thrust away or replaced, rather, as Paul will show in vs. 17, below, the Gentiles were added TO Israel. We read about the ethnic multitudes in Eph. 2:

**"you were, and continued on being for that season (or: in that appointed situation), apart from Christ ([the] Anointed One; = [the] Messiah): people having been alienated from the state of**

**being a citizen** (or: estranged from citizenship in the commonwealth) **of Israel and [being] strangers pertaining to the arrangements of** (or: foreigners from covenants and testamentary dispositions whose origin is) **The Promise"** (vs. 12).

Then, with the death and resurrection of the Messiah:

**"But now, within, in union with and centered in Christ Jesus, you – the folks once being** (continuously existing) **far off** (or: at a distance) – **came to be** (were birthed; are generated; are suddenly become) **near,**

**immersed within and in union with the blood of the Christ (the Anointed One)" (vs. 13).**

**"You see, He Himself is our Peace (or: continuously exists being our harmony [= Shalom]) – the One making (forming; constructing) The Both [to be] one.... to the end that He may frame (create; found and settle from a state of wildness and disorder) The Two into One New [p46 & others: common] Humanity within the midst of, and in union with, Himself, continuously making (progressively creating) Peace**

**and Harmony (= shalom); and then should fully transfer from a certain state to another which is quite different (or: make completely other while moving away from what existed; or: fully reconcile) The Both within One Body – with, by, in, to and for God through the cross (execution stake) – within Himself killing the enmity (or: discordant hatred; characteristics of an enemy)" (vs. 14-16).**

**3. "O Lord [= O Yahweh], they kill Your prophets! They dig down under (thus: undermine to demolish) Your altars! And as**

**for me, I was left under, alone** (or: I'm the only one left below), **and they continually seek** (are continuously trying to find) **my soul** (my breath; = they want to kill me)." [1 King 19:10, 14]

As further evidence of Israel's degraded condition, he cites here the passage of what Elijah is **repeatedly encountering in God**, and is hitting on target when conversing with God, as indicated in vs. 2. Paul's point? What Israel did in the past they are doing now; what happened to Elijah has been happening to him. The Jews were trying to kill Paul (Acts 23:12). They were trying to destroy the place of God's new altar – the called-out

community. Yet God is aware of everyone's behavior and heart attitude. And as during the time of Elijah where there was a core group – of which Elijah was unaware – that was faithful to Yahweh, as vs. 4, below, reminds his audience, so it is now (vs. 6, below).

**4. To the contrary, what does the useful transaction (the deliberative instruction; the oracle) say to him?**

**"I leave down (or: reserve) to Myself (for Myself; in Myself) [other MSS: They have been leaving for Myself] seven thousand adult males, those men who do not bend a knee to Baal." [1 Kings 19:18]**

Observe that in this quote Yahweh is doing the action ("**I leave down and reserve to Myself**"). It does not speak of the 7000 being anything special, except for their faithfulness to Yahweh. It was right after this announcement to Elijah, that he passed by Elisha "plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him" and he "cast his mantle upon" Elisha (1 Kings 19:19). The numbers are most likely symbolic, and thus figurative. Seven is the number that represented completeness and the number 1000 is  $10 \times 10 \times 10$ , the dimensions of the holy of holies (the place of God's throne and His rule). These would signify God's kingdom on

earth. The twelve yoke of oxen would represent the twelve tribes of Israel, which embodied the kingdom. The passing of the mantle (a figure of the anointing) prefigures Christ (as the eschatological Elijah) anointing those who would remain (the redefined Israel; figured by the olive tree in vs. 17, below) to carry the anointing and do the work of the kingdom (Christ's body – who would do greater works than Jesus, because He was going to the Father, John 14:12, just as Elisha did twice the number of miracles as Elijah, who was caught up into the atmosphere). This is an apocalyptic/prophetic interpretation of these two verses in 1 Kings 19. In

Paul's time, Baal could represent the Emperor cult (a likely candidate since he was writing to Rome), or other idols of the pagan religions.

The Baal worship in Elijah's time was championed by Israel's queen, Jezebel, and we find her, symbolically, in the called-out community of Thyatira (Rev. 2:20). Such associations may have been quite common among the Jewish Christians of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, who had been drenched in Israel's stories. We will find Paul echoing Zech. 4 when we come to his figure of the olive tree, below.

**5. Thus then, also, within the present season** (or: In this way, therefore, even

in the current appropriate situation and in union with the present fertile moment) **a destitute remainder** (or: a forsaken minority under the effect of lack; a left-behind surviving group; a worn-smooth, plain, inferior, unsculptured, unembossed part; a remnant) **has been birthed** (has come to be and exists) **down from a selection of grace** (in accord with an election which is grace and a choosing-out for favor).

There is much to be unpacked from this relatively terse statement. Let us move through Paul's words, in order:

The adverbial phrase, **Thus then** (or: In this way, therefore) refers back to the example from Israel's history that Paul

has just cited in vs. 4, and exhibits a parallel relationship between God's act in the past (reserving the 7000), and His act **within the present season**. The character of this last phrase can be seen in the two renderings in the parenthetical expansion:

- a) in the current appropriate situation
- b) in union with the present fertile moment.

First, he is obviously speaking about the time in which he was living. It was the **season** that had burst upon the scene with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Second, it was the appropriate situation, for it was the time when the "**male Son**"

(Rev. 12:5) was to be born (figure of resurrection – He was the "Firstborn from the dead," Col. 1:18) and snatched away to God's throne to begin the reign of the Messiah. It was also the conjunction between the old age of the Law and the covenant with Israel, and the new age of the Messiah and the new creation. It was the time when Christ was,

**"presently making all things new, or, periodically making all humanity new, progressively creating every person new and constructing all people fresh and new, or, continuously renewing everyone"** (Rev. 21:5).

It was the beginning of the time of a new union between God and humanity as He anointed them with Himself, and by His Spirit entered into the midst of them to impregnate them with the Logos (the message; the thought; the idea; the reason; His Word) to incarnate Himself within them – to take up residence in them. This age of the Messiah is The Fertile Moment in the history of mankind – the time when He has sent His Spirit to people.

The term “**a destitute remainder**” contains multiple connotations due to the present context, its significance in Israel's history, and Paul's choice of this particular Greek word (which he uses

only here, and in a compound form in 9:27, above). On the surface, he presents us with a paradox: "a left-behind surviving group **has been birthed.**" But with the concept of "a fertile moment" and Paul's arguments that we have been buried with Him (6:4, above), and then have been raised up with Him (6:5, above), this enigmatic affirmation starts to become clear. Paul's words here answer to Jesus' words to Nicodemus, "**It is necessary and binding for you folks to be born back up again to a higher place**" (John 3:7b). Jesus was speaking about Israel, in that context, for he was speaking to a Jew, a teacher in Israel, a part of its leadership.

The term "remnant" suggests that this "forsaken minority under the effect of lack" was a part of a greater whole. And, like in Elijah's time, so it was in Paul's time. They lived under the **effect** of the **lack** of God's glory (they had lived in the shadow-lands of the death inaugurated by Adam's disobedience). They were the "lost, destroyed sheep of the house of Israel" (Mat. 15:24). They were "the little flock" to whom the Father was giving the kingdom (Lu. 12:32). They were, through insertion into the Messiah, the seed of Abraham through which the blessing would be conducted to the ethnic multitudes. But what about the long, conflated

rendering of this word: "a worn-smooth, plain, inferior, unsculptured, unembossed part"? The Greek is *leimma*. The *-ma* ending gives us the sense of "effect." The stem of the verb *leipo* from which this word comes is *lei-*, which signifies something that has been worn smooth, filed down or beaten fine, and is plain, and thus inferior. It is like a land without mountains (no high points); it is like unembroidered cloth or an unembossed work of art; it is like raw material: stone or wood that has not yet been sculpted. The combined meaning is that this group "lacks." It has been left out and left-behind. It is composed of the outcasts, the prostitutes,

the tax-collectors, the fishermen – not many wise folks of this world. These folks are inferior, in the eyes of the controlling System. They were those who could only stand, beating their chests, saying, "**O God, at your mercy seat let me, the failure** (the one who has deviated and missed the goal; the sinner), **be sheltered and cleansed!**" (Lu. 18:15). But God saw them as being in the same category of the 7000. They had not joined the polluted religious system, for it would not accept them. So the Spirit of God had caused this **destitute remainder** of Israel to "come to be and exist" within the Messiah, in the new creation with a new

arrangement (a new High Priest, in Melchizedek's order; and a change of law – Heb. 7:12). Christ had **birthed** them into His reign.

None of this came because of the identity markers of the old covenant; it was not because of race or pedigree; it happened not because of what anyone did – neither works of the Law, nor obedience to a creed, nor from exercising one's own will – it is **down from a selection of grace** (in accord with an election which is grace and a choosing-out for favor). God chose a small group to be "a handful of corn in the earth, on the top of the mountains" (Ps. 72:16, Young). They were Christ's

branches, which grew like the prophecy for Joseph – they spread over the wall (Gen. 49:22) of Jerusalem and Israel and out into the whole Empire, and beyond. They were His firstfruits that would be planted to continue the multiplication of harvests (30, 60 and 100 fold with each successive season) in the generations to come.

**6. Now since (or: if) [it is] by grace (in a gift of favor), [it is] no longer from out of works (deeds; actions)!**

**Otherwise grace (the joyous gift of favor) comes to be no longer grace (or: Else grace is no longer birthed, or comes to be, grace; [some MSS add: but if from out of works, it is no longer**

grace, otherwise the work is no longer work]).

Paul has now woven the strand of 4:4ff, above, back into his tapestry. His conclusion here echoes 4:14 and 16, above. The "election" to participation in the new covenant is NOT based upon **works** of Law, or upon deeds that keep the precepts of the Torah. If Law-keeping is the basis for covenant inclusion, then the gift of His favor is no longer a gift or a favor. It would mean that the Age of the Messiah had not come, and that Gentiles, as Gentiles, could not be included.

**7. What, then? That which Israel is constantly searching for (or: seeking**

out), **this it did not encounter** (or: did not hit upon the mark, and thus, obtain), **yet The Selected One** (the Picked-out and Chosen One; or: the choice collection; the elect – that which is chosen out) **hit upon the mark, encountered and obtained it. But the rest** (the folks remaining) **were petrified** (were turned into stone; were made calloused and were hardened), What was Israel searching for? The Pharisees wanted perfect obedience to the Law. This, they thought, would usher in the Age of the Messiah, and Israel would rule the world with the new David on the throne. The Essenes had similar goals.

Yet what is Paul answering? "**The Selected One** – the Picked-out and Chosen One – **hit upon the mark, encountered and obtained it!**" Christ Jesus was the Selected One. The Chosen One (the Messiah) established the kingdom, the Reign of God that was close enough to touch (at hand) and was thus available for everyone.

**"The reign of the ordered System** (of the world of religion, culture, government and economy; or: of the realm of the religious and secular) **suddenly came to belong to our Lord** [= Yahweh or Christ] **and to the anointed of Him.**" (Rev. 11:15)

Observe that the noun "The Selected One" is singular, and thus I suggest that this refers to the Messiah, Jesus.

However, this can also be a collective unity: "the choice collection; the elect — that which is chosen out." So this same clause can also refer to **the destitute remainder**, of vs. 5, above.

The last statement has the verb in the passive voice, which scholars often call "the divine passive." This means that God "turned **the rest** into stone," as we see affirmed in vs. 8, below. He made them "calloused and hardened." Paul uses this same verb, also concerning Israel, in 2 Cor. 3:14a,

**"But further, the results of their**

**mental conceptions, intellectual workings and thought processes were petrified** (made to be a stony concretion; were hardened and made callous [note: the word became a medical term for being covered with thick skin]), **for until this very day the same head-covering (veil) continues remaining** (dwelling; abiding) **upon the reading of the old covenant** (arrangement; thorough placement)..."

John 12:40 speaks a similar thing about the Jews, citing Isa. 6:9. *Cf* Mat. 13:14.  
**8. just as it has been and now stands written,**

**"God gives (or: at one point gave) to them a spirit (breath-effect and attitude) of stupor, from receiving a piercing blow (or: deep sleep; a senseless mental condition), eyes of the [condition] not to see, ears of the [condition] not to hear, until this very day (or: until today's day)." [Deut. 29:4; Isa. 29:10]**

This calls to mind the words of Jesus in Mat. 13:11-15,

**"to intimately experience and insightfully know the secrets (mysteries) of the reign of the heavens.... it has not been given.... because while seeing**

**(or: observing) they continue not seeing, and during listening (or: hearing) they are not hearing (or: listening).... 'For the heart of THIS PEOPLE was made thick and fat, and thus has become impervious, dull and insensitive, and with the ears they hear heavily, and are thus hard of hearing, and they shut (or: closed) their eyes (or: they squint their eyes), lest at some time they might see with [their] eyes and should then be listening and hearing with [their] ears, and with the heart they could make things flow together so as to**

**comprehend – and they might turn about! And so, I will progressively cure and heal them' [Isa. 6:9-10]."**

**9. And David is saying,**

**"Let their table be birthed into a snare (a trap) and into a wild beast trap-net and into a trap-stick, even into an effect of repayment to them (for them; in them).**

Stern points out that **"their table"** referred "to fellowship at meals, which is highly valued in Judaism, especially if 'words of *Torah*' are exchanged" (Ibid p 406). This could also refer to the various sacrifices and the "bread of the

Presence" in the holy place which the priests ate – and thus Paul could be suggesting that now their temple cultus was a **snare** and an **entrapment** for them.

I chose the rendering **Let... be birthed** to express the aorist imperative form of the verb *ginomai*, which could also be translated, "Let... become." But the verb is part of a word-family whose root idea is birth, and I wanted to preserve this imagery and to show the movement from a prior condition of blessing **into** a new situation of **their table** (i.e., cultus and form of fellowship) becoming the very thing that would snare and entrap them. It was a radical religious reversal. It

would be cultural destruction, in regard to the eating of the sacrifices. The aorist tense expresses the suddenness (point in time) of this action – like the new situation that occurs with a birth.

The object of the last “**into**”-phrase has often been rendered “retribution” (e.g., NRSV; NASB; NWT; NIV), but this choice carries an unnecessary negative connotation, due to popular preaching over the last couple centuries. The word literally means **an effect** (the *-ma* ending) of a **repayment**. It was a judgment (decision) according to their deeds, or the pay for their works. This payment came **to them** in the form of their table fellowship becoming a **snare**,

**a trap-net** and **a trap-stick** (often rendered “stumbling block,” but I wanted to keep the literal picture: all three of these words denoted catching or trapping animals or birds). They did not just stumble, they became trapped in their slavery to the Law. Notice that this also happened “for them, and in them).

10. **"Let their eyes be darkened, not to see, and let them bend (or: bow) their back together [in bondage] through all (or: every [situation])."** [Ps. 69:22-23]

Once again Paul is grounding – in their own Scriptures – his argument concerning the situation of physical

Israel. And this would also be a clear message to the Judaizing teachers. It was God's purpose that His inauguration of the new covenant and the new creation would be with **the destitute remainder**. If we recall the story of Gideon, we saw that Yahweh wanted to operate through a small number:

"Yahweh said to Gideon, The people with you are too many... lest Israel might vaunt itself against Me, saying, My own hand has saved me" (Judges 7:2).

Even in those early days of Israel, God had to take measures to insure that Israel did not base their successes in their own works; it was always the grace of God

that saved them.

As before, here too, we see that God is causing, or arranging for, Israel to miss the goal. It was always His plan for the Promised Seed to "**hit upon the mark, encounter and obtain it.**" It was always His purpose for those in the Way pointed out – those in covenant – to live by God's faithfulness, and thus to trust Him. Paul now moves on to elaborate God's plan:

**11. I am asking, then, they do not stumble [on the racetrack] so that they should fall, do they? Certainly not! On the contrary, by (or: in) the result of their fall to the side the Deliverance (the Rescue, Salvation,**

health and wholeness; the restoration to the original state and condition) **[is] in, for, to and among the nations** (the ethnic multitudes; the non-Jews; the Gentiles; the pagans) **unto "the [situation] to bring jealousy alongside them** (or: in order to provoke them to jealousy)." [Deut. 32:21]

Here is the reason for what he quoted in vss. 8-10, above: **by** (or: in) **the result of their fall to the side the Deliverance** (the Rescue, Salvation, health and wholeness; the restoration to the original state and condition) **[is] in, for, to and among the nations** (the ethnic multitudes; the non-Jews; the Gentiles; the pagans). It is all part of

what God designed, which is,

**"in accord with** (or: down from; corresponding to) **a purpose of the ages** (a fore-designed aim, plan and object [which He is bent on achieving] of the unspecified time-periods) **which He formed** (forms; made; constructs; produced) **within the Christ by our Lord, Jesus"** (Eph. 3:11).

And at the same time it was "in order to provoke [Israel] to jealousy." God did not cast them away, but He just kept moving on with His plans. And He still plans to bring all Israel into the new covenant, as Paul affirms in vs. 26, below. As the Representative Head of

Israel, the Messiah took all of Israel into the grave with Him – and this entire event was **the result of their fall to the side** of the path, or as I suggest, [**on the racetrack**] – a reference to "the games." They **stumbled** over the Rock of offense, so that by being a part of the Seed that was planted, they would have their role in the production of the harvest that spread into the ethnic multitudes (the Gentiles). All of Israel was buried when Christ was entombed. And so, in their proper time they will be existentially raised into life in Him.

Here (and in 14:1, below) Paul wants to "provoke them to jealousy." Nanos observes from Paul's quotes from Deut.,

Isa. and Ps., above, that,

"It signifies that *they* [Israel] are those suffering the eschatological curse ('hardened' vss. 7-10), that *they* are standing outside the promised blessings, while *Paul* is fulfilling Israel's eschatological privilege of bringing light to the gentiles" (ibid p 250; emphasis original; brackets mine; cf Paul's warning in Acts 28:24-28).

Paul's points in the early parts of this chapter need to be kept in mind when considering vss. 24-29, below. Nanos cites William Campbell (*Intercultural Context*, pp 92-93):

"the jealousy motif is concerned

vis-à-vis the view that the 'final restoration of Israel would be the work of God himself'... but the jealousy motif suggests that it is in fact the winning of the representatives from the nations [via Paul's preaching] which causes Israel's restoration" (ibid. p 250; brackets mine).

**12. Now since (or: if) the effect of their fall to the side [brings, or, is] enrichment of the world (universe; = all humanity; or: the realm of the secular; or: the ordered System [outside of Israel]) and the effect of their discomfiture [in the games] and the**

**resultant lessened position** (the result of their defeat and loss from being overthrown) [**brings, or, is**] **enrichment of the nations** (ethnic multitudes; non-Jews; Gentiles), **how much exceedingly more the effects of their filled-full condition** (the result of their full measure with the entire contents)!

Paul has picked up the thread of 8:28, above, which he now expresses in relating Israel's story and the part which they played in fulfilling the Promise made to Abraham about him being an instrument for blessing all the families of the earth (Gen. 12:3). He has also once again accessed his athletic motifs which we saw in 9:16, 9:30-32a and

10:4, above. This **enrichment of the ethnic multitudes** is their becoming Abraham's inheritance (4:13, above) and their being a part of His **seed** (4:16) with him being their **father** (4:17). This enrichment of the aggregate of mankind (**the world**) is seen in Eph. 2:

11. **On which account** (or: Wherefore) **you must continuously call to mind** (or: keep in mind; remember) **that once you, the nations** (multitudes; ethnic groups; Gentiles; non-Israelites) **in flesh** (= in your physical beings and cultural heritages) **the ones habitually termed** (spoken of as;

called; said to be)

**"uncircumcision" by the one (or: that) habitually being termed "circumcision," in flesh (= in body and culture/religion), [i.e.], made by hand,**

**12. that (or: because) you were, and continued on being for that season (or: in that appointed situation), apart from Christ ([the] Anointed One; = [the] Messiah): people having been alienated from the state of being a citizen (or: estranged from citizenship in the commonwealth) of Israel and [being] strangers pertaining to the arrangements**

**of** (or: foreigners from covenants and testamentary dispositions whose origin is) **The Promise** (or the assurance), **continually having no expectation** (or: hope), and **[were] folks without God** (or: godless; atheists) **within the ordered System** (world of culture, religion and governments).

**13. But now, within, in union with and centered in Christ Jesus, you – the folks once being** (continuously existing) **far off** (or: at a distance) – **came to be** (were birthed; are generated; are suddenly become) **near,**

**immersed within and in union with the blood of the Christ (the Anointed One).**

**14. You see, He Himself is our Peace** (or: continuously exists being our harmony [= Shalom]) – **the One making** (forming; constructing) **The Both [to be] one, and within His flesh** (= physical being; or: = system-caused crucifixion) **is instantly destroying** (unbinding; unfastening; loosing; causing to collapse) **the middle wall of the fenced enclosure** (or: the partition or barrier wall): **the enmity** (cause of hate, alienation,

discord and hostility;  
characteristics of an enemy).

**13. So I am presently speaking for and to you, the nations** (the ethnic multitudes; the non-Jews; the Gentiles). **In as much as** (or: For as long as), **indeed then, I myself am an emissary** (envoy; missionary; one sent on a mission with a commission) **pertaining to and belonging to [the] ethnic multitudes** (nations; non-Jewish groups; Gentiles; pagans), **I am continually building the reputation, appearance and notions of my service and dispensing** (or: I am glorifying the function and execution of my attending in waiting upon [you folks]),

He now speaks directly to the Gentile members of the called-out community in Rome, and informs them that he is specifically **THEIR emissary** and that he is **continually building the reputation, appearance and notions of [his] service and dispensing**. Why? He gives the reason in the next verse, but first let us consider the verb of this last clause. It is commonly rendered "glorify," but this word has a wide semantic range which is the reason that I conflated the meanings into the expansion, "**build the reputation, appearance and notions... glorifying the functions and execution...**" He wanted his work in the kingdom to be seen,

known, talked about, spread by word of mouth, and considered.

The direct object of that verb is the noun *diakonia* and it referred to what Paul was doing for the ethnic multitudes: he was providing a **service** for them; he was functioning as an attending waiter for them (Strong suggests that this term was probably derived from an obsolete verb that meant "to run errands"); and he was **dispensing** life, deliverance and the new creation to them as he dispensed the message and the teaching to them.

Nanos gives an insightful observation on vs. 13 and 14,

"Paul does not say that the Jews will be jealous of gentiles being

saved.... He explicitly says it is *his ministry* that will be the cause of jealousy for some of them... [while the Jews] are among those whom the prophets warned of hardness of heart" (ibid p 249;emphasis original; brackets mine).

Nanos suggest that since Gentiles are being added to the covenant, Paul hopes that the Jews will come to feel that they are being left out of their own eschatological expectations which they see happening through Paul's ministry, and this would create jealousy in them which would end in their reconsidering the proclamation that the Messiah had

come.

14. **if somehow, possibly, I may arouse my own flesh** (= my own people) **to jealousy and can deliver** (or: should save; as a future: I will proceed in rescuing and making whole) **certain folks** (or: some) **from among them.**

He wanted his own people to notice what he was doing and to inquire about it so that he could dispense life to them, and thus **deliver certain folks.** The spelling of this verb falls into two tenses: an aorist subjunctive (the bold rendering and the first parenthetical alternative) and the future. With the future reading, Paul sees this as happening by what he is doing and

continuing on to the point that he "will proceed in rescuing some" **from among them**. Although his immediate focus is on the Gentiles, he sees his work splashing over to those of his **own flesh**, as well, for as we will see in 23-26, below, bringing in all Israel is also the goal of this process.

15. **You see, since (or: if) their casting away (or: their rejection [of the good news]) [is, means or brings the] conciliation of the aggregate of humanity** (the changing of the universal system to another level of existence; the complete change for the arranged order to be other than it was; the world's change from enmity to friendship), **what**

**[will be] the receiving** (the acceptance; the taking or drawing toward one's self as a companion or associate) **[of them,** (or: the receiving of it)] **if not life forth from out of the midst of dead folks?!**

The participle **casting away**, or "rejection," can have two applications. The first one is normally favored because it relates to the verb **broken off** in vs. 17, below, and seems to be set in contrast to the participle **the receiving** (which corresponds to their being grafted back into their tree, in vs. 23, below) in the second clause. The text has no personal pronoun **"of them"** following the participle **the receiving**, so "of it" could instead be supplied –

which would refer to their ultimate acceptance of the good news of Jesus being their Messiah and the fulfillment of their promises.

And so, the first clause can refer to their rejection of the good news that Jesus is their Messiah, as I indicate with the parenthetical alternatives. Fitzmyer sees "their rejection" as a subjective genitive, "the Jews' rejection of Christ" (ibid p 323). Stern also follows this reading (ibid p 412). Reading this verse either way makes sense, but my bold rendering seems to best fit the context which follows in the metaphor of the broken-out branches. If this is correct, then the **casting away of them**, here, would

refer only to the unbelieving branches of the tree (a figure of God's anointed purposes and influences). This would be in line with the parables of Jesus which refer to people losing their jobs or being sent to the darkness outside of God's sovereign activities. So this does not speak of rejecting Israel or the Jews as a whole. We see a similar situation in the illustration of the Vine (Christ) and its branches (His apprentices) in John 15:6a,

**"If anyone can (or: would; should) not continuously remain (dwell; abide; stay) within the midst of and in union with Me, he is cast (or: thrown) outside –**

**as the tender branch (twig; shoot) – and is caused to dry up and wither."**

Paul goes on to explain his phrase **conciliation of the aggregate of humanity** with the metaphor of the olive tree and its branches in 16-24, below. This gives another view of what he termed **their fall to the side** in vs. 12, above, in the first use of **casting away**. He is restating and further defining **enrichment of the nations** of vs. 12 by referring to it as the **conciliation of the aggregate of humanity**, here in vs. 15. There are at least three other ways that this last phrase about conciliation can be rendered:

a) "the changing of the universal system to another level of existence" – this describes the most encompassing and age-changing aspect of the work of Christ

b) "the complete change for the arranged order to be other than it was" – this, too, paints an all-encompassing shift from the old order to the new

c) "the world's change from enmity to friendship" – this gives the relational and perceptual aspect of the new creation.

See 5:10, above, for the discussion of the verb from which we get these

additional meanings of the noun first rendered **conciliation**, here. Each of these four phrases is of equal linguistic and contextual value. Ponder them all. In the last phrase, Paul weaves in his theme of resurrection and demonstrates that either the status of the physical (flesh) Israelites in relation to being existentially included in the new covenant (or, the olive tree, below), or their spiritual condition of receptiveness to the message of God's goodness in Christ, is what Paul means by "**life forth from out of the midst of dead folks.**" From this statement, we see that Paul regards the unbelieving Jews as figuratively, or spiritually, dead. Kirk

refers to this death as being in the midst of a "cosmic drama" in which the climax is the death and resurrection of the Messiah, while "Israel's death itself is a subplot that must turn from death to life" (ibid p 185). But we must remember that Paul is not speaking generally of all Israel, but of just the unbelieving leadership: **some of the branches** – vs. 17, below – who will ultimately be grafted back into their own tree (vss. 23-26, below). Resurrection is, for Paul, primarily a spiritual condition or existence: being within, and in union with, Christ and the flow of His Spirit. Fitzmyer, following his view of "their rejection," considers **the receiving** to

be, "their acceptance of Christ [which] will mean their passage from the status of death to life" (ibid p 323; brackets mine).

Nanos sees this section of vss. 11-15 as showing that Paul has kept in mind the priority of the restoration of all of Israel ("to the Jew first..."), and that his Gentile mission was a part of the means to this end (*cf* ibid p 240), and since he had not yet been to Rome, that he would most likely plan to preach in the synagogues there before turning to the Gentiles (*cf* Acts 28:17ff). He quotes Gunter Klein (*Paul's Purpose in Writing the Epistles to the Romans*, p 40) as saying that Paul "regards the

Romans both as Christian brothers and as missionary objects" (Nanos, *ibid* p 243). In consideration of Israel's "**the effects of their filled-full condition**" (vs. 12, above), and their "**life forth from out of the midst of dead folks,**" here, Nanos observes that "Even though Paul is bringing the gospel to gentiles it is in the service of Israel's eventual restoration..." (*ibid.* p 248).

16. **Now since** (or: But if) **the Firstfruit [is] holy** (set-apart and consecrated; sacred), **the kneaded mixture** (the result of the lump which is mingled and reduced to a uniform consistency by treading, kneading or beating) **also [is]; and since** (or: if) **the Root [is] holy**

(set-apart, sacred, different from the norm), **so also [are] the branches** (the shoots; the boughs).

Paul now advances his metaphors to describe what has happened and why. Christ is, of course, **the Fristfruit** – as we discussed earlier – but He is now the Head of a body that His Spirit has anointed, so this term now applies to all those who are presently in Christ and compose the corporate Christ, referred to in vs. 5, above, as "the remnant" and in vs. 7 as "the Selected One/the elect. What he is saying is that since the newly defined Israel is holy, so is the rest of mankind of which this group was the representative.

It is a reference to Israel's festival cultus and the "waiving of the sheaf" (Lev. 23:10-15) of the first-ripe grain – setting it apart to Yahweh – which made the entire crop set-apart and sacred. And it meant that every **kneaded mixture** of bread dough that would come from the entire crop would also be holy and set-apart for God. Paul's universalism is plainly evident in this verse. Fitzmyer sees this metaphor as a reference to Num. 15:18-21, where it is said in vs. 20,

"Of the first of your dough (or: meal) you shall lift up a cake as an offering; as the offering of the threshing floor, so you shall lift it

up."

This was set aside for the Lord, being given to the Temple priests. As a second witness, Paul reaches back and grabs **the Root** of Jesse (15:12, below) and "the root of David" (Rev. 5:5; 22:16) – i.e., the Messiah – and says that if the Messiah is holy, so are what He produces – His **branches**. Theodore of Mopsuestia concluded this:

"By *first fruits* Paul means Christ, because he was selected out of the entire race of the Jews; by *root* he means Abraham, from who the race descended" (Pauline Comm. from the Greek Church, *Ancient Christian Comm., Vol. VI*, *ibid* p

Here, my interloper might say, "Yes, but this refers just to the branches of Christ."

True, but we must read the second half of the parallelism in light of the first: **the Root and Its branches** answer to the **Firstfruit** and the **kneaded mixture**.

The branches hold the same place in these comparisons as the "kneaded mixture." The branches are a figure of the increase of His government which has no end (Isa. 9:7).

17. **Now since some** (or: if certain ones) **of the branches are broken off** (or: were at one point broken out of [the tree]), **yet you yourself, being a wild olive tree of the field or forest, you**

**are** (or: were) **grafted in within** (or: among) **them**, you also came to be (are birthed; are become) a **joint-participant** (a partner taking in common together with; a co-partaker) **of the Root and of the Fatness** (= sap) **of The Olive Tree** (or: of the oil of the olive).

He is still addressing the Gentiles, so the **in-grafted branches** refer to the non-Israelites (or, all the rest of the world of humanity that will one-after-another be placed in covenant within Christ). These folks were birthed to become **joint-participants of the Root** (Christ) **and of the Fatness** (a figure of the olive oil that was used to anoint prophets, priests and kings into service

to the community). These believers participated in the Anointing (which is a figure for God's Spirit).

Paul has likely reached back to Jer.

11:16 for this figure,

"The LORD called you an olive tree with leaves and good-looking fruit. But with a loud thunderstorm He lights a fire on it, and its branches break off" (*An American Translation*, William F. Beck).

Or, perhaps the description Yahweh gives Israel in Hos. 14:6,

"His tendrils will spread out; and his beauty will be like the olive tree..." (Smith).

Note first of all the word **some**, or

certain ones. It was the unbelieving leadership and priests of the Jews that were **broken off**, out of the tree that produced the oil. This tree represents the presence of God's Spirit in the earth. In Zech. 4 the prophet has a vision of a gold lampstand and two olive trees. There, in vs. 12, the trees are called "branches" (the part of the tree that produces the fruit which in turn produces the oil) and they are seen emptying the golden oil out of themselves so that there will be oil for the seven lamps. This lampstand is tabernacle/temple imagery – furniture of the holy place (an interesting correlation here, in vs. 17, for the holy lump of

dough and the holy branches). We see this same apocalyptic imagery in Rev. 1:20 where the seven lamps are the figurative seven called-out communities in Asia. They are a figure of the anointed leadership of Israel and its priests (the kingdom is a reign composed of priests – Rev. 1:6). So the former priests and leaders were broken out, and the wild folks (Gentiles) were grafted in among the remaining branches (the first Jewish followers of Christ). The first followers of Jesus were Jews – that worn-down remainder. The Gentile covenant communities were grafted into the flow of the Spirit, in among the Jewish believers – such as those in the

community at Rome.

Nanos cites A. Baxter and J. Ziesler ("Paul and Arboriculture: Rom. 11:17-24," *JSNT*) and suggests that "rejuvenation of the tree that no longer produces proper olives" is a purpose for engrafting fresh branches into "'a tree that was exhausted, unproductive, or diseased, in order to reinvigorate it' (p 27)" (ibid. p 251). I would suggest that this is indeed one aspect of God's eonian purpose for His tree that needed both pruning (Mat. 25:45-46, literal rendering) and invigorating, but that it is not the "main" point, which is the eschatological inclusion of the nations into the tree that is planted by the

"channels of water" (Ps. 1:3).

**18. Stop boasting against** (or: Do not be constantly vaunting or exulting over) **the branches! Now since you are habitually boasting and exulting** (priding yourself), **you yourself are not bearing** (supporting; sustaining; carrying) **The Root, but rather, The Root you!**

Here Paul is instructing the Gentile members of the community in Rome to stop boasting against or vaunting themselves over the Jewish minority of the group, and the non-believing Jews outside the community. This practice was destroying the unity between these two parts of Christ's body there, and

was also hindering their missionary witness to Judaism. Their perspective was upside down. Christ, or the Anointing – the Root and Source of the tree – was **supporting** and giving life to ALL the branches: both of the Jewish members and of the Gentile members. Of themselves, the Gentiles were nothing; of themselves the Gentiles could not produce the oil of the anointing – the fruit of the Spirit. There was no more cause for boasting in this new covenant than there was in the old. It is God that **bears, sustains and carries** everything and everyone.

A broader application of this admonition would be for Gentile believers, in

general, not to act as if they were better than either the branches still in place (the Messianic Jews) or the ones that were broken off of the tree (the non-Messianic Jews). Also, **The Root** could be seen as Abraham or the Patriarchs of Israel, and the tree as the storied People that formed Israel's history. Stern rightly cites the story of Ruth as a classic example for Paul's metaphor. There, in 1:16b, we read, "Your people shall be my people and your God my God." (Cf Eph. 2:11-16)

Nanos cites Jacob Jervell ("The Mighty Minority," *Studia Theologica*, p 23) who suggests that "the root that sustains you... [is] the Jewish Christians [which]

carry the church," and then cites Johannes Munck (*Christ and Israel, An Interpretation of Romans 9-11*, pp 110-11) who comments on 11:5,

"But here, in ch. 11, the remnant concept is put forward in preparation for the message that the whole of Israel will eventually be saved; the stress lies on the fact that there is at least a remnant which stands as testimony that God's grace toward the chosen people has not ceased" (ibid p 252; brackets mine).

The believing Jews who were NOT "broken out" were an outgrowth of the root and trunk which was Israel. With

the eschatological act of God, in Christ, the unproductive or dead branches (non-believing Jews) were cut out (*cf* John 15:2a) and the Gentile believers were grafted in among the Jewish Christians. Nanos cites Richard B. Hays (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, pp 60-63), in reference to Ps. 44:

"If exilic Israel's suffering is interpreted by the psalmist not as punishment but as suffering for the sake of God's name, then perhaps even the temporary unbelief of Israel can be understood as part of God's design to encompass Jews and Gentiles alike with his mercy" (*ibid* p 253).

19. **You will say** (or: declare), **then,**  
**"Branches are broken off** (or: were broken out of [the tree]) **to the end that I may be grafted in."**

20. **Beautifully [put]!** (Ideally [said]!; Well [conceived]!) **In lack of faith or trust** (or: By unbelief; Because of lack of allegiance) **they are broken off** (or: were broken out of the midst), **yet you yourself stand in faith** (or: by trust; with confidence). **Stop being haughty** (Don't constantly have high opinions; Do not continually think lofty things), **but to the contrary, [be constantly having] an attitude and mindset of respectful awe** (or: [Godly] fear; healthy respect)!  
In vs. 19, Paul brings in a Gentile

member of the community to momentarily be another interlocutor, but in the next verse he puts this **haughty, self-opinionated** person in his or her place. This person represents folks who bring into the community the mindset and way of thinking of the old, flesh-centered age (12:2-3, below). Receiving grace and favor is no ground for haughtiness. Being given a gift is no reason to have a high opinion of oneself. There is no blame or guilt for **lack of faith or trust**: these are either given or withheld according to God's purposes. Unbelief and lack of allegiance is the estranged human condition. Folks must be delivered from this condition of

lacking God's image and glory.

Sometimes God's judgment is the way forward. Those Jewish branches were indeed broken off so that the Gentiles could **be grafted in**, for Paul tells his Gentile interlocutor, "**Beautifully [put]; Ideally [said]; Well [conceived]!**" Yet, as always, all the work was done by God and there is no merit in ANY of the branches. The action and work of God is always a reason to have **an attitude and mindset of respectful awe** (or: [Godly] fear; healthy respect)! Sovereignty should produce humility.

I love Nanos' statement, regarding this passage, "Israel has not fallen; she has been divided" (ibid p 254). And the

inclusion of the once-pagans (Gentiles) was exacerbating the situation.

**21. For you see, since (or: if) God spares not (or: did not spare) the natural branches (the branches down from, or, in accord with, nature), neither will He continue sparing you!**

And this is the reason for the admonition in vs. 20. God's grace does not mean that He will not correct those who need correction. He does not love the Gentiles any more than the unbelieving Jews. Pride and haughtiness were twin fruits that were from a self-centered spirit that caused the scribes and Pharisees to be like people that thrust hard words and evil actions through the

midst of folks (to be like devils – John 8:44).

"Hays continues: 'it is clear that the breaking of the branches is God's act, aimed at salvation of the Gentiles.... By describing the fate of unbelieving Israel in the same language that he had used to describe Jesus' death, Paul hints at a daring trope whose full implications subsequent Christian theology has usually declined to pursue. What Paul has done, in a word, is to interpret the fate of Israel christologically... Israel undergoes rejection for the sake of the world, bearing suffering

vicariously.’ (p 61) By combining 11:21 and 8:32 and linking these with Abraham's near sacrifice of Isaac, Hays suggests: ‘the parallel between these three beloved ones *not spared* are too rich to be fortuitous.... God did not spare his people Israel but broke them off like branches for the sake of the Gentiles... In each case the rejection/acceptance pattern plays itself out to the vicarious benefit of others.’" (quotes of Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, p 61-62, cited in Nanos, *ibid* p 253).

**22. Observe, perceive and consider,**

**then, God's useful kindness** (benevolent utility) **and abruptness** (sheer cutting-off; rigorous severity) – **on the one hand upon those falling: abruptness** (sheer cutting-off); **on the other hand** (or: yet) **upon you: God's useful kindness** (benign, profitable utility), **provided** (or: if) **you should persistently remain in** (or: with; by) **the useful kindness** (or: = continue to be kind and useful). **Otherwise you, also, will proceed in being cut out!** The **useful kindness** (or: benevolent utility) was His grafting the Gentiles into the Christ-tree. This tree into which they were grafted was the cross, where the dead state of all olives trees (wild and

garden olives) was taken into the grave and resurrected into the life of the Spirit (the sap of the olive tree). The Gentiles were cut-off (figure of death to the old) in order to be grafted in. God's **abruptness – the sheer cutting-off** happened to both the wild olive (ending its state of wildness) and the unbelieving branches that needed to be pruned out because they were dead, and the anointing (or, life) would not flow through them. God is after fruitfulness. But the pattern is that **useful kindness** follows pruning (abrupt cutting-off). Yet there remains the need for the branch to continue producing the Tree's fruit, or it, too, will be pruned. This picture

parallels the metaphor of the Vine and the branches that Jesus told to His disciples. The end in view is the same in both metaphors,

**"every one consistently bearing the fruit He periodically clears (or: seasonally cleanses) by pruning, to the end that it can continue bearing more (a greater amount of) fruit.... "This is My implanted goal (impartation of the finished product within; inward directive; interior purpose and destiny): that you keep on loving and accepting one another – correspondingly as (to the same degree as; in the same sphere as) I**

**love and accept you folks"** (John 15:2, 12).

This teaching from Jesus is the same message that Paul is giving to the Gentiles, but the Jews of the community will be instructed as well. They are to be loving and accepting one another.

**23. Now they also, if they should not persistently remain in the lack of faith and trust (or: unbelief), they will proceed in being grafted in, for God is able (capable; is constantly powerful) to graft them back in again!**

You see, useful kindness will follow abrupt pruning. The unbelieving Jews will be given faith to believe when their hardness and callousness has been

trimmed away, and when the veil over their eyes and hearts has been removed by the orchard Owner. This is the **life forth from out of the midst of dead folks** (vs. 15, above): resurrection of the valley of dry bones (Ezk. 37:1-11) by the One Who IS "**the Resurrection and the Life**" (John 11:25) – and He remains "**the same: yesterday, today and on into the ages**" (Heb. 13:8). When a branch is removed from a tree or a vine, it withers (John 15:6) and dies. But in this passage Paul reveals a secret about God's ultimate plans: death is not the end of either His "abrupt cutting-off" or of His "useful kindness."

**24. For since (or: if) you yourself were**

**cut out of the olive tree [which is] wild** (of the field or forest) **by nature, and then to the side of nature** (perhaps: = outside of, or contrary to, nature) **you are** (or: were at one point) **grafted in – into a fine** (beautiful; cultivated; garden) **olive tree – to how much greater an extent** (or: for how much rather) **will these, the ones in accord with nature, proceed in being engrafted into their own olive tree!**

The Gentiles were cut out of their previous wild existence. The wilderness and desolate environment is the exact opposite of a creation. The root idea of the verb *ktizo* (to create) is: to reduce from a state of disorder and wildness; to

bring order out of chaos – and thus to frame and found. They were brought into the new creation – here figured as an orchard-grown olive tree. God's saving work is always **to the side of nature**, for His kingdom is not of or from the estranged, human-dominating System (John 18:36).

Paul's confidence in the goodness of the plans and purposes of God is seen in this superlative expression, "**to how much greater an extent** (or: for how much rather)." Here he is also promoting unity by adding value to the Jewish members of the community: they were branches that grew up **naturally** as a part of the "**fine** (beautiful; cultivated;

garden) **olive tree**," which just incidentally was **their own olive tree** – so they are on the same level with the Gentile members.

Is this an unusual thing for God to do? After He exiled the leaders of Judea to Babylon, did He not have Cyrus return them? What Paul says here exactly follows the teaching of Jesus about the one lost sheep. Even though the Shepherd still had 99 sheep, He WENT AFTER the only one that was lost UNTIL He FOUND it – and then He carried it back to the fold (Lu. 15:4-7). It was the same with the woman who lost ONE coin; she searched UNTIL she found it (vss. 8-10). And then we have

the story of the younger son who decides to leave home and partake of the "wild life" in a foreign country. The story ends with that son returning. Furthermore, the discussion that the Father has with the older brother compares to what Paul has said, above, to the Gentiles in their attitude toward those Jews that were broken out of the olive tree. In the community at Rome, the Gentiles hold the majority position: similar to what an older brother would have in a family.

**25. You see, I am not willing for you folks to continue being ignorant of this secret (or: mystery), brothers (= fellow believers; family) – in order that you folks may not continue being prudent,**

**thoughtful or discreet by** [other MSS: among or within; other MSS: beside] **yourselves** (or: = be conceited) – **that a petrifying, from a part** (a stone-like hardening in some measure; a callousness [extending over] a part), **has been birthed and come into existence in Israel** (or: has happened to Israel) **until which [time]** (or: to the point of which [situation]) **the effect of the full measure** (or: the result of the entire contents; or: = the full impact and full compliment of forces) **from the nations** (or: of the ethnic multitudes; or: – which are the Gentiles –) **may enter in.**

The Gentile members of the audience are having revealed to them the **secret**

(*musterion*; Nanos points out that this word "draws from Jewish apocalyptic language the sense of 'divine secrets now revealed by divine agency' ..." – *ibid* p 255) of God's work upon **a part of Israel** (the leadership and the unbelieving Jews): **a petrifying** – a stone-like hardening in some measure; a callousness over a part – **has been birthed and come into existence in Israel**. It "happened TO" them. This is the "divine passive" again – it is the work of God, which is why it was a secret. But it was to be for a time – **until**. Nanos quotes Bruce W. Longenecker (*Eschatology and the Covenant: A Comparison of 4 Ezra and*

*Romans 1-11*, 1991, p 264),

"For Paul, gentile faith in the Jewish Messiah is the actualization of the Jewish hope for the eschatological ingathering of the nations" (cited in Nanos, *ibid* p 248).

We should note that Paul reveals this secret so that the Gentiles of the Roman community,

**"may not continue being prudent, thoughtful or discreet by [other MSS: among or within; other MSS: beside] yourselves (= be conceited)."**

What does he mean by this? Nanos suggests that this phrase is speaking

about what Paul warns the Gentiles about in vs. 18, above, "**Stop boasting against** (or: Do not be constantly vaunting or exulting over) **the branches!**" and "**Stop being haughty,**" in vs. 20, and so he poses the question of how will the disclosure of this **secret** help these Gentiles not to be "conceited." In other words, this *pro tem* **petrifying** has a purpose which will culminate in the broken-out branches being restored to the olive tree, as vss. 23, 24 and 26 instruct us. Their being broken out is part of a process which God has used to graft the Gentiles into the olive tree (and the new covenant-arrangement), as stated in vss. 17 and

19. Nanos points out that these broken-out branches "have become co-participants in the process of Israel's restoration" (ibid p 259). So love them and value them, and don't be "prudent among yourselves," or be "haughty" toward them! In fact, live in such a manner (ch. 14, below) as to draw them out of their unbelief.

Nanos suggests that the "secret/mystery" is "*why* Israel is stumbling and *how* Israel will be saved.... and this process involves the suffering of those hardened, but certainly not their destruction" (ibid p 260; emphasis original; Cf 11:11, 28, 30-31). He also posits that by the Gentiles thus having their eyes opened to

God's plan, "they will see the depth of their responsibility to 'bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please [them]selves'.... Paul is not describing rejection, but temporary discipline..." (ibid p 261-62; brackets mine). He then quotes Munck on this:

"Israel's unbelief expresses God's hardening of their hearts.... God's hardening implies a redemption purpose toward the Gentiles. The apostolate – and, as we shall see, the remnant – testifies to God's will to save, which is to achieve its purpose after the hardening has fulfilled its function. God hardens

in order to save, and he will therefore save the obdurate as well" (*Christ and Israel*, p 91, cited in Nanos, *ibid* p 262).

Much speculation has been made about the next clause. Just what is **the effect of the full measure from the nations, or, the results of the entire contents of the ethnic multitudes entering in?** Was Paul speaking prophetically about the entrance of the Roman legions into Jerusalem – the full impact and full compliment of forces from the pagans? Consider Lu. 21:24,  
**"And so, folks will keep on falling by [the] mouth of a sword, and [others] will proceed being led captive into all**

**the nations** (or: into the midst to unite with every ethnic group) – **and Jerusalem will continue being progressively trampled by and under pagans** (non-Jews; those of the nations) **until where they can** (or: should) **be fulfilled. And then there will progress being seasons of the ethnic multitudes** (or: fitting situations pertaining to the nations; or: occasions which have the qualities and characteristics of the pagans; or: fertile moments with regard to non-Jews)." [*cf* Rev. 11]

This would be a preterist interpretation. Or, is this referring to the fullness of all ethnic multitudes, which now includes Israel, entering into the kingdom, since

vs. 32, below, says that God has locked up all mankind in disobedience, etc., so as to have mercy upon all? This would be a universalist view. Here Fitzmyer suggests that "the results of the entire contents entering in" means that it,

"... has entered as a graft into the stock of the olive tree that is Israel. Paul speaks in corporate terms and apparently sees a causal connection between the conversion of the 'full number' of the Gentiles and the conversion of the Jews" (ibid p 324).

I suggest that both views can be seen here. The **effect** or **result** of the full measure of force from the Roman armies

(in the Jewish war that ended in AD 70) was that Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, just as Jesus had prophesied they would be (Mat. 24; Lu 21). This buried the temple cultus and ended animal sacrifices – and as Jesus said in John 4:21, the old form of worship would no longer be conducted in Jerusalem. The transition from the age of the works of Law to the age of the Spirit was complete. The Jewish leadership was judged along with its seat of power. Now the categories of Jew and Gentile were completely destroyed (Col. 3:11; Eph. 2:15). There was no more need for a **petrifying** to be upon the Jewish leadership or the rest who rejected Jesus

as the Messiah: now they, like the Gentiles, could one after another be birthed into the reign of the Messiah (the kingdom of the heavens and the Spirit), each one in his or her own class or group (1 Cor. 15:23) when Christ would come to them in the proclaiming of the Message.

Seen from the "finished" work of the cross, all humanity had been placed in the Messiah (as the representative of the first Adam) and was buried with Him (*cf* 6:4, above, and 2 Cor. 5:14), and has been raised in the *eschatos* (or, last) Adam – the Second Humanity.

Existentially, this is an ongoing process (as are the ongoing births of children

into life here on earth). But this Second Humanity is "**a spiritual one** (or: = one animated by spirit)," as Paul indicated in 1 Cor. 15:44 and 46. It is a part of the *eschatos* Adam that is "**a continuously life-making** (life-engendering; life-creating; life-giving) **Spirit** (or: Breath-effect)," as we see in vs. 45 of that passage. And vs. 47 instructs us that "**the Second Human** (Person; Man; [*p* 46 reads: {is} spiritual; other MSS add: {is} the Lord]) [**is made**] **of heaven** (or: sky; atmosphere)." The entire metaphor of the olive tree in vs. 17ff, above, is a picture of a spiritual reality and concerns God's economy, His kingdom and the new arrangement that is

headed up in the risen Messiah. As Paul wrote in Col. 1:

**16. because within Him was created the whole** (or: in union with Him everything is founded and settled, is built and planted, is brought into being, is produced and established; or: within the midst of Him all things were brought from chaos into order) – **the things within the skies and atmospheres, and the things upon the earth** (or: those [situations, conditions and/or people] in the heavens and on the land); **the visible things, and the unseen** (or: unable to be seen;

**invisible) things: whether thrones (seats of power) or lordships (ownership systems) or governments (rulers; leadership systems; sovereignties) or authorities – the whole has been created and all things continue founded, put in order and stand framed through means of Him, and [proceeds, or were placed] into Him (or: = He is the agent and goal of all creation).**

**17. And He is before (prior to; or: maintains precedence of) all things and all people, and the whole has (or: all things have) been placed together and now**

**continues to jointly-stand** (stands cohesively; is made to have a co-standing) **within the midst of and in union with Him.**

In their respective works, cited above, both Nanos and Munck seem to see a then-present application of "**the effect of the full measure** (or: the results of the entire contents) **from the nations** (or: of the ethnic multitudes)." Nanos points to the comparative use of *pleroma* (effects of the full measure, etc.), in 11:12ff, as a starting point of understanding Paul's use of the word in this verse. First we have Paul mentioning Israel's "fullness" (vs. 12) and then the Gentiles' "fullness" (here).

Nanos points to Col. 1:25 where Paul uses the verb form of this word: "to fill full God's Word," and 2 Tim. 4:17 where *pleros* is joined to the verb *phero*: "so that through [Paul] the proclamation may be fully carried and all the nations might hear." Munck also observes that Col. 1:27 speaks of "the secret among the nations," and then concludes, "The fullness of the Gentiles then signifies the achievement of the goal toward which Paul is striving during his preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles: the completion of that preaching" (*Christ and Israel*, p 134, cited in Nanos, *ibid* p 266; see ch. 5 in Nanos for a full discussion).

We have the perfect infinitive of *plerao* in 15:19 where Paul describes his missionary circuit "to have **filled [the region]... [with] the good news of, from, and concerning the Anointed One,**" and then in 15:29 we see that Paul planned to come to them "**in an effect of the fullness of Christ's message of goodness.**" Nanos concludes that Paul uses this verb mainly in association with the completion of his ministry.

If we take the genitive phrase about the ethnic multitudes as being in apposition, then the last part of this verse would read,

**"until which [time] (or: to the**

point of which [situation]) **the effect of the full measure** (or: the result of the entire contents) **from the nations – which are the Gentiles – may enter in."**

This, then, could simply be speaking of the Gentiles being included in the covenant. The **effect** and the **result** of their inclusion is the signal that the new age has come and the prophecies have been fulfilled. "[T]he hardening of part of Israel has completed its function" (Nanos, *ibid* p 267), and thus we have what Paul says in vss. 26-27. The dependent clause, **may enter in**, "carries the sense of time... and figuratively it means to 'come into

something or share in something' (Munck).... Particularly interesting is the observation of Dunn that Paul, who seldom uses this verb, may draw this usage of *eiserchomai* 'on a pre-Pauline tradition which stems from Jesus' where it is frequently employed 'in talk of entering into the "kingdom" or into "life."' This suggests.... the '*incoming* of Gentiles to Zion'" (James D.G. Dunn, *Romans*, WBC p 680-81, emphasis added, Nanos, *ibid* p 267).

And of course, Zion is where we now ARE (Heb. 12:22).

**26. So then, thus, in this manner and with this result: all Israel will progressively be delivered** (rescued,

saved, made whole and restored to their original position [in the olive tree]), **according as it has been written,**

**"The One continuously dragging out of danger and drawing to Himself (The Rescuer; The Deliverer) will repeatedly arrive and be present from out of Zion; He will continue turning irreverence away from Jacob.**

27. **"And this [is] the arrangement for them from beside Me (or: And this [will be] My covenant in, to and for them) when I take away their failures (deviations; sins; mistakes; misses of the target; shooting amiss of the goal)." [Isa.**

59:20-21; 27:9]

The broken-out branches of Israel being "restored to their original position" (delivered; saved; rescued; made whole – the passive voice: the work of God) means their **being engrafted into their own olive tree**, along with the Gentiles and the Jewish Christians.

Consider the conflated adverb: **So then, thus, in this manner and with this result, ALL Israel will be progressively delivered** (saved; etc.) – **ACCORDING AS it has been written.**

This process was prophesied by the prophets, and vs. 25 explained how it was happening. The "**so then, in this manner**" refers back to what he had just

said concerning God's program of the **petrifying** that had **happened to a part of Israel**, and then **the effects of the full measure of the Gentiles** would **enter in**, with the result that **all Israel will proceed in being restored**. **God's power** (ability; capacity) [**leading**] **into deliverance** (1:16, above) was being displayed in the Gentiles being grafted into Israel. We read in the book of Acts how it started with three thousand (2:41) and then the five thousand more (4:4) and later multitudes of men and women were added to the Lord (5:14), and even "many of the priests" (6:7). In Acts 21:20 we read that "**many tens of**

**thousands there are among the Jews of those having trusted and are continuing in believing."** This was the beginning. These represented the remnant among whom the Gentiles were engrafted into God's kingdom. **The One (God) continued dragging them to Himself, and He continues turning irreverence away from Jacob, taking away their failures, deviations and sins (etc.).**

During this same period, someone reached out to the Gentiles in Rome, just as Paul and others did elsewhere. But the broken-out branches continued resisting for as long as the petrifying continued upon them, until the time of

their individual visitation from the Holy Spirit came to them. Yet other Jews continued being added to Christ. And verse 26 clearly states the outcome when **the effects of their filled-full condition** (the result of their full measure with the entire contents), vs. 12, above, is finished. This is the outcome of the **secret**. "**All Israel**" refers to the totality of the branches – the remnant of Israel that became the called-out covenant communities, who remained in their olive tree, plus the restored branches who had been broken out.

"The bedrock of the entire Hebrew Bible is impregnated with this vision of universal

salvation. It is not by chance that the Great Book begins with the portrayal of a single universe and closes with the vision of a reunited humanity.... no bearer of God's image is without salvation..." (Pinchas Lapide and Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul: Rabbi and Apostle*, 1984 p 48-49; cited in Nanos, *ibid* p 282).

E.P. Sanders, in commenting on *The Psalms of Solomon*, says,

"The 'free grace' passages (God's mercy to Israel) have to do with the *election and preservation of Israel*. They show... that all Israel is elect and as such is 'saved'"

(ibid p 396; emphasis his).

And when commenting on *Jubilees*,

"It is repeatedly emphasized that the basis of salvation is membership in the covenant and loyalty to it" (ibid p 367).

As for the Rabbinic literature of the period, in the section on the *Tannaitic Literature*,

"Sanhedrin 10:1 by its very wording (literally, 'All Israel – there is for *them* a share in the world to come;' thus 'All Israelites have') indicates that it applies to individuals, not just to the continuation of the Israelite nation" (ibid p 182; emphasis his).

Next Paul grounds his argument in quotes from Isa. Notice the verses that he chose: verses that express God's sovereignty and show that He does the saving:

- a) **continuously dragging out of danger and drawing to Himself**
- b) **will continue turning irreverence away from Jacob**
- c) **when I take away their failures (etc.).**

No works of Law here; no mention of believing; no mention of human choosing; no mention of human will. This is how it will be, for God has pledged to do it (note: the quote is from the LXX). This is an answer to those

who question God's faithfulness (the perceived theodicy issue), and it shows that His purposes are still "to the Jew first" (just as the Messiah was sent first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Mat. 15:24) and it is His branches that now take Him to the ethnic multitudes, and to unconvinced Israel.

**He will repeatedly arrive and be present from out of Zion.** Zion was another term for

Jerusalem. Here we can hear an echo from Heb. 12 that describes our current situation:

**22. But to the contrary, you folks have approached so that you are now at Mount Zion –**

**even in a city of a continuously living God; in "Jerusalem upon heaven"**

(or: in a Jerusalem pertaining to and having the character and qualities of a superior, or added, heaven and atmosphere; or: in Jerusalem [situated] upon, and comparable to, the atmosphere) – **also among ten-thousands** (or: myriads) **of agents and messengers** (people with a/the message):

**23. [that is] in (or: to) an assembly of an entire people (or:**

an assembly of all; a universal convocation) **and in** (or: to) **a summoning forth** (or: a called-out and gathered community) **of firstborn folks having been copied** (from-written, as from a pattern; or: enrolled; registered) **within [the; or: various] atmospheres** (or: heavens), **and in** (or: to; with) **God, a Judge** (an Evaluator and Decider) **of all mankind, even among** (or: to; with) **spirits of just folks** (or: breath-effects from those who are fair and equitable and in right relationship within the Way pointed out) **having been brought**

**to the destined goal** (perfected; finished; matured; made complete),

**24. and in** (or: to) **Jesus, a Medium** (or: an agency; an intervening substance; a middle state; one in a middle position; a go-between; an Umpire; a Mediator) **of a new and fresh** (young; recently-born) **arrangement** (covenant; settlement; a deposit which moves throughout in every direction; a placing through the midst; a will and testament), **and to and in blood of sprinkling, and to One continuously speaking something**

**superior to** (or: stronger and better than) **Abel**.

28. **Corresponding to** (With respect to; In accord with; Down from) **the Good News** (the message of goodness and well-being), **on the one hand, [they were] enemies** (hostile ones; ones regarded as enemies) **because of** (or: through; with a view to) **you folks; on the other hand, according to** (in accord with; down from; corresponding to) **the selection** (the choosing out; the election) **[they are] loved ones, because of** (with a view to) **the fathers** (= ancestors),

"Corresponding to the Good News" simply means "in accord with God's

plan." For His purpose of fulfilling the Promise to Abraham of blessing all the families of the earth, He made the Jewish leadership to be hostile and regarded as enemies of the cross. This was **because of [the Gentiles]** – to bring them into His new covenant. But on the other hand, God **loves** them – because of the promises that He made to their ancestors (**the "fathers"**). And so He will take the sins and deviations away from Jacob (a figure here for these "broken out, unbelieving branches"). Fitzmyer considers this verse, "A summary of 11:11-24" (ibid).

**29. for the grace-effects and the calling of God** (or: for you see, the

results of God's joyous favor and invitation) **[are] void of regret and without change in purpose** (or: unregretted; not to be regretted afterward; are not subject to recall; = are never taken back).

The word **for** grounds what he is about to say in what he just said, "**because of the fathers.**" God's **calling** carries **effects** and brings **results**. His calling of Israel to be a people in covenant with Him was an act of grace and joyous favor to them. The covenant was the **effect** of the **calling**. It was an arrangement with stipulations, as Deut. 28:15-68 makes very clear. But in all of God's dealings with humans there are

always **effects of His grace**, and these effects, observable throughout Israel's history, witness to us that what He has promised is always **void of regret and without change in purpose**. Israel's story – including "the divine activity that has left aside most of Israel" (Kirk, *ibid* p 183) – has all been a part of God's plan for humanity from the very beginning of creation. The idea of "let Us make humanity in Our image" involved the entire story: from Eden to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Who was the first person to bear and display God's image. So neither God's calling nor His grace-effects – both of which are gifts to humanity – are either

regretted or subject to recall. They are parts of His purpose of the ages.

**30. For just as you folks were once** (or: at one time) **incompliant to God** (or: unconvinced, disobedient, unwilling to be persuaded and stubborn by God), **yet now** (at the present time) **you folks are** (or: were) **mercied** (made the recipients of mercy) **by** (or: in; with) **the incompliance** (disobedience; stubbornness; lack of being convinced) **of these folks.**

Verses 30 and 31 level the playing field for the Gentile and Jewish components of the Roman community. God's fairness and equity (His justice) are also on display. We get a bird's-eye (or, spirit)

view of His purpose in the turn-around for Israel which ended in some of them being cast into "outer darkness" (*cf* Jesus' parables where those of the Jewish leadership were the players that got left out or cast out). Now we can understand why "It is God who hardened part of Israel" (E.P. Sanders, quoted in Kirk, *ibid* p 183). Now we view God's "end game."

God left the Gentiles (the wild olive tree) outside of Israel's covenant and left them in an **incompliant**, unconvinced, disobedient, unwilling to be persuaded and stubborn state of being so that He could display His **mercy** to such a condition, and gather them in "while they

were yet failures and outcasts" (5:8, above).

In rendering the dative of **incompliance** as an instrumental function, "by," I have shown the important part that the "disobedience and stubbornness" of the Jews played in what Peter described as, **"the specific, determined, bounded (limited) plan (intended purpose, design and counsel) and foreknowledge (intimate knowledge which was experienced beforehand) of God (or: whose source and character was God; or: which pertained to and was God"** (Acts 2:23).

The Gentiles were **mercied by** "their

lack of being convinced." Yes, God works all into good.

"God is behind the disobedience of Israel to the gospel proclamation, for the purpose of the inclusion of the Gentiles. This is how God is bringing about the salvation of all Israel (vs. 26). As Bruce Longenecker has pointed out, 'even unbelieving Israel is playing a role in God's redemptive story'" (Kirk, *ibid* p 188).

The locative and associative functions of the dative also apply: the Gentiles being "made recipients of mercy" came IN the Jews' incomppliance and was

hand-in-hand WITH their stubbornness. These two groups showed the two hands of God at work upon the clay of humanity as He was making Adam into a new container for His glory.

31. **Thus, also, these now** (at the present time) **are incomppliant** (stubborn; disobedient; unconvinced) **by** (or: for; to) **your mercy, to the end that they also may now be mercied** (would be the recipients of mercy).

The extreme **mercy** that came in God's grace to the ethnic multitudes (that were dead in their errors and deviations) caused the blatant **incompliance** by the Jewish leadership – but this can only be seen in hindsight, and with the revelation

of the **secret**. Why was this the case? Because God had planned it to be this way. He hardened the Jewish leadership so that they would crucify their Messiah, so that the new age could be inaugurated and that the Gentiles would be brought into the new covenant. It was the Gentiles' **being mercied** that was the instrument for Jewish disobedience. God began with the end in view, just as Paul goes on to say: **to the end that they also may now be mercied**. Mercy is what is given when it is not deserved or when folks are helpless. It comes in the form of grace, and as a favor. So now we see the other side of the coin: the **mercy to the Gentiles** was the path

that brought **incompliance** to the Jews, which then leads to the Jews **now being mercied** in the same way that the Gentiles are being mercied. The stubbornness of the Jewish leadership, along with zealots such as Saul, resulted in the crucifixion of the Messiah. This brought an end of the Mosaic arrangement. But with the resurrection of Jesus, there was a new humanity with a spiritual arrangement that made both Jew and Gentile to be "one new humanity" in God's new economy. Now the same mercy that was shown to the Gentiles is now shown to even the disobedient Jews. All are treated in the same way – God leveled the field

through the work of Christ. Note the **now** in the final clause. This was a situation that existed in Paul's day – it does not await some future event. The **incompliance** and the **mercy** were both wrapped up in the crucifixion and the resurrection.

Now taking a less oblique look at this same dative phrase, we read that the Jews are "unconvinced, **for** [the Gentiles'] mercy" – and the end in view is that these same Jews "would be the recipients of mercy." Following the Day of Pentecost, and then the "sent-off folks" taking the message to the Gentiles, the Jews continued "unconvinced **to**" Gentile inclusion without their

complying to the Law (Judaizing). The next verse explains the reason for all this:

**32. For you see, God encloses, shuts up and locks all mankind** (everyone; the entire lot of folks) **into incompliance** (disobedience; stubbornness; lack of being convinced), **to the end that He could** (or: would; should) **mercy all mankind** (may make everyone, the all, recipients of mercy)!

And so here Paul makes a summation of his argument that began in 9:1, above. Jews and Gentiles alike were all **enclosed, shut up and locked into incompliance**. To us it may seem like a convoluted plan, but apparently it makes

sense to God : ) As Paul said in Eph. 2, He had made of The Two (Jew and Gentile) One new humanity, in Christ. In Adam (ch. 5, above) **all mankind** was included in Adam's disobedience. This is what Paul is again saying here.

But the second half of this verse is a purpose clause – it has an end in view. God did all this **to the end that He could** (or: would; should) **mercy all mankind**, i.e., make everyone – the all – recipients of mercy. What good news!

C.H. Dodd says it well:

"The universal state of disobedience has been set forth in 1:18-3:20. It has been shown in the present chapter that this state

of mankind is within the purpose of God... But the final aim of that purpose is a state in which God's mercy is as universally effective as sin has been. In other words, it is the will of God that all mankind shall ultimately be saved" (ibid p 183).

We can also conclude that Israel's condition at the time that Paul wrote this (pre-AD 70) was a temporary situation. When the conjunction of the previous and the present ages was complete, it seems reasonable to assume that the one new humanity would fully be a reality, and even the unbelieving Jews would be treated just like the unbelieving

Gentiles. All would await their pre-determined time of rebirth into the new creation – i.e., into Christ.

**33.O, the depth of [the] riches** (wealth; resources) **and wisdom and intimate, experiential knowledge and insight of God** (or: from God)! **How unsearchable** (inscrutable) **the effects of His decisions** (the results of the distinctive separations, judicial awards, judgments and evaluations from Him), **and untrackable** (untraceable) **His ways** (paths; roads).

The **riches, wisdom and experiential knowledge and insight of God**, and which comes "**from God**," have great **depth**. He is speaking specifically about

the plan and purpose of God which he has just been laying out for his listeners.

**His ways** with humanity are

"untraceable" and **untrackable**. They have to be revealed, for until He discloses them to us they remain His secret. But, as we have seen, above,

"The present 'stumbling' of 'the rest' of Israel is somehow, in the 'depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God' a blessing and not a curse, bringing salvation to the gentiles and provoking those of Israel who may not have reconsidered faith in Christ Jesus to do so.... The temporary role of hardening will

be over, and Paul hopes, so too will be their 'stumbling'" (Nanos, *ibid* p 263).

The **effects of His decisions** about Adam, about Abraham, about Israel, and now about the Gentiles, cannot be **searched** out by the human mind. They must be spiritually discerned, after the Spirit of God opens them up to us. So Paul is indirectly admonishing his listeners to look to the Spirit in order to perceive what he has been saying about God's "paths" within His creation, and where He is going with His plan as He take us, in Christ, through the coming ages.

34. **For,**

**"Who knows (knew by intimate experience) the Lord's [= Yahweh's] mind?**

**Or, who becomes (or: came to be) His planning adviser (His design counselor; the one who makes determinations with Him)?"** [Isa. 40:13, LXX]

**35. Or,**

**"Who gives to Him first, and it will continue being repaid to him?"** [Job. 41:3]

Again he uses Scripture to emphasize the point that he has just made. At the same time he is opening the minds of his listeners as to how to investigate what the Spirit said in Israel's writings, and

how to read them from the perspective of the new covenant, which is in a creation that is different from the times of those early writings.

Isa. 40:13 and Job 41:3 both highlight God's sovereignty. Witherington rightly point out that, "God's mind is unknowable unless he reveals it" (ibid p 277).

**36. Because, forth from out of the midst of Him, then through the midst of Him (or: through means of Him), and [finally] into the midst of Him, [is; will be] the whole (everything; [are] all things; or: = Because He is the source, means and goal/destiny of all things – everything leads into Him)! By Him (In**

Him; To Him; For Him; With Him) **[is]** **the glory** (the manifestation of that which calls forth praise; the reputation; the notion; the opinion; the imagination; the credit; the splendor) **on into the ages. It is so** (Amen; So be it; Count on it)!

The lyrics of a song come to mind, "nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could..." And so it is. Witherington cites the Stoic philosopher Marcus Aurelius (*Meditations* 4:23), "From thee are all things, in thee are all things, unto thee are all things" (ibid p 278), and Fitzmyer also points to it. It was both a secular and a sacred (Biblical) perception in Paul's day that all of

creation came **forth from out of the midst of [God]**. Fitzmyer rightly says, "The preposition *ex* denotes 'origin'..." (ibid). God is the Alpha... and He is also the Omega. Isa. 44:6 tells us, "I am the First and I am the Last." (*cf* Isa. 48:12; Rev.1:11, 17; 22:13)

"Paul declares that God is the beginning of the substance of all things by the words *of Him* and the bond of their subsistence by the expression *through Him* and their final end by the term *to Him*" (Origen, "Against Celsus," *Ancient Christian Commentary*, ibid p 303).

**The whole** of existence and creation –

everything – passes **through the midst of [God]**. Acts 17:27-28 immediately come to mind, and beginning with vs. 26,

**"Besides this, He made (formed; or: constructs; or: produced) from out of one [man, or, source; D and other MSS add: blood] every ethnic group of mankind, to continue dwelling (or: to be repeatedly residing) upon all [the] face of the earth... to be continuously seeking God, since really, in fact, they could feel about and grope, and then at some point might find Him! And, to be sure, [He] is continuously**

**being an Originator** (or: He is constantly subsisting, being inherently [the] Under-beginner) **not far away** (or: a long distance) **from each one of us! For you see, within the midst of and in union with Him we continuously live** (or, as a subjunctive: could be constantly living), **and are constantly moved about and put into motion, and continue existing** (experiencing Being)."

What a universal horizon Paul had! And his world view had a glorious end for everything, which of course will include everyone: **and [finally] into the midst of Him, [is; will be] the whole.**

I have been waiting for this verse ever since I began this commentary : ) This is what our friend Ray Prinzing termed "the law of circularity." Nothing ever exists outside of God, from the Beginning, through the Midst, and especially on into the End. God is humanity's *telos*, its end, its goal, its destiny. The coming **out** and the passing **through** is what we term our existential experience of "being," and the realm of His creation. David was given insight into some of our experiences of "passing through,"

"He leads me in right paths, for the sake of His Name. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I fear no evil

or harm, for You are with me....  
Goodness and Mercy will pursue  
me all the days of my life" (Ps.  
23:3-6).

And in Ps. 139:8 we read, "... if I make  
my bed in Sheol (the unseen, the realm  
of the dead, the grave) You are there."  
Yet even there, "[His] rod and [His]  
staff comfort [us]" (Ps. 23:4b). Through  
the midst of this "**through**" is what is  
termed "the ages." Some ages are now  
past and gone; we are in one now; there  
are ages lying out ahead for mankind and  
the entire creation.

We now have the firstfruit of the Spirit  
(8:23, above), but it is inconceivable  
what it will "be" to be in that Omega

"midst of God."

I paraphrased part of this verse, because I just could not get enough of it:

"Because He is the source, means and goal/destiny of all things – everything leads into Him." And we should not too quickly pass over his last clause, simply terming it a doxology and thus giving it little thought:

**"By Him (In Him; To Him; For Him; With Him) [is] the glory."**

Each of these alternate renderings speaks volumes. **The glory** can be perceived as His entire plan and execution of creation and the ages, which is culminated in the finished Product of His purpose: The Second

Human; The Christ,

**"Who is the Image** (portrait; the Exact Formed Likeness; the Figure and Representation; visible likeness and manifestation) **of the not-seen God** (or: the unable to be seen God; the invisible God), **the Firstborn of all creation because within Him was created the whole** (or: in union with Him everything is founded and settled, is built and planted, is brought into being, is produced and established; or: within the midst of Him all things were brought from chaos into order)... **the whole has been created and all**

**things continue founded, put in order and stand framed through means of Him, and [proceeds, or were placed] into Him (or: = He is the agent and goal of all creation)" – Col. 1:15-16.**

It was done, and continues being done, **by Him**. It also exists **in Him**. It is progressively coming **to Him**. It was and is all done **for Him**. And it has always happened **with Him**.

The manifestation of that which calls forth praise; the reputation; the notion; the opinion; the imagination; the credit; the splendor – all describe His creation, His design for humanity, His work of the cross, His resurrection life... everything.

They are God's tapestry that portrays Himself and what He has done – and hints (via the "notion" from His "imagination" within us) at the beauty that lies ahead for all. And He gets all the "credit."

"What person who believes that he lives *from Him and through Him and to Him* will dare to make the One who encompasses in Himself the life of each of us a witness of a life which does not reflect Him" (Gregory of Nyssa, "On Perfection," *Ancient Christian Com.*, *ibid* p 304; emphasis original).

Stern notes the "three chief areas in

which god manifests his nature and power... creation (**from him**), revelation (**through him**) and redemption (**to him**)" (ibid p 427; emphasis original).

The next section, or argument, is referred to by Harvey as "Christian Behavior," by Dodd as "The righteousness of God in Christian Living," by Witherington as "Living Sacrifices and Loving Service," by Barclay as "The True Worship and Essential Change," by Knoch as "The Conduct of the Saints," by Fitzmyer as "The Demands of the New Life," and Barth titles the first part as "The Problem of Ethics." Of the section of 12:1—15:13, Fitzmyer says,

"As it stands in Rom., it implies that the legal prescriptions of Moses are no longer the norm for Christian conduct. But there are demands on Christians, and the principle at work in all of them is charity [love]" (ibid; brackets mine).

Witherington quotes J.D.G. Dunn, "chapters 12-15 flow naturally from and constitute a necessary corollary to the overall argument of chapters 1-11..." (ibid p 280). With this sample of characterizations in mind, let us begin the next meal.



## Chapter 12

1. **Consequently, brothers, I am repeatedly calling you folks alongside to advise, exhort, implore and encourage you, through God's compassions to stand your bodies alongside** (or: to set or place your bodies beside) **[the] Well-pleasing, Set-apart** (Holy; Different-from-the-usual), **Living Sacrifice by God** (or: in God; for God; to God; with God), **[this being] your sacred service which pertains to thought, reason and communication** (or: your reasoned and rational service; the logical and Word-based service from you folks; or: =

temple service).

The conjunction **Consequently** anchors what he is about to say in what he has just said, above. "God's mercies form the pivot of the book of Romans" (Stern, *ibid* p 427). Because of God's plan for the ages, and keeping in mind the previous eleven chapters, the folks of the fellowship in Rome (the **brothers** in Christ; the fellow believers) are **called alongside** by Paul (meaning that He wants their close attention) so that he can **advise, exhort, implore and encourage** them to take a particular stand – both together and within Rome. They are implored **to stand [their] bodies alongside**, or put another way,

they are to "set or place [their] bodies beside," the **Well-pleasing, Set-apart, Living Sacrifice by God.**

He is asking them to live out their lives in solidarity with the finished work of Jesus on the cross. He is saying, "Take your stand with the crucified Messiah." In 1 Cor. 2:2, Paul told them,

**"You see I decided not to see or know anything among you folks, except Jesus Christ – and this One being one having been crucified (executed on a stake)!"**

When he came to see them, all he wanted to see was the effects of the crucified Christ in them. This meant for both Jew and Gentile that their physical

living (figured here by "**your bodies**") would present the work of the crucified Messiah both to one another and to the world of Rome. This would be the full extent of their **sacred service which pertains to thought, reason and communication**. Two other ways of saying this are,

a) your reasoned and rational service

b) the logical and Word-based service from you folks.

The word used for service is found in Heb. 9:1 and 9:6, and there it speaks of the tabernacle or "temple service" of the priests as they performed duties on behalf of the people whom they

represented. The verb form is used in Lu. 4:8 and Mat. 4:10 where Jesus pits service to God against idolatry, referring to Deut. 6: 13-14, when He is being tested by the adversary, and it is used in Heb. 9:9, referring to the cultic work of the priests, on behalf of the people. Paul uses this verb in 1:9 in reference to his relationship to God, **"to, in and with Whom I continuously render service** (or: for Whom I am hired to constantly work), **within my spirit** (or: in union with my Breath-effect; in my attitude)." Then he used it in 1:25 in regard to those who **rendered religious service to and for the creation.**

In Phil. 3:3 Paul again uses this religious

word for spiritual service,

**"For you see, we ourselves are**  
(exist being) **The Circumcision:**  
**the people** (or: those)  
**continuously rendering sacred**  
**service in a spirit of God** (or: by  
God's Breath-effect; to God's  
Spirit; with God's breath; [some  
MSS: service to God in spirit;  
*p46* omits "God," so simply:  
serving in spirit]) **and constantly**  
**making our boast** (being loud-  
tongued, vaunting and exulting)  
**within, and in union with, Christ**  
**Jesus; even folks** (or: those)  
**being people having been**  
**persuaded and thus continuing**

**to put no confidence within flesh**  
(= having no reliance upon what is physical: e.g., religious works or natural heritage; or: the estranged human nature; [comment: this could be a reference to animal sacrifices]).

Then in Acts 24:14 he said that,

**"according to the Way** (or: corresponding to the Path) – **which they are normally calling a sect** (or: maintaining [to be] a party; or: terming heresy) – **in this way am I habitually performing sacred service to the God of** (or: pertaining to) **the fathers** (or: the

ancestral God)..."

And in Acts 27:23, he told the folks in the ship, amidst the storm,

**"because there stood by me, in this night, an agent of (or: a messenger from) the God from Whom as a source I continue existing (or: of Whom I am and to Whom I belong) and to Whom, for Whom, in Whom and by Whom I perform as a servant."**

These examples of how Paul used this term should color in the picture of what he is saying here. Paul stood himself in the service of his King and Owner, and figuratively placed himself at Christ's side as being ready to serve God through

serving people. We are able to do the same because of there being,

**"within the midst of the throne and of the four living ones, and within the midst of the elders... a little Lamb standing, as one having been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes – which are the Seven Spirits of God (or: God's seven Breath-effects/Attitudes)" – Rev. 5:6.**

The **Well-pleasing, Set-apart** (Holy; Different-from-the-usual), **Living Sacrifice by God** (or: in God; for God; to God; with God) has been resurrected and is **standing within the midst of the throne**. He is **"the Root of David [who]**

**overcame [death in order] to open the little book (scroll) and to loose (or: destroy) its seals"** (Rev. 5:5). This was done **by God, in God, for God, to God and with God**. And we are called to stand at His side, or as Paul says in Eph. 2:6,

**"to sit... within and in union with Christ Jesus."**

Ludwig Feuerbach, in his chapter on "The Mystery of the Suffering God," lends this insight into our call in Christ:

"To suffer is the highest command of Christianity – the history of Christianity is the history of the Passion of Humanity" (*The Essence of Christianity*, Harper

& Brothers, 1957 p 61).

This is the call to the cruciform life: being molded in the image of Christ who gave Himself to humanity to be "the sum of all human misery" (ibid p 59). As we "place our bodies beside" the crucified-yet-arisen Messiah, we are taking a stand alongside Love, and, "Love attests itself by suffering" (ibid p 59). He displayed the image of God and was anointed with "the Seven Spirits [a figure of the fullness] of God." This Lamb that was slaughtered is a picture of "the suffering God," of Whom Feuerbach says,

"God suffers, [which] means in truth nothing else than: God is a

Heart. The heart is the source, the center of all suffering.... The mystery of the suffering God is therefore the mystery of feeling, sensibility. A suffering God is a feeling, sensitive God.... feeling is absolute, divine in its nature" (ibid p 62, 63; brackets mine).

Kirk rightly observes that, "Pauline ethics are simultaneously a call to live in both the death and the resurrection life of Christ. In Romans, the focus of Paul's ethical exhortation has clearly fallen on the resurrection side of the Christ event" (ibid p 214).

**2. And stop constantly conforming yourselves to** (or, as passive: So then,

quit being repeatedly molded by,  
fashioned for or patterned together with)  
**this age** [with other MSS: and not to be  
continuously configured to this age, or  
not to constantly remodel yourself for  
this age], **but on the contrary, be  
progressively transformed**  
(transfigured; changed in form and  
semblance) **by the renewing** (or: in the  
renewal; for the making-back-up-new  
again) **of your mind** [with other MSS:  
from The Mind; of the intellect;  
pertaining to the faculties of perceiving  
and understanding; of the mindset,  
disposition, inner orientation and world  
view] **into the [situation and condition  
for] you folks to be habitually**

**examining in order to be testing and, after scrutiny, distinguishing and approving what [is] God's will (design; purpose; resolve; intent): the good and well-pleasing, even perfect (finished, complete and destined)!**

(or: = the thing [that is] virtuous, satisfying and able to succeed in its purpose.)

Paul can only say this to folks who have been redeemed and set free (6:18, 22; 8:2, above) from slavery to the death, to sin, and to the control of the dominating System of **this age**. This can only be done by one who has existentially been placed into the Way, which is Christ.

**"You will progressively come to**

**know the Truth** (or: Reality; that which is unsealed, open and without concealment) **by intimate experience, and the Truth** (Reality) **will progressively liberate and make** (or: set) **you free....**

**"Therefore, if the Son should** (or: would) **at some point liberate or begin to make** (or: set) **you free, you folks will progressively exist being free ones in your very essence and being"** (John 8:32, 36).

It was being molded to the image of the alienated self, rather than of God, that brought the gush of misery into the ages

of existential life. This "**current age** (or: the present indefinite period of time, or eon)" – Tit. 2:12 – is "**the present misery-gushing and worthless age, the space of time having been inserted and now standing in union with base qualities**" from which "**He would carry us out from the midst**" (Gal. 1:4). It is the age of the earth that has not yet been existentially joined to the Age of the Messiah, the Age of the Spirit. It is the parallel universe where folks yet remain and exist "**being dead ones by** (or: to; with; in) **the results and effects of your stumblings aside** (offences; wrong steps) **and failures to hit the mark** (or: mistakes; errors; times of falling short;

sins; deviations)" – Eph. 2:1 – awaiting their particular class, or order, in order to be made alive in Christ (1 Cor. 15:23). It is the age of existence for those who are still a part of "**the present Jerusalem, [which] continues in slavery (or: bondage) with her children**" (Gal. 4:25). Being conformed to the age of the old covenant leads one back into slavery.

But due to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and through the power and ability of God that has been given to us, we can now "**be progressively transformed** (transfigured; changed in form and semblance) **by the renewing** (or: in the renewal; for the making-back-up-new

again) of [our] mind [with other MSS: from The Mind; of the intellect; pertaining to the faculties of perceiving and understanding; of the mindset, disposition, inner orientation and world view]." This is the work of the Potter (God) upon the clay (us). Following the MS tradition that reads "The Mind," and reading the noun as an ablative, we see that this transformation comes **from The Mind**, for we have been given "**Christ's mind** (a mind which is Anointed, and which is Christ)!" – 1 Cor. 2:16.

Yet, reading the MSS that say, **your mind**, we understand that the work of **progressive transformation** is done by **the renewing** – the "making-back-up-

new again" – is accomplished by the Spirit of God that dwells within us. The imperative verb is in the passive voice – and this is the divine passive, i.e., it is the work of God.

**"For you see, God is the One habitually being inwardly active, constantly working and progressively effecting [results] within you folks – both the willing (intending; purposing; resolving) and the [situation] to be continuously effecting the action and inward work – above the thing that pleases (or: over [the situation of] well-thinking and delight; for the sake of [His] good**

pleasure)." – Phi. 2:13.

So whether the imperative in the first clause is middle, **stop constantly conforming yourselves**, or passive, "quit being repeatedly molded by, fashioned for or patterned together with," the good news is that this is a work of God's Spirit – it is not up to us to transform ourselves. This renewal brings us,

**"into the [situation and condition for] you folks to be habitually examining in order to be testing and, after scrutiny, distinguishing and approving what [is] God's will (design; purpose; resolve; intent).**

And His design it to bring us into Christ's image. His resolve is to bring us,

**"into (or: unto) [the] measure of [the] stature (full age; prime of life) of the entire content which comprises the Anointed One**

(or: which is the result of the full number which is the Christ; of the effect of the fullness from the [Messiah]; of the effect of that which fills and completes that which pertains to the Christ; of the result of the filling from, and which is, the Christ)" – Eph 4:13.

Above, in 8:5-6, Paul addressed the thinking of the previous age of “the flesh,” comparing it with the new age in Christ, and how that to “**habitually think about, have an understanding and outlook based upon, are inclined to, set their mind on and are disposed to the things of the flesh.... [is, or brings] death.**” But in contrast, “**the result of the thinking (mind-set; disposition; thought and way of thinking; outlook) of the spirit (or: the Spirit; the Breath-effect; the Attitude) [is; brings] Life and Peace.**”

The **will**, the intent, the design, the purpose, the resolve is described as **the good and well-pleasing, even perfect**

(finished, complete and destined)! Or, this can mean "the thing [that is] virtuous, satisfying and able to succeed in its purpose." The word **perfect** is the adjective form of the Greek *telos*, and so suggests the concept of the goal that God intends.

**3. For, through the grace and favor being suddenly given to me, I am saying to (or: for) everyone being among you folks not to be continually over-opinionated or elated (to be constantly hyper-thinking to the point of being haughty, arrogant or having a sense of superiority; to be habitually over-thinking issues; to constantly mind things above; to be overweening) beyond what**

**is necessary** (binding; proper), **but rather to think** (mind; be disposed) **into the disposition to be sane and of a sound mind, as God divides and distributes** (or: parted) **to, in and for each one a measure of faith** (a meted amount of firm persuasion; a measured portion of trust; a [specific or allotted] ration of confidence and loyalty).

The **grace and favor** that was **suddenly given to [him]** on the road to Damascus, upon God's blinding him and halting his mission as a Pharisee to eradicate Christianity, humbled him and showed him what he was in being apart from union with the resurrected Jesus, his Messiah. He had learned by experience

**not to be over-opinionated or elated beyond what was necessary and proper.** Our opinions will always come short, for,

**"If anyone continues imagining (supposing; presuming) to have come to know anything through his experience, he not as yet knows according as it continues binding and necessary [for him] to personally know (or: he does not yet have insight to the level as he ought to have insight)" – 1 Cor. 8:2.**

Furthermore, through all the years since that fateful day, his Lord and Master had instructed Paul about Jewish "hyper-

thinking" to the point of being "haughty, arrogant" or about having a "sense of superiority" over the Gentiles, or even about the outcasts among his own people.

He had learned not to be habitually over-thinking issues or to constantly put his mind on "things above" the average person. He had learned his place of solidarity with all human beings, and that everything which he had was a gift of God's grace.

There are times when it is "proper" to re-think issues that one once thought he or she understood. It is always "binding" to "mind the things of the spirit," and it is always **necessary** to focus on God.

Paul is not admonishing against such things, but rather against what is self-centered and which lacks love or consideration for others. We should all **"think (mind; be disposed) into the disposition to be sane and of a sound mind, as God divides and distributes (or: parted) to, in and for each one a measure of faith."** In accord with his usual teaching, Paul presents God as the One who is the source of **faith** – and even a **sound mind**. It is worth pondering the fact that **God divides and distributes – or parted – "a measure of faith."** The parenthetical expansion informs us that this last phrase can also be read:

a) a meted amount of firm persuasion

b) a measured portion of trust

c) a [specific or allotted] ration of confidence and loyalty.

It would seem that no one is given "more" than anyone else. This "meted amount" or "measured portion" is **distributed, by God, to, in and for each one.** If we perceive that these spiritual gifts and qualities are aspects, traits or qualities of God, then when we are given Life, or the Spirit, or Christ, the faith, trust, firm persuasion, confidence and loyalty are all quite simply God that is **parted** (or, imparted) to us. He is the Manna, the Bread and Drink that is given

to us, just as a soldier was given his "ration" of food. Stern suggests that God's distribution of this trust contains a "particular pattern of trust" (ibid) for each person.

**4. For you see, just as** (or: according to what is encompassed) **in one body we continuously have** (constantly hold and possess) **many members, yet all the members do not have the same mode of acting** (do not constantly hold the same function),

As he moves to the body metaphor, we can look back to vs. 3 and understand that when a person eats his "portion" of food, all members of the body receive the same nourishment from that one

"meted amount" of food that was dished up. This section, through 13:10, below, describes "general guidelines for Messianic communal life" (Stern, *ibid*, p 428).

He is comparing the Roman community to a unified organism: a body. We can see more of his perceptions of "Christ's body" in 1 Cor. 12. There, in vs. 4-6, we see similar instructions concerning the distributions from God,

**4. Now there continue being different distributions (divided-out apportionments) of the effects of favor and the results of grace, yet the same Spirit (Breath-effect; Attitude),**

**5. and there are different distributions of attending services (divided-out apportionments of dispensings), and yet the same Lord (or: Owner; Master; [= Christ or Yahweh]);**

**6. also there continue being different distributions of the results of inner workings and the effects of inward operations, and still, the same God – the One continuously working inwardly and progressively activating all things within and in union with all people (or: constantly energizing and**

operating the whole within the midst of all things).

Then we read in vs.11 of that same chapter,

**"Now the one and the same Spirit (or: Breath-effect; Attitude) is habitually working within (energizing, activating and operating) all these things, constantly dividing, apportioning and distributing in (to; for) each person his own [effect of grace], correspondingly as He progressively intends (is habitually willing; continuously purposes)."**

Just as the **Spirit** is habitually **working**

**within... constantly dividing,**  
**apportioning and distributing** the effects and results of **grace** among the Corinthians, in the same way is God **distributing** Himself as **faith** (etc.) in vs. 3, above. But here Paul is pointing out that not everyone **has the same mode of acting**, or has the same function. In vss. 5-8, below, he gives further explanation (similar to an expanded version of the same in 1 Cor. 12:12-27) along with some examples.

**5. thus we, the many, are and continue to exist being one body within Christ** (in union with [the] Anointed), **yet individually** (or: the situation being in accord with one), **members of one**

**another** (or: but still, [being] on one level, [are] members whose source is, and who belong to, each other).

Just as with the situation of divisions among the covenant group in Corinth where in ch. 12 of his letter to them (1 Cor.) he used the body metaphor to call to their minds that they were, in fact, one body in Christ, so here we should keep in mind that his argument is leading up to addressing the division between the "weak" and the "strong" in the community in Rome (14:1-15:13, below). He is laying the same foundation of reasoning here that he did for Corinth.

Verse 5, here, makes a beautiful

statement: **"we, the many, exist being... members of one another."** That is like saying, "I am a part of you, and you are a part of me." In 1 Cor. 12:26 he gives an example of this,

**"And further, whether one member is continuing to experience the effect of something, or constantly undergoes suffering, all the members continually experience the effect or the suffering together with [it]; or if a member is being constantly glorified or is progressively receiving a good reputation, all the members are continuously**

## **rejoicing together with [it]."**

That is more than solidarity, it is the literal meaning of "koinonia" – common being or existence. The picture describes an organic relationship that is ontological, not just theoretical.

Rendering the last phrases of vs. 5 differently, we have "but still, [being] on one level, [we are] members whose source is, and who belong to, each other." Wow. You see, the Jerusalem which is above, who is our mother (Gal. 4:26), is really just other members of Christ's body. Someone in the body planted the Seed of Life (via the message of goodness, which is Christ) and gave birth to each one of us. Christ

in them is our Source. And so, as a huge family of sons (8:29, above), "we belong to each other." Stern points out that membership in this family is not "a matter of personal choice" (ibid p 428). Cf Eph. 4:15-16.

6. **Now constantly holding** (having; possessing) **excelling grace-effects** (or: gracious results of favor that carry-through), **down from, in accord with and to the level of the grace and joyous favor being given to us, in us and for us, whether prophecy – [let it be] down from and in line with the above-word of the faith**

(or: in accord with the analogy of the loyalty; according to the

proportion of trust; following the pattern of the corresponding relationship that pertains to the Faithfulness; down along the upward-thought of faith or the up-message of the belief; in accordance with conformability from the faithfulness; on the level of the correspondence and ratio of confidence);

In the first clause, the word **excelling** is one of the meanings of *diaphoros*. It could also be rendered "superior." But the adjective is from the verb, *dia-* (through) + *pherō*, which literally means to convey or carry through, so in the parenthetical expansion I rendered the

noun phrase, "gracious results of favor that carry-through" – i.e., which bring results. This gives us greater insight into how the **excelling grace-effects** operate within the body of Christ.

Following that phrase is the preposition *kata* which indicated the direction and source of these **grace-effects**: they come **down from the grace being given to us**. But *kata* also indicates that they are **in accord with and to the level of the grace being given IN us** – "us" is in the dative case, and this is the location function, "in." This same dative also can indicate that this is given **for** us. Each of these dative functions makes sense here. Now he gives his first example:

prophecy. There is no verb expressed, so I inserted [**let it be**] to carry his meaning into English. Next we have the same preposition, *kata*, for which I give the following optional translations, along with additional renderings of **the above-word** (*ana-logia*) and its modifier, **faith**. So the phrases, **down from and in line with the above word of the faith** can also mean,

- a) in accord with the analogy of the loyalty
- b) according to the proportion of trust
- c) following the pattern of the corresponding relationship that pertains to the Faithfulness

d) down along the upward-thought of faith or the up-message of the belief

e) in accordance with conformability from the faithfulness

f) on the level of the correspondence and ratio of confidence.

Here are seven readings of the phrases which describe that to which the **grace-effect** of **prophecy** should conform. Its source should be **the above-word of the faith**, i.e., from a thought or message that has its origin in the heavens, or, the spirit – that which is "above." It should come from the **faith** that corresponds to

the new covenant, the new creation and the Age of the Messiah – NOT from the old covenant, the old creation (the Law) or the age of Israel. It should not sound like the OT prophets who operated from an economy of God that has passed and was nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). It should come from Christ's Spirit.

Option a) tells us that it should speak that which is analogous to Christ's loyalty to the Father and to us. In b) we see that it should be according to the proportion of trust that has been imparted to the person speaking and also carry a message of trust that accords to the grace that has been given to humanity in Christ.

Option c) tells us that the prophecy should follow a pattern which has a corresponding relationship to Christ's faith and His Faithfulness that comes in the proclamation of the Good News.

Option d) indicates that this word to the body should be "down along" (or follow the line of) the upward-thought of faith, or the up-message of the belief inherent in the Messiah. Option e) points to the faithfulness of Jesus and informs us that the prophecy should be "in accordance with" the "conformability" to the image of Christ.

The last option that I have given, f), can speak of the confidence of the speaker, or of the confidence that comes with

God's promise. It should be "on the level of the correspondence and ratio" – which means that it should relate in a commensurate manner to the confidence that He has given to us.

His faithfulness and loyalty, along with the faith, confidence, belief and trust that He has and that He gives to us through His Spirit, are the factors that define and delineate prophecy in the new arrangement of this new creation in Christ.

**7. or whether serving** (thoroughly dispensing in attendance on a duty) – **[let us be, or live] in the service** (the attendance to the duty; the arrangement for provision; the aid through

dispensing); or whether the one constantly teaching – [let the person continue] in the teaching (the instructing or training);

Here I have first supplied two verbs, **be**, or **live** that seem to express Paul's thoughts in this verse. Notice the dual meanings: **serving**, and the expanded rendering, "thoroughly dispensing in attendance on a duty." Serving can be assistance or some helpful action, while the idea of dispensing suggests that we have something to provide for others. In the second half of the couplet I added "the arrangement for provision" and "the aid through dispensing."

In the next example, **teaching**, he suggest

that the person so called "**continue**" providing that service of this particular **excelling grace-effect**, namely, instruction or training.

**8. or whether the person normally performing as a paraclete** (one habitually calling alongside to aid, admonish, encourage, exhort and give relief) – **[let the person flourish] in the calling alongside to give relief and aid, as well as for admonition, encouragement and exhortation; the one habitually sharing** (imparting; giving together) – **in simplicity** (singleness; or: = with generosity); **the one constantly setting himself before [a situation] or being a**

**caregiver** (or: standing in front and presiding; or: being in charge of giving care or aid) – **in diligent haste** (= eagerly);

**the one continuously mercying** (applying mercy) – **in cheerfulness** (pleasantness; gleeful abandon).

Here we have four more examples. The first one is **performing as a paraclete** – giving aid, relief, etc. Paul is simply saying, "Just do it and do it well." The next one, **sharing**, can refer to imparting a word, a spirit, physical sustenance or whatever the need may be. The word rendered **simplicity** may speak to giving with no strings attached and without religious complexities. The idea of

"singleness" may speak to purity of motive – e.g., without the idea of getting the recipients to join the giver's organization. The paraphrase "with generosity" suggests that Paul may be using a Jewish idiom.

**Setting [oneself] before a situation** describes a person who is gifted to take charge, to follow through to see that what needs to be done is done, or, it may refer to **being a caregiver**, or, being in charge of giving care or aid. Such **grace-effects** are to be done eagerly and **in diligent haste** – i.e., without being slothful.

We should show folks **mercy** with **cheerfulness** – or, "with gleeful

abandon." Joy is an important component of God's reign.

9. **Love** (or: The inner movement toward overcoming existential separation) **[is] not overly critical and [does] not [make] hyper-distinctions or excessive divisions or separations** (or: [is] unfeigned, unhypocritical and [does] not play a role as an actor).

We observe that there is no verb in this first clause, so I supplied the usual English copula. As a definition of *agape* it once again calls to mind Paul's letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 13). However, this may not be a thought that is separate from the last part of vs. 8, or it may be indicating that vss. 6-8, the **excelling**

**grace-effects**, are all expressions of **love**. And in the execution of these "results from favor" we should not be **overly critical** or make **hyper-distinctions, excessive divisions or separations** among or for the folks that we are actively loving and accepting. In the parenthetical expansion I have given the more commonly accepted meanings of the adjective. This expresses a good admonition, but recent researchers (e.g., Ann Nyland) have found that the traditional meanings of "hypocrite" stem from later uses of this word.

**With abhorrence** (or: strong detesting) **[be] constantly shrinking away from the worthless thing** (the bad situation;

the painfully toilsome endeavor; the base, cowardly or evil thing) [**and be**] **habitually gluing or welding yourself** (attaching yourself and adhering) **to The Good One** (or: the profitable situation; the virtuous endeavor).

The first clause needs little explanation, other than to point out the wide semantic range of the word that is normally simply rendered "evil" or "wicked." The extreme contrast in the second clause (**gluing/welding to** as opposed to **shrinking away from**) expresses the attitude of union with Christ – **The Good One**. He is to be our focus, and we are to abide and dwell in Him (John 15:1ff). This gives us the power and

ability to "attach ourselves to a profitable situation or a virtuous endeavor."

**10. In sisterly love** (or: By fond affection, as for members of a family,) **unto one another, [be] tenderly affectionate folks who express warm regard, being people constantly taking the lead in the honor** (by and with the estimation of value or worth) **of one another**

(or: habitually esteeming one another first in value; constantly giving preference to one another in respect).

I chose a literal rendering of the first phrase since the noun is feminine. This

speaks to the nurturing side of the liberated inner part of the new humanity. The expression of affection – as toward a member of one's family – is a normal characteristic of the covenant community. We should be **folks who express warm regard as we take the lead in honor of one another**. What a beautiful picture of the new humanity. Paul was also addressing the issues in Rome (which also applies to all called-out groups), instructing them to be **tenderly affectionate** "by and with the estimation of value or worth" of each other. The Gentile members should be this way toward the Jewish members, and vice versa. The alternative

renderings of the last clause are worth noting:

- a) habitually esteeming one another [as] first in value
- b) constantly giving preference to one another in respect.

This sure turns hierarchies on their heads.

**11. [Be] eager and in diligent haste – not slothful, lazy or hesitating folks. In the Breath-effect (or: By the Spirit; With this attitude), [be] people constantly boiling hot! For the Lord (or: In the Owner; By the Lord; To the Lord [= Yahweh or Christ]; [D\* F G & others: For the situation; In the season]), [be] folks constantly slaving**

(repeatedly performing as slaves)!

"The expression *aglow with the Spirit* proves that the Word of God is hot and fiery" (Origen, "On First Principles," *Ancient Christian Comm.*, *ibid* p 315; emphasis original).

"Love by itself is not enough; there must be zeal as well. For zeal also comes out of loving and gives it warmth, so that the one confirms the other. For there are many who have love in their mind but who do not stretch out their hand" (Chrysostom, "Homilies on Romans 21," *Ancient Christian Comm.*, *ibid* p 315).

Because we have entered into His rest (Heb. 4:10) and have "ceased from [our] own works," we are free to be **constantly slaving for the Lord**. This seeming paradox dissolves with the understanding that our rest is union with Christ, and from being "in Him" we, like Jesus, do the things that we see the Father doing. We now perform His works in service to others. It is because we understand that all things relate to His kingdom and reign that we can now be **eager and in diligent haste**, because we are not working for the dominating System, but for Christ. We **slave in the Owner (God), and by the Lord (Christ), and we do goodness to the**

**Lord** as we minister mercy to His brothers and sisters (Mat. 25:40).

The alternate reading, *kairo* (situation; season) rather than *kuri* (Lord), would be an admonition to "meet the demands of the time in which they live" (Fitzmyer, *ibid* p 325), and to serve in whatever situation arose and to slave within each fertile moment that presented itself. This reading is also found in some MSS of Jerome's writings.

We are to be a **people constantly boiling hot in the effect of His breath** upon and within us. All is done by **[His] Spirit** which gives us **this attitude** to zealously slave for people. And so we read in Eph. 2:10,

**"we are... people being founded from a state of disorder and wildness (being framed, built, settled and created), within and in union with Christ Jesus, upon good works (virtuous actions; excellent deeds) which God made ready (prepared; or: prepares) beforehand, to the end that we may walk about (= live our lives) within and in union with them."**

God has already prepared the good works, virtuous actions and excellent deeds so that we can now live our lives **within them and in union with them.** It was upon these, as a foundation, that we have been created, framed, built and

settled, **within Christ Jesus**. This picture recalls His prior work as described in 8:30, above.

12. **In and with expectation** (or: By expectant hope) [be] people **continuously rejoicing; in pressure** (squeezing; tribulation; compression) [be] folks **constantly remaining under to give support** (or: humbly enduring); **in thinking or by acting, and with speaking, toward having goodness, ease and well-being** (or: by and with prayer) [be] people **habitually persevering** (persisting in adherence and engagement).

Our **expectation** is the completed purpose of God: of His **constantly**

**working all things together into good and progressively working all humanity together into that which is advantageous, worthy of admiration, noble and of excellent qualities (8:28, above).** With this revelation we are **constantly rejoicing.** Because of the vision of His sovereign influence upon humanity, we draw upon the Spirit's power in order to be **constantly remaining under** various situations that involve **pressure**, etc., so that we can **give support** to other folks. He admonishes **habitual perseverance** in **acting** (or, thinking, or speaking) **toward having goodness, ease and well-being.** This last noun (normally

rendered "prayer") is a compound noun that begins with the preposition *pros-* (toward) prefixed to *euche* (having goodness, etc.). This word is not limited to just thoughts or speaking, but can apply to actions as well. We become "prayers." It expresses active impartation from our spirit, which is joined to the Lord's spirit (1 Cor. 6:17), to the object (situation or person) into which we are prompted by His Spirit to inject His **goodness, ease and well-being**. I have offered three functions of the dative case of this noun (**in, by and with**) in order to present the varied forms that this activity can take. Paul expects his audience to be very active in

the kingdom of God. He is describing attributes and characteristics of "the Way pointed out" to and for them.

13. **To the** (or: For the; In the) **needs of the set-apart folks** (the holy ones; the saints) **[be] people continuously sharing** (contributing/participating in partnership from common existence).

**[Be] folks habitually pursuing** (rapidly following; eagerly pressing toward) **the love of and for foreigners** (or: Follow the course of hospitality by fondness expressed in kindness to strangers).

The sphere of kingdom activities is both at home (among **the set-apart folks** of the covenant community in Rome) and abroad (**foreigners and strangers,**

whether within Rome, or in other areas – e.g., Jerusalem, or Corinth, etc.).

The constant **sharing** is to be with the sense of mutual participation or partnership from being in "common existence" with them. The idea of **the love of and for foreigners** may also be planting in their minds an attitude toward the folks in Spain where he plans to go after visiting Rome.

Interpreting this attitude on day-to-day encounters, the rendering "Follow the course of hospitality by fondness expressed in kindness to strangers" brings this admonition into practical application. This was describing a way of life, for he used the present tense:

**habitually pursuing.** This also expresses going out of one's way to do this: "rapidly follow and eagerly press toward" opportunities to show this kind of love to people whom you do not know, or to those recently come into your country and community. Paul speaks nothing about borders here.

**14. You folks keep on speaking well of** (or: repeatedly think goodness for; continue blessing) **the people consistently pursuing and persecuting you: be continuously blessing** (speaking well of [them] or thinking goodness for [them]) **and stop cursing** (or: you must not continue praying down on, or wishing anything against, [things,

situations or people])!

The contrast expressed in this verse should make us pause and consider. The religious mind can think, "Well of course... we should not curse!" And yes, we so commonly say, "Bless you," or sign an email, "Blessings," – and we mean it. Yet it can also be a thoughtless social response.

A childhood memory verse for me was Ps. 19:14 where David said, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord (Yahweh), my Strength (Rock) and my Redeemer." Paul, in our Romans verse above, has given a definition of acceptable words and thoughts – while

pointing out their opposites.

MSS *p*46, B and 1739 omit the word **you** as a direct object of **pursuing/persecuting**. This would make the sense of what he says here more general, not just as a reference to persecution of the Roman community. Fitzmyer suggest that this would mean "bless [all] persecutors" (ibid p 325). Even though we may not think that we participate in "cursing," we may be doing so without realizing it. The Greek word for curse here is *kataraoimai*, which comes from *ara*, a prayer or a wish, and is prefixed by *kata-*, down on, or against – as given in the expansion above. Do we ever pray thoughts or

words down on situations or people? Do we ever wish anything against things, situations or people? Do we "curse" the weather – something that comes from God? Do we "curse" people through our criticism of them – are we entertaining wishes against their behavior? Are we praying against practices or laws that we consider not right or immoral? Do we "curse" our leaders by praying against them?

I think that it was Socrates to whom the saying was attributed, "The unexamined life is not worth living." David, in Ps. 139:23-24 asks of God,

"Search me out, O El, and know my heart; test me, and know my

disquieting thoughts. See if a grievous way [is] in me, and guide me in [the] Way eonian" (CVOT).

We can often tend to live "thoughtless" lives, and be in habits of speech or thought of which we are unaware. I have not thought that I curse people or things, yet I can see that I have had wishes against situations and people – and have felt just in doing so. In the past I am sure that I have prayed against the devil and evil spirits. I have practiced *kataraoimai*, in my ignorance. But the simple imperative is, "Curse not." "O Father, lead me in the Way eonian!" But let us look at the positive injunction: **"Be continuously speaking well of,**

**blessing and thinking goodness for people, things and situations!"** What a different mindset. What a contrasting attitude and way of being! The word "bless" comes from *eu*, (which means goodness, ease, well-being), prefixed to *logeō*, to speak or think (from which comes the noun, *logos*). The noun *eulogia* (from which we get the English "eulogy") can simply mean "good speaking," or "thinking goodness and well-being." So Paul's positive admonition is to think and speak goodness, well-being, and what today we would call "positive things" in regard to people, things and situations. "Bless, and curse not" (KJV).

Paul's instruction, here, falls in line with and recalls the words of Jesus in Lu. 6:

**27. "But rather, I am now saying to you folks – the people continuing to listen, and constantly hearing – Be habitually loving your enemies (the folks that are hostile in regard to you); be repeatedly doing ideally to (constantly performing beautifully for; habitually making or creating finely among) the folks habitually hating you and repeatedly treating you with ill-will.**

**28. "Repeatedly speak words of goodness, ease, well-being and**

**blessing to the people constantly cursing (or: making negative prayers about) you folks; be constantly thinking and speaking toward [their] having goodness and well-being: concerning (or: habitually praying about) the folks [that] repeatedly threaten, insult, mistreat or abuse you.**

And in Mat. 5:44-45 He instructed folks,  
44. **"Yet I, Myself, am now saying to you folks: Be constantly loving your enemies** (urging toward reunion with, and accepting as persons standing on the same ground, those folks hostile to you; [comment: this

could have applied to the Romans, as well as to personal enemies]),  
**and be habitually praying  
goodness over the people  
continuously persecuting you**  
(constantly thinking and speaking  
on behalf of the folks repeatedly  
pursuing you, that they would have  
ease and well-being)

45. "**so that** (or: By this manner;  
This is how) **you folks can be  
birthed** (may and would come to  
be) **sons of your Father – the  
One within [the] atmosphere  
and in union with [the] heavens  
– because He is repeatedly  
making His sun to rise back up**

**again upon bad** (evil; wicked; worthless) **folks as well as [upon] good** (virtuous) **folks, and He is habitually sending rain upon fair and equitable people** (those in right relationship; those within the Way pointed out; just ones; rightwised ones) **as well as [upon] unfair and inequitable people** (those not in right relationship; those not in the Way pointed out; unjust folks).

**15. Practice** (or: Be constantly) **rejoicing with those who are presently or habitually rejoicing, and constantly weep** (or: cry; lament) **with those presently** (or: habitually) **weeping;**

Paul is instructing the Roman community to enact, embody and realize complete solidarity with other people, regardless of their emotional situations. This could be either in incidental situations or with chronic predicaments. We are to enter into other peoples' situations and lives. We do not live separately, but rather, we are a body. Sirach 7:34 (LXX) states, "Do not lag behind those who weep, but mourn with those who mourn."

This can also have a positive effect upon our own experiences. Even if we are feeling depressed or are experiencing grief, we are not to be self-centered but rather corporately centered. Even when we are experiencing loss, we are to

make it a practice to rejoice with folks that are either presently or habitually rejoicing. Such admonitions, if followed, will mitigate against divisions within the body.

In 1 Thes. 5:16 Paul gives even more general and inclusive instructions concerning rejoicing,

**"Be continuously rejoicing – always** (or: = Find joy in every [situation]; Always express constant joy)!"

And to the Philippians he wrote (3:1a),

**"As for the rest** (or: For what remains), **my brothers** (= family; = fellow believers), **continue rejoicing** (be habitually glad and

delighted) **within [the] Lord** [= Christ or Yahweh]."

**16. in this very same vein, continue being folks who are focusing your thinking into one another: not being those constantly setting their minds on the high positions or elite social statuses (or: don't be corporately arrogant), but rather, being folks consistently led away together to the low, humble ones (or: by the humble people; in the low things; = associate with folks of low social standing).** How different this is from society at large and the thinking of the dominating System. The first clause must be taken in the context of vs. 15, above. It is

admonishing the group to live in solidarity as a body, as opposed to thinking selfishly about themselves and how they can attain to **high positions or elite social statuses**. Paul put it this way in Phil. 2:

**2. fill my joy full, so that you folks may be continually having the same frame of mind** (may be mutually disposed; may have the same opinion; may mind the same thing), **habitually holding** (or: having) **the same Love: folks joined together in soul** (inner life of feelings, will, heart and mind), **continuously minding The One** (or: habitually holding one

opinion; constantly thinking one thing; regularly disposed to one [purpose]; [other MSS: the same])

—

3. **nothing down from** (or: along the line of; corresponding to; or: descending to) **party interests** (hireling-like contention; faction; self-serving; or: from a motive of financial gain, or to enhance one's career) **nor down from** (or: along the line of; corresponding to; or: descending to) **empty reputation** (futile opinion; vainglory; fruitless appearance) – **but rather, in humility** (or: by an attitude of being in a low station; in

humbleness of disposition and way of thinking) **constantly considering one another** (or: each other) **[as] those habitually holding [a position] above yourselves** (or: [as] being superior in regard to yourselves),  
4. **not each one continuing to attentively view** (keep an eye on and look out for) **the things or interests pertaining to themselves, but to the contrary, each one also [looking out for] the things and interests pertaining to others** (or: of different folks; of people that are different).

The idea of **focusing your thinking into one another** means to take an involved interest in one another's needs or concerns. It speaks to in-depth involvements rather than superficial associations. It implies being a loving family that pulls together for both individual needs and corporate goals. It also describes attentive commitment both to know and to support others within the group. It is a matter of community orientation toward the well-being of others. One example of this was seen in the early Jerusalem community,

**"In fact, 'there was not even anyone [p8 D E and others: Your see, not even any was continuing**

to subsist inherently] **in persistent need** (poverty-stricken; destitute; indigent) **among them,' for whoever** (or: as many as) **had been owners** (possessors) **of pieces of land or houses, upon from time to time selling [them], were periodically bringing the proceeds** (= the money paid for the value and price) **of the things being occasionally sold"** (Acts 4:34).

As opposed to seeking to get a place "on the platform," he instructs us to be **folks consistently led away together to the low, humble ones**. Rather than being "corporately arrogant," we should be led

by the humble people. We should be involved "in the low things." And as my paraphrase reads, it is a good thing to "associate with folks of low social standing." The desire for attaining to a high social standing is the "love of the System." 1 John advises us in chapter 2:

**15. You folks should not be habitually loving** (as indicative: are not normally accepting; as imperative: Stop constantly seeking reunion with) **the world** (secular realm and the controlling ordered System of culture, religion, economy and government), **neither** (or: not even) **the things within the world**

(ordered system). **If anyone is in the habit of (or: keeps on) loving the world** (ordered system of religion, or of secular society), **the Father's** [other MSS: God's] **Love** (or: the love which the Father has; the Love which is the Father) **does not exist within him.**

**You folks must not habitually become people of a particular mind-set** (or: Stop engendering corporate arrogance or producing opinionated folks) **side-by-side with, and among, yourselves** (or: = Stop being those who are wise or conceited in their own opinions and in their own eyes)!

Here Paul warns against forming

associations based upon doctrines, political views, party or denominational affiliations or any other **particular mind-set** that brings exclusiveness, division and the "us-and-them" way of thinking. These engender corporate arrogance. They produce folks that are opinionated and who tend to look down upon those who are outside of their clique or group.

The parenthetical paraphrase gives a generalized picture of what Paul instructs us against. Religion has been one of the biggest breeding grounds for bigotry.

**17. To no person practice giving away**

(returning or repaying) **evil in exchange for evil** (ugly in the place of ugly; worthless, bad, ill, unsound, poor quality over against the same)!

**Habitually being folks taking thought in advance for fine things** (or: constantly providing ideal things; continuously giving attention ahead of time with regard to things of good form and quality; repeatedly having forethought for beautiful [situations]) **in the sight of all humanity,**

Here Barth poses the rhetorical ethical question, "What am I to do, when I realize that everything that can be done against the enemy is itself evil?" (ibid p 472) Of course Jesus and Paul give the

Spirit's answer:

In the first statement Paul echoes the teaching of Jesus in Mat. 5:

**39. "Yet I, Myself, am now telling you folks not to at any point actively set yourself against, or take a counteractive or aggressive stand in opposition to, the bad situation**

(or: = participate in armed resistance against the miserable condition; = mirror the painful, insulting or laborious situation; or: = 'render evil for evil' in opposition to the evil or wicked person; = rebel or

be part of an insurrection; =  
stand off an enemy).

**On the contrary, [to] whomever  
is repeatedly cuffing or  
habitually slapping into your  
right cheek (or: jaw), turn to  
him the other one, also!**

This would also show that "an eye for an eye" (Deut. 19:21; *cf* Hammurabi's code, §230), or "the Law," no longer applies. "Reciprocal justice" has been overturned by Christ. The traditional Christian doctrine about God's judgment of unbelieving or unrepentant humans is soundly scuttled by Paul's statement here and Jesus' teaching in Mat. 5:44-45, cited above. If God only loves those

who love Him, what reward does He have? (Mat. 5:46). We, like Jesus, are to do the things that we see the Father doing. And He sends blessings upon both the just and the unjust.

**In the sight of all humanity**, we are to be **habitually folks taking thought in advance for fine things**. Rather than retuning evil in exchange for evil, we are constantly to provide "ideal things" for people. Paul calls us to be "continuously giving attention ahead of time with regard to things of good form and quality." We should be "repeatedly having forethought for beautiful [situations]." In a dark and "worthless" society we should be in the habit of

anticipating for the needs that result from "unsound [political] behavior," "ugly" [reactions] and "poor quality" [production].

18. **since [you are] full of power** (or: if capable; if or since able) **regarding that which has its source in you folks** (or: as to that which proceeds from yourselves corporately), **[live] being folks continuously at peace with all mankind** (or: being in harmony in the midst of all people),

The conjunction, or conditional particle, *ei*, can mean either **since**, or if. With a positive context it "implies that there is likelihood that the assumption will be fulfilled" (Dana and Mantey, *A Manual*

*Grammar of the Greek NT*, MacMillan, 1955, p 246). Because of the indwelling of God's Spirit and because they are "in Christ," I think that it is fair to assume that they (and we) are **full of power**, capable and able to be "**continuously at peace with all mankind**" – and be in harmony in the midst of and with all people.

The Greek of this verse is rather abbreviated. I have supplied main verbs for the first and last clauses that seem to flow with Paul's admonition. The literal Greek of what I have rendered "**regarding that which has its source in you folks**" is actually "the out of you folks." The preposition "out of" or

"from" gives the sense of something proceeding from a source. The source is the Roman community. They are full of the power and ability of the Holy Spirit that dwells within and among them.

Thus, Paul is directing their attention to the Spirit (the "**that which**") – i.e., their Power. They are to look to "that which proceeds from [them] corporately" – and this is the Spirit that has been given to them. They, because of the Spirit in them, are **full of power to continuously [live; be] at peace with all humanity.** Paul told the Colossians,

**"let the peace [= *shalom*] of the Christ** (belonging to and originating in the [Messiah]; the

harmony which is the Anointing [other MSS: God]) **continuously umpire** (act as a judge in the games) **within your hearts** (= in union with the core of your being) – **into which [peace] you folks are called** (were called; were invited), **within one body"** (3:15).

He wrote to the Philippians,

**"God's peace** (= shalom; or: and so the harmony which is God), **which is continuously having a hold over** (is habitually holding sway over; or: is constantly being superior and excelling by having it over) **all mind and inner sense** (or: every intellect; all power of

comprehension; or: all process of thinking), **will continue garrisoning** (guarding; standing sentinel over) **your hearts and the results of thinking** (thoughts; reasonings; understandings; effects from directing the mind on something; or: dispositions; designs; purposes; effects of perceptions; [p16 adds: and bodies]), **within, and in union with, Christ Jesus....**

**"And, the God of the Peace** (or: And God, the source and quality of peace [= shalom]; Then the God which is harmony) **will continue existing in company**

**with you folks** (or: will constantly be with you folks)" (Phil. 4:7, 9).

So, yes, they are **full of power** to live in harmony with all. This reality should eliminate divisions and conflicts within the covenant community. Paul once again echoes the Sermon on the Mount,

**"The ones who make peace and create shalom [are] happy and blessed because they, themselves, will continue being called God's sons (or: termed 'sons of and from God')!"** (Mat. 5:9)

**19. not being folks habitually getting justice for yourselves** (not maintaining

what is right concerning yourselves; not avenging yourselves), **beloved ones, but on the contrary, you folks must yield the position held in anger** (or: give a place for [His] natural impulse, propensity, passion and personal emotion; give place to [His] intrinsic fervor; relinquish [your] right to anger or wrath), **for it has been written,**

**"In Me** (or: For or By Me) **[is] maintenance of justice** (execution of the Way pointed out; working out of the right); **I Myself will continue giving away, instead** (or: I will progressively be making a recompense [to you]; or: I will continue taking the

opposing position of giving [it] away; or: in its place, I Myself will repeatedly repay [you]),' **the Lord [= Yahweh] is habitually saying."**

[Deut. 32:25; comment: if we are not to practice giving away evil in exchange for evil

(vs. 17, above), then we should not expect the Lord to do this]

In the first clause, Paul may be referencing Lev. 19:18,

"You shall not avenge yourself, you shall not bear a grudge, against your fellow-citizens" (Moffatt).

His quote from Deut. 25 is setting the

stage for what he will develop in 13:4ff, below. We see here, again, that God is sovereign and we can rely upon Him to sort out matters of justice and right. We may well become **angry** over injustice that we observe or experience, but we are called to **yield this position** to God, and Paul's quote gives the reason that we must do this.

In our attitudes, our dispositions, our emotions and our behavior, we must "give a place for [**His**] natural impulse" to have room to work. He may not be angry about that which makes us angry. He sees things differently than we do. We need to "relinquish [our] right to anger or wrath," and "give place to

[His] propensity, passion, personal emotion and intrinsic fervor." He will do what is best for everyone.

In maintaining fairness and equity, in execution of the Way pointed out, and in working out of the right, [He] **will continue giving away**. He is a Giver. He gives back to us compensation for what we lose. **Instead** of reading the Deut. quote as His saying "I will punish them" or "I will get even for you," I have suggested that He is saying, "I will progressively be making a recompense [to you]," or, "in its place, I Myself will repeatedly repay [you]." In another situation He may tell us, "I will continue taking the opposing position of giving

[it] away." God will make up to us for all of our hurts and losses. He will give Himself to us in the place of our injury. He will fill our lack (which was caused by some injustice – like the death that was passed on to humanity through no fault of its own, but due to Adam's disobedience) with Himself. He will put His glory upon us. He **will continue giving** [Himself] **away** to humanity.

20. **But further,**

**"If your enemy** (the one hostile to you) **should perhaps be** **hungering** (or: continues hungry), **continue feeding him morsels** (supplying him with food); **if he may continue thirsting** (be

constantly thirsty), **continue giving drink to him** (causing him to drink), **for while constantly practicing** (performing; doing) **this you will progressively pile on and heap up burning coals** (embers) **of fire upon his head."**  
[Prov. 25:21-22]

The directives of feeding and giving drink correspond to what was to be done for Christ's brothers in Mat. 25:35, 40. The metaphor of heaping coals may correspond to Isa. 6:6 where a coal from the incense altar purged sin, so being put on his head may be a picture of purging his thinking. Kenneth Wuest suggests that this is supplying a needed source of fire

for someone's home, meeting a desperate need (*Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek NT, Vol. 1*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988, p 220).

Since the first two directives are positive, I suggest that the result will be positive as well. Jerome said of this,

"In other words, you are curing him of his vices and burning out his malice, in order to bring him to repentance" (*Homilies on the Psalms, Ancient Christian Comm.*, *ibid* p 322).

The first half of the quote from Proverbs calls to mind the teaching of Jesus in Mat. 5:44-45a, cited above.

**21. Do not be habitually conquered**

**under** (or: Stop being overcome by) **the worthless** (the bad of quality; the ugly and unsound; the evil), **but to the contrary, be constantly conquering** (overcoming; victorious over) **the worthless** (the unsound, the bad and the ugly; the evil) **[by being] in union with The Good One** (or: [a participant] within what is profitable; or: in the midst of virtue).

This verse points to a positive interpretation of the burning coals in vs. 20. It echoes what he said in 8:28, above – working everything into goodness. Witherington (*ibid* p 297) quotes C.K. Barrett (*Romans*, p 223),  
"This is not merely prudential; it

is the way God himself has proceeded against his enemies (*cf* vs. 8). The mercy of God... will triumph over the rebellion and disobedience of men (11:32)..."

Dodd comments,

"Where the divine love floods the heart, there evil will be met with an unwearying beneficence which, in the end, will wear out the evil.... the mercy of God will finally include all men.... [in] human nature... evil [is] an abnormality" (ibid p 201; brackets mine).

Wright makes an important practical application of following Paul's advice in

this passage,

"We are refusing to allow our own future lives to be determined by the evil that someone else has done." (*Paul for Everyone, Romans: Part Two, Chapters 9-16*, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and Westminster John Knox Press, 2004 p 81).

Barclay observes,

"Evil can never be conquered by evil. If hatred is met with more hatred it is only increased; but if it is met with love, an antidote for the poison is found" (ibid p 170).

The verb in the second half of this verse

is a present tense imperative: **be constantly conquering** (overcoming; victorious over). How? By being **in union with The Good One**. Once again we are drawn back to the metaphor of Jesus as the Vine (John 15:1ff) with Whom we need to be in union in order to produce the Spirit's fruit (virtue; what is profitable). And in John 16:33 He informed us,

**"I Myself have overcome and conquered the System (dominating world; organized arrangement of religion and society) so that it stands a completed victory."**

In 1 John 4 we read,

**4. Little children** (born ones), **you continuously exist from out of God** (or: you exist with God as your source; you originate your being from God), **and you have conquered** (overcome) **and are now victorious over them,** **because greater is the One** (or: He) **within you than the one within the ordered System** (the person in union with the world of religion, culture, society, economy and government; or: the individual centered in either the secular or the religious).

And in 1 John 5:4 we are told,

**"everything having been born**

**from out of the midst of God continuously overcomes** (habitually conquers and is progressively victorious over) **the controlling System** (ordered world or religion, secular culture, economy and government)."

What comes out of the midst of God is His fruit:

"**Now the Spirit's fruit** (or: So the fruit whose origin and source is the Spirit; But the fruit which is Breath-effect; Yet the fruit of the Attitude) **is: love** (unrestricted acceptance and the drive to overcome existential separation), **joy, peace** (or: harmony; [=

shalom]), **length before a stirring of emotion** (slowness of rushing toward something; long-enduring; longsuffering; patience), **useful kindness, goodness** (virtuousness), **faith** (or: faithfulness; trust; trustworthiness; loyalty; reliance; reliability; allegiance; fidelity), **gentle friendliness** (meekness; mildness), **inner strength** (self-control)" – Gal. 5:22, 23a.

This is God's goodness and virtue. In union with this, which comes with union with **The Good One**, is the overcoming of **the worthless** (the unsound, the bad and the ugly; the evil).



## Chapter 13

**1. Every soul (or: = Everyone) is to be continuously placed and arranged, or aligned, in a supportive position by superior (or: excelling) authorities (or: must be subjected to rulers holding dominion and jurisdiction above [him]; [p46, D\*, F, G, it, & Ire. read: To every superior authority you folks must subject yourselves]). For an authority does not exist except under God (or: For there is no authority, except by God), and the existing ones are those which have been arranged and set in order, under God (placed in their relative positions by God).**

The passage of vss. 1-7 has been subtitled by Barclay as "The Christian and the State." Fitzmyer refers to it as "duties of Christians toward civil authorities" (ibid p 326). Witherington rightly points out that the preceding context (e.g., 12:19-21) must be kept in mind. He cites N. Elliott, who states that,

"The broad rhetorical movement across chs. 12-15... is meant to quell Gentile-Christian arrogance and to evoke sympathy and solidarity with Israel.... [and] to deflect the Roman Christians from the trajectory of anti-Jewish attitudes and ideology..." (ibid p

304; brackets mine).

Wright observes that "this paragraph has been used – and abused – by many people in power as a way of telling their subjects to keep silent and offer no resistance..." and calls us to "put these verses back into context," pointing out that Paul had just told folks that "private vengeance is absolutely forbidden for Christians." He concludes that what Paul means here is that, "We want to live as human beings in an ordered, properly functioning society" (ibid p 84-95).

Harvey explains that,

"[U]ntil at least the persecution of Nero some 15 years after the date of this letter, the Roman

administration had done nothing which would particularly antagonize the Christians; indeed, at this period the main adversary was usually the local Jewish community, and the narrative of Acts shows the Christians often invoking the protection of the Roman government against Jewish attacks. So Paul... argues that the authority of the state is a **divine institution**" (ibid p 533).

Fitzmyer notes,

"[A]n internal strife in the Jewish community at Rome (probably between Jews and Jewish Christians) was settled by the

Emperor Claudius' expulsion of the Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2; Suetonius, *Claudii Vita* 25)" –  
ibid.

Witherington comments that J.D.G. Dunn and other commentators,

"... are right that Gentile Christians, who welcomed Jewish Christians back to Rome after Claudius died in AD 54 and his banishment edict lapsed, were perhaps putting themselves and their congregations at some risk of imperial scrutiny... Nero's ascent to the throne brought a new rhetoric of peace..." (ibid p 305).

With these scholarly insights in mind, let

us proceed to unpack this passage. The vast majority of MSS have the verb in the first clause in the passive voice which is to be understood as "the divine passive" in which we perceive that this is God's work in orchestrating humanity into ordered societies – for the common good, as Wright pointed out, above. So as we saw concerning God's sovereignty in 12:19, above, we again see that sovereignty affirmed by Paul in this clause. This is a universal perspective of God's economy and kingdom life. The verb is also imperative, and thus Paul instructs us: this is what is to be the situation for the covenant community. Wright's translation reads, "Every

person **MUST** be subject to..." (ibid p 82; emphasis mine).

There is no textual or contextual reason to interpret the **authorities** as being anything more than the governmental rulers in human societies. In the realm of spirit – the heavens or atmospheres – Jesus Christ is Lord. The resurrected Jesus informed us that,

**"All authority** (or: Every right and privilege from out of Being) **is** (or: was at once) **given to Me within heaven and upon the earth** (or: in sky and atmosphere, as well as on land)!" – Mat. 28:18.

Even during the 1<sup>st</sup> century ministry of

Jesus, He said in Lu. 10:22,

**"All mankind and All things were given over to Me by and under My Father, and yet no one is in constant, intimate, experiential knowledge of Who the Son is (exists being), except the Father, nor Who is the Father, except the Son – and whomsoever the Son is now wanting and continuing intending to at some point unveil (uncover; reveal; disclose) [Him]."**

In the apocalyptic vision of Rev. 11:15 (which can be read as **"the things presently existing,"** Rev. 1:19), the

voices within the heavens cried out,  
**"The reign of the ordered  
System** (of the world of religion,  
culture, government and economy;  
or: of the realm of the religious  
and secular) **suddenly came to  
belong to our Lord** [= Yahweh or  
Christ] **and to the anointed of  
Him, and so He will continue  
reigning** (ruling as King) **on into  
the ages** (or: indefinite time  
periods) **of the ages."**

So there is no need to worry about  
"spiritual rulers" over cities or  
countries. God is in control. All we  
need to do is listen to the Spirit's voice  
and be led by the Breath-effect. Our

message and our outlook should be,  
"Jesus Christ is Lord!"

The reading of *p46* (our oldest MS of Rom.) and the other witnesses noted, have the voice of the verb that can be translated as either passive or middle, so to give this second option a reading I rendered it as a middle voice in the parenthetical expansion. But the understanding would be that they were to do this by the power of the Breath-effect (or, the Christ) that was within and among them.

In the second half of the verse, Paul makes it clear without a shadow of a doubt that all authorities, chiefs, rulers, magistrates, etc., are under God's rule

and "do not exist" except "by God!" And furthermore, **the existing ones are those which have been arranged and set in order, under God** (placed in their relative positions by God)! So where should our focus be? Are we to be looking to our nation's capital? Was the 1<sup>st</sup> century community in Rome to be looking to Caesar? Not in the least. C.H. Dodd points out that, "Paul could cite OT authority for this teaching (*cf* Dan. 4:28), and it was orthodox doctrine Judaism" (ibid p 203).

"By Me kings reign and governors administer justice; Through Me princes hold sway and and nobles govern the earth (or:

land)" (Prov. 8:15, 16).

"Now I have given all of these countries to My servant Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon..." (Jer. 27:5).

"He removes kings and He sets up kings" (Dan. 2:21).

"Hear therefore, you kings, and understand; learn you judges of the ends of the earth; give ear you that have dominion over multitudes and boast of many nations, because your dominion was given you from the Lord and your dominance from the Most High. He will examine your deeds and inquire into your counsels,

because, being servants of His kingdom.... Terribly and swiftly He will come upon you.... for the Sovereign Lord of all will not give way to anyone..." (Wisdom of Solomon 6:1-7, LXX. N.E.T.S.).

"In the Lord's hand is the governance of the earth, and He will raise up over it the person useful for the time" (Sirach 10:4, LXX, N.E.T.S.).

In John 19:11 we read,

**"Jesus decidedly replied to [Pilate], "You were [other MSS: continue] holding no authority at all (or: in even one thing) down on (or: against; with regard to)**

**Me, except that it is existing having been given to you from above (or: from [One; someone] above [you])."**

**2. So that, the one constantly placing himself in opposition to the authority (or: the man resisting and posting an array as to battle against or to stand instead of the authority) has taken a stand against God's precise and complete arrangement (or: institution), and the ones having taken an opposing stand, and remaining in determined resistance, will progressively take to themselves (or: will continue receiving in themselves) a result of a decision (the effect of that which [God] decides**

to do or to bring to pass; a judgment-effect; a result of separating for evaluation).

This is a clear and definite repudiation of the Zealot inclination in 1<sup>st</sup> century Judaism. "The Jews were notoriously rebellious. Palestine... was constantly seething with insurrection" (Barclay, *ibid* p 173). It was a warning against the already gathering resistance against Rome which culminated in the Jewish war which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Such activities would also present adverse effects on the covenant community in Rome at that time.

But this absolute statement applies to

other times and places, as well. To resist **the authority** (which has been established **by God**, vs. 1 above) is to resist **God's precise and complete arrangement** for humanity. Such actions or attitudes will have repercussions from God that will bring **a result of a decision** (the effect of a judgment; etc.) upon or within those who do or think in such a way that **takes an opposing stand** against what God has ordained. We must realize that Jesus is truly the Lord of the world.

"They are indeed a revolutionary community, but if they go for the normal type of violent revolution they will just be playing the

empire back at its own game"  
(Wright, *ibid* p 85).

Barclay points us to Tit. 3:1,

**"Repeatedly bring folks under recollection, constantly causing them to think again and remember to be habitually placing themselves in subjection to (or: to be supportively aligned with; be continually arranged under by) governments (or: rulers; sovereignties; originating headships) – to (or: by) those having the right of authority – [and] to continuously comply in persuaded obedience, yielding to these authorities; to constantly**

**be ready ones: facing and progressing toward every good work (or: virtuous action),"**

and then to 1 Pet. 2:

**13. Because of, and by, the Lord** [= Yahweh or Christ], **you folks are to be humbly aligned in and to every human creation and with every societal invention** (or: be subordinated to every human framing; let yourselves be arranged under for support of every founding or institution pertaining to mankind which brings order to a state of wildness): **whether to** (or: by; for) **a king, as to** (or: by; for) **one**

**being superior** (or: constantly holding over [others]; = as a prominent cultural institution),  
14. **or to** (or; by; for) **governors** (government officials; rulers; leaders; guides), **as to** (or: by; for; with) **those being regularly sent** (or: dispatched) **by Him unto a maintaining of right, in regard to doers of worthlessness** (or: into a correction from out of the way pointed out pertaining to those creating bad situations; unto an administering of justice, fairness and equity of situations affected by evildoers) – **yet on the other hand, [sent] unto a**

**commendation** (a praise; applause) **of those habitually doing good things** (performing with virtue; constructing excellence).

**15. Because thus is God's will** (or: For God's intent and purpose exists in this manner): **folks habitually doing good things** (constructing excellence; performing with virtues; creating goodness) **to repeatedly muzzle** (continuously gag; thus: progressively silence) **the ignorance of senseless and thoughtless people** (humans without intellect and prudence;

unreasonable folks);

**16. as free folks** (those not bound) – **and not continually holding** (or: having) **the freedom as a covering** (or: a veil) **of worthlessness** (bad quality; evil; poorness of situation) – **but still, as God's slaves.**

**17. Value everyone** (Honor all)! **Habitually love** (Practice loving) **the brotherhood** (= the organism of fellow-believers)! **Practice reverence to God** (or: Habitually fear God; Be constantly respecting and revering God)! **Be continuously valuing and showing honor to the king** (or:

the One Who reigns).

At the same time, as both Witherington and Wright point out, proclaiming the sovereignty of God over human affairs and institutions demotes human rulers and governments to a place below that of final authority and foments a world view that speaks against totalitarian regimes. Witherington concedes that this ethic of non-violence is directed to the called-out folks of the covenant community, and feels that it should not be imposed upon the "non-Christian state" (ibid p 308).

However, it is a principle, or ethic, of God's kingdom – and we are to pray for His kingdom to come and to be become

effectual upon the earth, just as it is within the heavens. We are to be a Light to the nations, and the Light that Jesus gave tells us,

**"Yet I, Myself, am now telling you folks not to at any point actively set yourself against, or take a counteractive or aggressive stand in opposition to, the bad situation**

(or: = participate in armed resistance against the miserable condition; = mirror the painful, insulting or laborious situation; or: = 'render evil for evil' in opposition to the evil or

wicked person; = rebel or  
be part of an insurrection; =  
stand off an enemy)" – Mat.  
5:39.

He also said,

**"Turn away (= Return) your  
knife (or: sword) into its place.  
You see, all those taking [up] a  
knife (or: sword) will proceed in  
destroying themselves in union  
with a knife (or: sword)" – Mat.  
26:52.**

Paul is carrying on the message of Jesus.  
Wright also points us to the OT  
prophetic tradition where the Gentile  
nations were tools through which God  
was working toward Israel's ultimate

good. He used Assyria (Isa. 10), Persia – via Cyrus – (Isa. 45) and Babylon (Jer. 29) – *ibid* p 87.

**3. For the chief ones** (those in first position or headships; the princes or rulers; the magistrates) **are not a fear to the good work** (or: for virtuous and profitable action; [F\*, Ethiopic: worker of excellence]), **but rather, for the worthless** (the ugly; the base; the evil; the one of poor quality).

This statement may be understood as simply saying that if you do what is right and obey the law or the rules, you need not be afraid of getting into trouble with the law or the boss. But it also tells us that even if our **good work** or **virtuous**

**action** which results from the Spirit's leading and the Breath-effects empowerment may result in punitive action from the authorities, we need not be in fear for having done as the Spirit leads God's sons. Jesus addressed such situations in Lu. 12:

**11. "Now whenever they may bring you folks into the midst, upon [some charge before] the synagogues (or: public assemblies), or [haul you up before] the government officials (rulers) and the authorities, you should not be anxious or overly concerned about how or what you should speak in your**

**defense, nor what you should say.**

**12. "You see, the Set-apart Breath-effect (or: Holy Spirit; Sacred Breath and Attitude) will continue teaching you within that very hour what things it is necessary to say."**

Although we have limited textual evidence for the alternate MS readings, I decided to include F\* and the Ethiopic version witnesses because the difference in the Greek is an omicron in place of an omega, and the contrast **worthless**, etc., is in a form that could also mean **worthless person**, etc. The message is the same in both cases.

Any **worthless**, ugly, base, evil or poor-quality work or action should indeed engender fear, because God will bring corrective action through His servants.

**Now are you not wanting to constantly fear and be wary of** (or: So are you normally desiring to be unafraid of) **the authority?**

Note that Paul now addresses an interlocutor – a person – not a "work" or "action." He raises a practical matter here, and then gives practical, ethical advice as the answer. He is saying, "Do you want to stay out of trouble? Here's how:" (and the verse continues with the answer) –

**Keep doing the good** (the virtuous; the

profitable), **and you will continue having praise** (applause; commendation) **forth from it** [i.e., the authority],

**4. for it is God's servant** (attendant who renders service or does a duty; an aid in dispensing; one who arranges for provision) **for you** (or: to you), **[directing you] into the good** (the profitable; the virtuous). **Yet if you should be constantly doing the worthless** (the evil; the base; the thing of poor quality; the ugly), **be fearing with a healthy respect, for it is not purposelessly** (aimlessly; vainly) **continuing to bear the sword! For it is God's servant, a maintainer of what is**

**right** (an obtainer and executor of justice) **into a fruitful fervor** (to a strong personal emotion; unto an angry result; unto [its] personal bent) **for** (or: in; to) **the person constantly practicing or performing the worthless** (the ugly; the poor of quality; the evil).

Instead of living in fear because of worthlessness or ugly behavior, **do the good**, practice virtue and create what is profitable and then **the authority**, or, the boss, **will continue having praise**, applause or commendation for **you**.

**The authority is God's servant FOR YOU!** This arrangement is for YOUR benefit. Even if it is a bad boss, an evil empire or a worthless parent. We are to

see God behind every situation. We are to look only to Him, and not to His "attendant who renders service and does his duty." **The authority** is "an aid in dispensing" goods and services for your family, your community and your country. It "arranges for provision" that will come "to YOU." This is all a part of God working all things **into the good, the profitable, the virtuous!**

**This authority continues bearing the sword for a purpose.** That purpose is to hold the force that is needed to maintain peace and security for society. It is how God is actively judging the worthless, the ugly, the evil or that which is done with poor quality (*cf* 1 Cor. 3:9-17). The

word **sword** is a figure for the ability to bring correction, to recompense equity, to administer justice and to function as a government. It represents the power and ability to enforce. God has arranged for the state, the community, the employer or the head of the family to maintain order, fairness and equity within society.

**The authority is God's servant, a maintainer of what is right** (an obtainer and executor of justice). It will bring **the person constantly practicing or performing the worthless** (the ugly; the poor of quality; the evil) **into a fruitful fervor** (to a strong personal emotion; unto an angry result; unto [its] personal bent) – according to what is best for this

person, to rehabilitate him or her. The term **fruitful fervor** is the Greek *orge*, and I take this from Thayer's lexicon where he gives the root idea: "from *orgao*, to teem, denoting an internal motion, especially that of plants and fruits swelling with juice" (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*, T&T Clark, 1958 p 452). This word-picture is worth a thousand explanations. It shows that God has a goal in mind for His "strong personal emotions and natural bent," even if on the surface it appears as an angry result.

**5. On which account** (or: Wherefore) **[there is] compelling necessity** (or: compression) **to constantly be**

**subjected and humbly aligned in support** (or, as a middle: to be subjecting and aligning oneself; to place oneself under; to humbly subordinate oneself), **not only** (or: solely) **because of** (or: through) **strong personal emotion** (intrinsic fervor; natural disposition; swelling desire and teeming passion; or: indignation, anger or wrath), **but further, also, because of** (or: through) **the conscience** (the mutual knowing from the together-seeing).

Here Paul brings a restatement of vs. 1 as a preliminary conclusion to vss. 2-4. Because of what he has just argued, there is **compelling necessity** for the extant situation of humanity. It is all part

of God's plan of, and purpose for, the ages.

Then he adds one more reason: **the conscience** which has come with the new creation and the new humanity. We have "together seen and thus now know" that **subjection and humble alignment for support** of the authority is necessary. The alignment comes "through" both God's **strong emotion** and "through" our **conscience**. God "compresses" us through the existential situations in this life, and that compression **subjects** us to His transforming process within this futile setting (8:20, above). This is not language of "free will." It is language of His sovereignty. Based upon this

principle of God's rule over humanity,  
Paul admonished in 1 Cor. 7:17,

**"Let each one thus be habitually walking about (= continue living your life in this way), as God has permanently called [him]." (cf vss. 20, 21, 24)**

**6. For you see, because of this you folks continually fulfill the obligation by paying tribute-taxes brought on by a foreign ruler – for they are God's public servants (officials; officers), men constantly attending to (staying by and persisting at) this very thing [i.e., duties].**

Because of their "compressed subordination" to the Roman Empire,

they were **continually fulfilling the obligation by paying tribute-taxes brought on by the foreign ruler**. And it was **this very thing** that was a part of why God made them His **public servants**. On the natural, physical level it had created a society by bringing order out of chaos. Recall Mk. 12:17, **"So Jesus said, 'Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar (or: Pay off to Caesar the things that come from Caesar), and to God what comes from and belongs to God.'"**

Witherington see this verse as a "climax" to Paul's argument in this passage.

7. **Render** (give away in answer to a claim; pay) **the debts** (the duties; what is owed) **to everyone: to the tax [collector], the tax; to the [one collecting] civil support tax, the civil government tax; to [whom] fear** (or: reverence) **[is due], fear** (or: reverence); **to the one [due] honor and value, honor and value.**

The members of the called-out community still had an obligation to the society out of which they had been called to be set-apart as the catalyst for the progressive growth of the society that God had created. They had **debts, duties and obligations: to everyone.** They owed **taxes, civil support, fear**

(or: reverence), **honor and value**. Paul is describing complete solidarity of the covenant community with the greater society at large. *Cf* Mat. 22:21.

"To the state ordinary people owe a wide range of services which individually they could not enjoy.... Paul saw in the state an instrument in the hand of God" (Barclay, *ibid* p 174).

**8. You folks are not to be continual debtors** (or: do not be in the habit of owing even one thing) **to anyone, except to be constantly loving one another, for the person continually loving the different one** (or: the other person) **has made full the Law** (has

fulfilled law [or: = Torah] and custom) (or: You see, the one constantly loving has fulfilled the other, different law).

Paul uses the verb of "**being a continual debtor** and owing" that is associated with the noun **debts** in vs. 7, but here the sense is of continued owing what has not been paid. The aorist tense of **render** in vs. 7 gives the sense of a point in time paying when the obligation comes due. Here he instructs against being constantly in debt because of lack of paying when the obligation came due. Of course this would apply to the taxes to which he referred, while the ethical currency of reverence and honor would be things that should always be paid,

without excuse. These should never be owed from the sense of not having been paid. That would be an affront and a discourtesy.

On the other hand, transitioning to another section of arguments, he makes a rhetorically paradoxical **exception** to what he has just said: they must **be constantly loving one another** as a kind of lifestyle of "a debt of love." This echoes Paul's reference to himself as a debtor to Greeks and Jews (1:14, above).

Next he makes a statement about love and its relationship to **the Law**, which can be translated two different ways. The first one reads **different** as applying

to another person. The second rendering applies "different" to the word law.

**Loving the different (or: other) person makes full, or fulfills, the Law, as Jesus said in Mat. 22:**

**37. So He affirms to him,**

**" You will continue loving [the] Lord [= Yahweh], your God, in union with your whole heart – and within the midst of the core of your being, and in union with your whole soul – and within the midst of your entire soul-life, and in union with your whole intellectual capacity – and**

**within the midst of your whole thinking process and comprehension.'**

[Deut. 6:5]

**39. "Yet [the] second one [is] like it:**

**'You will continue loving your associate (or: overcoming existential separation from your neighbor; participating with the one close to you) as he were yourself.'** [Lev. 19:18]

**40. "In the midst of (or: In union with; Within) these two imparted, goal-oriented directives the whole Law**

– as well as the prophets –  
is continuously being  
hung!"

The parenthetical rendering of this clause would make "loving" the fulfillment of Christ's law which we find practically expressed in Gal. 6:2,

**"You folks be habitually lifting up and carrying one another's heavy burdens and oppressive matters (grievous weights of and from one another), and thus, you will continuously fulfill [or, with other MSS: In this way, at once fill up and fulfill] Christ's Law (or: the law which is Christ; the law of the Anointing;**

[other MSS: and in this manner, at once fill up the law of the Christ {the law whose character and source is Christ} )."

This is love expressed and lived out. Jacob (James) 2:8 refers to loving one's neighbor or associate as "**the royal law** (or: kingly custom; sovereign distribution; rule fit to guide a king)." Witherington suggests that Paul is saying "that 'another Law' has replaced and fulfills the heart of the old Mosaic Law" (ibid p 310).

**9. You see, the [Law, or Torah, says or prophecies],**

**"You will not continue**

**committing adultery,"**

**"You will not continue**

**committing murder,"**

**"You will not continue stealing,"**

**"You will not continue to over-desire (crave; covet; lust)," [Ex. 20:13-14; Deut. 5:17-18]**

**and if any different implanted goal**

**(impartation of the finished product within; inward directive), it continues being brought to a head, summed up and united again in this word, namely,**

**"You will continue loving your near one (participate with uniting and unambiguous acceptance with your close one, associate, or neighbor) as yourself." [Lev.**

19:18]

Once again Paul grounds his argument in OT Scriptures. Compare the quote by Jesus in Mat. 19:18-19. Notice the future tenses in the promises of Ex. 20, Deut. 5 and Lev. 19. He is showing that **loving your near one** – or, participating within uniting and unambiguous acceptance with your associate or neighbor – is the fulfillment in the Ex. and Deut. promises. All other **implanted goals** and inward directives of the Law **continue being brought to a head, summed up and united again** in treating and regarding those with whom we come in contact as being **ourselves**. It is the attitude, outlook, mind-set and paradigm

of union and solidarity. Uniting acceptance that puts no qualifiers or ambiguities into it is the essence and realization of God's love.

While for the Jews the "near one, associate and neighbor" described fellow Israelites, Jesus expanded the meaning of this term to Samaritans (i.e., those who the Jews considered to be foreigners and non-Israelites) in Lu. 10:30-37 (the "good Samaritan"), and to enemies in Mat 5:43-48 and in Lu. 6:27-36. In Mk. 3:35 Jesus even redefined "family" as those who do the will of God.

**10. Love is not habitually working [the] worthless** (poor quality; base;

bad; evil; harm) **for** (or: to; with) **the near one** (the associate; the neighbor). **Love [is], then, that which fills up Law's full measure** (the entire contents of law and custom; [the] Law's [= Torah's] fulfillment).

Similar to 12:9, above, Paul describes **love** as what it does not do, here tying it in with vss. 3 and 4, above. By loving we will not need to fear **the authority or its sword**, and we will at the same time **fill up the full measure of the entire contents of the Law**. No more need of cultus or observance markers. No more need of the old arrangement. Love is the full measure of all.

**11. This also – being folks having seen**

**and thus knowing the season** (the fit of the situation; the appointed fertile moment) – **that [it is] by this time** (or: already) **an hour to be aroused** (or: awakened) **out of sleep, for now our rescue** (our deliverance; our wholeness, health and salvation) **[is] closer than when we came to trust** (or: we believed with faith and conviction).

Fitzmyer sees vss 11-14 as, "An exhortation to the Roman Christians to realize that they are already living in the *eschaton*. The two ages have met (1 Cor. 10:11)" – *ibid* p 327.

**11. Now all these things went on progressively** (or: from time to time) **stepping together among**

(or: to) **those folks typically** (as examples; figuratively), **and it was written with a view toward a placing [of them] into the minds of us: ones unto whom** (directed into the midst of whom) **the ends** (= conjunctions; or: consummations; goals) **of the ages have come down to** (or: arrived at) **and are now face to face [with us].** (1 Cor. 10:11)  
[note: “the ends,” plural, may describe a picture of a succession, where “one end” meets “another end,” this latter being really the beginning of another indefinite time-period, stretched out like a

rope; each rope in the time-line having "two ends."]

They were living in a critical time and did not realize what the Empire would do to Jerusalem and to Judaism in just a few years. But Paul was aware of the changes that the age of the Messiah had brought, and foresaw that more changes were about to happen. Fitzmyer points out that Paul "often uses this eschatological motive in his moral exhortations (1 Thes. 5:6; 1 Cor. 7:26, 28-30; Col. 4:5; Eph. 5:16)." (ibid) Since Paul says that they had **seen and thus knew the season** and "the fit of the situation," it would seem that this eschatological understanding of where

they all were in regard to the *eschaton* (the period of "the end") had been a normal ingredient of the proclamation about the Messiah, and of Jesus having become Lord of all. They were in a transition period between the old and the new, and the coming of the full end of the old was not a matter of the coming of the **Day** (vs. 13, below), but it was the matter of **an hour** – very soon. **By this time** (or: already) [it was] **an hour to be aroused** (or: awakened) **out of sleep** – a figure of resurrection into the Day of the Lord, the Day of the Messiah. Sleep was often a metaphor of being dead. The new Day had arrived and they needed to be alert to what was happening.

The imagery here is similar to that of Eph. 5,

**8. for you folks were once existing being darkness** (dimness; obscurity; gloom; shadiness), **yet** (or: but) **now [you are] light, within and in union with [the] Lord [= Christ or Yahweh].**

**9. Be constantly walking about** (= Habitually conduct yourselves) **as children of Light** (born ones from light) – **for the fruit of the Light** [other MSS: **Spirit**] **[is] in union with** (or: [exists] within the midst of) **all Goodness** (virtue; beneficence), **Justice** (fair and

equitable dealing in rightwised relationships which accord with the Way pointed out; also = covenant participation) **and Truth** (or: Reality) –

**14. for you see, all that is continuously being manifested** (clearly displayed, made apparent and is progressively shown for what it is) **is, and continually exists being, light. Wherefore He is now saying,**  
**"Let the sleeper** (the person continuously down and being fast asleep) **be waking up, continue rousing, and then stand up** (arise) **from out of the midst of**

**the dead ones, and the Christ will continue shining upon you (enlightening you)!"**

**16. making it a habit [to be] intensively buying-out for yourselves** (as at a market, exhausting the supply; redeeming; reclaiming) **the season** (fitting situation; opportunity; fertile moment), **because the days** (= present times) **are of a bad quality** (or: a gush of misery; unsound; harmful; or: in a sorry plight; or: toilsome).

See also Eph. 6:10-20.

**Our rescue** (our deliverance; our wholeness, health and salvation) is not

just a one-time event that happened **when we came to trust**. Our own lives witness to the reality that coming into full health and wholeness is a process. Deliverance is a work of the Spirit within us that can be instantaneous, but often takes the rest of our lives. **Our rescue** begins a Path (the Way) that is characterized as salvation and each day brings us **closer**. In 2 Cor. 1:22 Paul spoke of us having been given,

**"the advance transaction of the agreement** (or: the pledge and down payment guaranteeing full payment for purchase; or: a dowry) **of the Spirit** (or: which is the spirit; or: having its source

and origin in the Breath-effect; or: which belongs and pertains to the spirit; from the Attitude) **within the midst of our hearts.**"

I think that Glen H. Stassen is right on target when speaking of God's reign, "[It] is not a place, it is a process – a process of turning and deliverance – a process of peace, justice..." (*Just Peacemaking: Transforming Initiatives for Justice and Peace*; quoted by Witherington, *ibid* p 321).

Pagels gives a 2<sup>nd</sup> century Gnostic interpretation of vss. 11-13 which provides a good insight to Paul's metaphors. She uses the term "psychic" for the Greek *psuchikos* (soulish;

oriented to the soul as opposed to the spirit; having the qualities of the soul, rather than the spirit) and the term "pneumatic" for the spiritual person who possesses the insight of *gnosis* from having the Spirit.

"Paul closes the passage with an eschatological warning. The psychic long has remained oblivious of God ('Adam's sleep was the oblivion of the soul') but the savior has come to awaken the soul, whose 'awakening' is his salvation (*Excerpta ex Theodoto*, from *Stromata*, Clement of Alexander, 2.2-3.1). 'The day is drawing near;' if the 'first day' is

past... and the second is present, the *psychic* day, the day that 'draws near' must be 'the third, the *pneumatic* day,' the day of resurrection of the ecclesia" (*Commentarium in Johannis*, Origen, 10.37). On that 'day' the psychics shall be roused from sleep, that is, 'raised from the dead.' The elect already walk 'in the day' (13:13), having emerged from the 'night' of cosmic existence, 'drawn upward by him like the beams by the sun... this is the pneumatic resurrection' (*Epistula ad Rheginum {De Resurrectione}* 45.28-40)" (ibid p

44).

**12. The night advances, and the day has approached and is presently near. We should put, then, the acts of the Darkness** (works from the realm of the shadows; actions that belong to dimness and obscurity) **away from ourselves** (or: take off and put away the deeds pertaining to darkness; = ignorance; that which was before the light arrived), **and clothe ourselves with the instruments** (tools; weapons; implements; [some MSS: works; deeds]) **of Light** (or: The Light).

**The day has approached and is presently near.** This is like Jesus saying, "The reign of God is at hand." It

was accessible to them so that they could **clothe [themselves] with the instruments of Light – or, The Light.** Note Paul's expression of solidarity with them: **we... ourselves.** He never acts like he has advanced far beyond his listeners. They are all of one cloth, one body. Since the old age of the Law had passed, they **should put the acts of the Darkness** (the period of the night which is a figure of the Law, which preceded the Day of the Light) **away from** them. No more Torah observance which would conflict with the freedom that came with The Light. In vs. 14, below, he equates "the tools, weapons, implements" of the Light to **the Lord, Jesus Christ,**

Himself. Clothe yourself with Christ and you are **clothed with the instruments of Light** (which is a figure of understanding, knowledge and insight of reality).

The metaphor of "clothing" may be a subtle reference to the nakedness of Adam in the Garden story of Genesis. We no longer need clothing of "skin" (or, of flesh, as to which 14b points, below), for we now have **The Light**. The Life that is in Christ is **the Light of mankind** (John 1:4) and,

**"the Light is constantly shining  
in the dim and shadowed places,  
and keeps on  
progressively giving light within**

**the gloomy darkness where there is no light** (or: within the midst of the obscurity of The Darkness where there is no light of The Day; or: = in the ignorant condition or system).

**And yet the darkness does not grasp or receive**

**it on the same level"** (John 1:5).

**Light** is our tool, our instrument – or, with the other MS reading, our "works and deeds." As Jesus said in Mat. 5,

14. **"You folks, yourselves, exist being (are) the light of the ordered System** (the world of culture, religion, politics, government and secular society; =

the human sociological realm). **A city located up on a mountain** (or: situated on top of a mountain range) **continues unable to be hidden or concealed.**

**15. "Likewise, people are not normally lighting a lamp and then placing it under the measuring bowl (or: a one-peck grain-measuring basket), but rather upon the lampstand – and it continues shining and giving light for all those within the house.**

**16. "In this way, let the Light, which you folks possess (or: which has a source in you folks;**

or: which you people are), **shine in front of mankind** (before humans), **so that people can see your fine works** (or: the beautiful works that you are; the ideal acts which come from you folks) **and they can give glory to** (or: and [these deeds; or: these works of beauty] will bring a good reputation for) **your Father – the One in union with the atmospheres [that surround you folks]** (or: within the midst of the heavens)!

This admonition would also include ethical behavior on the social level and would include the catalogue of negative

activities that vs. 13 lists which should not be a part of kingdom living.

**13. As within [the] Day, we should** (may; can) **walk about** (= live our lives) **respectably** (reputably; decently; with good form; mannerly; pleasing to look upon; presentably) – **not in festive processions** (or: orgies; revelries; excessive feasting; carousing) **and collective drunkenness** (intoxications); **nor in beds** (i.e., sexual interludes) **and outrageous behaviors** (shamelessness; vice; loose conduct; indecencies); **not in strife** (or: contentious disposition) **and in jealousy** (or: envy) –

Beyond the obvious physical and behavioral applications of this

admonition, there is also a spiritual application. Good form and mannerly behavior applies to the relationships and interactions within the covenant community – especially between the Gentile and Jewish believers. The Darkness had a wall of separation between the two, and there was enmity (Eph. 2:14-15). **Strife** and **jealousy** were a part of the conflicts that had previously characterized the Gentile/Jew relationships. Idolatry (figured by the prophets as adultery – sexual interludes: **beds**) was a temptation that had plagued Israel's history. Eating in pagan temples had been a problem that Paul addressed in

Corinth (*cf* Witherington, *Conflict & Community in Corinth*). This would expose the members of the community to pagan **festive processions** and **excessive feastings** which would put their Light under a basket. **Outrageous behaviors** have happened in "worship services" even in our day, and "loose conduct and vice" can characterize how the community leadership treats its members and supporters. The Greco-Roman culture of Paul's day was an honor/shame-based society. To be without shame was to step outside of the ethics and social mores of the day. This list does not only address physical or even behavioral issues.

**Collective drunkenness** can be a spiritual matter, such as "intoxication" with the concept of becoming financially wealthy through "Christian principles." We see the figurative picture of being drunk in Rev. 17:2, 6 and 18:3. It speaks of excessive participation in something that can bring bondage and addiction. This can be both mental and emotional. Whole groups (entire communities) can become obsessed with a particular mind-set, such as "fighting demons" or "combating false doctrines."

He tells us that we should live our lives as being **within the Day**. We are in the Day (Christ), so we should live in accord with Christ.

14. **but rather, you folks must clothe yourselves with** (or: enter within and put on) **the Lord, Jesus Christ, and stop** (or: do not continue) **making forethought** (constructing provision; planning ahead; performing provident care) **into excessive desires of the flesh** (= into rushing upon emotions which pertain to the inner self or the estranged humanity; = into the setting of feelings and longings upon something of the human nature that is oriented to the System).

The word **clothe** literally means "enter within" – as stepping into a garment that encloses us. This imagery is similar to

Jesus saying "abide in Me" in John 15. Putting on the Lord is the same thing as putting on **the full suit of armor** (panoply; implements of war) **which is God** (Eph. 6:13ff). Paul means here to **walk about** – or, live – as folks that **were immersed into Christ** and thus, **"at once clothed yourselves with Christ** (or: were plunged into so as to be enveloped by then saturated and permeated with Anointing – or, the Anointed One – instantly entered within and put on [the] Anointing)." – Gal. 3:27 Paul may be drawing on the imagery of Isa. 61:10,

"For He has clothed me with

garments of salvation; He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness..."

Stern points out, "The Hebrew word for 'salvation' in this passage is *yeshua*', related to 'Yeshua,' which also means 'salvation.' Compare Rev. 19:8" (ibid p 431).

This attitude, mind-set and focus (Christ) is the tool for avoiding **excessive desires of the flesh.**

The parenthetical expansions give two paraphrases of this expression which show that it refers to more than sexual desires. The first one involves emotional relationships or inner feelings. The second speaks to an

orientation toward the System – whether it be cultural, political, economic or religious. All of these are aspects of how Paul uses the word **flesh**. We are not to **make forethought** or construct provision or plan ahead or perform provident care for any **excessive desires** that pertain to the old Adam or the old creation or the old covenant. Obsession with rituals or purity codes or food laws is something that brings bondage – and are things from which folks need to be rescued. Clothing ourselves with Christ puts a **stop** to such behavior. Wright sees the getting dressed (putting on clothes) as coming from the night-passing/day-arriving contrast.

When the day arrives, we wake up and put on our clothes: Christ. (ibid p 90)

Witherington shares what may be a parallel use of the metaphor:

"Dionysius of Halicarnassus 11:5 where to 'put on Tarquin' means to play the role of Tarquin" (ibid p 318).

We are indeed called to assume the roll of Christ on earth as we bear His image, speak His words and do His works.



## Chapter 14

**1. So constantly reach toward and receive in your arms** (take as a companion, admit to your home, society and friendship, and then partner with) **the one continuing without strength in the faith or by the Faithfulness** (or: the person weak in trust, confidence and loyalty) – **not [putting him] into separated distinctions** (or: not [pushing the issue] into disputed discriminations for a decision) **based upon or pertaining to opinions** (or: reasoned considerations; thought processes; dialogues or disputes; things being thought through; thoroughly considered

and settled accounts).

This admonition concerning conduct flows out of being clothed with the Lord, Jesus Christ (13:14, above). It applies to all his listeners, but Paul would most likely be addressing the Gentile members who were the majority of the community and who would most likely not have concerns about dietary rules or discrimination of days (such as sabbaths). Witherington presents good arguments for "the weak" being the Jewish members of the Roman community (ibid pp 330-336). He quotes W.S. Campbell ("The Rule of Faith in Rom. 12:1-15:13" in *Pauline Theology*) who says that "Paul is dealing here with

conflicting groups rather than with differing types of individual Christians" and, agreeing with Campbell, Witherington observes that "there were in Rome Christian groups who followed some aspect of the Jewish lifestyle..." (ibid p 332). He concludes that in this section, "Paul is combating pride, arrogance, boasting... presumptuousness and... anti-Semitism among the largely Gentile audience he addresses" (ibid p 333).

Nanos, representing a different reading of Romans, cites Gunter Klein as,

"a representative of those who question the prevailing conclusions that derive from the

discussion of the 'weak' and the 'strong' for determining the historical occasion, and thus the purpose of the message of Romans, has shown that one of the inherent problems is the failure to recognize that chapters 1-11 'at no point reflect an antagonism between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians,' and thus, 'the passage 14:1-15:13 does not deserve a key heuristic position with respect to an understanding of the epistle as a whole'.... 'the decisive statements' 'are meant to shed light on the situation of the non-believing Jews... 9-11 cannot

be regarded as a defense of Jewish Christianity in Rome' because 'unconverted Israel' is the 'primary reference' (Klein, *Paul's Purpose in Writing the Epistle to the Romans*, pp 29-43, cited in Nanos, *ibid* p 88-89).

For a contrasting view on this, *cf* Witherington (*ibid*).

Now those who are wearing Christ should **constantly reach toward and receive in your arms** (take as a companion, **admit to your home**, society and friendship, and then partner with) **the one continuing without strength in the faith** (be they non-believing Jews or Christian Jews). The

called-out met in "house gatherings" and there may have been some that met in Jewish homes, while others met in Gentile homes. Witherington suggests that the last half of this verse may refer to "the weak" not being welcomed in some of the Gentile homes. This argument is a word for unity, solidarity and mutual acceptance – even with, or of, those with whom folks had issues concerning matters that Paul describes as causing them to be **without strength in the faith**. Paul's use of the word faith, or trust, seems somewhat ambiguous. It could refer to the individual's weakness in regard to trusting God or to his lack of confidence in the work of Christ –

possibly due to his lack of understanding of what the death and resurrection of Jesus accomplished for humanity. Or, it could refer to his being like the Corinthian community: one that is immature and can handle only the "milk" of the message (1 Cor. 3:2), and so is weak in loyalty to the new arrangement in Christ. Taking **the faith** as referring to the body of teachings which Christ's sent-forth representatives brought to Rome, and to the Life that came to them through these teachings, it could suggest that such folks were in some way not in a healthy relationship with the Breath-effect or with the other members of the body – both of which would impart

strength to these weak ones. Here, Nanos could be correct in his assessment that those who were **without strength in the faith** were the non-Christian Jews in Rome. We must keep in mind that the Jews had faith in the One God, but in this case it was weak because of not being able to accept Jesus as the Messiah or His resurrection and the new covenant as the fulfillment of the OT promises.

In the conflated rendering “**in the faith or by the Faithfulness**,” the latter, instrumental reading (**by**) of the dative together with the rendering of *pistis* as **the Faithfulness** shifts Paul’s meaning from personal faith/trust/etc. to the

faithfulness of Jesus to the Father's plan for the death and resurrection of the Messiah. This could lend strength to the reading by Nanos, or it could refer to the Jewish Christians in the community that might fall prey to the Judaizing Christian teachers (a central emphasis in Douglas A. Campbell's apocalyptic reading – *ibid*). So the “weak” could be those who had not become “strong” in their understanding of the full effect of the work of God's deliverance in the Christ event. Both readings on this verse promote unity. Seeing these folks as non-Christian Jews would suggest that Paul's point was that the called-out community should live with the inclusive, accepting

perspective of there now being “one new humanity” – and that these non-believers will at some point be “grafted back into” the living flow of the Age of the Messiah (the re-interpreted “olive tree”). Seeing these weak ones as Jews of the called-out group (i.e., as believers in Christ, but weak in their faith) would be understanding Paul as calling for unity within Christ’s body there in Rome. Both readings hold merit.

Nanos comments:

"Paul does not describe them as 'weak in *opinion*'; in fact, he instructs the 'strong' not to dispute the opinions of the 'weak'..." (Ibid p 105; emphasis original).

He also points us to 10:2, above, where Paul instructs us that the non-Christian Jews "**continue possessing a zeal from God** (or: hold God's zeal), **but however, not down from** (or: on the level of and in accordance with) **full and accurate experiential knowledge, recognition or insight.**" Nanos equates this with being "weak in faith."

Katherine Grieb states:

"Paul argues that Christians are just as accountable to God for their *attitudes* towards their brothers and sisters with whom they disagree as they are accountable for the *decisions* they have made that divide them from

one another" (*The Story of Romans: A Narrative Defense of God's Righteousness*, Westminster/John Knox, 2002 p 128; emphasis original).

**2. One person, indeed, is habitually trusting** (is continually believing; continues to have faith) **to eat everything, yet the person being constantly weak** (without strength) **continues** (or: is normally) **eating vegetables.**

Here Paul defines "strong" and "weak" trust or faith in terms of the absence of, or of being bound to, a food law or code. In this case a restricted behavior signifies a **weakness of trust and faith.**

It would seem that the person without strength has not come to a full realization of what Paul wrote to the Galatians in 5:1,

**"For the freedom, Christ immediately set us free (or: [The] Anointed One at once frees us in, to, for and with freedom)!"**

According to Dodd, vegetarianism seems to have been a cross-cultural religious fad at this time (ibid p 212). If this is true, then **the person being constantly weak** could refer to either the non-Christian Jew or the Jewish Christian.

**3. The person habitually eating the one thing must not constantly make**

**nothing out of** (= look down on) **the person not eating. And the person not normally eating the one thing must not constantly make a decision about** (separate away from; make a distinction between; pass judgment on) **the one habitually eating, for God reaches toward him and takes him in His arms** (receives him as a companion and a friend, and has taken him as a partner). Now he addresses attitudes and mental or expressed decisions within the community, or the city: no looking down on other people (**making nothing out of [some] person**) for their religious bondage; no passing judgment on someone for their freedom from religion.

Why? Because God intimately receives and accepts them – even makes them His friends and partners. This last verb is the same one that is used in vs. 1, above: God behaves as He has instructed us to behave. This is an important principle of God's dealing with humans which we need to keep in mind when meditating on God's judgments. And in this specific case, we should receive **the one continuing without strength in the faith or by the Faithfulness**, because God does!

**4. You, who are the person constantly judging** (separating away; making a distinction or a decision about) **another man's house-servant** (domestic)! **By**

(In; To; For; With) **his own Lord**  
(Master; Owner) **he continues standing,**  
**or, he is falling. Yet he will repeatedly**  
**be made to stand, for you see, the**  
**Lord [= Yahweh or Christ] is**  
**constantly able** (perpetually powerful)  
**to make him stand.**

So here we get a window into one of the  
divisive situations in the Roman  
community (either the called-out groups  
of Christians, or the city at large,  
including non-believing Jews). Each  
group was probably **constantly judging,**  
**separating away and making a**  
**distinction or a decision about** those of  
the other group. But notice: each person  
in each group is God's **house-servant**

(or: a domestic within the temple and household of God). Paul is using a metaphor from the household situations within the Greco-Roman world of the first century. He is telling us that God's economy with humans has a similar relationship. Thus, whether a person is **standing** (i.e., being successful within the Life of the body) or **falling** (i.e., failing in some aspect of his or her Christian walk; or failing to accept Jesus as the Messiah), his situation is **by his or her own Lord**. Their standing and/or falling is also **in the Lord**, is **with the Lord**, and is both **to** and **for the Lord!** So why are we having negative thoughts or reactions toward them?

**The Lord can MAKE him or her stand!** What a statement of involvement, solidarity and sovereignty!! It calls to mind what Judah (or: Jude) said,

**24. Now in and by (or: with; to) Him being powerful and able to keep and guard you folks from stumbling (or: tripping) and from harm, and then to stand you flawless and blameless (or: unblemished; without defect or stain) in the presence of His glory (or: down in sight of the manifestation of Him which calls forth praise and yields a good opinion and reputation; or: down in the center of a view of the glory**

which is Him) **in extreme joy** (in the center of a much-jumping exultation; in union with body-moving celebration).

Our life in Christ is all a matter of God making it happen in us. Paul said in Phil.2:13,

**"for you see, God is the One habitually being inwardly active, constantly working and progressively effecting [results] within you folks – both the willing (intending; purposing; resolving) and the [situation] to be continuously effecting the action and inward work – above the thing that pleases (or: over**

[the situation of] well-thinking and delight; for the sake of [His] good pleasure)."

**5. One person, on the one hand, is habitually discriminating** (deciding; separating; passing judgment; making a distinction): **a day from** (or: beside) **a day** (or: = [one] day more than, or compared with, [another] day). **Yet, on the other hand, another is habitually deciding for every day** (or: is constantly separating each day [as alike, or, as set-apart]). **Let each one habitually be fully led within his own mind** (or: Each person must constantly be carried to full measure in union with his own mind [on this matter]).

Now he moves to another cultic or cultural issue: the keeping of "holy days," the observance of religious festivals and the religious distinction of religious traditions regarding days that had been considered in some way to be different or special under the arrangements (or: the covenant) of the old creation that had now passed away. This could refer either to Jewish customs and their religious calendar, or to the Greco-Roman observances of pagan holidays. Paul apparently did not see this as a specific marker of identification with these religions, so he applied the freedom that is within Christ to the end that **each one [would]**

**habitually be fully led within his own mind**, or, "each person constantly carried to the full measure in union with his own mind" on the matter.

He expresses the idea and point of this last clause in vs. 23b, below:

**"everything which [is] not forth from out of faith (or: [does] not arise from trust) is a failure to hit the target (exists being an error; is a deviation from the goal; continues being sin and a mistake)."**

The situation at Colossae was different than at Rome, but Paul's admonition to those folks in Col. 2 presents a balancing consideration:

**16. Therefore, do not let anyone habitually pass judgment on you (or: make decisions for you) in [matters of] eating and drinking, nor in a part of a festival, or of a new moon, or of sabbaths (= concerning things that are of a religious nature),**

**17. which things are a shadow of the things being about to be (or: of the impending), yet now the body belongs to the Christ**

(or: So we see, the body is Christ; or: Now the body has its origin in the Christ; or: Yet the body has the character and qualities of

[the] Anointed; [note: A.T. Robertson sees in this construction "the body" {figure of: "the substance"} as casting the shadow; Vincent is similar]).

**6. He who is habitually minding** (being disposed to; being opinionated about) **the day, in the Lord** [= Yahweh] **is continuously opinionated** (or: for the Lord [= Christ] is he [thus] minding or being disposed; [some MSS add: and yet the person not minding the day, to, for or in the Lord he is not minding it]). **And the one habitually eating, in the Lord** [= Yahweh or Christ] **is he eating, for he habitually gives thanks to God**

(constantly expresses gratitude by God, for God and in God). **And the one not eating is not eating in God** (to God; for God), **and habitually expresses gratitude for God** (in God; gives thanks to God).

Here he has given detailed examples of the principle that he stated in vs. 4, above: each one's life is **to, for, in, with and by the Lord/God**. Note the interchangeable terms here: **the Lord; God**. Union with God is clearly presented in this verse. It is the branch joined to the Vine. Fitzmyer observes that one of the main things here is a person's "motivation" (ibid p 327). Consider also the terms **minding** and

**being opinionated.** These come from past teachings or enculturation that have given us a paradigm and a horizon. But Paul said earlier (12:2) that our minds need to be renewed and conformed to the mind of Christ, which is Love.

Furthermore, we need to keep in mind that both groups are **giving thanks to, and expressing gratitude for, God!** Our own particular thoughts on a matter should not cause anyone to stumble or be offended – much less, be rejected, but rather be accepted and embraced.

**7. You see, not one of us is living to himself** (for himself; by himself; in himself), **and not one is dying away by himself** (in himself; for himself; to

himself).

The unity of humanity in God is what we see by these words. **Not one of us...** this leaves no one out. This applies to families, to communities, to countries and to the whole of mankind. Whether we realize it or not, our lives touch everyone else; we matter to everyone else. We are the Second Humanity, the Last Adam.

Barclay comments,

"From every man goes out an influence... From every man's deeds come consequences.... we leave something of ourselves in the world by leaving something of ourselves in others" (ibid p 186).

In terms of the Firstfruit, the body of Christ, Paul revealed in 1 Cor. 12:

**26. And further, whether one member is continuing to experience the effect of something, or constantly undergoes suffering, all the members continually experience the effect or the suffering together with [it]; or if a member is being constantly glorified or is progressively receiving a good reputation, all the members are continuously rejoicing together with [it].**

But here, in vs. 7, Paul does not restrict his statement to just the covenant

community. Non-believers – whether Jew or Gentile – are also included in this statement.

**8. For it follows, both if we are (or: should be) living, in the Lord (or: for, to and by the Lord [= Yahweh or Christ]) we are (or: could and should be) living, and then, if we may (or: would) be dying, in, for, to and by the Lord we would be dying. Then, both if we are living, and if we may be dying, we are the Lord's (we constantly exist being of [Yahweh]; we continuously belong to the Lord; we are from the Owner).**

The first clause echoes Acts 17:28a, "**within the midst of and in union with**

**Him we continuously live...**" But the other functions, "for, to and with," repeat what he said in vss. 4 and 6, above.

Consider how seamlessly Paul connects **living** and **dying** in this verse. They are both part of the same cloth; both part of the same eonian existence. And in both processes **we are the Lord's** – we are from our Owner, we belong to our Lord and we exist being "of Him," for,

**"You see, we are also a family of the One** (or: we even continuously exist being a race whose source is the One; or: we also are His species and offspring; we are even a family which is composed of the One and

which is the One)" (Acts 17:28b).

The reason for both the indicative and the subjunctive renderings of the verb **living**, it is that the form (spelling) of the Greek is the same for both moods.

Harvey points out that the effect of Christ's dying is that we can even **die FOR the Lord** (ibid p 535).

In regard to vss. 3-8, Nanos comments that,

"Everything that has been said ... could be said along christological lines of Jews who did not believe in Jesus as the Christ... Paul regards non-Christian Jews as his 'brethren' throughout this letter... Jews were the historical

community of the One God, whether they believed in Jesus as the Christ or not. Thus to be a Christian... would have immediately made one a 'brother' to all Jews, whether they were Christians or not" (ibid p 108, 110, 111).

Nanos points to the illustrations of the dough and the olive tree in ch. 11 to assert that "the faith of Christian Gentiles is inextricably linked with historical Israel" (ibid p 111). On p 112 he lists the terms that Paul applies to both Christians and Non-Christian Jews in this letter:

brethren, adoption as sons,

children of God, the glory,  
Abraham as father, seed of  
Abraham, beloved of God, called,  
elect and foreknew. *Cf*, especially,  
chs. 8 & 9.

He further says in regard to Christian  
Gentiles and non-Christian Jews,

"All are related to the Christ, even  
if they do not yet acknowledge  
Jesus as the Christ," and cites  
Jacob Jervell, *Luke*, pp 50-51, 'To  
be a brother means to belong to  
the family of Abraham, to share in  
the promises. *Adelphos* [brother]  
means Israelite (Acts 1:16; e:12,  
17; 7:23, 25f; 13:26)'" (ibid p  
112; emphasis original; brackets

mine).

**9. For into this [situation] Christ not only died away, but also now lives (= came back to life again), to the end that He would (or: should) be Lord (Owner; Master; Possessor) both of dead folks as well as of living people.**

Note the inclusiveness of this statement and its universality: **dead folks... living people**. It was into the situation and predicament of the aggregate of humanity that Christ came (John 3:17), and for whom He **died away but also now lives** (John 3:16).

That Christ is **Lord of dead folks** can refer to His ruling over people that are physically dead or figurative dead (as

"dead in trespasses and mistakes" – Eph. 2:1; *cf* Col. 2:13; 1 Tim. 5:6). The main point is that He is Lord of all.

Kirk rightly sees a "tight association between resurrection and lordship" in this verse (*ibid* p 202; *Cf* Acts 2:31-36). He quotes James Dunn (*Theology of Paul*),

"The greatest significance in Paul's use of the term *kyrios* for Jesus lies in the fact that '(the) Lord' was already a customary way of speaking of God in Jewish circles" (*ibid* p 203).

Kirk continues, "A reinterpretation of God occurs with the affirmation that the resurrected Jesus is Lord.... the name of

the Lord is now Jesus" (ibid p 203, 204). In regard to Paul "revisions of Israel's stories," they give us "a thoroughly new framework within which to assess God's faithfulness.... [Paul] has completely retooled Jewish theodicy around the resurrection of Jesus" (ibid p 205; brackets mine).

**10. But you! Why are you constantly judging** (discriminating against; separating away; making a decision about) **your brother** (= fellow believer; or: = fellowman)? **Or why are you also habitually making light of** (making nothing out of; setting at naught; treating with scorn or contempt) **your brother?** Here he picks up his argument from vs.

4a and vs. 3, above. All that he has said from 4b through vs. 9 has been to show that such as was said before and is now repeated here should not be the case.

This is one of the central reasons for his writing this letter: to overcome the divisions caused by such thoughts and actions, and to restore unity and solidarity within the Roman community.

Jesus taught, in Mat. 7:1, 2,

**"Stop separating-off, dividing-out and making distinctions (or: Do not have a habit of evaluating or judging) – so that you folks may not be separated-off, evaluated or judged.**

**"You see, within and with**

**whatever aspect of separating-off, effect of evaluation, result of discrimination, or produce of judgment you folks are habitually or normally separating-off, dividing-out, discriminating, evaluating and judging, you will be judged (etc.). And further, within and with whatever measure or standard you folks are using or applying, it will be used to measure you, and that standard will be applied to you (or: = you will receive in the same proportion that you give)."**

**For you see, we will all continue**

**standing in attendance alongside on God's elevated place** (platform or stage which is ascended by steps, from which one speaks in a public assembly; or: we will all repeatedly present ourselves at the seat, dais or throne which is God [some MSS: Christ]),

**11. for it has been written,**

**"I, Myself, am continuously living. The Lord [= Yahweh] is saying that in Me (by Me; to Me; for Me) every knee will repeatedly bend in worship, or, to sit down (or: I live, says the Lord, because every knee will repeatedly bend to sit down in Me), and every tongue will**

**continue to agree, bind itself and promise to God** (speak out of the same word in God; publicly acclaim/acknowledge God; openly profess by God)." [Isa. 49:18 and 45:23, conflated]

This is a past, present and future reality. It is past now because it began with the resurrection of Jesus. We see in vs. 4, above, that **the Lord is constantly able to make His house-servants stand**. We live in Him. He now rules and is constantly making decisions about us and all. Paul admonished the covenant community in Rome **to stand [their] bodies alongside** (or: to set or place [their] bodies beside) **[the] Well-**

**pleasing, Set-apart** (Holy; Different-from-the-usual), **Living Sacrifice by God** (or: in God; for God; to God; with God) – 12:1, above. In fact we are now **"caused to sit** (or: [He] seated [us]) **together within the things situated upon** [thus, above] **the [elevated places] within and in union with Christ Jesus"** (Eph. 2:6). Paul told the Philippians that they **"are constantly and progressively standing firm within the midst of and in union with one Breath-effect** (or: Spirit)" (1:27). In 1 Thes. 3:8 Paul said, **"...you continue standing firm in** (and: in union with) **[the] Lord."** The called-out groups of Asia were receiving decisions from the

risen Lord who promised to visit them in judgment if they did not change their thinking (Rev. chs. 2-3). In fact, in Rev. 3:20 He told them,

**"Consider! I have stood, and continue standing, upon (= at) the door (entrance), and I am constantly knocking; if ever anyone may (or: can) hear My voice (or: sound) and would open the door, I will proceed entering (coming or going in) toward him, and then I will continue eating the evening meal with him, and he with Me."**

Paul "stood" before Jesus on the road to Damascus and was judged (a decision

was made by Christ that changed his life). In Eph. 3:14 he said, "**I continually bend my knees** (= in loyalty, respect and reverence) **to** (toward; or: face-to-face with) **the Father.**" Paul associates **standing in attendance alongside on God's elevated place** with the quote that **every knee will repeatedly bend in worship.** In Phil. 2:10-11 he affirms,

**"that within The Name: Jesus!** (or: in union with the name of Jesus; in the midst of the Name belonging to [Yahweh-the-Savior]), **every knee** (= person) **– of the folks upon the heaven** (of those belonging to the super-

heaven, or [situated] upon the atmosphere) **and of the people existing upon the earth and of the folks dwelling down under the ground** (or: on the level of or pertaining to subterranean ones; [comment: note the ancient science of the day – a three-tiered universe]) – **may bend** (or: would bow) **in worship, prayer or allegiance, and every tongue** (= person) **may speak out the same thing** (should and would openly agree, confess, avow and acclaim) **that Jesus Christ [is] Lord** (Master; Owner) – **[leading] into [the] glory of Father God** (or:

unto Father God's good reputation; [progressing] into a manifestation which calls forth praise unto God [the] Father)!

There he used terms of the ancient science of that day, a description of a three-tiered universe (heaven – earth – under the ground), to show that this included **every knee** – or, **every person**. This is an all-inclusive statement; no one is left out. It began happening in the 1<sup>st</sup> century and has continued ever since.

Let us now consider the alternate rendering, "we will all repeatedly present ourselves at the seat, dais or throne which is God [some MSS:

Christ])." In the old covenant type which foreshadowed the reality of the new arrangement, God's seat was the mercy seat (the lid of the ark) within the holy of holies of the tabernacle (and later, the temple). In Ex. 25:22 Yahweh said,

"There I shall come to meet you; there, from above the throne of mercy, from between the two cherubs that are on the ark of the Testimony, I shall give you all my commands for the sons of Israel" (Jerusalem Bible).

The reality for which the tabernacle was a type and a figure is the body of Christ which is His temple (home). The tabernacle/temple was situated on earth,

among His people, but it represented the heavens, the elevated place of the Spirit. He now resides within us and we meet with Him there, in the core of our being, to receive His directives and be led by His Spirit (8:14, above).

As Paul quotes Isaiah, we find the dative case which can indicate instrumentality, location and the indirect object of the verb. So we find that the **bowing of every knee is in God**, by God, to God and for God. Nothing has ever been or will ever be "outside" of God.

It is worth quoting again that **"every tongue will continue to agree, bind itself and promise to God** (or: speak

out of the same word in God; publicly acclaim/acknowledge God; openly profess by God)." This verse recalls the universality of 11:36, above. Ultimately there will be no atheists or unbelievers. Fitzmyer comments that "bending the knee and making a confession are scarcely acts one associates with a judge" (ibid p 328).

**12. Consequently, then, each one of us will continue giving a word** (presenting a message; rendering an account) **about himself to God** (or: for God; by God; in God).

I have given the durative aspect of the future tense, **will continue**, since this is something that our lives do moment by

moment, day by day, since He dwells within us and in being "joined to the Lord" we are "one spirit" with Him (1 Cor. 6:17) at all times. Our thoughts, prayers, imaginations and attitudes constantly render an account **about ourselves to God**. They also are progressively presenting a message "for God," to others, who read us as living letters (2 Cor. 3:2). It is God working within us, so it is "by God" that we give **a word** (a thought, an idea) concerning ourselves "in God."

13. **No longer, then, should we continue judging** (making decisions about; discriminating against; separating away) **one another, but rather, to a**

**greater extent you folks must decide this: not to continue placing (or: setting) the stumbling-block (that which results in tripping) for or in the brother; neither a snare (a trap-spring; a cause for tripping or becoming trapped).**

Knowing that we all continually stand before the Lord, we need not be judging one another. This includes not "making decisions about" one another, and not "discriminating against" one another, and not "separating one another away" in any way. We are all part of one body and Christ is our Head and Source.

Specifically in the context of this argument, the strong and the weak

(whoever these folks were) were not to continue judging each other's behavior. But further than this, our behavior (whether eating or drinking – or not; whether having certain days special – or not) should not **continue placing** (or: setting) **the stumbling-block** (that which results in tripping) **for or in the brother; neither a snare** (a trap-spring; a cause for tripping or becoming trapped). This exhortation is addressed to "the strong." The idea in the verb **placing** or **setting** seems to be a deliberate act or an act in which we are aware that it will result in a weaker person tripping or becoming trapped by the **snare** that we set in place. This "**not**

**to continue**" is the result of a **decision**. Paul may be referencing Lev. 19:14 here,

"before the blind you shall not put a stumbling block."

Jesus referred to the Jewish leadership as "blind guides" in Mat. 23:16.

With Paul's use of the term **brother**, we see that he is referring to the family of God, which is the newly defined Israel which includes both Jews and Gentiles.

**14. I have seen to know** (or: have perceived), **and I have been persuaded and now stand convinced in union with [the] Lord Jesus, that nothing** (not one thing) **[is] common** (profane; ceremonially defiled; unclean;

contaminating; = the opposite of set-apart or holy) **through itself, except to** (in; by; for) **the person considering** (or: logically accounting and reckoning) **anything to be common** (profane; etc.); **to** (for; in; by) **that one [it is] common and unclean.**

There is a new creation and a new arrangement. He is acknowledging the new reality that the strong have also come to see. Paul has been made aware that the old has passed away and God has cleansed everything (Acts 10:15 – and Peter's vision was about FOOD). Mark 7:15 gives us Jesus' instructions about food:

**"There is nothing** (not even one

thing) **from outside a person** (a human) **which, progressively entering into him, continues having power** (is continuing able) **to make him ritually defiled or unclean** (or: can contaminate him or make him common)."

In giving His disciples an explanation of this, He gives the reason in vs. 19, **"because it is not passing on into his heart."** Then Mark gives an editorial comment at the end of this verse,

**"– [He is] proceeding in cleansing** (making ritually clean) **all foods!"**

Paul had become persuaded either from the tradition of Jesus' teaching that was

passed on to him, or **now [stood]**  
**convinced in union with the Lord**  
**Jesus** from having been taught it by the  
risen Lord.

Paul, **having seen** (the new revelation)  
so as to now know and perceive that  
nothing is intrinsically unclean, instructs  
them that it is only how a person  
considers, reckons or logically accounts  
something that would make it **common**  
(i.e., profane or unholy) and **unclean**  
(thus, a taboo to the culture and for the  
religious cultus). In vs. 17, below, he  
makes the sweeping statement that food  
and drink has nothing to do with God's  
reign, or kingdom, or His sovereign  
influence and activities. Such things

were part of the old covenant which has passed away. What counts now are things of the heart, the mind, the spirit, the motive and the attitude. We have been resurrected from out of the death brought by the Letter (i.e., the Law; *cf* 7:6, above), into the new Life of the Spirit. Paul informs us in 2 Cor. 3:6,

**"[We are] attending servants and dispensers of an arrangement that is new in quality** (or: pertaining to a new kind of covenant that has a different character and is fresh and effective) – **not of [the] letter** (or: not pertaining to the result of that which is written

down; not having its source in the effect of a written text), **but in contrast, of a Breath-effect** (or: pertaining to the result of [the] Spirit; having its source in and being the effect of spirit and attitude), **for the effect of letter habitually kills** (or: the result of writing something into a text repeatedly puts away in death), **yet the Spirit** (or: the spirit; the breath-effect; the Attitude) **continuously gives life** (or: repeatedly makes alive; progressively forms life; habitually creates life)!"

There are no more cultic taboos, and

thus (as Witherington points out), no "food laws to be used as boundary markers" (ibid p 338). But with this parenthetical clarification aside, he now returns to the argument that he was making in vs. 13.

**15. For instance, if because of solid food** (or: the effect of something eaten) **your brother is continually made sad** (made sorry, distressed or grieved), **you are no longer continuing to walk about** (= living your life) **in accord with** (or: down from and on the level of) **Love** (or: you are not yet habitually walking [your path] in participation with transcendent unity of unambiguous, uniting acceptance toward others). **Do**

**not, by your food** (or: for your solid food), **progressively destroy away** (lose by ruining; bring to loss) **that person over whom Christ died.**

The admonition in the last part of this verse is profound. First, it gives insights into the meaning of **destroy**: causing a tripping so that folks stumble over something concerning the existential life of the community – in the here and now. Division and offenses repeatedly destroy the life of covenant communities – and often the local community ceases to exist as the members move to other fellowships or stop outwardly following the Lord in their daily lives and thus no longer being a light to society. Issues

concerning **food** was bringing division to the called-out group in Rome. Second, it shows that the behavior and ethics of the members of a community can "bring loss" to a person, and that the community can "lose a person by ruining" him or her over people having some **considering** or logically accounting or reckoning about some peripheral issue that has no intrinsic significance.

Insensitivity to the conscience of another person so as to cause them to be **sad**, sorry, distressed or grieved in their spirits is a behavior that shows that the insensitive person is not living his life **in accord with Love**. Our walk, as we follow the Path of Christ, is to be

"habitually behaving in participation with transcendent unity of unambiguous, uniting acceptance toward others."

Concerning "[foods] that were offered in sacrifice to idols" (1 Cor. 8:1) Paul tells the community in Corinth, ch. 8,

**11. You see, [thus] the one being habitually weak is being progressively loosed away and ruined (or: is destroying himself) by (with; in; for) your "knowledge" (*gnosis*) – the brother (= fellow believer; member of the family) because of whom Christ died!**

**12. Now by continually doing error (repeatedly failing and**

missing the goal; habitually sinning or acting amiss) **unto the brothers** (or: So while from time to time [casting this] mistake into the [hearts] of [your] fellow believers) **in this way, and repeatedly beating or striking and thus wounding their weak conscience, you folks are constantly doing error** (failing; sinning; acting amiss) **unto Christ!**

Nanos observes that "the text nowhere suggests that the 'weak' should act like the 'strong,' but rather it emphatically asserts the very opposite: the 'strong' should change their *own* behavior and

act like the 'weak.'" (ibid p 117).

16. **Do not cause your good thing** (or: the excellence and virtue which pertain to you) **to be slandered** (defamed; insulted; blasphemed; vilified; have its light hindered),

Freedom from religious bondage is a **good thing**. Freedom from the Law and the mindset of the old creation is **excellence and virtue** for us. But freedom without **Love** will defame this good thing and cause it to be **slandered** so that its light is hindered. Grace has been vilified (because of thoughtless or worthless behavior) to the point that many have turned back to the death of the Law – and have thus been destroyed

from living true kingdom Life.

Eating something that looked "good," and was available, was the disobedience of Adam which brought death to all mankind (5:12, above).

Behavior can bring offence within the hearts of others, and cause division.

**17. for you see, God's kingdom** (or: the reign-and-dominion which is God; the expression, influence and activity of God's sovereignty) **is not** (or: does not exist being) **solid food and drink, but rather, eschatological deliverance into fair and equitable dealing which brings justice and right relationship in the Way pointed out** (being turned in the right direction; rightwisenedness; also =

covenant inclusion and participation), **peace** (and: harmony; = shalom) **and joy** (or: happiness; rejoicing) **within set-apart Breath-effect** (or: in union with and amidst a dedicated spirit and a sacred attitude; or: in [the] Holy Spirit). The problems within the new covenant group in Rome have caused Paul's deep insights concerning **God's kingdom** to surface for our benefit. The "reign-and-dominion which is God" (the genitive of apposition) is an inward "influence and action." It exerts His sovereignty upon the hearts of humans. Its character is **peace and harmony**, or in the Hebrew expression, *shalom*. It produces **joy** with attending "happiness and

rejoicing." Its sphere of operation is **within [God's] set-apart Breath-effect, [the] Holy Spirit**. It produces a "dedicated spirit and a sacred attitude" within those who have been resurrected into union with the Messiah. His kingdom has come and His will is being done on earth – even as it is within the atmosphere and the heavens. For He is **"the One continuously operating (effecting; energizing) all things (or: the whole) in accord with (or: down from; in line with; in correspondence to) the deliberated purpose (intent; design; plan; determined counsel) of His will (or: resultant decision**

of His resolve; effect of His desire)" – Eph. 1:11.

We should note that the first character of His reign is in the spiritual sphere of **relationship**. It came to us as liberation from the eschatological deliverance brought to humanity by the resurrection of Jesus, and concerns and affects our behavior, for its influence is toward **fair and equitable dealing** with people which will produce the **justice** of what is right. It is the Way, the Truth and the Life that was embodied in Jesus Christ; it is that Path of cruciform living that has been pointed out to us.

Inwardly, it turns us in the right direction (toward the Father and toward the glory

of Christ) – it rightwises us and places us within the new covenant so as to be able to participate within His dominion – and thus we become the light of the organized System of the aggregate of humanity (Mat. 5:14). It certainly has nothing to do with dietary regulations, nor with freedom from such.

**18. You see the one continuously slaving for and in the Christ in this [realm, sphere or regard] [is; continues being] well-pleasing (well-satisfying; fully acceptable) to (or: in; by; with) God, and approved (after examination and testing) by people (or: among mankind).**

Don't miss Paul's use of the verb **slaving**

– yes, we have been given freedom by being redeemed from the Law and the rudimentary elements of the dominating system, but remember,

**"you are not folks belonging to yourselves (or: Also then, you people do not exist from yourselves), for you people were bought, as at a marketplace." (1 Cor. 6:19b-20a).**

Our sphere of performing as slaves is **in the Christ**. The antecedent of **in this** would most likely be **God's kingdom** or its **rightwiseness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit**. It could also refer to the manner in which we serve, so I inserted the options **realm, sphere or regard** as

the potential ideas to which **this** points. The copula of the verse is missing, as is common in 1<sup>st</sup> century Greek, so I have given the alternatives **is** or **continues being**.

Paul is saying that this type of **slaving** is **well-pleasing, well-satisfying and fully acceptable to God**. Note again the dative which can also be rendered **in God, by God** or **with God**. **To** indicates relationship; **in** gives the sphere of operation; **by** affirms that it is God that is working within our slaving; **with** points to His solidarity, presence and participation in the work that He leads us to do.

The last phrase shows that such

behavior is both observed by the society at large (including the non-Christian Jews), and that it has an effect upon them to the point that it brings an **approval** of God's kingdom by and among mankind. They see the true kingdom of God in action as we bear His image before them. "Paul then appeals to the 'strong' in vss. 16-18 to live in view of the kingdom of God in their relationship with the 'weak'" (Nanos, *ibid* p 127).

**19. Consequently, then, we are continuously pressing forward and pursuing the things pertaining to, belonging to and which are the peace and harmony [= shalom] and the things pertaining to, belonging to and which**

**are the act of building a house, pertaining to [input] into one another** (or: which [effect] edification [infusing] into each other).

He emphasizes **peace and harmony** since there are divisions and disputes within the Roman community, or between the community and the non-believing Jews, concerning food and days. **Pursuing** kingdom values by one's behavior is **the act of building [God's] house** – i.e., the covenant community – and it is a supplying of life, comfort, acceptance, assistance and "edification" **into one another**. Kingdom living is a "win-win" situation. It is building with gold, silver and precious stones (things

of value) – 1 Cor. 3:9-17.

The metaphor of **building a house** is used in Eph. 2:19-22 where the topic was the joining of the circumcision and uncircumcision (Israel and the strangers, of vs. 11-12 of that chapter) into one new humanity (vs. 15) and thus,

**19. Consequently then** (or: Thereupon), **you folks no longer continuously exist being strangers** (foreigners) **and sojourners** (temporary residents in a foreign land), **but continually exist being fellow-citizens** (folks residing together in a City) **of those set apart: even God's family** (members of God's

household),

**20. being fully built as a house upon the foundation of the sent-forth representatives (or: emissaries) and prophets (folks who had light ahead of time), Jesus Christ continuously being a corner-foundation [stone] of it (or: there being an extreme point of the corner, or, capstone: Jesus Christ Himself).**

Notice the term **fellow-citizens**, which implies union, not replacement, just as we saw in ch. 11 of the wild branches being grafted into Israel's olive tree, among the branches of believing Israel.

**20. Stop tearing down** (dissolving;

loosing down; demolishing) **God's work for the sake of solid food** (or: on account of the effect of what is eaten).

**Indeed, all things [are] clean** (= ceremonially pure; [Aleph2 adds: to the clean ones]), **but on the other hand, [it is] bad** (harmful; unsound; base; wicked; evil; not as ought to be) **for** (or: to; in; with) **the person who by habitually eating [experiences] an effect of [or causes] stumbling through it.**

The opposite of **building** is **tearing down**. Their disputes and divisions were ruining God's house in Rome – all because of issues concerning what people eat. All foods are **clean**, but the issue is the **effect** that eating certain

things was having upon those who were **weak in the faith**. When this is the situation, the **habitual eating** of something that causes **stumbling** in others is a **bad** activity. Or, as vs. 23 below points out, if the weak one begins habitually eating something that violates his conscience, he experiences a harmful effect from the indecision in his thinking. So the continued eating of animal flesh, e.g. (*cf vs. 21, below*), is base and not what ought to be from the standpoint of Love.

21. **[It is] beautiful** (fine; as it ought to be; profitable; ideal) **not to eat meat** (animal flesh), **neither to drink wine, nor even that in which your brother**

**habitually stumbles** (strikes himself against [it]), **or is being constantly snared, or is continually weak.**

Being vegetarian is a fine thing; abstaining from drinking wine can be profitable and even ideal, when these patterns of behavior keep our **brother** (fellow believer) from **habitually stumbling** or **being constantly snared.**

The present tenses of the verbs are significant. If Paul had used the aorist tense it would have meant to cause the **weak** one to stumble, to be ensnared or to be weak at "any point." But it is when we see that our freedom in an otherwise inconsequential matter causes **habitual** stumbling or **is constantly** ensnaring or

is making a member of God's family **continually** weak, then our freedom has become unsound.

Jesus taught about snares in Mat. 18:

**7. "What tragedy [exists] in the System (controlling world of culture, religion, economics and government) [which comes] from bait-laden traps and snares. You see, it continues being a compulsory necessity for the traps with their bait and snares to come, nevertheless, [it is] a tragedy for (or: to; in) the person through whom the traps and snares continue coming [i.e., the person constantly setting the**

**traps].**

This last clause would speak to the "strong" in the Roman community, as it speaks to us, today. Mark 9 also speaks to this,

**42. "And yet, whoever may be an entrapment for (or: give bait so as to entrap; = give cause for stumbling and becoming captured, trapped, held in bondage or enslaved) one of these little ones – those continuing with faith, who are habitually trusting and believing – it is ideal rather for him if a millstone, such as is turned by an ass, continues lying around his neck and throat, and**

**he had been thrown into the sea!**

*Cf* Lu. 17:1-2.

Wright considers the market situation in Rome and concludes that very likely the meat which a person could buy from the market "had obviously come from a pagan temple" (ibid p 100). This was likely the sting of the issue of eating meat in Rome – the reason that the Jewish Christians would not eat such meat, for who could tell for sure from where the meat had come. But Stern objects to this line of reasoning since, "Rome had a large Jewish colony (Ac. 28:17); it is unthinkable that it would not have had a *shochet* (ritual slaughterer)" that could provide *kosher*

meat for Jews (ibid p 433).

Paul addresses this issue in the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of 1 Cor. where he says in vs. 13,

**"Because of this very reason, if food is habitually being a snare-stick to entrap my brother (= fellow believer; family member) or cause him to stumble, I should under no circumstances eat meat (flesh [i.e., referring to what was offered to idols]) – on into the midst of the Age! – so that I should not be a snare-stick to entrap my brother (or: group member) or cause him to stumble."**

Witherington points to the fact that the infinitives **to eat** and **to drink** are both aorists and concludes that this means "if on any particular occasion" to do so would cause someone to stumble, then, "it is right on that occasion to abstain..." (ibid p 341). Paul's arguments are about love and being sensitive to people, not about food and drink laws.

**22. The faith, trust, confidence and fidelity which you yourself continue to have, hold it in accord with** (in line with, on the level of, and corresponding to) **yourself in God's sight and presence** (or: = Keep your personal faith between you and God). **Blessed and happy [is] the one not constantly**

**judging himself** (evaluating himself; separating and dividing things within himself; criticizing himself; making decisions or determinations about himself) **within that which he is habitually examining to test and to prove** (or: in what she normally approves).

This is probably directed primarily to the strong, although the weak can also learn and apply it to themselves with a view to the unity of the community. I suggest that the parenthetical paraphrase gives the correct interpretation of the first clause.

We are all happy and blessed when we don't constantly evaluate ourselves or

separate our attitudes or activities so that we become double-souled (*cf* Jacob [James] 1:8; 4:8) and thus, unstable.

Self-criticism can be healthy so long as it does not become a constant activity or lead to a habit of focusing on ourselves (e.g., on our own spiritual growth, faith, piety, etc.). Being led by the Spirit is far superior to "making decisions or determinations about" ourselves.

Habitually **examining to test and to prove or approve** is wise, so long as it is not accompanied by self-judging. We stand **in God's sight and presence** – and He sees rightly so He can make decisions that accord with the Way that He has pointed out to us. And as Paul

instructs us in 2 Cor. 5:19, God is "... **not accounting to [us]** (not putting to [our] account; not logically considering for [us]; not reasoning in [us]) **the results and effects of [our] falls to the side** ([our] trespasses and offenses)..."

23. **Now the person continually wavering with diverse evaluations, being undecided, has been and remains correspondingly evaluated** (or: commensurately decided about; separated by following the pattern and judged accordingly; condemned), **if he should eat, because [it is] not forth from out of faith** (or: it does not have trust as its source). **And everything which [is] not forth from out of faith**

(or: [does] not arise from trust and conviction) **is a failure to hit the target** (exists being an error; is a deviation from the goal; continues being sin and a mistake).

The present participle *dia-krinomenos* and the following verb in the perfect tense *kata-kekritai* both have the same root *krinō*, which Paul used in vs. 22, and means to make an evaluation by separating out the facts of a matter and then to decide or judge. This first clause is why he said that the person NOT doing this is **happy and blessed** (vs. 22). Where there is **wavering** from **diverse** (from *dia-*) **evaluations** which render the person **undecided**, there is

now already present (in this moment or continued condition of **wavering**) a **corresponding** (from *kata-*) **evaluation** with a **commensurate decision** (from *kata-* and *krinō*) that has been "separated by following the pattern [of Law]" and so "judged accordingly" which then led to "condemnation" within which the person now exists because of the thinking that led to the wavering and indecision. It is a self-imposed condemnation. Liberated, rightwised living in the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit instills **faith**, trust and confidence – and this kind of living is what **hits the target**. In this we can hear an echo of the rightwisedness of Abraham (ch. 4,

above) whom God pointed in the right direction (faith and trust) by the promise that He made to him. What is **not forth from out of faith** (etc.) is out of the first Adam (5:12ff, above) that has not yet been existentially resurrected into participation in Christ, or it is from some merit system or mentality that looks to Law-performance for its grounding and empowerment, instead of to the life of Christ in the new arrangement. As Campbell well states it, “not to be of Christ *is* to be in the realm of Sin” (ibid p 832; emphasis his). He thus he rightly equates **faith** with Christ. **Everything which [does not come] from out of faith and trust is a failure**

**to hit the target** (Christ) and at the same time is not **turned in the right direction of the Way that has been pointed out** to us in Christ. Paul here has made **sin** and **unrighteousness** to be synonymous. Failure to be in Christ (i.e., covenantal inclusion in the Way pointed out) is The Mistake (sin). And the Way pointed out – through both Abraham (*cf* 4:20a, above) and Jesus – is faith, trust, confidence and faithfulness, and this equates to "hitting the target." All these concepts are of the same cloth: God. Wright considers Paul's main thought in this chapter as, "the danger of so clearing your own path that you end up making it impossible for your neighbors

to walk down theirs.... [so] don't put *other* people in the position of verse 23. Don't insist that all other Christians conform at once to the freedom which you celebrate" (ibid p 106, 108; emphasis his; brackets mine).



## Chapter 15

1. **Now we ourselves, the able ones** (the powerful people), **owe and thus are constantly obliged** (or: are continually indebted) **to pick up and habitually carry** (or: embrace) **the weaknesses** (the results of being without strength) **of the unable ones** (the powerless or disabled people; the incapable), **and not to constantly be pleasing ourselves.**

Paul identifies with the "strong" (**able ones**; powerful people – *cf* 4:20b, above [I owe this connection to Campbell, *ibid* 1140 n 130]) in Rome, and tells them that they have a duty to the

"weak," to those who are **unable** or "incapable" of comprehending the fullness of freedom that has come with the Messiah and His Spirit, or to those who are blind, and unable to see that Jesus is their Messiah. He enjoins them to put up with, handle and endure "the results of [their] being without strength." Treat them like the "disabled" and as a body **carry** (i.e., aid, give assistance, help them "shoulder the burden of their scruples" – Fitzmyer, p 328) their **weakness** instead of just **pleasing [them]selves**. He explains in vs. 3, below, why they continue "indebted" to do this and **owe** it to the weak. This is what Paul was doing for the entire group

in Rome, for he was Christ's slave (1:1, above) and considered himself as being indebted to everyone (1:14, above). We all have this **constant obligation** toward the powerless. There is no condemnation for being powerless, for power is a gift from the Spirit of God, and **the Lord** [= Yahweh or Christ] is **constantly able** (perpetually powerful) **to make her or him stand** (14:4, above).

What they are to **carry and embrace** are "the results" of the areas of where the incapable are weak. Our weaknesses have effects upon those around us. We should not reject the weak because these effects irritate or offend us. Weakness is

a miss of the target and a step off the Path, but our Father does not hold this against us (2 Cor. 5:19), and so neither should we do that to others. **Pleasing ourselves** is "living down on the level of and in accord with flesh," and "we do not continue being debtors to the flesh (or: we are not folks under obligation in the [alienated human condition])" – 8:12, above.

**2. Let each one of us be habitually pleasing to the near one** (or: be continuously accommodating for [his] neighbor or associate), **[leading] into The Good, toward building the House** (or: unto [his] good, virtue and excellence: toward edification).

He points out the Way to them: **The Good** (Christ). He points **toward** the goal: **building the House** [of God]. He echoes what he said in 8:28b, above, **working all humanity together into that which is advantageous, worthy of admiration, noble and of excellent qualities.**

We don't have to go to another country to do this; each one needs only **be habitually pleasing to the near one** – or, "be continuously accommodating for [his] neighbor or associate." Paul uses the present tense here to indicate that this is to be a lifestyle, a habit. This is the way forward, the Path of kingdom living. Self-pleasing is building with

wood, hay and stubble (the flesh); other-pleasing is edification from virtue and excellence which leads unto his or her good.

**3. For Christ also did not please Himself** (or: For even the Anointed One does not make accommodations for Himself), **but rather, just as it has been written,**

**"The insults (unjustifiable verbal abuses; reproaches) of those habitually insulting You fell (or: fall) upon Me."** [Ps. 69:10]

The verb of the first clause is aorist, so it can refer to what Jesus DID in His obedience and faithfulness to the Father, and it can refer to what He still DOES.

He still bears the insults that come against us, just as He bore those that came against His Father. The insults, reproaches and all verbal abuses come from humanity's weakness, disability and lack of power (the Breath-effect). We are His co-laborers, and we are called to BEAR these as well. We bear them outside the camp, continuing the work of "atonement" as God works through us as His tools to cleanse folks. We have the Consuming Fire dwelling within us – It (He/She) removes the waste from our environment, and "purifies the sons of Levi" (Mal. 3:3). We can incinerate an abuse that is inflicted upon us (by the power of His

Spirit) instead of spreading it to our surrounding environment by our thoughts, our words or our actions. We need not even tell other folks about it (love “covers” a multitude of sins). The works that He did we continue to do (John 14:12).

Paul's words in Phil. 2 provide good commentary on this verse,

**5. You see, this way of thinking** (this attitude and disposition) **is continuously within and among you folks** (or, as an imperative: So let this minding be habitually within you folks) – **which [is] also within Christ Jesus,**

**6. Who, starting and continuing**

**as inherently existing** (or:  
beginning under; subsisting)  
**within God's form** (or: in an  
outward mold which is God), **He**  
**does not consider the [situation]**  
**to be equals in and by God a**  
**plunder** (or: a pillaging; a  
robbery; a snatching; or: a thing or  
situation seized and held),  
(or: Who, [although]  
constantly humbly and  
supportively ruling in union  
with an external shape and  
an outward appearance  
from God, did not give  
consideration to a seizure:  
the [situation] to

continuously exist being the same things with God, even on the same levels in God, or equal [things; aspects] to God,)

**7. but to the contrary, He empties Himself** (or: removed the contents of Himself; made Himself empty), **receiving** (or: taking; accepting) **a slave's form** (external shape; outward mold), **coming to be** (or: birthing Himself) **within an effect of humanity's** (mankind's; people's) **likeness.**

**8. And so, being found in an outward fashion, mode of**

**circumstance, condition, form-  
appearance** (or: character, role,  
phase, configuration, manner) **as a  
human** (a person; a man), **He  
lowers Himself** (or: humbled  
Himself; made Himself low;  
degrades Himself; levels Himself  
off), **coming to be** (or: birthing  
Himself) **a submissive, obedient  
One** (one who gives the ear and  
listens) **as far as** (or: to the point  
of; until) **death – but death of a  
cross** (torture stake)! – *cf* 2 Cor.  
8:9

**4. You see, as much as was written  
before was written [leading] into the  
teaching** (the instruction and training)

**[which is] ours** (or: was written unto and for our instruction), **to the end that through the persistent remaining-under to give support** (the humble yet relentless endurance in handling the blows), **and through the calling-alongside of the Scriptures** (or: through the Scriptures' comfort, consolation, relief, aid, support and performance as a Paraclete) **we may constantly hold expectation** (or: can continue having the expectant hope).

Here he validates his practice of grounding his arguments in **Scriptures**, and shows how they all point toward the time of the Messiah in which they were presently living. These writings led **into**

**the teaching** which God had now unveiled. Both John the baptizer and Jesus followed this Jewish custom of drawing from the sacred writings for use in founding their teachings. We find the risen Jesus doing this for the disciples on the road to Emmaus, in Lu. 24:

**25. Then He said to them, "O senseless (or: unintelligent; mindless) and slow at heart to be trusting and believing on all things which the prophets spoke!**

**26. "Did it not continue necessary for the Christ (the Anointed One) to experience and suffer these things – and then to**

**enter into His glory (or: His assumed appearance)?"**

**27. And so, beginning from Moses, and then from all the prophets, He continued to fully interpret and explain to (or: for) them the things pertaining to (or: the references about) Himself within all the Scriptures.**

Those **Scriptures** were "written unto and for our instruction," and have now been transformed (or, reinterpreted) **into the teaching which is ours**. With the coming of the new age of the Messiah, **we may constantly hold expectation**. We have the body of OT writings as a witness to **persistent remaining-under**

**to give support** (e.g., *cf* Heb. 11). We can hold the faithfulness of Jesus – His "humble yet relentless endurance in handling the blows" that answers Israel's cry to God for deliverance and fulfillment of the Promise to Abraham. The question of theodicy was forever answered in the death and resurrection of Israel's Messiah.

But we also have these same Scriptures to call alongside in our own trials and ordeals. They give us "comfort, consolation, relief, aid, and support," and they embody the Spirit of God Who is a Paraclete for us. The declaration of 2 Tim. 3:16 fills out the picture for us,  
**"All Scripture [is] God-**

**breathed, and [is] beneficial to furtherance toward instruction** (or: Every inspired-of-God [temple] writing [is] also profitable {of advantage; [gives] augmentation} with a view to teaching and training), **toward** (with a view to) **testing unto proof** (or, negatively: exposure; laying bare), **toward full restoration to straightness** (or: straightening-up upon; = improvement), **toward child-training** (education; discipline) **of the person within the Way pointed out** (the one in rightwised [covenantal] relationships with

fair and equitable dealing)."

It is important, however, to emphasize that the OT pointed to and led **into the teaching** newly given TO US through Christ and His unveilings to the sent-forth folks concerning the NEW arrangement which has come with the age of the Messiah. The old must be interpreted through the lens of the new and must be retooled to fit the era of the Promise-fulfilled.

**5. Now may the God of the persistent remaining-under to give support** (or: Who has the qualities of this humble, patient and relentless endurance of the blows) **and of the calling-alongside for comfort, relief, consolation, aid and**

**support** (or: the God Who is humble, persevering endurance and is the essence of the encouraging performance of a Paraclete) **give to** (or: grant for) **you folks to be constantly mutually disposed** (to be minding the same thing; to be of this very opinion) **within and among one another, down from** (or: in accord with and in the sphere of) **Jesus Christ** [other MSS: [the] Anointed Jesus; = Jesus the Messiah],  
The genitive of apposition says it so well: "the God Who IS humble, persevering endurance and IS the essence of the encouraging performance of a Paraclete." He is all things to everyone! And further, He makes **the**

**persistent remaining-under to give support possible,**

**"for you see, God is the One habitually being inwardly active, constantly working and progressively effecting [results] within you folks – both the willing (intending; purposing; resolving) and the [situation] to be continuously effecting the action and inward work – above the thing that pleases (or: over [the situation of] well-thinking and delight; for the sake of [His] good pleasure)" – Phi. 2:13.**

And in the same way, He **gives to** (or: grants for) **[people] to be constantly**

**mutually disposed** (to be minding the same thing; to be of this very opinion) – **within and among one another**. And this all comes **down from** (and is in accord with and in the sphere of) **Jesus Christ**. So Paul does not lay a heavy yoke upon the Romans, or us, but shows that the Anointed Jesus is the Way to live this way – through participation in Christ and His attitude (recall 12:1-2, above).

**6. to the end that at the same time, with a unanimous rush of passion, you folks may (or: would) in one mouth continuously glorify (or: progressively enhance the reputation of and the opinion about) the God and Father of our**

## **Lord, Jesus Christ.**

This should be exciting to us – as I'm sure it was to those in Rome – as it shows how there can be unity of **passion** that speaks with **one mouth** that is not divided by sectarian divisions over lifestyles or religious behavior. This **unanimous rush** will "progressively enhance the reputation of, and the opinion about, **God**. This answers to humanity's failure as stated in 1:21, above. It answers to the goal of bearing God's image to the world. It simply amounts to following the Way of the Reality of the Life by being joined to Christ and then God performing in us through the indwelling of His Spirit

within His body – both individually and corporately.

We see this passion evidenced in the Jerusalem community in Acts 1:14,

**"All these men were continuing to be carrying on forward with strength and with the same passion and temperament constantly persisting in the prayer with a view to goodness – together with [the] women..."**

And later they were **"continuing strongly focused and persevering while devoting themselves in like passion and with one accord within the Temple courts and grounds..."** (Acts 2:46). Luke used this same word in Acts

4:

**24. So upon hearing [it], the [group] unanimously with the same mind and like passion lifted up a voice (or: sound) to God and said, "O Sovereign Owner – absolute in power – You, 'the One making (or: constructing) the heaven (or: the atmosphere and sky) and the earth (or: the land) and the sea as well as all the things within them,' [Ps. 146:6]**

And again in Acts 5:12,

**"And so they all continued being with one accord and with similar emotions (like-minded**

and with the same passions)  
**within Solomon's colonnade** (a  
roofed portico)."

This is what Paul desires to see within  
the community at Rome, and it is the  
kingdom-life that comes via the  
indwelling of God's Spirit.

**7. Wherefore, be constantly reaching  
out with your hands and taking one  
another in your arms** (welcoming and  
receiving one another as partners), **just  
as the Christ** (or: the Anointed) **also in  
this way receives you as partners**  
(takes you [B, D\* & P read: us] in His  
arms; took you to Himself), **into God's  
glory** (or: the glory from, and which is,  
God)!

Paul uses the same imperative here in the first clause that he used in 14:1, above, when he began this argument. But here he speaks to the whole group, not just the "strong." They all are to **take one another in [their] arms** (etc.) just as Christ does to all of us. He is using the rhetorical technique of restatement in beginning a conclusion which drives home his plea for unity of Jew and Gentile within the community. Christ took them all **into God's glory** (or: the glory from, and which is, God)! They have all arrived at the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22) and live within God's glory – which is Himself. So, just as the Gentiles have been grafted into

the Jew's olive tree and are not to be boasting against the branches that were broken off (ch. 11, above), so are they here now called to embrace and include the Jewish Christians within their community.

**8. For I am saying and laying out the idea [that] Christ has been birthed to become, and remain, a Servant and Dispenser from circumcision (or: an Attendant, Helper and Minister of and pertaining to [the] Circumcision [i.e., God's covenant people]), over [the situation of] God's reality (or: Circumcision's Dispenser of provisions for the sake of a truth from and about God, and a reality which is God), into**

**the standing to confirm** (stabilize; make good; cause to stand by stepping in place on a good footing; or: to guarantee the validity of) **the promises from, which pertain to, and which belong to, the fathers** (or: the patriarchal promises),

This verse, together with the OT quotes in vss. 9-12, affirms what Paul said in 1:16, above: **for** (to; in) **[the] Jew first, also for** (to; in) **[the] Greek** (or: Hellenist; = non-Jew). Witherington rightly sees Paul as reaching back to his arguments in chs. 9-11 to be a springboard for his summation here (ibid p 343).

I gave the first rendering of the noun

**circumcision** (a figure for the Jewish religion, culture and ethnicity) as an ablative: Christ came FROM the Jews to be a **Servant and a Dispenser of God's reality** which started with two groups (Jew and Gentile) and ended in one (the New Humanity: Christ). He dispensed Life first to the house of Israel, and then to the **ethnic multitudes** (non-Jews; Gentiles). In this one and once-for-all act, He "caused [**the promises**] to stand by stepping in place [on behalf of humanity] on a good footing" and "to guarantee the validity of and **to confirm the promises**" which **belonged to the fathers** but also included **the ethnic multitudes** (vs. 9, below).

His work as an Attendant, Helper and Minister pertained first to the Circumcision (God's people under the old covenant), but then He sent His apprentices out into the whole Empire, and on into the entire world. This latter was and is still a part of His service and dispensing of His life to all. The parenthetical rendering of what Paul lays out in the first clause bears close attention:

"Christ is Circumcision's  
Dispenser of provisions for the  
sake of a truth from and about  
God, and a reality which is God."

The perfect tense, **has been birthed to become and remain**, shows that His

work continues for the Jew as well as for the Gentile, who have both now become One new Olive Tree (a Tree of Life in His spiritual Garden).

**9. and on the other hand [to place on good footing and confirm the standing of] the ethnic multitudes (the nations; the non-Israelites; the pagans), [for them] to glorify God (to enhance the reputation of and the opinion about God) over [the situation of] mercy (for the sake of [His] mercy), just as it has been written,**

**"Because of this I will continue openly professing and acclaiming You (speaking out of the same word for and to You;**

agreeing and promising) **within ethnic multitudes** (among nations that are pagans and Gentiles), **and I will continue playing music** (striking the string; making melody; singing with musical accompaniment) **to, for and in Your Name.**" [2 Sam. 22:50; Ps. 18:50]

To the Jews because of the **promises** pertaining to the **fathers**, but **on the other hand** it also involves **the ethnic multitudes** (Gentiles) so that they, too, can **glorify God and enhance His reputation** – because of His **mercy**. These two verses echo ch. 11:32, above. Paul's quote of David demonstrates the

integration of both ethnicities. It projects a picture of the Gentiles accepting this behavior of "speaking out the same word for and to [Yahweh]." It shows pagan and non-Israelite inclusion in the **glory of God**, "enhancing their opinion of Him."

**10. And again he is saying,**

**"Be of a good frame of mind (Be merry and glad; Have thoughts of wellness), you ethnic multitudes (non-Jews), together with His people." [Deut. 32:43]**

**11. And again,**

**"You folks – all the multitudes (all nations; all of the Gentiles) – be continually praising the Lord**

[= Yahweh]." [Ps. 117:1]

12. **And again, Isaiah is saying,**

**"There (or: He) will continue being The Root (or: the Sprout from the root) of Jesse, even the One habitually standing up (placing Himself back; raising Himself up) to continue being Ruler (being The Chief; to repeatedly be the Beginner) of multitudes (ethnic groups; of nations; of Gentiles). Upon Him ethnic multitudes (non-Jews; nations) will continue placing their expectation (will rely; will hope)." [Isa. 11:10]**

Paul stacks up Moses, the Psalms and

Isaiah as backing his arguments. The Deut. quote shows the **togetherness** of the non-Jews and the Jews. They are all, together, to **be of a good frame of mind and have thoughts of wellness**. This describes a healthy, united group – exactly what Paul wanted for Rome, and everyone.

**All the nations** are enjoined to **be continually praising Yahweh**. The realization of this is a manifestation that God has put the world to right (*cf* 1:17, above) in Christ. The promises are being fulfilled within **all the ethnic multitudes**, and each one in his or her own order (1 Cor. 15:23). This displays "the eschatological unity of all people"

(L.E. Keck, quoted in Witherington, *ibid* p 345).

Isa 11:10 is almost a mirror image of vss. 8 and 9, above. It gives the essence of what Paul has just said in these two verses. The **Root** is equivalent to the **Servant/Dispenser** that is **standing** as the Lord of **multitudes** (ethnic groups), and this is what Paul told the Colossians,

**"the riches of the glory of this Secret** (or: the wealth which has its source in this sacred mystery's manifestation which calls forth praise) **within the multitudes** (among the nations; in the Gentiles; **IN UNION WITH** the

swarms of ethnic groups), **which is (or: exists being) Christ within you folks, the expectation of and from the glory**

(or: which is [the] Anointed in union with you people: the [realized] hope of the manifestation which called forth praise; or: which is [the] Anointing within the midst of you folks – the expectation which is the glory)" – 1:27.

Nanos quotes Richard B. Hays (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 1991, p 71),

"Commentators often note that

Paul has offered here one quotation from the Pentateuch, one from the Prophets and two from the Writings, all strung together by the catchword 'ethne,' all pointing to the eschatological consummation in which Gentiles join in the worship of Israel's God..." (Nanos, *ibid* p 138).

In regard to vs. 10, above, he again quotes Hays (p 72),

"The Gentiles do not stand alone around Christ; they are being summoned to join 'with' Israel in rejoicing" (*ibid* p 139).

Witherington sees Paul as saying in these verses that "the destiny of Jews and

Gentiles is intertwined..." (ibid p 343).

**13. Now may the God of Expectation** (or: the God Who is the Expectant Hope) **make you full of all joy and peace** (or: harmony) **within the midst of constant trust and in union with continual operation of faith and believing, [leading] into the midst of continually surrounding you with abundance within The Expectation** (or: in union with expectant hope) – **within [the] power of a set-apart spirit** (or: within [the] Holy Spirit's ability; or: in union with a power which is, and whose source is, set-apart Breath-effect and sacred attitude).

The **God** of what **Expectation**? The

**expectation** that the swarms of ethnic multitudes have in Him! (vs. 12, above). The **expectation of and from the glory**; the **expectation** of the Messiah among the Gentiles! The **expectation** into which both Jews and non-Jews have been rescued, as Paul said in 8:24, above,

**"24. For in the expectation and with hope we are suddenly made whole and healthy**  
(or: You see, by the expectation we are delivered and saved; or: For we were at one point **rescued to expectation**; or: To be sure, we were kept safe for the expectation)!"

Paul instructs us in 1 Cor. 13:13 that,

**"So at the present time trust (or: faith; loyalty; trustworthiness), expectation (or: expectant hope) [and] love (unrestricted acceptance which overcomes existential separation – Tillich) – these three – continue remaining and habitually dwell [with us], yet the greatest of these [is] the Love ([God's] urge toward unambiguous, accepting reunion – Tillich).**

**You folks make haste to progressively run after and continuously pursue the Love!"**

**The Expectation is here equated to the**

**power of a set-apart spirit** which is the effect of God's breath upon and into them, which created them as the second human, the *eschatos* Adam. It is also the Holy Spirit's ability which brings the **joy and peace**, and creates **harmony** within the group. Paul flourishes this blessing and impartation to them which will **make them full... within the midst of constant trust and in union with continual operation of faith and believing, [leading] into the midst of continually surrounding you with abundance within The Expectation.** They have all that they need.

14. **Now, my brothers** (Family members; fellow believers), **I myself**

**also have been persuaded and remain convinced about you that you yourselves are (or: exist being) folks stuffed full of goodness (bulging with excellence and quality), being those having been filled and remaining full of all The Knowledge (intimate, experiential knowledge and insight; [with other MSS: all gnosis]), being folks continuously able and empowered, also, to habitually put one another in mind (or: to place [thoughts] in each other's mind; to advise or admonish).**

Dodd designates this section to the end as an Epilogue, Fitzmyer considers 14-33 as the Conclusion to the letter, and

Witherington see vss. 14-21 as a conclusion that was addressed mainly to the "strong" group (apparently, the Gentiles). Paul has finished his arguments and the main thrust of the letter so now he compliments them as being **stuffed full of goodness**. What a wonderful concept – and it is true of all of us. Because we are filled with God's Spirit, we "bulge with excellence and quality." They are **full of all The Knowledge** by having been given the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). The unveiling of the secret about the Messiah has filled them with all *gnosis* (insight from personal, experiential knowledge from God). They are now **continuously**

**able** from having been **empowered** by His Spirit to **habitually put one another in mind** – i.e., to be thoughtful of one another – or, to advise and admonish one another by "placing" thoughts and ideas into each other's minds: thoughts of peace and harmony.

**15. Yet I more daringly write to you** (or: Yet with assumed resolution I outspokenly write to you; [other MSS add: brothers; = fellow believers]) **partly as habitually calling you back to full recollection** (causing you to be completely remembering) **because of the grace and favor being given to me from** [other MSS: by; under] **God,** They are full of goodness and all

knowledge, so he is writing outspokenly to call all of this up from within them and to bring them into **full recollection**. Yes, they already knew the true gospel. Paul is just reminding them of what they had been taught. He **dares** to do this **because of the grace and favor being given to [him] from God**. A word of correction and admonition should be done with grace, and it should be received as a favor from God.

**16. into the [arranged ability for] me to be Christ Jesus' public servant into the nations** (a public worker of Jesus Christ unto the ethnic multitudes and pagans), **constantly doing the work of a priest for God's good news** (or:

habitually functioning as the Temple for the message of the goodness, which is God), **to the end that the offering composed of the ethnic multitudes** (or: the act of bearing forward gifts from the pagans; the approaching of the nations as an offering) **can become well-received and pleasingly acceptable, it being [an offering; a carrying toward] having been set-apart and remaining sacred within the midst of holy spirit and a sacred attitude** (or: in union with a set-apart Breath-effect; within [the] Holy Spirit).

He was performing as a **priest to the nations, for God's good news**. He functioned as God's Temple, bringing the

Word of the Lord to them and presenting God's goodness to them. The end that the Lord had in view was that, as God's priest, he could bring them into a greater awareness of God's presence and acceptance. He is using cultic imagery to remind them of the picture he had given them in 12:1-2, above, of taking a stand in God's presence beside the Living Sacrifice of Christ. They, being joined to Christ, are folks **having been set-apart within the midst of holy spirit and a sacred attitude** toward others. In following the Messiah, they are called to offer themselves to others because they were "in union with a set-apart Breath-effect" from God.

Paul was Christ's **public servant** to call the **ethnic multitudes** into being **well-received and pleasingly acceptable offerings** to be given as bread for the hungry (recall that we, the many, are "one bread" – 1 Cor. 10:17). This is also similar to Paul saying to the Corinthians, in 2 Cor. 11:2,

**"for I continue with hot zeal**  
(eager vehement passion)  
**concerning you in** (or: with; by)  
**God's fervent zeal** (an eager  
vehement passion which is God),  
**because I myself joined you**  
**folks in marriage to one**  
**husband, to make a pure virgin**  
(= unmarried girl) **to stand**

**alongside in the Christ."**

We are also reminded of how Paul described his original commission which Jesus spoke to him, in Acts 26:

**16. "'But now, get up and stand upon your feet! You see, into this [situation; commission] and unto this [purpose] I became seen by you (or: was made to appear to you): to take you in hand beforehand (or: to handle you in advance; or: to hand-pick you ahead of time) [to be] a subordinate (one who is a rower of a ship's crew) and a witness (one who testifies and**

gives evidence) – **both of things in which you saw Me, and of things in which I will continue being seen by (or: in; with) you –**

**17. "'now Myself choosing you from out of the midst of the People (or: repeatedly taking you from out of the midst of, i.e., rescuing you from, the People), as well as from out of the midst of the ethnic multitudes (or: nations; non-Jews) unto whom I Myself am progressively sending you off with a mission:**

**18. "'to open back up their**

**eyes again; to turn [their eyes; or: them] back: away from darkness (a realm of the shadow; dimness and obscurity) into Light, even from the authority and privilege of the adversary (or: that is, from the right which comes from out of being the opponent), and upon God; to receive a flowing away of deviations and a release from failures, mistakes and occasions of missing the goal (or: a forgiveness of sins) and an allotted inheritance among and in union with the folks**

**having been – and now  
remaining – set apart in, with  
and for faith which [leads]  
into Me**

(or: centered within the  
people now made holy by  
trust [which is] by the One  
[having come] into the  
midst of Me;

or: within those having been  
consecrated for loyalty,  
sanctified with faith and  
now set apart to trusting  
conviction [that has brought  
them] unto Me).'

**17. I have and continuously hold, then,  
the boast (the glorying; the exulting)**

**within Christ Jesus** (or: in union with Anointed Jesus) **about the things facing toward** (or: with a view to; face-to-face with) **God.**

This is an echo of what he said in 5:2, above:

**"we have had and now hold the conducted approach and access** (or: the act of bringing toward to gain entrée), **by [His] faithfulness** (or: in this trust; with the confidence), **into this GRACE and joyous favor within which we have stood and in union with which we now stand, and so we keep on celebrating, speaking loudly and boasting..."**

Our "conducted approach and access" is **facing toward**, so as to be "face-to-face with" **God**. So we have our **boast within Christ Jesus**, not against those that we deem weak or not presently a part of the community (e.g., 11:18, above).

Witherington points out that, "Boasting was a regular part of an honor and shame culture..." (ibid p 355).

**18. You see, I will not venture to speak (or: tell) anything of which (or: what) Christ does not (or: did not) work down, produce and bring into effect through me [leading] into a submissive giving of the ear (or: humble, obedient hearing and paying attention) from [the]**

**ethnic multitudes** (or: of non-Jews, nations and pagans) **by an arranged speech and message as well as by a work** (or: in word and in action or deed) – **in a power of signs and of miracles, [that is], in [the] power of God's Spirit** (or: in union with an ability from God's Breath; in an ability from an Attitude which is God [other MSS: in the midst of set-apart Breath-effect]) –

He gives Christ all the credit for what HE has **worked down, produced and brought into effect** through his life and work. **Christ** brought about the **submissive giving of the ear from the ethnic multitudes**. The Anointed One in

their midst caused "humble, obedient hearing and paying attention" within them. Paul was used to bring this about **by an arranged speech and message, as well as by a work** among them. Or, he did it "in word and in action and deed."

The works (**signs and miracles** – *cf* 1 Cor. 12:10; 2 Cor. 12:12) were done **in [the] power of God's Spirit**, or in union with an ability from God's Breath – either upon, or through, Paul. In some instances it could have been done "in an ability from an Attitude which is God." Paul is assuring them that he is only God's instrument that is being used on their behalf. (*cf* 2 Cor. 3:5)

19. **with a view for** (in the purpose for) **me to have filled [the region] from Jerusalem even, around in a circuit, as far as Illyricum [with] the good news of, from, and concerning the Anointed One** (or: the message of goodness, ease and well-being – which is Christ).

He defines the regional extent of his ministry, up to the writing of this letter. His work of **filling** this region with **the good news of Christ** had stretched (in the east) from Jerusalem in the south to the Roman province of Illyricum in the north (located on the west coast of the Balkan Peninsula).

20. **Now thus** (or: in this manner) **am I constantly loving the honor, which is**

**my driving ambition, to habitually be proclaiming the message of goodness and well-being where Christ is (or: was) not named, to the end that I should not be building upon another person's foundation.**

So now he is ready to move on to the west – to Rome and beyond. He considers it an **honor** to habitually be **proclaiming the message** to peoples that have not yet heard of Christ. He wants to lay more foundations, not build upon the foundations laid by other people. He wants to birth new covenant communities.

**21. But just as it has been written,  
"They, to whom it was not**

**reported concerning Him, will progressively see!**

**And they who have not heard will progressively understand from things flowing together."**

[Isa. 52:15]

This would refer to non-Israelites. He was one that was sent forth by Christ unto the swarms (note: the Greek word can refer to a swarm of bees) of ethnic multitudes. Those who had not heard OT prophecies about the Messiah **will progressively see** because,

**"He was, and continued being, the True and Genuine Light which (or: Who) is continuously (repeatedly; progressively)**

**enlightening** (giving light to)  
**every person** (or: human)  
**continuously** (repeatedly;  
progressively; constantly; one  
after another) **coming into the  
world**" (John 1:9).

He wanted to find **those who have not heard** and see them **progressively understand** the new reality of God's new arrangement for humanity **from things flowing together** in their minds and hearts.

This quote from Isaiah is from one of the "Servant Songs." The Servant can be the Messiah, but it can also be Israel. Here Paul, the "attending servant and dispenser" (*cf* vss. 25, 31 and 16:1,

below), functions as a member of the Servant.

**22. For this reason (Wherefore), also, I was repeatedly being cut-in on (interrupted; hindered) – many times and by many things – in regard to coming to you folks.**

The reason which he refers to is what he said in vs. 20, above. It had been **his driving ambition** to go to Rome, but the needs of the communities he had established, and other things (he is not specific), kept on **cutting-in on** his plans and desires to do this.

**23. Yet now I am no longer holding a place (or: having a territory; or: = having an opportunity) within these**

**regions, but am holding (or: having) a great longing to come to you – for many years –**

We can only guess at what he meant by **"I am no longer holding a place within these regions."** Some have speculated that this was because of his not wanting to build on another person's foundation (*cf* 1 Cor. 3:6, 10). But we would do well to assume that the reason was the Spirit's leading for him.

**24. as whenever I may be traveling (journeying; proceeding) into Spain. For I continue expecting to gaze on you (or: hoping to get a look at and view you), while passing through, and to be escorted (or: sent forward with funds**

and supplies) **there by you, if first I can be filled within, in part, from you** (or: could be in some measure satisfied by your company).

He makes it a point to let them know that he has no plans to come and take over.

He will just be **passing through**. When he says that he would like **to be escorted there** he is using an idiom which meant that he would expect those in Rome to be partners in his mission to Spain, by providing him with funds and supplies (i.e., their material support would be his escort). Those in Rome would likely go with him to the outskirts of the city, but not accompany him the rest of the way. The phrases **filled**

**within** or "satisfied" can have both the meaning of the joy of their company and fellowship, but also of their impartation to him of what he needs to make the journey to Spain.

**25. But now I am progressively traveling into Jerusalem, continually performing as a servant in dispensing** (or: functioning as an attendant; or: supporting and supplying necessities) **to the set-apart folks** (the holy ones; the saints; sacred people).

He uses of himself the same word that he used of Christ being a **Servant and Dispenser** in vs. 8, above. He would serve them spiritual food and sustenance, but his literal reference was

to the collection of money as he makes explicit in vs. 27, below. By the term **set-apart folks** he means the called-out covenant community of believers in Jerusalem. This collection had been received from the Gentile believers in the provinces of Achaia, Macedonia and Galatia (Gal. 2:10; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor.8:1-9:15).

**26. You see, Macedonia and Achaia take delight and were well-pleased to make some common sharing (a certain participating contribution from partnership in common existence) into the poor (unto the destitute) of the set-apart folks (holy ones; saints) in Jerusalem.**

The **common sharing** or "certain participating contribution from partnership in common existence" shows the sense of solidarity that these regions held toward the Empire-wide body of Christ. Paul had taught them well: they saw that this new creation was one new humanity composed of both Jew and Gentile. The term **common sharing** (etc.), *koinonia*, literally means "common being and existence."

**27. For they take delight and were well-pleased, and are their debtors, for since the ethnic multitudes (the nations; the Gentiles; the non-Jews) have common participation and shared existence in their spiritual things, they**

**also continue indebted to perform communal service to and for them in things pertaining to the material life (or: fleshly things).**

Here he uses the verb form of *koinonia*. This same principle of reciprocity of **material** for **spiritual** is seen in 1 Cor. 9:

**11. Since, upon [the ground of] an expectation, we ourselves sowed the spiritual things in (to; for) you folks, [is it] a great thing if we ourselves shall reap a harvest of your fleshly things (= natural or material goods)?**

**28. Bringing this, then, to fruition (or: Attaining this goal; Coming upon**

completion, then, of this) **and myself sealing** (or: stamping an identifying mark) **to them** (or: on, or for them; [omitted by *p46 B*]) **this fruit, I will proceed going away, through the midst of you folks, into Spain.**

Paul uses a term from the practice of tenant farming in which the grower stamped his identification seal on the crop that was to be delivered to the landowner. Apparently he wanted the Gentile communities to receive the credit for sending this gift to the Jerusalem community, which would be a strong show of solidarity.

Having done that, his plan was to travel on to Spain, through Rome. Tradition has

it that Paul died in Rome, but 1 Clement 5:7 tell us of Paul,

"... having taught righteousness to the whole world [or, Empire] and having reached the farthest limits of the West" (*The Apostolic*

*Fathers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, trans. by J.B.

Lightfoot *and* J.R. Harmer, rev. by M.W. Holmes, Baker Book House, 1994 p 31; brackets mine).

A footnote in this edition suggests that "the farthest... West" refers to the Straits of Gibraltar.

**29. Now I have seen and thus know (or: am aware) that when coming (or: going) to you I will continue coming (or: going) in an effect of the fullness**

## **of Christ's message of goodness**

(or: within that which fills up pertaining to [the] good word about Christ; in a result of the entire contents of well-speech from [the] Anointing; in union with an effect of the filling of blessing, which is [the] Anointed One).

As had been the case when going to other communities, Paul would continue in coming to them in the same way: **in an effect of the fullness of Christ's message of goodness**. That would be in grace, in the Spirit, in love, with mercy, in solidarity, in Truth-Reality, in joy, in union with God's reign, for edification

and as a paraclete – to encourage, comfort, assist and support them. This phrase can also express the following:

a) within that which fills up pertaining to [the] good word about Christ

b) in a result of the entire contents of well-speech from [the] Anointing

c) in union with an effect of the filling of blessing, which is [the] Anointed One.

**30. So I am calling you alongside** (entreating and encouraging you), **brothers, to struggle together with me** (or: to contend and fight by my side, as

in the public games), **through our Lord** (Master; Owner), **Jesus Christ, even through the Spirit's love** (or: and by means of the uniting and accepting love which is the Breath-effect; or: as well as through the urge toward reunion from this Attitude), **within the thoughts and words toward having goodness and well-being [directed] toward God over me** (or: in union with prayers, face to face with God, for my behalf),

Now Paul asks from them an expression of their solidarity with him. He wants them to send **thoughts and express words toward having goodness and well-being that are directed toward God** for his behalf. By focusing on God

as they speak, their union with God will be realized as being in their presence and in their minds, and as they project and impart these thoughts and words **over [Paul]** and for his behalf, they will be **struggling together with [him]** and participating in his service to others. The "contending" (the metaphor is from the public games) is done **through our Lord, Jesus Christ – even through the Spirit's love**. So God's Love is the sphere and means of **struggling** in the work of the Lord. Their "prayers" (*pro-seu-che*: toward having goodness and well-being; [note: this implies thinking and speaking nothing negative]) are done within the holy of holies (the innermost

part of the temple – which they ARE) where they are face-to-face with God. The phrase **even through the Spirit's love** can also be rendered:

a) and by means of the uniting and accepting love which is the Breath-effect

b) as well as through the urge toward reunion from this Attitude.

Everything that needs to be done in our Father's kingdom is accomplished through our Lord and God's love.

**31. to the end that I may be dragged out of danger from the habitually in compliant (disobedient; stubborn; unconvinced) folks within Judea, and that my attending service of**

**dispensing which is directed into Jerusalem may come to be well-received by, and acceptable to, the set-apart people** (holy ones; saints; sacred folks)

Their thoughts and words (or: prayers), when done through the Lord and through the Love which is the Spirit and that operate face-to-face with God, could effect Paul's being **dragged out of danger from the habitually stubborn folks in Judea**. These would also support his **attending service of dispensing which [was] directed into Jerusalem** so that it would **come to be well-received by, and acceptable to, the set-apart people** (i.e., the called-

out covenant community there).

**32. in order that, in coming to you in joy through God's will and purpose, I myself will proceed to be taking rest, repose and refreshing in company with you folks.**

The above participation of the community at Rome would result in Paul being able to take a rest and be refreshed when he visits them. Note, also, that his **coming** was **through God's will and purpose** – Paul lives the reality of being a slave of the Lord, Jesus Christ (1:1, above).

**33. Now the God Who is The Peace** (the God Who has the characteristics of Peace; the God of and from harmony [=

Shalom]) **[is] together with all of you folks. Count on it** (It is so; Amen)!

Paul assures them that they have all that they need in order to have **peace** and **harmony** which will overcome all divisions within the entire covenant community at Rome, as well as with the rest of the city, and especially with the non-Christian Jews. I rendered **The Peace** as a dative of apposition. Eph. 2:14 tells us,

**"He Himself is our Peace** (or: continuously exists being our harmony [= Shalom]) – **the One making** (forming; constructing) **The Both [to be] one."**

The "God of, and from, harmony" is

there **together** with them in Rome. Paul made a similar reference to peace in Col. 3:15,

**"Furthermore, let the peace [= *shalom*] of the Christ (belonging to and originating in the [Messiah]; the harmony which is the Anointing [other MSS: God]) continuously umpire (act as a judge in the games) within your hearts (= in union with the core of your being) – into which [peace] you folks are called (were called; were invited), within one body."**

Peace, harmony and concord are the opposite of chaos and turmoil. From the

concordant, organized System of the universe came a picture of God (1:20, above) who creates peace and harmony from out of chaos, disorder and wilderness. The new creation of the called-out, covenant community is the goal of which symbiotic ecosystems are the initial pattern.

Kirk gives an insightful overview of the place of the resurrection of Jesus as a key theme of this letter (which inserts this ingredient of the good news beginning in 1:4, above):

"The resurrected Christ provides the grounds for redefining the God of Abraham... (chs. 2-4).... inaugurates the eschatological

aeon of freedom... (chs. 5-8)....  
transform the message of the law...  
(chs. 9-11).... superintends the life  
of the body... calling it to live in  
complete harmony as under one  
resurrected Lord (chs. 12-15)"  
(ibid p 208).

He further states,

"... it is only after the resurrection  
of Jesus that Paul has the  
hermeneutical leverage to see new  
creation as a function of the reign  
of a resurrected Christ" (ibid. p  
209).



## **Chapter 16**

**1. Now for (or: with) you folks I continue standing together with Phoebe, our sister (or: Now I am placing Phoebe, our sister, with you people; Now I am recommending Phoebe, our sister, to you [community members]), she being also an attending servant of the called-out community (or: dispenser to the assembled congregation) [which is] in Cenchrea,**

**2. to the end that you folks would welcome, provide hospitality, and may reach out with your hands and take her in your arms, within [the] Lord [= Yahweh or Christ], worthily (in a**

manner of equal value) **of the set-apart folks** (of the saints; of the holy ones), **and may stand beside her within whatever matter** (practice-effect; event; affair; result of a transaction) **she may continue having need of [from] you folks, for she also became one who stands before many** (or: a leader or presiding officer over many; = a champion, protector or patron of many) – **even of me, myself!**

Witherington maintains that those listed in 16:3-16 are people to whom the Gentiles (i.e., the majority) of the community are instructed to greet and treat with hospitality (ibid p 350). One third of them are women. Some scholars,

e.g. Fitzmyer, consider this chapter as a letter of recommendation (common during this era) that was attached to Romans at a later time. My comments take it as part of the original letter, as its contents are included in *p46*, our oldest MS of Romans.

Paul can be saying that he is "recommending Phoebe" to the Roman community by his figuratively **standing together** with her, or, that he is "placing" her with them, as she comes (likely bringing the letter) to them. In either rendering, by saying "**our**" he affirms her solidarity with himself and with them, noting that she is a "sister" to those in Cenchrea (the port on the east

side of the isthmus of Corinth) and Corinth, as well as to the community in Rome. He notes that her relationship to the called-out communities is the same as his: she is **an attending servant** who **dispenses goods and support** to the called-out congregations. This could refer to all manner of kingdom living (and that he does not specify indicates that all such service is on a par): personal aid to folks, teaching and training, financial or other.

Note that they are to welcome her into their homes as being family, showing the intimate emotion of **reaching out [their] hands and taking her in [their] arms**. They are now to **stand beside her**

**within whatever** need or endeavor that she may have, or take up. They are to respond "in a manner" that is commensurate to being **set-apart folks** – a term used at times by Paul to describe the community at Jerusalem (15:25, 26, 31, above; Eph. 2:19), and which was supposed to be the quality displayed by Israel (Ex. 19:6). They had been grafted-into Israel's olive tree (11:17, above) and Israel's history. He gives further recommendation that she had been "a leader or presiding officer over many and a champion, protector and patron of many" – **even of Paul**.

**3. Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow**

## **workers within Christ Jesus,**

Again, Paul does not elevate himself above his **fellow workers** (*cf* Acts 18:1ff; 2 Tim. 4:19). They had moved to Corinth when Claudius evicted all the Jews from Rome, then later settled for a while in Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:19), and now had apparently moved back to Rome, following the death of Claudius. In fact, it is likely that all of the Jews listed below had also been among those expelled from Rome by Claudius. A good number of those to be greeted had probably already met Paul, so by naming them Paul is not only indicating their importance within the community at Rome, but is also demonstrating that

although he had not yet been to Rome he was known by a good number of their group, and so was not a total stranger.

**4. who, over my soul (= person, or, life), placed their own necks under the axe, to whom not I alone am constantly giving thanks, but further, also all the called-out communities (summoned-forth congregations) of the nations (belonging to the ethnic multitudes of the Gentiles), as well as the called-out community down at their house (or: which also follow the pattern of their house-assembly).**

So they held home-gatherings, or else also had folks living with them, in Rome. They apparently ministered to

Gentiles (the ethnic multitudes), at large, as well as to those who had joined the covenant communities where they had lived, and were now living. They had obviously stood by Paul in all situations, at a disregard for their own personal welfare. For an unspecified reason (or, perhaps just because of their support of Paul), **all the called-out communities** of the Gentiles that had been associated with Paul were **also constantly giving thanks** to God for their having **placed** their lives on the line.

"Christian congregations continued to meet for worship in private houses until at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> century" (Harvey, *ibid* p 538). There are five home-communities

listed in these greetings.

We do not have definite information on the remaining list of people that Paul greets, though there have been some speculations made about them.

Apparently Paul either knew them, or knew of them by name.

**5. Greet Epanetus, my beloved one, who is a firstfruit of the [province of] Asia [entering] into Christ.**

**6. Greet Mary (or: Mariam), who wearily labored many things unto and into you folks.**

**7. Greet Andronicus and Junia (*p*46 and others read: Julia), my relatives (or: fellow-countrymen) and fellow-captives, who are ones bearing a**

**distinctive mark** (a sign) **upon them**  
(or: = that are well-known or famous)  
**among those sent out with a mission**  
(the representatives; the emissaries),  
**ones that were birthed within Christ**  
**before me.**

It is thought that these two "emissaries"  
(commonly called "apostles," which is a  
transliteration, not a translation) were  
likely a husband and wife team. Women  
were obviously in "ministry" in Paul's  
time, and were an integral part of the  
missionary teams that went to the  
Gentiles. These two became followers  
of Christ before Paul, but they had a  
common history: they had experienced  
imprisonment together. Junia is a Roman

name, and Harvey suggests that this couple could have been the ones who first brought the message of Christ to Rome.

The elasticity of the expression **relatives** can be seen in his use of this term in 9:3, above, where he uses it to speak of Israelites, in general, yet it was "more usually in a restricted sense of a closer blood relative" (Knoch, *ibid* p 246). We can only speculate on how he meant the term here, but it is clear that he regarded them "as family." The idea of "family" in Scripture is an organic concept that permeates all human relationships, whether with God or with fellow human beings. Paul refers to

others as his **relatives** in vss. 11 and 21, below.

**8. Greet Ampliatos, my beloved within [the] Lord.**

**9. Greet Urbanus, our fellow-worker within Christ, and Stachus, my beloved one.**

**10. Greet Apelles, the tried and approved one in Christ. Greet the people from out of those belonging to Aristobulus' [household] (or: from Aristobulus' folks).**

**11. Greet Herodion, my relative (or: fellow-countryman). Greet those from out of the people of Narcissus – those being within [the] Lord.**

Wright points out that Aristobulus and

Narcissus were heads of households and that it does necessarily follow that they themselves were believers. He says that Narcissus had been a favorite of Claudius and had committed suicide following the latter's death. (ibid p 132)

**12. Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, the women habitually wearied and spent with labor within [the] Lord. Greet Persida, the beloved woman who is weary from much labor within [the] Lord.**

**13. Greet Rufus, the chosen one in the Lord, and his mother, and mine.**

Apparently Paul had a very personal relationship with Rufus and his mother – Paul had considered her as his own

mother. This is a very intimate touch for such a public letter.

**14. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brothers (= fellow believers) with them.**

**15. Greet Philogos and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the set-apart (holy; sacred; different-from-what-is-common-and-usual) folks with them.**

**16. Greet one another in a set-apart expression of affection (or: a holy kiss which is different from the common one). All the called-out communities of Christ are greeting you folks.**

The word "holy," literally: set-apart, has

the intrinsic meaning of "different from the common." Exactly how those of Paul's time and culture performed this expression is not known for sure (it may have been a kiss on each cheek, as is often practiced today), but the main idea is that it is to be a **set-apart expression of affection** (*cf* 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thes. 5:26). The "kiss of peace" had become a part of the Christian gatherings by the mid-second century, and it may have had its roots in what Paul refers to here. Peter referred to this greeting as "a kiss of love (*agape*)" in 1 Pet. 5:14. By giving this admonition, Paul may have been putting in a last word for unity between the

strong and the weak. He then shows the solidarity of **all the [other] called-out communities** in sending their greetings to the community in Rome.

17. **So I am calling you folks alongside to encourage and exhort [you], brothers** (= fellow believers), **to constantly view attentively and mark** (or: watch out for) **those continually causing the divisions, dissensions or standings-apart, and the snares** (those occasions for stumbling and becoming entrapped; or: = obstacles and difficulties) **to the side of** (= which are a counterfeit of and a distraction to) **the teaching which you yourselves learned by instruction, and thus you folks must**

**slope forth** (or: incline out; deflect; hold aloof) **away from them** (or: = shun or avoid them),

As Nyland (ibid p 305) rightly points out, the definite articles are used with the words **divisions** and **snare**s. This indicates that Paul is referring to specific cases or situation, and that the members of the community would know what he was talking about. Anything that is divisive is both a distraction to and a counterfeit of **the teaching**, i.e., what has been taught them concerning Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit among them. He reminds them that they had already **learned this by instruction** and so he advises them to **slope away**

**from them**, or, avoid those that are doing these things.

The primary literal meanings of the last verb are: **slope forth** or **incline out**.

These show movement and inclination, but not utter avoidance, as the potential paraphrase indicates (which is what numerous scholars embrace). To avoid means to have no contact, but to **slope forth** or **incline out** indicate interaction but not remaining involved with what they do. Nyland insists that when the verb is used with a preposition (as here) it definitely does NOT indicate avoidance. We can love them without participating in their dissensions and stumbling blocks. The secondary

meanings of "deflect" or "hold aloof" could indicate only casual interactions with them. The leading from the Spirit will give the best solution in dealing with such members of the community. Campbell sees these admonitions (17-20) as a "*strong* exhortation" (emphasis his) that signifies

"the intended function of the letter that they conclude.... located in a place of strategic importance.... the last piece of substantive instruction that the Roman Christians would hear from Paul" (ibid p 497, 496).

**18. for such folks are not habitually performing as slaves for our Lord**

**Christ, but rather for their own belly** (cavity; bowels or stomach; = appetite), **and through the useful smooth talk** (profitable words) **and complimentary speech** (or: false eloquence; literally: blessings!) **they continuously deceive** (mislead; seduce) **the hearts of the folks without malice** (those with no bad qualities; blameless and innocent ones). The slave of the Lord does the work of the Spirit, as led by the Spirit, and is not focused on or involved with things that pertain to the flesh nature of the old Adam. These who divide and lay traps have selfish motives, and Paul uses a physical metaphor to indicate the realm and sphere in which they operate. They

may say good-sounding things and even give blessings, but the motive is deception. Judah wrote of such folks that came in from the side (Judah [or, Jude] 4, 10-23; *cf* Mat. 10:16). The **smooth talk** could be a reference to their false teachings which may have been "**the snares** (those occasions for stumbling and becoming entrapped) **to the side of** (= which are a counterfeit of) **the teaching which you yourselves learned by instruction**" (vs. 17, above).

Paul's reference to **their own belly** may have its antecedent in his arguments about foods in ch. 14, above. He may be referring to "the strong" here. However, Campbell notes that Paul uses the same

verb for **deceive**, here, that he used in 7:11, above (which we saw made a person "**unable to walk the Path**"), "which is in turn a probable echo of the work of the serpent as Eve describes it in Gen. 3:13" (ibid p 497). Paul warns the Philippians of folks to watch out for, using similar words,

**"... continually keep a watchful eye on and take note of those.... walking about (i.e., are living their lives) as enemies of the cross of the Christ.... whose god [is their] cavity (or: belly) and [whose] reputation (or: glory; opinion) resides within their shame (disgrace; embarrassment)**

**– people continually thinking about** (habitually being intent on; constantly minding) **the things existing upon the earth** (or: = folks whose minds are earthbound)" (Phil. 3:17-19)

**19. You see, [the report of] your obedient hearing and compliance has reached** (or: arrived) **unto all people. Therefore I constantly rejoice upon you** (or: = over [this news of] you), **yet I am wanting you folks, on the one hand, to be wise [leading] into the midst of The Good, yet, on the other hand, unmixed into the bad** (mixtureless as to the worthless, evil and ugly).

He is ending with an encouraging compliment which gives subtle pressure for them to continue in **obedient hearing** to what he has said in this letter. He expresses confidence that they will do this, saying that he was **constantly rejoicing upon [them]**, but then calls them to the **wisdom** that is in **The Good** (Christ, and the teachings that has come from Him) and to no longer be **mixed into the bad, worthless and ugly** behavior that had brought about the divisions and stumbling blocks into their covenant communities. Following Campbell's interpretation of this letter, this last phrase would be speaking about the false teachers with their counterfeit

gospel.

Paul is echoing the admonition given by Jesus in Mat. 10:16b,

**"Therefore, habitually come to be thoughtful, prudent, cautious and discreet (or: = wary and on the alert; = observant, decisive and timely) – as the snakes [are]; and yet [still] unmixed (pure; = without negative characteristics added) – as the doves [are]."**

**20. And now the God Who is The Peace** (the God of harmony Who is the source of shalom; the God whose character and quality is this peace) **will progressively rub together, trample**

**and crush the adversary** (beat the opponent to jelly; shatter satan) **under your feet swiftly! The grace and joyous favor of our Lord Jesus [is, and continues] with you folks.**

"It seems to me that *Satan* here refers to any spirit which is opposed to God, for in our language, *satan* means *adversary*" (Origen, "Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans," *Ancient Christian Comm.*, *ibid* p 377; emphasis original).

"And he shall grant to his children the authority to trample on wicked spirits" (Testament of Levi, 18:12, translated by H.C. Kee, *The OT*

*Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1, ibid p  
795). Cf Lu. 10:19

Nanos suggests regarding vss. 19-20 that Paul's summary of chs. 14-16 here "concludes with an appeal to his audience from the imagery of the garden and of the eschatological kingdom of peace" (ibid p 217). The traditional association of **the adversary** (*ton satanan*) with the serpent in the garden story echoes Gen. 3:15 and the work of the Promised Seed.

The **adversary** here is very likely the spirit of division that had come into the community through the various negative attitudes which the "strong" and "the weak" had towards each other. We see

this same use of this word when Jesus corrected Peter (Mat. 16:23) who had spoken to the Lord out of a human perspective about the Messiah suffering. The personification of this term has brought much confusion and wrong teachings into Christianity.

So instead of having adversarial spirits toward one another, Paul reminds them that our Lord's **grace and joyous favor** continues being with them. They should be showing grace and favor to those with whom they were disagreeing. The appellation **The God Who is The Peace and The Harmony** (*cf* 15:33, above) is appropriate here, considering what he has said in vss. 17-18, above.

*Cf* 2 Cor. 11:13-15. God will put an end to the divisiveness and roadblocks, because **the grace from our Lord is with [them]**.

In the apocalyptic imagery of Rev. 20:9-10, we see a similar scene where enemies "**ascended** (or: climb up) **upon the breadth of the Land and surrounded the encampment of the set-apart** (holy; sacred) **folks, even the Beloved City**" – which in that context referred to Jerusalem in A.D. 70. There we see that "**fire descends** (or: came down) **from God, out of the atmosphere** (or: sky; heaven), **and devours them**" and this is interpreted symbolically:

**"And so the 'devil' (slanderer; accuser; PERSON who thrusts-through or causes DIVISION), the one continuously deceiving them (repeatedly leading them astray) is cast (or: was thrown) into the lake (or: basin; artificial pool; marshy area) of the Fire and Deity (or: which is Fire, even Devine Nature)."**

If we recall the picture of the Holy Spirit coming upon the set-apart folks in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, God's fire was present with them:

**"Then progressively dividing and self-distributing tongues – as if of fire – were seen by them, and**

**He (or: it; or: [one]) sat down upon each one of them" (Acts 2:3).**

It is God's presence with His people that delivers them from divisive spirits and worthless acts of adversaries.

But again, interpreting the **adversary** as the false teaching and the counterfeit gospel, we can discern Paul as saying that their "way of living" in the Lord (i.e., their **feet**, which is a figure of their "walk" in union with the Lord) would be that which would crush these false teachings.

**21. Timothy, my fellow-worker, is greeting you. Also Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my relatives (fellow-**

countrymen).

Timothy we know, and Lucius could be the one referred to in Acts 13:15. Jason could be the same one mentioned in Acts 17:5-9 and Sosipater could be the Sopater of Acts 20:4.

**22. – I, Tertius, the one [being the amanuensis (or: scribe; secretary) and] writing down the letter, am greeting you in [the] Lord –**

Tertius, Paul's scribe, was obviously a believer.

**23. Gaisu, my host, and the whole of the called-out assembly, greets you.**

**Erastus, the city manager**

**(administrator; steward) greets you.**

**Also Quartus, the brother.**

Gaius is very likely the same person of 1 Cor. 1:14. Note that Corinth's city manager is one of the believers.

[vs. 24 – omitted by the oldest MSS – repeats vs. 20b]

Of this group of Christians in Rome, Wright rightly says, "They were living in God's new world" (ibid p 139).

Next we have the closing paragraph of the letter which is somewhat of a summation of much of what he has said, as well as a sketch of God's plan through the ages (*cf* Eph. 3:1-13), which is one of goodness.

**25. Now by the One (in the One; to the One) being continuously able and powerful to set you steadfast (to make**

you stand firm and settled) **in accord with** (or: corresponding to; in the sphere of; in line with) **my message of goodness and well-being – even the preaching and public heralding of the message of and from Jesus Christ – down from** (in accord with; in line with) **an unveiling of a secret** (or: a revelation and a disclosure of a mystery) **that had been being kept silent** (or: quiet) **in eonian times** (or: for time periods of the [preceding] ages; to [the] times [that would] pertaining to the Age [of Messiah]),

As throughout the entire letter, Paul affirms God's power and ability (e.g., 1:4, 16), and that He is the one Who

does such things as making people **steadfast** and "stands [them] firm and settled." THIS is Paul's **message of goodness** (i.e., God's goodness) and **well-being**. It is what he had been **preaching and publically heralding** as **the message of and from Jesus Christ**. Paul had received this message through **an unveiling of a secret** – a revelation and a disclosure (*cf* 1:17, above) of a mystery – which he had received from God, and which is,

**"in accord with** (or: down from; corresponding to) **a purpose of the ages** (a fore-designed aim, plan and object [which He is bent on achieving] of the unspecified

time-periods) **which He formed** (forms; made; constructs; produced) **within the Christ by our Lord, Jesus"** (Eph. 3:11).

This secret concerning the Messiah, as well as the inclusion of the Gentiles in the new covenant, had been **kept silent** during the previous ages (or, **eonian times**) that had eventually led up to the present Age of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He spoke of this secret in Colossians ch. 1:

26. **the Secret** (or: sacred mystery) **having been hidden away and remaining concealed away from the ages** (or: from [past] eons), **as well as away**

**from the [past] generations, yet now (at the present time) is set in clear light in His set-apart folks (or: was manifested to His holy ones; is caused to be seen by His saints; is shown for what it is, for His sacred people),**

**27. to whom God wills (or: at one point purposed; or: intends) to make known by intimate experience, what [are] the riches of the glory of this Secret (or: the wealth which has its source in this sacred mystery's manifestation which calls forth praise) within the multitudes (among the nations; in the**

Gentiles; IN UNION WITH the swarms of ethnic groups), **which is (or: exists being) Christ within you folks, the expectation of and from the glory**

(or: which is [the] Anointed in union with you people: the [realized] hope of the manifestation which called forth praise; or: which is [the] Anointing within the midst of you folks – the expectation which is the glory),

28. **Whom** [other MSS: Which] **we ourselves habitually proclaim down the line** (or: announce in

accord with the pattern),  
**constantly putting [Him] into the  
minds of every person (or:  
human) and repeatedly teaching  
every person (or: human), within  
the sphere of all wisdom, to the  
intent that we may place every  
person (or: human) finished**  
(mature; perfect with respect to  
purpose; complete; as having  
reached the goal of destiny) **by  
[our] side, within and in union  
with Christ** [other MSS add:  
Jesus],

**29. unto which [goal] I habitually  
work hard (or: progressively toil  
on) and become weary,**

**constantly struggling as in a contest, corresponding to (or: down from, yet on the level of) His inward working (or: energy and operation): the One continuously operating (energizing and inwardly working) within me – within power and in ability.**

More details of this **secret**, along with echoes of ch. 8:28-30, above, are given in Eph. ch. 1:

**5. In love [He was] marking us out beforehand (or: definitively appointing us in advance; before-setting our boundaries and defining us, with a designation)**

**[and directing us] into a placing in the condition of a son (or: a deposit of the Son; a setting in place which is the Son; the constituting as a son; a placing in the Son) through and by means of Jesus Christ – [moving us] into Himself, according to (or: down from; in correspondence with; following the pattern of) the good thought, the intention of well-being, and the well-imagined delight of His will (determined purpose).**

**6. [This was] with a view unto praise of His grace's glory (or: This [led] into [the] praise of [the])**

reputation and honorable consideration of His favor) **with which He graced us** (or: favors and gifts us with grace) **within the One having been, and continuing being, loved**

(or: the Beloved One; or: the One having been given and now expressing the essence and qualities of love; [some MSS: within His beloved Son]),

**7. within and in union with Whom we continuously have** (constantly hold; progressively possess) **the redemption** (the release into freedom procured by

the payment of a ransom; the liberation from our predicament) **through His blood – the sending away** (causing to flow off; forgiveness; dismissal) **of the effects and results of the fallings-aside** (the stumblings by the side; wrong steps; offences; transgressions), **in accordance with** (or: down from; corresponding to; in keeping with; to the level of) **the wealth and riches of His grace and joyous favor,**

**8. which He caused to superabound around [and] unto us** (or: which He makes to be

more than enough unto us; which He excessively supplied and then lavishes into us) **within the midst of, in union with and centered in all wisdom** (or: in every wise thing) **and thoughtful prudence** (gut-intelligence; mindful purpose; considered understanding).

9. **[This occurred] while making known to us** (acquainting us by intimate, experiential knowledge; suddenly making us to realize) **the secret** (mystery; hidden knowledge) **of His will** (determined purpose; resolve) – **in accord with** (or: down from and following the pattern of;

corresponding to; in line with) **His good thought which He before placed within Himself**

(or: – corresponding to the measure of His pleasing imagination and intent of well-being which He designed beforehand and determined by setting it forth within Himself),

**10. [leading] into a planned administration of the effects of that which fills up the appointed seasons and fertile moments**

(or: unto a dispensing of the entire contents of the opportune situations;

[leading] into a house-law  
of the result from the full  
measure of the fitting  
situations and a management  
of the household of the  
complement of the seasons;  
into an administration of the  
full effect from the eras),  
**[designed] to itself bring  
back all things** (or: the  
whole) **up under one Head**  
(or: to bring back to and  
gather round the main point  
and source of all things)  
**within and in union with  
the Christ: those things  
upon** [other MSS: within]

**the heavens** (or: the atmospheres) **and the things upon the land** (earth) – **within and in union with Him!**

**11. Within and in union with Whom we were** (or: are) **also chosen** (or: appointed) **by lot** (or: were made an allotted portion; or: received an inheritance), **being previously marked out** (or: being before designated) **in keeping with** (or: down from; corresponding to; in accord with) **a before-placed** (or: predetermined-by-setting-forth) **aim and design of the One**

**continuously operating**  
(effecting; energizing) **all things**  
(or: the whole) **in accord with**  
(or: down from; in line with; in  
correspondence to) **the**  
**deliberated purpose** (intent;  
design; plan; determined counsel)  
**of His will** (or: resultant decision  
of His resolve; effect of His  
desire),

**12. [and progressing] into the**  
**[situation for] us to continuously**  
**be (or: exist) [oriented and**  
**moving] into [the] praise and**  
**approval of His glory and**  
**reputation – [we] being the ones**  
**having before placed**

**expectation within the Christ – and who have left our expectation there** (or: the folks who have continued expectantly hoping in advance [of others]).

Paul also referred to this secret in 1 Cor. 15:51ff, which follows his discussion on the theme of resurrection,

**"See (Look and consider)! I am progressively telling you a secret ([the] mystery)! We, indeed, shall not all continue falling asleep, yet we all will continue being changed**

(or: On the one hand, not all of us will continue [dying], but on the other hand, we all

will be progressively altered;

or: We all shall not continue being put to repose, and so we all shall keep on being transformed;

or: All of us shall not continue sleeping, but we all will continue being rearranged to be another or made to be otherwise)."

We saw his reference to one aspect of this secret in 11:25-26, above,

**"For I am not willing for you folks to continue being ignorant of this secret... a petrifying, from a part, has been birthed**

**and come into existence in Israel until which [time] the effect of the full measure from the nations may enter in. So then... all Israel will progressively be delivered (rescued, saved, made whole and restored to their original position [in the olive tree])..."**

**26. but now is being brought to light and manifested, and through prophetic Scriptures, down from (in accord with, on the level of and in line with) a command of the eonian God**

(from the God Who exists through and comprises the ages; of God in relation to the ages; or: = from the

God who created, inhabits, owns and rules the ages), [**which leads**] **into**

**hearing obedience from faith as well as a humble listening and paying attention belonging to trust, pertaining to confidence and which comprises loyalty – suddenly being made known unto all the ethnic multitudes (nations; Gentiles; pagans; non-Israelites),**

The many quotes of the OT scattered throughout this letter are the "**prophetic Scriptures**" of which he speaks here (*cf* 1:2, above). The unveiling of the **secret** brought **God's command to light, and manifested** it (or: Him). Kirk observes,

"The Christ event is the prepromised gospel which Paul finds in the Scriptures of Israel" (ibid p 227).

The parenthetical expansions which follow the terms **eonian God** explain this phrase:

- a) from the God Who exists through and comprises the ages
- b) of God in relation to the ages
- c) [paraphrased]: from the God who created, inhabits, owns and rules the ages.

See the short study, "Who is the God of This Age?" following the comments on Paul's letter to the Romans.

His **command** leads humanity **into**

**hearing obedience from faith as well as a humble listening and paying attention belonging to trust, pertaining to confidence and which comprises loyalty. And all this was suddenly being made known unto all the ethnic multitudes (nations; Gentiles; pagans; non-Israelites; cf 1:5, above), by God (as vs. 27 makes clear). 27. by God (or: with God; in God), alone wise, through Jesus Christ, in Whom [is] the glory (by Whom [is] the reputation) on into the ages of the ages. It is so (Count on it; Amen)!**

This verse is artificially separated from the long sentence that begins with vs. 25 and is one continuous thought. The

separation was to make it a formal "doxology" rendering the dative form of **God** as "**to God.**" Scholars have presumed that Paul was conforming to a contemporary epistolary form, but the context seems to me to flow best with this verse being an immediate continuation of vs. 26 and continuing the affirmations about God that were begun in vs. 25. The other dative functions (**by**, **with**, **in**) seem to best finish Paul's thoughts of vs. 26.

**God** is the only source of wisdom (*cf* 11:33, above) – all wisdom comes from God, Who is **alone wise**. This wisdom, along with all that Paul has just said from vs. 25 on, comes **through Jesus**

**Christ – in Whom [is] the glory, and  
the manifestation of God which calls  
forth praise to Him!**

*Laus Deo, Amen!*

## THE GOD of THIS AGE

Who is the God (or: god) of this age? Most Christians will without hesitation answer, "Satan." Why do we think this to be true? The phrase comes from 2 Cor. 4:4, so let us read verses 3 and 4, to see the context:

**3. Now if the good news coming from us (or: our message of goodness, ease and wellness) continues being covered from having been veiled with a head-covering, it continues being thus**

**covered within the midst of and among those on their way to ruin** (being progressively lost; repeatedly losing-away so as to be undone; or: destroying themselves),

**4. within and among which folks the God of this age** (or: the God who owns this indefinite time-period; the God Who is in relationship with this eon) **blinds** (or: deprived of the ability to see) **the effects of the intellects and mental powers** (or: the results of directing the mind to something) **of those without faith** (of the un-trusting ones; of the unbelieving and disloyal), **[leading them] into the [situation that] the shining forth of light and the**

**illumination of** (or: the beaming forth of enlightenment from) **the good news of the glory of the Christ** (or: of the message of goodness, ease and wellness whose source is the glory of the Anointed One; of the glad tidings pertaining to the manifestation which calls forth praise to the [Messiah]) - **Who continuously exists being God's image** (a resemblance and likeness of [Concordant Text adds: the unseen; the invisible] God) - **would not shine forth as the dawn to irradiate them.**

First of all, you can see my take on this passage, in that I capitalized the word "God" in vs. 4, so right up front you have a hint of where I am going with this

study. But please don't cry "Heresy!" yet, and read on, with an open (un-blinded) mind. Now in the second place, keep in mind that our verses, above, follow the context of ch. 3 where it speaks of Israel's minds being blinded, there being a "veil upon their hearts" (vs. 10-11).

This is talking about when they are reading Moses (i.e., God's Word). So who put the veil there, and thus blinded them?

**In Isa. 6:10, Yahweh says, "Stouten the heart of this people, and make its ears heavy, and make its eyes squint, lest it may see with its eyes, and with its ears it may hear, and with its heart it may understand, and it gets healing**

**again for itself" (CVOT). So this was the work of Yahweh, just as where, in another place, He said, "Let there be light." Now John quotes this text, in his gospel, in ch. 12:40. "He has blinded their eyes with the present result that they are still blind, and He hardened (or: petrified) their heart, to the end that they could (or: should; would) not see with [their] eyes nor could they direct [their] mind so as to perceive and get the thought in (or: with) the heart and be turned, so I, Myself, will heal (or: cure) them." [Isa. 6:10]**

Notice that in vs. 39 of this chapter, John says **"On account of this they were unable (or: they had no power) to be**

**trusting or believing"** and this was because of what Isaiah said.

Do you notice that there is no mention of satan in these passages? It was God who did this. Paul takes up this theme in Rom. 11:7-12 and 25.

**Vs 7. What, then? That which Israel is constantly searching for (or: seeking out), this it did not encounter (or: did not hit upon the mark, and thus, obtain), yet The Selected One (the Picked-out and Chosen One; or: the choice collection; the elect - that which is chosen out) hit upon the mark, encountered and obtained it. But the rest (the folks remaining) were**

**petrified** (were turned into stone; were made calloused and were hardened),

**Vs 8. just as it has been and stands written, "God gives (or: at one point gave) to them a spirit (breath-effect and attitude) of stupor, from receiving a piercing blow (or: deep sleep; a senseless mental condition), eyes of the [condition] to not see, ears of the [condition] to not hear, until this very day (or: until today's day)." [Deut. 29:4; Isa. 29:10]**

**Vs 9. And David is saying, "Let their table be birthed into a snare (a trap) and into a wild beast trap-net and into a trap-stick, even into a repayment to**

**them** (for them; in them).

**Vs 10. "Let their eyes be darkened, to not see, and let them bend (or: bow) their back together [in bondage] through all (or: every [situation])."** [Ps. 69:23-24]

But lest we feel saddened by God's actions to Israel, Paul tells us His purpose in vs. 12:

**Vs 12. Now since (or: if) their fall to the side [brings, or, is] enrichment of the world (universe; the ordered system outside of Israel) and their lessened condition (their lapse; their diminishing; their loss; = their defeat) [brings, or, is] enrichment of the nations (the ethnic**

multitudes; the non-Jews; the Gentiles), **how much exceedingly more their filled-full condition** (their full measure with the entire contents)!

If you have eyes to see, you will realize that this was also the same purpose of the fall of humanity, and the expulsion from Eden. It was for enrichment.

Paul continues this theme in vs. 25, where he speaks of God's actions as "a secret," or, "a mystery,

**Vs 25. For I am not willing for you folks to continue being ignorant of this secret (or: mystery), brothers, in order that you folks may not continue being thoughtful, prudent or discreet by**

**yourselves** [other MSS: among yourselves (or: within yourselves)], **that a petrifying, from a part** (a stone-like hardening in some measure; a callousness [extending over] a part), **has been birthed and come into existence in Israel** (or: has happened to Israel) **until which [time; situation] the full measure** (or: the entire content; = full number) **from the nations** (or: of the ethnic multitudes who are non-Jews) **may enter in.**

Now reread our text, above - and note the action of the God of this age. It is the same as what we have read in these other passages. There is only one God who has any power. All other gods are

imaginary, and are not gods at all. Sadly, orthodox Christianity participates in dualism. They have a good God, and a bad god (satan). But this view is false. The God of this age is the same God of every age.

The writer of Hebrews gives insight into the origins of the ages. In ch. 1:2 we see,

**Vs 2. upon [the] last of these days spoke to us in a Son whom He placed (or: sets) [as; to be] Heir of all (or: One who receives all men as an allotment; or: heir of all things; or: One who received everything as his allotted inheritance) through Whom He also made (or: formed; constructed) the ages**

(or: various designated periods of time).

The One who constructed the ages is the God of the ages, the Creator. Again, the thought expressed above is seen in ch. 11:3,

**Vs 3. In faith and by trust, with the mind we constantly perceive (with the intellect understand) the ages to have been completely equipped by (and, or: thoroughly adjusted to; knit together and put in order in) God's declaration (that which flowed in speech that had the source, character and qualities of God; or: a spoken word which was God).**

Again, the One who completely equipped the ages did it through His

declaration. Yet someone may ask, "Well what about Gal. 1:4, where Paul speaks of 'the present wicked (or: evil) age'?" My expanded version reads thus:

**Vs 4. - the One at one point giving Himself, over the situation of (or: on behalf of; for the sake of; [p46, Aleph\*, A, D & other MSS read: concerning]) our failures (situations and occasions of falling short or to the side of the target; deviations; mistakes; errors; sins) so that He could carry us out from the midst of the present misery-gushing and worthless age (or: bear us forth from the indefinite period of time - characterized by toil, grievous plights**

and bad situations - having taken a stand in [our] midst; or: extricate us from the space of time having been inserted and now standing in union with base qualities), **corresponding to** (or: down from; in accord with; in line with; in the sphere and to the level of) **the effect of the will** (or: intent; purpose; design) **of our God and Father,**

The question implied is, "Did God construct this 'misery-gushing, worthless age'?" Let us see who creates evil:

"Former of light and Creator of darkness,  
Maker of good and Creator of evil,  
I, Yahweh, make all these things!" (Isa.

45:7, CVOT)

The God of this present age of bad situations and grievous plights made this age this way! Yahweh said in Amos 3:6 "Would there come to be evil in a city and Yahweh not have done it?" (CVOT)

Only faith can answer, "No."

# ATONEMENT

A variety of church theories and doctrines about the concept of atonement have been embraced and presented by different scholars over the centuries, from the time of the early church fathers on to our present day. Many books have been written on this topic.

In this study, I will suggest an alternative to all the traditional church theories – those from such as Origen, Anselm and Calvin, and those of our current scholars that have posited one, or a combination, of the varieties of these theological

constructs that continue being debated. Let us return to the sources, and look again.

The concept of atonement, in the Jewish-Christian traditions, comes from Israel's Torah (Law), and thus we should base our understanding upon its use in the OT Scriptures, if we are to apply it to the work of the Messiah (which concept also derives from this same source).

The English word "atonement" first appears in Ex. 29:36.

The NASB reads:

“And each day you shall offer a bull as a sin offering for atonement, and you shall PURIFY the altar when you make

atonement for it; and you shall anoint it to consecrate it.”

The Concordant Version (CV) reads:

“A young bull, as a sin offering, shall you offer day by day for propitiatory shelters; you will make a sin offering on the altar [Rotherham reads, here: a sin-cleansing for the altar] when you make your propitiatory shelter on it. And you will anoint it to hallow it”

Then vs. 37 reads:

“Seven days shall you make a propitiatory shelter on [other versions: make atonement for] the altar, and [thus] you will hallow

(or: consecrate) it. Thus the altar becomes a holy of holies. All that touches the altar shall be holy.” (CV, additions, mine)

The Hebrew word for “atonement” is *kaphar*, which means “to COVER.” It is first used in Gen. 6:14 where it is rendered “pitch [it]” – KJV – but the CV more correctly reads “... with nests shall you make the ark, and you will shelter it from the inside and from the outside with a sheltering [coat].” But it is noteworthy that the LXX uses the word “bitumen,” along with its verb form, in this verse. Elsewhere, the LXX uses either *hilasmos*, *hilasia*, or

*exilasetai* for the word normally rendered “atonement,” or its verb form. In the OT, we find this word and concept almost entirely associated with tabernacle/temple cultus, in the books, Ex., Lev. & Nu. It is next used in 2 Sam. 21:3 to make atonement for Saul having killed Gibeonites, and because of this Yahweh had brought three years of famine to the land. Here the atonement was made by giving over seven men of the sons of Saul to be hanged by the Gibeonites. Next, in 1 Chron. 6:49, we find a reference back to Aaron and his sons offering both burnt and incense offering “to make an atonement for Israel” (note the corporate effect that

this cultic ritual had; *cf* the cleansing of the temple in Hezekiah's day, and atonement being made "for all Israel" – 2 Chron. 29:24). Then there was the time of covenant renewal when the exiles returned to Jerusalem (Neh. 10:33).

On the Day of Atonement – the first part of the third great feast of Israel, the Feast of Tabernacles (or: Booths; Ingatherings), held in the seventh month – the chief priest was to go into the holy of holies of the tabernacle, and Yahweh was to "appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat" (Lev. 16:2). This day included the sacrifice of a ram, a bullock and a goat – another goat taking

the sins of Israel outside their camp and into the wilderness. He was to

“make an atonement for the holy [place], because of the UNCLEANNESS of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness” (Lev. 16:16).

The Day of Atonement was a corporate issue that happened once a year for the entire nation. In vs. 21-22 we read how the chief priest,

“shall lay both his hands upon the

head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat and shall send [it] away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon it all their iniquities (or: depravities) into an inaccessible area (or: wilderness) ...”

UNCLEANNES – from transgressions, sins and depravities – seems to be the main issue for this day. It was a cultic way of getting rid of the effects of what the nation had done wrong during the

previous year. It made the nation clean, and covered over their mistakes. Vs. 20 speaks of atoning the holy area, the tabernacle and the altar. Everyday-living polluted everything. All needed to be cleansed on this annual, corporate consecration.

On the topic of Atonement in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Sanders instructs us,

"Thus in IQS 11:14, God is said to 'atone for' the hymnist's iniquities and to 'cleansed' him... In IQS 3:6-8, the passive verb 'be atoned for' alternates with 'be cleansed,' and the agent is said to be 'the spirit of true counsel,' 'the spirit of holiness,' and the 'spirit of

uprightness and humility'" (ibid p 299).

He further states that in IQS 9:4-6, "The community itself has an atoning function," and in IQS 1:3, "the 'men of His Council who keep His Covenant in the midst of iniquity' atone for 'the Land'.... It may also be that the establishment of the community is considered to 'atone'." (ibid p 300, 302)

John Gavazzoni comments:

“The altar is where God meets with man, and is that place which initially is the opening to communion with God at the point of our conscience. We should consider not seeing the conscience

and the blood of Christ at the deepest level, as two things, but one. That is, the life which is in the blood IS our true conscience. It is our altar. It's the only "place" where we can meet with God, i.e., at the place of HIS reckoning of us.”

There was also an individual aspect to the concept. In Ex. 30:12-16 we read, “When you take up the sum of the sons of Israel by their mustered ones, then each man will give a sheltering ransom for his soul [= life; person] to Yahweh.... a half shekel... the half shekel shall be a heave offering [LXX: tax] to

Yahweh... [for] ones from twenty years old and upward.... You will take the sheltering ransom silver from the sons of Israel and give it to (or: for) the service of the tent of appointment [LXX: witness] that it become for the sons of Israel a memorial before Yahweh to shelter [= make atonement concerning] your souls [= lives; persons].”

So here, each man ransomed his own soul/life as his own atonement/shelter – and in this way the priests had operating money “for the service of the tent.” Lev. 1:2 begins instructions for a man bringing an approach present to Yahweh.

Verse 4 says, “And he shall lay his hand on the head of the offering, a thing acceptable to him to atone for him” (LXX). Lev. 4:13-21 gives instructions re: inadvertent sins of the whole congregation of Israel – a bull calf is to be offered, its blood appropriately applied, then it is burned outside the camp – and this became a shelter for the assembly. Lev. 6 addresses issues of trespasses between members of the community: restoration plus a fifth more was to be given to the wronged person and then a ram was to be offered for an atoning shelter (vss. 2-7). Many other examples involving shelter/atonement are given in both Lev. and Nu. My point

is: atonement was a central part of their cultic existence. Through the various rituals and sacrifices it was a way of cleansing individuals and the entire nation of offenses and mistakes. It was individual and group catharsis. It was a means of handling guilt, reciprocity and equity within the community. This was a part of the Way that was pointed out to them, the path of covenant membership. The word is not used, but the action of COVERING is seen in the prophet's description of Yahweh choosing Israel,

“... I spread the edge of my cloak over you, and covered your nakedness.... I bathed you with water and washed off the blood

from you... clothed you... etc.”

(Ezk. 16:8-10)

So how is this theme taken up in the NT? We read in Heb. 9 about how Christ, as the chief priest of the new order – that of Melchizedek – fulfilled that of which the Day of Atonement was a type and a shadow (Heb. 10:1, 10-14). In 10:22 the writer speaks of “the hearts having been sprinkled from a misery-gushed consciousness of what is evil or unserviceable (or: a joint-knowledge full of labor; a conscience in a bad condition)...” Heb. 9:24 tells us that, **“Christ did not enter into set-apart places made by hands (= by humans) – representations**

(things formed after a pattern) **of the true and real things – but rather into the atmosphere and heaven itself, now to be manifested** (exhibited to view; caused to appear in clear light; made apparent) **by the presence of God over us** (or: in God's face and countenance [being] on our behalf).”

Yes, we are the temple into which He has entered:

**“folks gathered, laid-out and chosen in accord with and down from Father God's foreknowledge** (or: corresponding to a previous

experiential and intimate knowledge possessed by God, who is a Father), **within a setting-apart of spirit** (or: in union with the process of being set apart from common condition and use by [the] Spirit; or: in the midst of a sacred differencing which is a Breath-effect) **[leading] into an obedient hearing** (or: [focused] to being centered in a listening and paying attention with compliance) **and a sprinkling with Jesus Christ's blood** (or: a sprinkling of blood, which is Jesus Christ)” (1 Pet. 1:2).

1 John is the only place in the NT where *hilasmos* is used;

**2:2. And He Himself exists continually being a cleansing, sheltering cover around our mistakes and errors, sheltering us from their effects so that we can be in peaceful and rightwised relationships (or: being the act by which our sins and failures are cleansed and made ineffective, effecting conciliation [to us]), yet not only around those pertaining to us (or: having their source in us), but further, even around the whole ordered System (secular realm**

and dominating world of culture,  
economy, religion and  
government; or: universe; or:  
**aggregate of mankind!**

**4:10. Within this exists (or: is)  
the Love, not that we ourselves  
have loved [other MSS: not that  
we ourselves love or accept]  
God, but in contrast, that He  
Himself loves us and sends (or:  
urged toward reunion with us and  
sent) His Son as a  
Representative (Emissary): a  
cleansing, sheltering covering  
around our sins (failures to hit the  
target, errors, mistakes,  
deviations).**

The verb, *hilaskomai*, is used twice:

**Lu. 18:13 But the tax collector** (or: tribute contractor), **standing far off** (= remaining at a distance, in the background), **continued unwilling even to lift up his eyes to heaven** (or: unto the atmosphere or sky) – **and in contrast kept on beating** (striking) **his chest, repeatedly saying, 'O God, at your mercy seat let me, the failure** (the one who has deviated and missed the goal; the sinner), **be sheltered and cleansed!'**

**Heb. 2:17 Wherefore, He was indebted** (or: obliged) **to be**

**assimilated by** (or: made like or similar to) **the brothers in accord with all things** (or: concerning everything; = in every respect; or: in correlation to all people), **so that He might become a merciful and a faithful** (or: loyal) **Chief Priest** (Leading, Ruling or Beginning Priest) [**in regard to**] **the things toward God, into the [situation] to be repeatedly and continuously overshadowing the failures** (mistakes; errors; misses of the target; sins) **of the People with a gentle, cleansing shelter and covering.**

The noun, *hilasterion*, is used twice,

once in Rom. 3:25, but I shall quote 23-26 to see the context:

**23. You see, all people at one point veered off the mark (or: all folks deviated; or: everyone fails; all humanity sins), and so they are continually posterior to, falling short of, inferior to and wanting of, God's glory (of a manifestation of God which calls forth praise; of a reputation which comes from, and has the character of, God; of God's opinion and imagination; of [having] an appearance of God; of the glory from God),**  
**24. while being folks presently**

**and progressively being made right, freed from guilt, placed in solidarity within the Way pointed out, and continuously set in right relationship** (or: being [all] one-after-another rightwised; being ones habitually turned in the right direction; being [all] presently justified [by covenant inclusion]) **freely** (as a gift; gratuitously) **by His grace** (or: in His joyous favor; with His grace; to His favor) **through means of the releasing-away** (redemption; setting-free) because of the payment of the ransom which is resident within Christ

Jesus (or: which is centered in [the] Anointed Jesus),

**25. Whom God publicly set and places before [us] (or: before put-forth; purposed) [as] a sheltering, cleansing cover (mercy seat; lid of the ark; = atonement) through the faithfulness (or: the trust, faith and loyalty) resident within His blood – into a demonstration which points out the proof of His rightwised solidarity (or: His fairness in covenantal, relational rightness, and His just act which accords with the Way pointed out), on account of (or: because of) the**

**letting flow-aside, and the passing by, of the effects of errors** (or: the results of sinful acts; offenses against the Law; effects of mistakes) **having previously occurred** (being ones having been before brought into being) **during the midst of God's tolerant forbearance –**

**26. toward the demonstration which points out the proof of His rightwised solidarity, with fair and equitable dealing** (His justice; His righteousness; His compliance with the Way pointed out), **within the present season** (in the current fitting situation; in

union with the current fertile moment), **for Him to be just** (or: One in covenantal solidarity that accords with fair and equitable dealings which comprise the Way pointed out) **and the One progressively turning in the right direction, making just and freeing from guilt while constantly placing in the Way pointed out which is righted, covenantal relationship** (or: The Right-wiser and Justifier of) **the person [issuing; being born] forth from out of the midst of Jesus' faithfulness** (or: from [the] trust, loyalty, and trustworthiness

[emanating] from, and [the] faith which is, Jesus)!

The other place where this noun is used is in Heb. 9:5, in the context of the Day of Atonement:

**“but up above her [i.e., the ark] [are] cherubim, which have the character and quality of and express [the] glory, continuously overshadowing the mercy seat (the place of gentleness and graciousness), concerning which things (or: ones) there is now nothing to be saying corresponding to [that] part (or: down from, or in accord with, a part; = in detail).”**

The “**mercy seat**” of Heb. 9:5 relates to the “**sheltering, cleansing cover**” of Rom. 3:25, above. So Christ is the lid of the ark, the mercy seat, and His blood shelters us, covers us, and cleanses us. His cross was the Day of Atonement for Israel. And since Israel was the conduit for Abraham’s blessings to come to all the nations, their atonement became humanity’s atonement. As Christ represented Israel in this cultic metaphor, so Israel represented Adam and His atoning work became ours, as well.

Dan Kaplan has pointed out that the mercy seat, the lid to the ark, was a covering over the contents that were, for

a time, kept in the ark: the Law written in stone; the rod of priestly authority within that bygone religious system; the pot of manna that spoke of Israel's wilderness wandering. Mercy was to reign above it all, and this type foreshadowed the place of Christ – as Paul points out – and His cleansing “judgment seat.”

As we saw in Lev. 16:30, atonement was associated with cleansing. In the Gospels, Jesus' healing of lepers was termed cleansing them. In demonstrating a disciple's role as a servant to the body of Christ, Jesus washed their feet (a figure of the walk of daily living). But He told Peter,

**"The person being one having bathed himself or herself (or, as a passive: being one having been washed and cleansed) does not continue having a need to wash himself or herself – except [his] feet – but rather she or he continues to exist being wholly clean. And you men continue being clean folks..."** (John 13:10)

I suggest that Acts 10:15 is an echo of the Day of Atonement which Christ fulfilled on the cross. In reference to the Gentiles of the house of Cornelius, the Lord tells Peter,

**"You are not to continue making,**

**or considering, common [the] things which God cleansed (or: cleanses) and made (or: makes) clean!"**

This referred to the Gentiles (and by implication, all humanity) now being clean.

John's 1<sup>st</sup> letter picked up this theme, and we read in ch. 1:7,

**Yet if we keep on walking about (= continue living our life) within the midst of and in union with the Light, as He exists (or: is) within the Light, we constantly have common being and existence (or: hold common fellowship, participation and**

enjoy partnership) **with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, keeps continually and repeatedly cleansing us** (or: is progressively rendering us pure) **from every sin** (or: from all error, failure, deviation, mistake, and from every [successive] shot that is off target [when it occurs]).

This presents the practical, living application in the new creation covenant community as it walks the path, following Jesus, who is the path, the truth and the life. Atonement was a work that was finished by Christ on the cross, but it is also a living experience through His Spirit. It was a maintenance feature

for cleansing Israel, and by the Spirit it is the figurative “life within the blood” that continues to cleanse and nourish His body.

We see a different word, but the act of covering in Rom. 4:7 where Paul quotes Psalm 32,

**“Happy and blessed [are] the people whose lawlessnesses (transgressions; violations of the Law; lawless deeds) were and are sent away (dismissed; discharged; divorced; pardoned) and whose failures (errors; situations of missing of the target; sins) were and are covered over (concealed with a veil or lid)!”**

I will quote one more verse, from 1 Pet 4, where he quotes Prov. 10:12,

**8. Before all people** (or: = More than anything), **continue being folks constantly holding the outstretching and extending love** (unambiguous, uniting acceptance) **unto yourselves** (i.e., into each other) – "because love is constantly covering (habitually throwing a veil over; progressively concealing; [and with other MSS: will be covering]) **a multitude of failures** (mistakes; errors; misses of the target; sins)."

This calls to mind Yahweh's covering

the nakedness of Adam and Eve. Also, the covering (roof) of the Tabernacle was with skins (a figure of the incarnation: God dwelling in a house/tabernacle that was “covered with” skin). Covering (atonement) extends all the way to Paul speaking of clothing ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27), with immortality (1 Cor. 15:54), with the new humanity (Eph. 4:24) and with the whole suit of armor, which is God (Eph. 6:11). Rev. 3:4 gives the promise of walking with Him in white; those in 6:11 were given white robes; 19:8 tells of the Lamb’s wife arrayed in clean, white fine linen (the effects of His fair and

equitable deed, and the rightwised Way that He pointed out to His set-apart folks).

E.P. Sanders, in commenting on *The Psalms of Solomon*, states that,

"God's forgiveness is described as his *cleansing* the repentant transgressor (9:12), and similarly God's chastisements are said to cleanse one from sin (10:1f)" (ibid. p 397; emphasis his).

When commenting on *Jubilees* and the Day of Atonement, he quotes 34:18f,

"And this day has been ordained that they should grieve thereon for their sins, and for all their transgressions and for all their

errors, so that they might cleanse themselves on that day once a year" (ibid. p 379).

In his section on Paul, Sanders makes an insightful comment on 2 Cor. 5:14 ("one has died for all; therefore all have died"):

"Here the significance of Christ death 'for all,' *huper panton*, is not primarily that it is expiatory. We note here the ease with which Paul uses categories of participation to explain his meaning: 'therefore all have died,' NOT 'therefore all have had their sins expiated' (ibid p 464).

Vs. 15 continues:

**"And further, He died over all humanity (over [the situation] of, and for the sake of all) to the end that those living may (or: could; would) no longer live for themselves (to themselves; in themselves; by themselves), but rather for (or: in; by; to; with) the One dying and then being awakened and raised up over them (over their [situation]; for their sakes)."**

His death had in view His giving of His life to us so that we could LIVE. As Atonement in the old covenant gave Israel a new start every year, so His covering us and cleansing us with His

Life and His love makes all things new for us.

Richard Rohr makes these comments in *Adam's Return; The Five Promises of Male Initiation*, (The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2004):

"We ended up with a horrible atonement theory that makes God the Father into a petty ogre who is not organically related to his own creation. God needed to decide to love us, but only if the payment was high enough and the suffering great enough. No wonder we have had so few Christians who loved and trusted God, and so many who feared and even disliked God. Is

this not at the heart of Western atheism? Fortunately, Blessed John Duns Scotus, a Franciscan theologian of the thirteenth century, taught what is now common sense. Jesus was not paying any debt, except possibly to the hardened human psyche. He did not have to die to get God to love us. His death allowed us to love and trust God. He died so we could see in his body what God was like -- to understand self-sacrificing love. Jesus was not changing God's mind about us, but changing our mind about God!" (p 178-9)

"We made the Jesus symbol [the cross] into a mechanical and distant substitutionary atonement theory instead of a very personal and intense at-one-ment process, the very stages of love's unfolding. Jesus became a cosmic problem solver, God became a petty autocrat unable to naturally love what he created, and Christian practice became a polite and fearful standoff instead of a cosmic love affair. We missed out on the positive and redemptive meaning of our own pain and suffering. It was something Jesus

did for us (substitutionary), but not something that revealed and invited us into the same pattern."

(p 38)

John Gavazzoni gives a good summation of this topic:

“A conscience, sprinkled with the blood of Christ, thus void of offense, surrounds, covers, and undergirds us as a propitiatory shelter. The God who provides a shelter by the blood of His Son, rather than a god who demands to be appeased by that blood, is the True God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In regard to Christ be the representative

of humanity in God's eschatological act of the deliverance of mankind, Campbell insightfully puts it, "[J]ust as Christ is God's movement toward humanity, so too Christ recapitulates and represents humanity to God... [in] Christ's identification with humanity..." (ibid p 212)

Rudolf Schnackenburg, in commenting on the Blessing in Eph. 1:2, says, "'Grace,' the compassion newly shown, and 'peace,' the salvation which embraces all humankind, [has] come from God, our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ..." (*The Epistle to the Ephesians – A Commentary*, T & T Clark, 1991, p 43; brackets mine).

Grace and peace are the coming and the outflow of Christ's Atonement of humanity.

“If one has a gracious God, then everything is good” (Martin Luther, *The Smalcald Articles*, 33, 1537, cited in Campbell, *ibid* p 269).

## WRATH in the NEW TESTAMENT

The definitions, below, are from the following scholars: Thayer; Bullinger; Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich; Friberg, Friberg and Miller; Liddell and Scott; Zodhiates; and *The Analytical Greek Lexicon*. In the NT examples which follow, note the contexts and settings:

1) *orge*: (from the verb *orgao*, which means "to teem, denoting an internal motion, especially that of plants and fruits swelling with juice," or, the sexual organs swelling in anticipation of intercourse) native character, mental

bent, temperament, temper of mind, disposition, mood, impulse, propensity, inherent fervor (phrase by Eddie Browne), vigorous upsurge of one's nature, passion – and in a negative sense, anger or indignation.

2) *thumos*: (from the verb *thuo*, which means "to rush on, or along; be in a heat; breathe violently or move impetuously or violently") passion, strong emotion, outburst from a state of mind (these can be either positive, or negative – this latter being hot temper, anger, rage or wrath).

These words signify a condition of being stirred up in spirit or soul; in mind or

emotion. In context they can describe fervent love (passion) of a person in love, or of a God of love. The neutral expressions of orge can refer to one's native character, mental bent, temperament, disposition, etc. The negative manifestations can be seen in humans and also in God – but we should pause before ascribing them in the same way as a pagan would to her or his gods. NT examples of orge (underlined, from *The Jonathan Mitchell New Testament*):

Mat. 3:7

**Now upon seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees** [two religious and political sects of the

Jewish culture] repeatedly or in turn coming upon the immersion (baptism) [event], he said to them, "O offspring (progeny; brood) of vipers (poisonous snakes)! Who secretly pointed out to you people (gave you a private, confidential suggestion) to flee, so as to escape, away from the inherent fervor (the internal swelling that gives rise to an impulse and mental bent which may be expressed in strong emotion, such as anger or wrath; a vigorous upsurge of [God's] nature) which is progressively about to be [demonstrated]?

Mark 3:5

Then glancing around at them with swelling emotion from His natural

**disposition (or: with indignation), being increasingly grieved and experiencing pain and sorrow with [them] at the petrifying of their [collective] heart (also: the covering-over of their heart with a hard, thick layer of flesh), He next says to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" So he stretched [it] out, and his hand was at once restored to its former condition.**

Luke 21:23

**"Tragic will be the situation for the women then being pregnant, and for the ones still nursing [babies] in those days. You see there will be a great compressive force upon the Land, and inherent fervor bringing internal**

**swelling emotion on this People.**

John 3:36

**“The one habitually trusting (or: continuously believing) into the Son is constantly holding (or: progressively having) eonian life (life having the characteristics and qualities of the sphere of the Age; age-durative life; eon-lasting life; life whose source is the Age). Yet the person continuing being unpersuaded by the Son (or: being constantly incomppliant, disobedient or disbelieving to the Son; being repeatedly stubborn toward the Son) will not catch sight of (see; observe; perceive) [this] life. To the contrary, God’s inherent fervor (teeming passion and swelling**

desire; mental bent and natural impulse; propensity and disposition; or: anger, wrath and indignation) **is continuously remaining** (habitually dwelling and abiding) **upon him.”**

Rom. 1:18

**But you see, God's personal emotion** (or: mental bent; natural impulse; teeming desire and swelling passion; temperament; disposition; or: anger; wrath; or: an inherent fervor, which is God,) **is continuously and progressively being unveiled** (revealed; disclosed) **from heaven upon every irreverence** (lack of awe or absence of pious fear; disrespect) **and injustice** (wrong; unrighteousness;

situation or act contrary to the Way pointed out) **of mankind** (or: that arises from humans) – **the folks continuously holding down** (restraining; stopping while possessing) **the Truth** (or: reality) **in the sphere of** (or: within the midst of) **injustice** (unrighteousness; that which is not right; unfairness and inequality)

Rom. 2:5

**Yet down from your hardness** (or: in line with and in accord to your obstinacy) **and an unrepentant heart** (= unchanged thinking and affection in the center of your being) **you habitually collect and lay up stores of personal emotion in yourself** (or: progressively

treasure up to yourself inherent fervor,  
passionate impulse and a mental bent or  
a disposition; or: periodically bank for  
yourself anger, indignation or wrath)  
**within a day of personal emotion**  
**(fervor; passion; anger; etc.) and of an**  
**unveiling of a decision of rightwising**  
**from God**

(or: of a revealing of God's  
verdict regarding fair and  
equitable dealing; of an  
uncovering of a just judgment  
which is God... of a disclosure  
from God's right evaluation)....

Rom. 2:8

**Yet, on the other hand, in those (to  
those; for those) out of a work for**

**ambitious, factious or contentious purposes, and in (or: by) being continuously in compliant (disobedient; unwilling to be persuaded) to (or: by) the Truth (reality; veritable essence), but constantly compliant (obedient; persuaded) in, to, by and for the injustice (inequity; that which is not in accord with the Way pointed out), [there will be] personal emotion (or: inherent fervor; passionate impulse; anger; indignation; wrath; a habit of mind; a mental bent or disposition) and rushing of feelings (or: intense passion of the mind; violent breathing; glowing animation; turbulent commotion of the mind; or: rage; fury) [note: the last**

phrase of this vs. translates *thumos*]....

Rom. 4:15

**For you see, the Law is by labor constantly effecting personal emotion from intrinsic fervor or natural propensity (or: is progressively working-down anger and wrath, repeatedly producing indignation and by habit fully accomplishing a teeming, passionate impulse or a disposition of desire). **Yet** (or: Now) **where no law is existing** (or: where there is no custom), **neither [is there] a stepping to the side** (a transgression; a violation; a breach)....**

Rom. 5:9

**Much more, then – being NOW** (at the

present time) **eschatologically**  
**delivered and rightwised** (turned in the  
right direction; placed in right  
relationships of solidarity; righted and  
made fair within the Way pointed out;  
or: justified and made free from guilt;  
or: = placed in covenant) **within His**  
**blood** (or: in union with the blood from,  
and which is, Him) – **through Him we**  
**will continue being rescued** (saved;  
delivered; made healthy and whole;  
returned to our original state and  
condition; kept safe), **away from the**  
**[conditions or situations of] personal**  
**emotion** (inherent fervor; natural mental  
bent or disposition; teeming passion and  
swelling desire; or: [our] anger and

[human] wrath).

Rom. 9:22

**Now since** (or: So what if) **God – habitually willing** (or: repeatedly intending) **to display and demonstrate inherent fervor, natural impulse, propensity and disposition** (or: teeming passion; swelling desire; or: anger, wrath and indignation), **and also to make known by personal experience His power and ability – in much long-suffering** (long-breathing; forbearance) **bears and carries** (or: brought forth and produced; or: enduringly supports while moving) **containers** (vessels; instruments; utensils) **of natural impulse** (belonging to a passionate disposition;

displaying inherent fervor; from teeming passion and swelling desire; or: of anger; having the character of wrath; owned by indignation), **being folks having been fully outfitted, thoroughly prepared and made correspondingly adequate for loss** (or: having equipped, adapted and adjusted themselves down into ruin, waste and destruction [of their well-being]), **and now continuing in this condition....**

Rom. 12:19

**not being folks habitually getting justice for yourselves** (not maintaining what is right concerning yourselves; not avenging yourselves), **beloved ones, but on the contrary, you folks must yield**

**the position held in anger** (or: give a place for [His] natural impulse, propensity, passion and personal emotion; give place to [His] intrinsic fervor; relinquish [your] right to anger or wrath), **for it has been written,**

**"In Me (or: For or By Me) [is] maintenance of justice**

(execution of the Way pointed out; working out of the right); **I Myself will continue giving away, instead** (or: I will progressively be making a recompense [to you]; or: I will continue taking the opposing position of giving [it] away; or: in its place, I Myself will repeatedly repay [you]),' **the**

**Lord [= Yahweh] is habitually saying."**

[Deut. 32:25; comment: if we are not to practice giving away evil in exchange for evil

(vs. 17, above), then we should not expect the Lord to do this]....

Rom. 13:4

**for it is God's servant** (attendant who renders service or does a duty; an aid in dispensing; one who arranges for provision) **for you** (or: to you), **[directing you] into the good** (the profitable; the virtuous). **Yet if you should be constantly doing the worthless** (the evil; the base; the thing of poor quality; the ugly), **be fearing with**

**a healthy respect, for it is not purposelessly (aimlessly; vainly) continuing to bear the sword! For it is God's servant, a maintainer of what is right (an obtainer and executor of justice) into a fruitful fervor (to a strong personal emotion; unto an angry result; unto [its] personal bent) for (or: in; to) the person constantly practicing or performing the worthless (the ugly; the poor of quality; the evil).**

Eph. 2:3

**immersed among which folks we all also were once twisted up (or: entangled; overturned; upset) within the cravings (lusts; full longings and desires) of our flesh (= the estranged**

human nature, or the alienated self),  
**continually doing the will** (or:  
producing the intentions) **of the flesh** (= our existence while in bondage), **and of the divided thoughts and things passing through the mind.**

**Furthermore, we were continuously existing in essence** (in natural condition; by instinct) **being children of natural impulse** (natural disposition; inherent fervor and swelling passion; teeming desire; or: anger; wrath) **even as** (or: as also) **the rest** (the remaining ones) [were].

Col. 3:6

– **because of which things God's inherent fervor** (natural impulse and

propensity; internal swelling and teeming passion of desire; or: anger; wrath) **is repeatedly** (or: continuously; progressively) **coming** [other MSS add: upon the sons of The Disobedience (or: those having the condition of being unpersuaded; or: the stubbornness); note: “the disobedience” could refer to Adam and Eve eating from the tree, and thus, the “sons of the disobedience” could refer to all of mankind] –

1 Thes. 1:10

**even to constantly dwell and remain** (or: abide and lodge) **back up again [with] His Son – [living] from out of the heavens!** (or: His Son, whose origin is from the midst of the

atmospheres) – **Whom He raised from out of the midst of dead folks, Jesus, the One continuously and progressively drawing** (or: repeatedly dragging) **us to Himself from out of the midst of the repeatedly** (or: periodically; continuously) **coming violent emotion** (inherent fervor; mental disposition of teeming desire; passionate impulse; or: anger; internal teeming & agitation; outburst of rage; wrath)....

1 Thes. 2:16

**while continuously forbidding us** (cutting us off; preventing us) **to speak to the nations** (the ethnic groups; the non-Israelite multitudes; the Gentiles) – **to the end that they may be delivered**

(saved; rescued; healed and made whole) – **always [proceeding] unto that which fills up their own failures** (errors; deviations; sins)! **But inherent fervor** (or: swelling passion; teeming desire; or: anger; wrath; agitation of soul) **advanced upon them unto a purpose** (or: on into [the] final act; or: in the end; on into the midst of a Goal)  
....

1 Thes. 5:9

**because God Himself did not** (or: does not) **place** (or: set) **us into anger** (inherent fervor; violent emotion; wrath; or: teeming, passionate desire), **but rather, into an encompassing of deliverance** (unto establishing a

perimeter of safety; into making health and wholeness encircle [us]; into the forming of an encompassing salvation around [us]) **through our Lord, Jesus Christ**

Heb. 3:11 (4:3 is the same)

**"So I swore in My inherent fervor**  
(native character; or: swelling passion and teeming desire; or: inward agitation and anger; or: disposition and impulse),  
**'If they shall enter into My rest**  
(or: the stopping down and rest which is Me, and which comes from Me) ...!" [Ps. 95:7-11]

Rev. 6:16-17

**repeatedly saying to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall upon us and**

**hide us [Hos. 10:8] from the Face of the One continuously sitting upon the throne, and from the inherent fervor (natural impulse and propensity; internal swelling and teeming passion of desire; or: anger, wrath and indignation) of the little Lamb,"**

**because the great Day of their [other MSS: His] inherent fervor (internal swelling emotion, teeming and passionate desire; impulse; or: anger, wrath and indignation; or: natural bent) comes (or: came), and who (which one) is continuously able (or: continues having power) to be made to stand (or: to be established)?....**

Rev. 11:18

**Now the multitudes** (ethnic groups; nations) **were made angry** (raged; were, or are, made to internally swell; were aroused; were made impulsive) [Ps. 2:1], **and Your inherent fervor** (swelling arousal; impulse; wrath; anger; indignation; natural bent) **came** (or: comes), **and the season** (fitting situation; suitable circumstances; fertile moment) **for the dead folks to be sifted, separated, decided about and judged, and then to give the wages** (or: reward) **to Your slaves: to the prophets and to the set-apart people, and to the ones continuously fearing Your Name – to the small** (or: = insignificant) **ones and to the great**

**ones – and then to thoroughly spoil** (fully ruin; thoroughly decay; utterly destroy) **the folks continuously corrupting** (thoroughly spoiling, ruining, destroying) **the Land** (or: earth; soil)....

Rev. 16:19

**And the Great City came to be [divided] into three parts, and the cities of the nations** (multitudes; ethnic groups) **fell, and then Babylon the Great** (or: the Great Babylon) **was called to mind** (or: is remembered) **in the presence of** (before; in the sight of) **God, to give to her the cup of the wine of the strong passion** (rushing emotion; fury; anger) **of His inherent fervor** (natural impulse; mental bent and

disposition; personal emotion;  
indignation; wrath). ....

Rev. 19:15

**Also a sharp two-edged broadsword repeatedly goes out (issues forth; proceeds) from His mouth, to the end that in it He may smite (or: strike) the multitudes (nations; ethnic groups). And He will shepherd them with an iron staff. Furthermore He is continually treading, [as on a path], (or: trampling) the tub (the wine vat) of the wine of the strong passion of the internal swelling fervor (natural impulse; mental bent; personal emotion; indignation; wrath) of the All-Strong (Almighty). NT examples of *thumos* (underlined,**

from *The Jonathan Mitchell New Testament*):

Luke 4:28

**Then all the men in the synagogue, as they were hearing these things, were filled with a rush of emotion (or: anger; fury),**

Acts 19:28

**Now at hearing these things and coming to be full of rushing and violent emotions (or: impetuous passion leading to indignation and fury) [D adds: then (or: while) running (or: dashing; rushing out forward) into the street], they began crying out, one after another repeatedly saying, "Great [is] Artemis of [the] Ephesians!" (or: they**

continued making exclamations of entreaty, constantly saying, "O Great Artemis of Ephesus!")

2 Cor. 12:20

**So you see, I continue being afraid, lest somehow – on coming – I may not find you folks such as I habitually intend (purpose; desire) – and I, myself, may be found by you [to be one] such as you folks continue not desiring – lest somehow [I may find] strife (contention; quarreling), jealousy, outbursts of emotions or swellings of anger, selfish ambition and factious rivalry, backbitings (down-babblings; slanderous conversations), whisperings (occasions of malicious gossiping),**

**situations of puffing up** (inflations of pride), **disorders** (situations of unrest; turbulences; losses of tranquility; instabilities).

Gal. 5:20

**idolatry, sorcery** (employment of drugs and enchantments; magic rites), **hostilities** (enmities; alienations), **strife** (contentious disposition), **jealousies** (or: zealous emotions), **stirring emotions** (rushing passions; furies), **factions, standings-apart** (divisions), **sects** (religious denominations; parties with a particular opinion; the making of choices from preferences),

Heb. 11:27

**In faith, by trust and with confidence,**

**he left Egypt behind, not fearing the rushing fury (violent breathing, rage and angry passion) of the king, for he was strong and stout as continually seeing the invisible (or: the Unseen One).**

Rev. 12:12

**Because of this, you atmospheres (or: heavens) – and the folks continuously tabernacling (or: normally living in a tent; presently encamping) within the midst of them – must continuously make yourselves glad (keep or develop a good frame of mind; rejoice). Woe to (or: Alas for; A tragedy into) the Land (or: earth) and the sea, because the devil (slanderer; separator; opposer; the**

one who thrusts-through) **is** (or: was) **cast down to you, having great anger** (violent breathing; rushing passion), **knowing that he continues having a little season** (a small suitable place; a limited circumstance; a brief fitting situation)....

Rev. 14:8

**And then another, a second agent** (or: messenger), **followed, repeatedly saying, "It fell (It falls)! Babylon the Great fell (falls), because it has caused all nations** (all ethnic groups and multitudes) **to drink out of the wine of the strong passion** (violent breathing) **of her prostitution" ....**

Rev. 14:10, 19-20

10. **“he will also drink out of the wine of God's rushing emotion (strong passion; anger) – of the one having been mixed undiluted within the cup of His inherent fervor (natural bent; impulse; indignation; wrath). And he will be examined (scrutinized with the touchstone to test his "mettle") within Fire and Deity (Divine qualities) in the presence of (before; in the sight of) the set-apart agents, and in the presence of (before) the little Lamb”....**

19. **And so the agent cast (or: thrusts) his sickle into the Land (earth), and picks (gathers) the vineyard of the Land and he casts [it; them] into the great wine-press (trough; tub) of God's**

**strong passion** (rushing emotion; or: anger).

**20. Then the wine-press** (or: trough) **was trodden** (or: is trod as a path) **outside of the City, and blood came** (or: comes; goes) **forth from out of the trough** (or: wine-press) **up to the horses' bridle – from a thousand six hundred stadia** (a fixed standard of measure; a racecourse; a stadium)....

Rev. 15:1

**Next I saw another sign in the atmosphere** (or: sky; heaven) – **great and wonderful** (marvelous): **seven agents continuously holding the last seven plagues** (smitings, strokes), **because within them God's strong**

**passion** (or: **fury; wrath**) **is** (or: was) **brought to its goal** (has been brought to its purpose; is completed; is finished, was ended; has accomplished its destiny)....

Rev. 15:7

**Then one out of the four living ones gave** (or: gives) **to the seven agents seven golden bowls** (or: shallow cups) **continuously brimming** (being full) **of the strong passion** (rushing emotion; or: **fury; anger**) **of the God Who is continuously living on into the ages of the ages** (or: from God, the One continuously living [and proceeding] into the [most significant] eons of [all of] the eons)....

**Rev. 16:1-2**

**And I heard a great Voice out of the Temple, saying to the seven agents,**

**“You must go (depart) and you must pour out the seven bowls (shallow cups) of**

**God’s strong passion (fury; rushing emotion; anger) into the Land (or: earth).”**

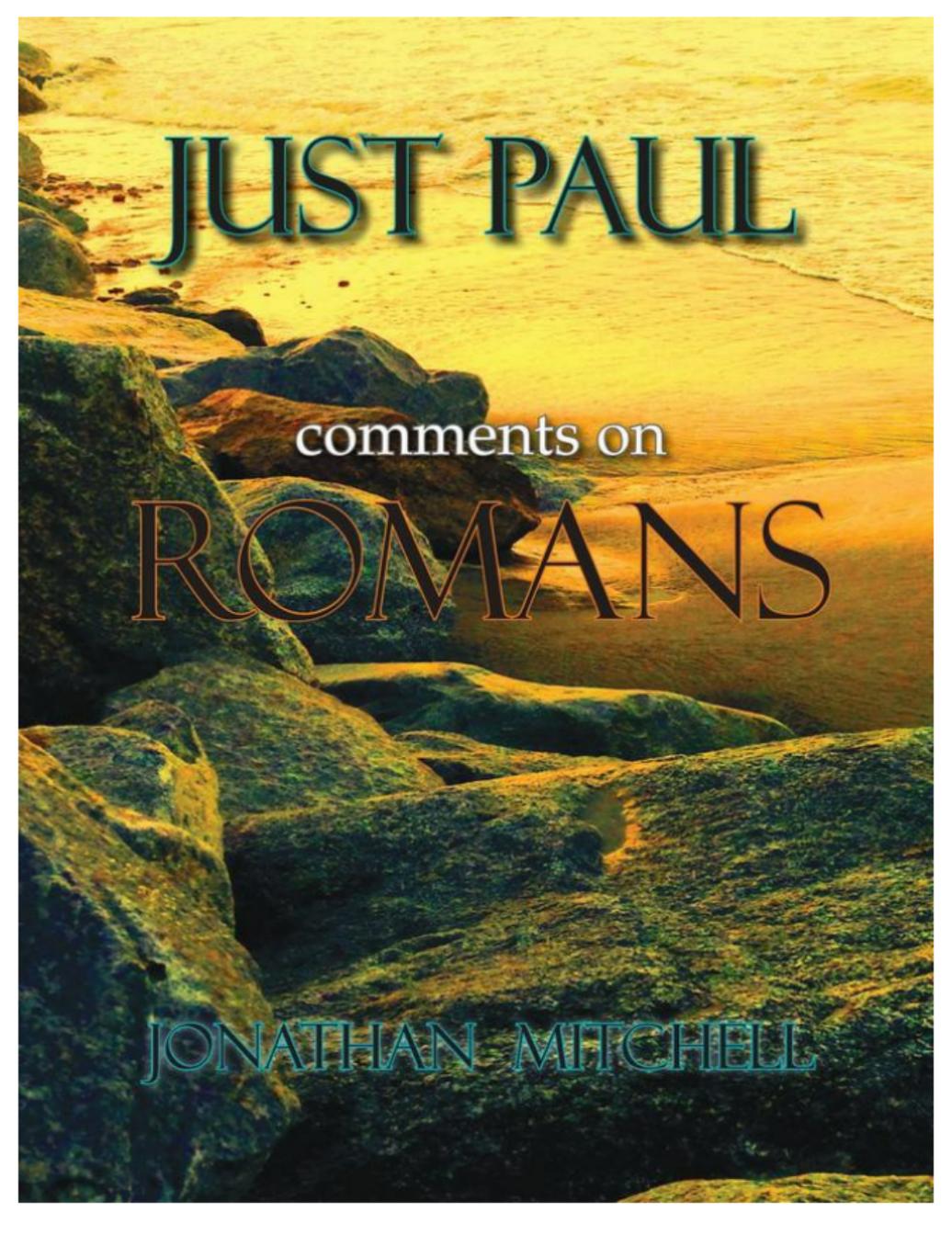
**Then the first one went forth and poured (or: at once pours) out his bowl (or: cup) upon the Land (or: ground; earth) – and a bad and malignant, festering wound (or: ulcer) came to be upon those people having the imprinted mark of the little wild animal (creature; beast), even upon**

**those continuously worshipping its image (or: likeness)....**

**Rev. 18:3**

**because all the multitudes (nations; ethnic groups) have drunk [other MSS read: fallen] from out of the wine of the strong passion of her prostitution, and the kings of the Land (earth) commit (committed) prostitution (fornication; = idolatry) with her, and the merchants (those who travel by sea for trade) of the Land (earth) are (or: became) rich from out of the power (or: ability) of her headstrong pride and wanton luxury (or: reveling).**

# COVERS



# JUST PAUL

comments on

# ROMANS

JONATHAN MITCHELL

## JUST PAUL

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