

# Romans

## 1

**Summary:** *Romans 1 opens with Paul's self-introduction as an apostle set apart for the gospel, expressing his longing to visit the Roman believers. He then states the letter's thesis: the gospel is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, because in it God's righteousness is revealed from faith to faith (1:16-17). The chapter then turns to the universal human problem — God's wrath is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, because what can be known about God is evident from creation, yet humanity suppressed this truth, exchanged God's glory for idols, and was given over to degrading passions and a debased mind.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *Verses 16-17 function as the thesis statement for the entire letter and arguably for Pauline theology as a whole. The phrase 'from faith to faith' (ek pisteos eis pistin) has generated centuries of interpretation. Paul's argument in 1:18-32 is not merely moral condemnation but a carefully structured case that all humanity stands under divine judgment — a setup for the surprising turn in chapter 2 where Paul indicts the moral judge as well. The vice list in verses 29-31 follows Greco-Roman rhetorical conventions but is grounded in the theological logic of idolatry producing moral disorder.*

**Translation Friction:** *The Greek dikaiosyne theou ('righteousness of God') in verse 17 is notoriously complex — it can mean God's own righteousness, the righteousness God gives, or the righteousness that comes from God. We render it as 'the righteousness of God' and note the ambiguity. Verses 26-27 address same-sex relations in language that has been intensely debated; we render the Greek as given without softening or amplifying. The phrase 'para physin' ('contrary to nature') reflects Paul's first-century understanding of the created order.*

**Connections:** *The Habakkuk 2:4 quotation in verse 17 ('the righteous shall live by faith') is foundational to Reformation theology and connects to Galatians 3:11 and Hebrews 10:38. The creation theology of 1:19-20 echoes Psalm 19 and Wisdom of Solomon 13. The pattern of 'God gave them over' (paredoken, vv. 24, 26, 28) structures the wrath section and will be contrasted with God 'giving over' his Son in 8:32.*

<sup>1</sup>Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God — <sup>2</sup>(Which he had promised afore by his God's spokespersons in the sacred scriptures). <sup>3</sup>Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was appointed of the seed of David in keeping with to the flesh;. <sup>4</sup>Declared to be the Descendant of God with authority, according to the inner life of holiness, by the resurrection from the no longer alive:. <sup>5</sup>By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to

the faith in the midst of all nations, for his name:.<sup>6</sup> In the midst of whom are you also the called of Jesus Christ:.<sup>7</sup> To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>8</sup> First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world.<sup>9</sup> For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I mention you<sup>10</sup> I constantly pray, asking that somehow, by God's will, I may finally succeed in coming to visit you.<sup>11</sup> For I long to see you, so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you —<sup>12</sup> What I mean is that we will encourage each other through the faith we share — both yours and mine.<sup>13</sup> I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I often planned to come to you — but have been prevented until now — so that I might have some fruit among you as well, just as among the rest of the nations.<sup>14</sup> I am under obligation both to Greeks and to non-Greeks, both to the wise and to the foolish.<sup>15</sup> So, for my part, I am eager to proclaim the gospel to you who are in Rome as well.<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes — to the Jew first and also to the Greek.<sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written: "The righteous one will live by faith."<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who suppress the truth by their unrighteousness,<sup>19</sup> On account of the fact that that which may be known of God is manifest in them. For God has shewed it to them.<sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.<sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give him thanks, but became futile in their thinking, and their senseless hearts were darkened.<sup>22</sup> Claiming to be wise, they became fools,<sup>23</sup> Changed the splendor of the uncorruptible God into an image appointed like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping matters.<sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them over in the desires of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.<sup>25</sup> They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.<sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them over to dishonorable passions. For their females exchanged natural sexual relations for those contrary to nature,<sup>27</sup> Indeed, likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another. Men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.<sup>28</sup> And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do what is not proper —<sup>29</sup> Being overflowing with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness. Full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity. Whisperers,.<sup>30</sup> Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil matters, rebellious to parents,.<sup>31</sup> Without discernment, covenantbreakers, without normal affection, relentless, unmerciful:.<sup>32</sup> Although they know God's righteous decree — that those who practice such things deserve death — they not only do them but also approve of those who practice them.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *doulos* means 'slave' or 'bondservant,' not merely 'servant.' It carries connotations of total ownership and devotion. We render 'servant' to maintain the dignity of the self-designation while noting the stronger Greek sense. The SBLGNT reads 'Christ Jesus' (*Christou Iesou*) rather than the KJV's 'Jesus Christ' — the order varies in manuscripts.
2. The verb *proepengeilato* ('promised beforehand') is a compound emphasizing prior commitment. Paul establishes from the outset that the gospel is not an innovation but the fulfillment of Israel's scriptural hope. The phrase 'holy Scriptures' (*graphais hagiiais*) refers to what Christians call the Old Testament.
3. The phrase *kata sarka* ('according to the flesh') limits the Davidic descent to the human, physical dimension — setting up the contrast with *kata pneuma* ('according to the Spirit') in verse 4. The Greek *genomenou* ('having become, born') from *ginomai* emphasizes the incarnation: the Son entered into human lineage.
4. The verb *horisthentos* ('declared, appointed, designated') does not mean Jesus became the Son at the resurrection but that the resurrection publicly demonstrated and vindicated his identity. The phrase *pneuma hagiosynes* ('Spirit of holiness') is unusual — it may be a Semitic idiom for the Holy Spirit or may refer to Christ's own spirit of holiness. We capitalize 'Spirit' as the most likely referent is the Holy Spirit's role in resurrection.

5. The phrase *hypakoēn pisteōs* ('obedience of faith') is programmatic for Romans and its meaning is debated — it could mean 'the obedience that is faith,' 'the obedience that comes from faith,' or 'obedience to the faith.' The genitive is likely expegetical: faith itself is the obedience Paul calls for. The same phrase bookends the letter (cf. 16:26).
5. The word *ethnesin* ('nations') is the standard Greek term that can mean 'Gentiles' or 'nations.' Paul's apostolic commission is specifically to non-Jewish peoples.
6. The phrase *klētoi Iēsou Christou* ('called of Jesus Christ') can be parsed as 'called by Jesus Christ' (genitive of agent) or 'called to belong to Jesus Christ' (possessive genitive). We render the possessive sense, which fits the context of believers' identity. The Roman Christians are included among the nations to whom Paul has been sent.
7. Paul's greeting combines the standard Greek epistolary greeting (*charis*, 'grace') with the Hebrew *shalom* greeting (*eirēnē*, 'peace'). The word *hagiois* ('saints, holy ones') does not mean morally perfected people but those set apart by God's call — corresponding to the Hebrew *qadosh*. Paul places God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ on the same level as the joint source of grace and peace.
8. The verb *katangelletai* ('is proclaimed, announced') is stronger than the KJV's 'spoken of' — it implies active, deliberate proclamation. 'The whole world' (*holō tō kosmō*) is hyperbolic, referring to the Roman Empire and the network of early Christian communities, but it testifies to Rome's strategic importance.
9. Paul invokes God as witness — a solemn oath formula rooted in Old Testament covenant practice. The verb *latreuō* ('I serve, worship') is cultic language, used in the Septuagint for priestly and temple service. Paul redefines worship: his liturgical service is gospel proclamation.
10. The verb *euodōthēsomai* ('I may be prospered, succeed on my journey') contains the root *hodos* ('road, way'). Paul's desire to visit Rome has been repeatedly frustrated (cf. 15:22), and he subordinates his travel plans to God's will — a significant qualifier given that his actual arrival in Rome will come as a prisoner (Acts 28).
11. The word *charisma* ('gift of grace, spiritual gift') shares the root of *charis* ('grace'). Paul immediately qualifies this somewhat presumptuous statement in verse 12, showing pastoral sensitivity toward a church he did not found.
12. Paul corrects the potential impression of verse 11 that he would arrive as a superior dispensing gifts. The compound verb *symparalēthēnai* ('to be encouraged together') emphasizes mutuality. Paul acknowledges that he, too, will benefit from the Roman believers' faith.
13. The formula *ou thelō hymas agnoein* ('I do not want you to be unaware') is a standard Pauline disclosure formula (cf. 11:25; 1 Corinthians 10:1; 12:1). We render *adelphoi* as 'brothers and sisters' since the Greek term functioned as an inclusive address for the whole community. Paul does not specify what prevented him — the passive *ekōlythēn* ('I was prevented') may imply divine hindrance or practical obstacles.
14. The Greek-barbarian distinction was the fundamental cultural divide of the ancient world: *Hellēnes* were Greek-speakers, *barbaroi* were everyone else (the term originated as onomatopoeia for incomprehensible speech — 'bar-bar'). We render *barbarois* as 'non-Greeks' to avoid the modern connotation of 'barbaric.' Paul's obligation crosses every cultural boundary.
15. The adjective *prothymon* ('eager, ready, willing') conveys personal enthusiasm. The verb *euangelisasthai* ('to proclaim good news') shares the root of *euangelion* ('gospel'). Paul's eagerness to preach in Rome — the imperial capital — reflects the universal scope of his commission.
16. The SBLGNT omits 'of Christ' (*tou Christou*) after 'gospel,' which appears in later manuscripts reflected in the KJV. We follow the critical text. The verb *epaischynomai* ('I am ashamed') carries social weight — in the honor-shame culture of Rome, the gospel of a crucified Jew would invite ridicule. Paul's 'not ashamed' is an understatement (*litotes*) meaning 'I am proud of.'
16. The phrase *Ioudaiō te prōton kai Hellēni* ('to the Jew first and also to the Greek') establishes the salvation-historical priority of Israel that Paul will defend in chapters 9-11, while insisting on the universality of the gospel.
17. The phrase *dikaiosynē theou* ('righteousness of God') is the theological center of Romans. The genitive *theou* can be subjective ('God's own righteousness'), objective ('the righteousness that comes from God'), or both simultaneously. Luther's breakthrough reading — that this is a righteousness God gives, not demands — launched the Reformation.
17. The quotation from Habakkuk 2:4 can be parsed two ways: 'the righteous-by-faith will live' or 'the righteous will live by faith.' Paul likely intends both senses. The Hebrew of Habakkuk reads 'by his faithfulness' (*be'emunato*), using *emunah*.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Habakkuk 2:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The parallel structure with verse 17 is deliberate: God's righteousness is 'revealed' (*apokalyptetai*) in the gospel (v. 17), and God's wrath is 'revealed' (*apokalyptetai*) against sin (v. 18). Both are present realities, not merely future events. The verb *katechontōn* means 'to hold down, suppress, restrain' — humanity actively suppresses truth, not merely ignores it. The word *adikian* ('unrighteousness') is the direct negation of *dikaiosynē* ('righteousness').
19. The phrase to *gnōston tou theou* ('what is knowable of God') implies a limited, partial knowledge — not everything about God, but enough to leave humanity without excuse (v. 20). The repetition of *phaneron/ephanerōsen* ('plain/made plain') emphasizes that this knowledge is not hidden but actively disclosed by God.

- 20.** Paul employs a deliberate paradox: the 'invisible' (aorata) attributes are 'clearly seen' (kathoratai). The knowledge of God comes through rational reflection on creation (noumena, 'being understood by the mind'), not through mystical experience. The word theiotēs ('divine nature, divinity') differs from theotēs ('deity, godhead') used in Colossians 2:9 — theiotēs refers to divine qualities perceivable in creation, not the full essence of God. The result is that humanity is anapologētous ('without defense, without excuse').
- 21.** The verb edoxasan ('glorified, honored') connects to the glory exchange in verse 23. The failure is twofold: refusing to honor God and refusing to give thanks. The verb emataiōthēsan ('became futile, empty') echoes the Septuagint's description of idol worship (cf. Jeremiah 2:5; 2 Kings 17:15). The 'heart' (kardia) in biblical usage is the center of thought and will, not primarily emotion.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 2:5. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Kings 17:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 22.** The verb emōranthēsan ('became foolish, were made foolish') is the root of the English 'moron.' The irony is sharp: the pursuit of wisdom apart from acknowledging God produces its opposite. This echoes the wisdom tradition of Proverbs 1:7 ('The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction').
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Proverbs 1:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 23.** The verb ēllaxan ('exchanged') introduces the 'exchange' motif that structures 1:18-32: humanity exchanged God's glory (v. 23), exchanged the truth for a lie (v. 25), and exchanged natural relations (v. 26). The descending list — humans, birds, animals, reptiles — mirrors the creation order of Genesis 1 in reverse, depicting idolatry as de-creation. The language echoes Psalm 106:20 and Jeremiah 2:11 on Israel's own idol worship.
- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 106:20 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 2:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 24.** The verb paredōken ('gave over, handed over') is the first of three occurrences (vv. 24, 26, 28) that structure this section. God's wrath is expressed not by active punishment but by allowing human choices to reach their natural consequences — a judicial handing over to the trajectory already chosen. The same verb is used of Christ being 'handed over' to death (4:25; 8:32), creating a profound theological contrast.
- 25.** The second 'exchange' (metēllaxan): truth for falsehood. The Greek para ton ktisanta ('rather than the Creator') means 'instead of,' not merely 'more than' as the KJV suggests. This is replacement, not comparison. Paul breaks into a doxology ('who is blessed forever, Amen') — even in describing idolatry, he cannot mention the Creator without praising him.
- 26.** The second 'God gave them over' (paredōken). The third 'exchange' (metēllaxan) now applies to sexual practice. The phrase para physin ('contrary to nature') reflects Paul's understanding of the created order, drawing on both Jewish creation theology and Greco-Roman natural law concepts. The word thēleiai ('females') rather than gynaikeis ('women') uses biological rather than social terminology, as does arsenes ('males') in verse 27.
- 27.** The verb exekauthēsan ('were inflamed, burned') denotes intense, consuming desire. The word aschēmosynēn ('shameless acts, indecency') is used in the Septuagint of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 for sexual prohibitions. The phrase antimisthian ('recompense, due penalty') suggests that the disordered desire is itself part of the judgment — the consequence is built into the act. Paul presents same-sex relations as symptomatic of the broader exchange of Creator for creature.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 18:22. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** The third 'God gave them over' (paredōken). Paul employs a wordplay: they did not edokimasan ('approve, consider worthy') to acknowledge God, so God gave them over to an adokimon ('unapproved, debased, failing the test') mind. The same root (dokimos, 'tested, approved') appears in both, creating an ironic correspondence between human rejection and divine response.
- 29.** The vice list follows Greco-Roman rhetorical convention but is grounded in Paul's theological argument: the debased mind (v. 28) produces debased behavior. The Greek contains a wordplay between phthonou ('envy') and phonou ('murder') — the words differ by one letter, suggesting that envy and violence are closely linked. The SBLGNT does not include porneia ('fornication') which appears in some manuscripts reflected in the KJV.
- 30.** The word theostygeis ('God-haters') can also be rendered 'hateful to God' (passive rather than active), but the active sense fits Paul's argument better — those who refuse to acknowledge God develop active hostility toward him. The list moves from social vices to spiritual rebellion to family breakdown, suggesting that the corruption permeates every sphere.
- 31.** The four alpha-privative adjectives (a- prefix negating each quality) create a staccato rhetorical effect: asyne-tous, asyn-the-tous, a-storgous, an-eleēmonas. Each describes the absence of a basic human quality. Asynthetous ('faithless, covenant-breaking') is particularly significant in a letter about covenant faithfulness. Astorgous ('without natural affection') denotes the absence of storge, the instinctive family love.

32. The climax of the argument: the deepest level of depravity is not merely doing evil but celebrating it in others. The word *dikaiōma* ('righteous decree, just requirement') shows that even in their rebellion, people retain knowledge of God's moral standard. Paul uses two different verbs for 'do' — *prassō* (habitual practice) and *poieō* (performing acts) — though the distinction may be stylistic rather than semantic here.

## 2

**Summary:** *Romans 2 turns the argument against the moral judge — the one who condemns the vices listed in chapter 1 while practicing the same things. Paul argues that God's judgment is impartial and based on deeds, not ethnic identity or possession of the law. He addresses the Jewish interlocutor directly, arguing that circumcision and Torah possession without obedience are worthless, while uncircumcised Gentiles who keep the law's requirements will condemn those who have the written code but violate it.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *Paul's rhetorical strategy is devastating: having described Gentile sinfulness in chapter 1, he now springs a trap on the Jewish reader who nodded along. The diatribe style — addressing an imaginary interlocutor — was a standard Stoic philosophical technique that Paul adapts for theological argument. The distinction between 'hearers of the law' and 'doers of the law' (v. 13) anticipates James 1:22-25. Paul's concept of the law 'written on hearts' (v. 15) echoes Jeremiah 31:33.*

**Translation Friction:** *The relationship between 2:6-11 (judgment by works) and 3:20-28 (justification by faith apart from works) is one of the most debated tensions in Pauline theology. We render both passages faithfully without harmonizing. The identity of the Gentiles who 'do by nature the things of the law' (v. 14) is disputed — they may be moral pagans, Gentile Christians, or a hypothetical case.*

**Connections:** *The 'day of wrath' (v. 5) connects to the Old Testament Day of the LORD tradition (Amos 5:18; Zephaniah 1:15). The law written on hearts (v. 15) echoes Jeremiah 31:33. Paul's argument about true circumcision (vv. 28-29) develops Deuteronomy 30:6 and Jeremiah 4:4. The impartiality of God (v. 11) reflects Deuteronomy 10:17.*

<sup>1</sup>Therefore you have no excuse, every one of you who passes judgment. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you who judge practice the very same things. <sup>2</sup>We know that God's judgment against those who practice such things is based on truth. <sup>3</sup>Do you suppose, you who judge those who practice such things yet do them yourself, that you will escape God's judgment? <sup>4</sup>Or do you despise the riches of his kindness, restraint, and patience, not recognizing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? <sup>5</sup>But because of your hard and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed, <sup>6</sup>He will repay each person according to their works: <sup>7</sup>To those who persist in doing good and seek glory, honor, and immortality, he will give eternal life. <sup>8</sup>However, to them that are argumentative, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,. <sup>9</sup>There will be affliction and distress for every human being who does evil — the Jew first and also the Greek, <sup>10</sup>However, splendor, honour, and wholeness, to every person that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:. <sup>11</sup>For God shows no partiality. <sup>12</sup>For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. <sup>13</sup>For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. <sup>14</sup>For when Gentiles who do not have the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law, <sup>15</sup>They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even defend them, <sup>16</sup>In the day when God will pass judgment on the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. <sup>17</sup>But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God, <sup>18</sup>You know his will. Because you have been taught from the law, you can recognize what really matters. <sup>19</sup>You are convinced that you are a guide for the blind and a light for those in darkness, <sup>20</sup>An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the what is genuine in the instruction of Moses. <sup>21</sup>You as a result which teachest another, teachest you not thyself? you that preachest a man should not steal, dost you steal? <sup>22</sup>You who say not to commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? <sup>23</sup>You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? <sup>24</sup>For "the name of God is blasphemed among the nations because of you," as it is written. <sup>25</sup>Circumcision

has value if you practice the law, but if you are a law-breaker, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. <sup>26</sup>So if an uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? <sup>27</sup>Then the one who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. <sup>28</sup>For a person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision something outward in the flesh. <sup>29</sup>Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise comes not from people but from God.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The word *anapologētos* ('without excuse, without defense') deliberately echoes 1:20, where it described pagan idolaters. Now the same verdict falls on the moral judge. Paul springs his rhetorical trap — the reader who agreed with chapter 1's condemnation now stands self-condemned. The shift to second person singular ('you') marks the transition to diatribe style.
2. The phrase *kata alētheian* ('according to truth') means God judges based on reality, not appearances — a principle that will undermine any claim to exemption based on external privilege. The first-person plural 'we know' (*oidamen*) appeals to common ground between Paul and his audience.
3. The verb *logizē* ('do you reckon, suppose, calculate') is a key Pauline term that will reappear throughout Romans in contexts of reckoning righteousness (4:3-6). Here it exposes faulty moral calculation — the judge imagines himself exempt from the standard he applies to others.
4. Three attributes of God are listed: *chrēstotētōs* ('kindness, goodness'), *anochēs* ('restraint, forbearance, holding back'), and *makrothymias* ('patience, long-suffering'). Together they describe God's generous delay of judgment — which the self-righteous person mistakes for approval. The word *metanoian* ('repentance') corresponds to the Hebrew *teshuvah* — a turning back, a fundamental reorientation.
5. The verb *thēsaurizeis* ('you are storing up, treasuring') creates a bitter irony — instead of treasuring up goodness, the impenitent person stockpiles wrath. The compound *dikaiokrisia* ('righteous judgment') appears only here in the New Testament, combining *dikaioi* ('righteous') with *krisis* ('judgment'). The 'day of wrath' draws on the Old Testament *yom YHWH* tradition.
6. Paul quotes Psalm 62:12 (LXX 61:13) and Proverbs 24:12. The principle of judgment according to works appears throughout Scripture and is affirmed by Jesus (Matthew 16:27). This does not contradict justification by faith — Paul is establishing the standard of divine judgment to which all are accountable, preparing the ground for the gospel's solution in chapter 3.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 62:12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Proverbs 24:12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The word *hypomonēn* ('perseverance, patient endurance') denotes sustained, tested faithfulness rather than a single act. The triad of *doxa* ('glory'), *timē* ('honor'), and *aphtharsia* ('immortality, imperishability') describes the eschatological reward. The phrase *zōēn aiōnion* ('eternal life') corresponds to the Hebrew concept of *olam* — life of the age to come.
8. The word *eritheias* ('selfish ambition, self-seeking') originally referred to work done for hire and came to mean partisan, self-interested behavior. The contrast between obeying truth and obeying unrighteousness personifies both as competing masters demanding allegiance.
9. The word pair *thlipsis* ('affliction, tribulation') and *stenochōria* ('distress, anguish' — literally 'narrow space') describes the crushing consequences of judgment. The phrase 'the Jew first' now applies to judgment, not just salvation (cf. 1:16) — priority in receiving God's revelation means priority in accountability.
10. The triad now shifts: 'immortality' (v. 7) is replaced by *eirēnē* ('peace'), corresponding to the Hebrew *shalom* — wholeness, well-being, and restored relationship with God. The parallel structure of verses 9-10 reinforces the impartiality principle: the same standard applies to both Jew and Greek.
11. The word *prosōpolēmpsia* ('partiality' — literally 'receiving the face') is a Septuagint coinage translating the Hebrew *nasa panim* ('to lift the face'), which meant to show favoritism. This principle, grounded in Deuteronomy 10:17, is the theological foundation for Paul's argument: if God is impartial, then ethnic identity alone cannot secure acquittal.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 10:17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. Paul distinguishes two groups: those *anomōs* ('without law' — Gentiles who lack Torah) and those *en nomō* ('in/under the law' — Jews who possess Torah). Neither group's relationship to Torah determines the outcome; both are judged by the same God. The verb *apolountai* ('will perish') describes eschatological destruction, while *krithēsontai* ('will be judged') implies a judicial process.
13. The distinction between *akroatai* ('hearers') and *poiētai* ('doers') anticipates James 1:22-25. In the synagogue, the Torah was read aloud, making 'hearing the law' a concrete weekly experience. Paul's point is that hearing without doing confers no advantage. The future tense *dikaiōthēsontai* ('will be justified') points to the final judgment.

14. The identity of these Gentiles is debated: they may be (1) moral pagans who instinctively follow some moral law, (2) Gentile Christians in whom the Spirit produces obedience, or (3) a hypothetical case illustrating a principle. The phrase *physei* ('by nature') complicates each reading differently. We render the Greek without resolving the ambiguity. The phrase 'a law to themselves' (*heautois eisin nomos*) does not mean 'lawless' but 'their own law' — they demonstrate the law's demands through their conduct.
15. The phrase 'the work of the law written on their hearts' echoes Jeremiah 31:33, though Paul uses *ergon* ('work,' singular) rather than *nomos* ('law'). This may mean the law's requirement or the deed the law demands. The word *syneidēsis* ('conscience') was a Stoic philosophical concept that Paul adopts — an internal witness that evaluates moral conduct. The imagery of internal accusation and defense anticipates the courtroom scene of the final judgment.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 31:33 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The phrase *ta krypta tōn anthrōpōn* ('the secrets of people') indicates that final judgment penetrates beyond external behavior to internal reality — the hidden thoughts and motives. The phrase *kata to euangelion mou* ('according to my gospel') is striking: Paul's gospel includes the message of coming judgment, not only the offer of grace. Christ is presented as the agent of divine judgment.
17. Paul now addresses the Jewish interlocutor directly. The SBLGNT reads *ei de* ('but if') rather than *ide* ('behold') found in some manuscripts and the KJV. The verb *epanapaue* ('rest upon, rely on') suggests confidence in Torah possession as a source of security. The verb *kauchaomai* ('boast') is key in Romans — Paul will argue that boasting is excluded by the gospel (3:27) and redirected toward God (5:2, 11).
18. The verb *dokimazeis* ('approve, test, discern') means to evaluate and recognize genuine value. The word *katēchoumenos* ('being instructed, catechized') gives us the English 'catechism.' Paul acknowledges real advantages of Torah education — knowledge of God's will and moral discernment — but these become liabilities when not matched by practice.
19. The self-descriptions in verses 19-20 draw on Israel's vocation as 'a light to the nations' (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6). The irony builds: each claim is legitimate as a calling but presumptuous as a boast when the claimant fails to live up to it.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 42:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The word *morphōsin* ('embodiment, outward form, formulation') can mean either 'the true form' or 'mere outward form.' In this context, Paul likely means the Torah genuinely embodies knowledge and truth — the problem is not with the law but with those who possess it without obeying it. The word *nēpiōn* ('infants, immature ones') describes Gentiles from the perspective of Jewish self-understanding.
21. The series of rhetorical questions (vv. 21-23) mirrors the style of Hellenistic moral philosophers who exposed hypocrisy. The shift from conditional clauses (vv. 17-20) to pointed questions increases the pressure on the interlocutor. Paul's charges may be general or may reflect specific accusations known to him about the Roman Jewish community.
22. The verb *hierosyleis* ('rob temples, commit sacrilege') is specific: it may refer to Jews profiting from the sale of confiscated pagan temple goods, or more broadly to any compromise with the idolatrous economic system. The charge of temple robbery appears in Acts 19:37. The irony is sharp — those who claim to abhor idolatry may still profit from idolatrous systems.
23. The verb *atimazeis* ('dishonor') reverses the intended effect of Torah observance. The law was meant to bring honor to God among the nations; its violation by those who claim it produces the opposite — the desecration of God's name, as the following quotation confirms.
24. Paul quotes Isaiah 52:5 (LXX), though the original context refers to the nations blaspheming God because of Israel's suffering in exile, not because of Israel's sin. Paul applies it to the present situation where Jewish moral failure gives Gentiles reason to disrespect the God of Israel — a different but related form of desecration of the divine name (*chilul hashem*).
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 52:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. Paul does not dismiss circumcision (he will affirm its value in 3:1-2) but relativizes it. The shocking claim is that covenant identity can be functionally reversed by disobedience: a circumcised law-breaker becomes, in God's reckoning, as if uncircumcised. This would be deeply provocative to any Jewish audience.
26. The verb *logisthēsetai* ('will be regarded, reckoned') is the same verb Paul will use for Abraham being 'reckoned righteous' (4:3). God's reckoning overrides external markers. The word *dikaiōmata* ('righteous requirements, ordinances') refers to the law's just demands.
27. The phrase *ek physeōs* ('by nature, physically') contrasts with the spiritual reality Paul will describe in verses 28-29. The word *grammatos* ('letter, written code') refers to the written Torah and introduces the letter-Spirit contrast Paul will develop further in 2 Corinthians 3:6 and Romans 7:6.
28. Paul redefines Jewish identity in terms of inner reality rather than external markers. The phrase *en tō phanerō* ('in the open, outwardly, visibly') contrasts with *en tō kryptō* ('in secret, inwardly') in verse 29. This is not a rejection of Jewish identity but a deepening of it — Paul argues for what authentic covenant membership means.
29. The phrase *peritomē kardias* ('circumcision of the heart') draws on Deuteronomy 10:16 and 30:6, where Moses calls Israel to circumcise their hearts. Paul identifies the Spirit (*pneumati*) as the agent of this inner transformation, contrasting it with *grammati* ('the written code'). The word *epainos* ('praise') contains a wordplay: the name 'Judah' (*Yehudah*) derives from the Hebrew root meaning 'praise' (Genesis 29:35). A true 'Judah' — a true praiser — receives praise from God, not from human recognition.

29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 10:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 29:35. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

### 3

**Summary:** *Romans 3 begins by addressing the implied objection: if inner reality matters more than external markers, what advantage does the Jew have? Paul affirms Israel's advantage — they were entrusted with God's oracles — but insists that Jewish unfaithfulness does not nullify God's faithfulness. He then marshals a chain of Old Testament quotations to prove that all people, Jew and Gentile alike, are under sin. The chapter climaxes in 3:21-26, where Paul declares that God's righteousness has now been revealed apart from the law — through faith in Jesus Christ, for all who believe. God put Christ forward as a propitiation, demonstrating his righteousness by passing over former sins, so that he is both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *Verses 21-26 are widely regarded as the theological center of Romans and one of the densest passages in the entire New Testament. Nearly every word carries heavy theological freight. The word hilastērion (v. 25) is the same word used in the Septuagint for the kapporet — the mercy seat atop the Ark of the Covenant where atonement was made on Yom Kippur. Paul presents Christ as the ultimate mercy seat, the place where God's wrath and mercy meet. The argument that 'all have sinned' (v. 23) is the universal premise that makes the universal offer of grace coherent.*

**Translation Friction:** *The phrase pistis Iēsou Christou (v. 22) can be translated as 'faith in Jesus Christ' (objective genitive) or 'the faithfulness of Jesus Christ' (subjective genitive). Both readings have strong scholarly support. We render the objective genitive ('faith in Jesus Christ') as the more traditional reading while noting the alternative. The word hilastērion (v. 25) is rendered 'propitiation' rather than 'expiation' — propitiation (turning away wrath) better captures the context, where God's wrath (1:18) demands resolution.*

**Connections:** *The Old Testament catena in vv. 10-18 draws from Psalms 14, 5, 140, 10, Isaiah 59, and Psalm 36. The hilastērion of v. 25 connects to Leviticus 16 (Day of Atonement), Exodus 25:17-22 (mercy seat), and Hebrews 9:5. The principle 'no one is righteous' (v. 10) echoes Ecclesiastes 7:20. Paul's argument about boasting (v. 27) will be developed through the Abraham narrative in chapter 4.*

1Then what advantage does the Jew have? Or what is the value of circumcision? 2Much in every way. First of all, they were entrusted with the oracles of God. 3What then? If some were unfaithful, will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? 4 Absolutely not! Let God be true and every person a liar, as it is written: "So that you may be justified in your words and prevail when you are judged." 5But if our unrighteousness serves to demonstrate God's righteousness, what should we say? That God is unjust in inflicting wrath? (I speak in human terms.) 6Absolutely not! For then how would God judge the world? 7But if God's truth is magnified through my falsehood to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? 8And why not say — as we are slanderously charged and as some claim we say — "Let us do evil so that good may come"? Their condemnation is deserved. 9What then? Are we any better off? Not at all. For we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin, 10As it is recorded, There is none upright, no, not one:. 11There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh following God. 12All have turned aside; together they have become worthless. There is no one who does good, not even one." 13"Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of vipers is under their lips." 14"Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." 15Indeed, their feet are swift to shed blood:. 16Indeed, destruction and misery are in their ways:. 17Indeed, the way of peace have they not known:. 18There is no fear of God prior to their eyes. 19No w we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. 21But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed, as attested by the Law and the Prophets — 22Even the righteousness of God which is by way of faith of Jesus Christ to all and upon all them that trust — for there is no difference:. 23for everyone has sinned and fallen short of God's glory. 24Being

justified freely by his grace by way of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup>God presented him as the atoning sacrifice through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his patience he had left earlier sins unpunished. <sup>26</sup>It was to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. <sup>27</sup>Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. <sup>28</sup>For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works of the law. <sup>29</sup>Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, <sup>30</sup>Seeing it is one God, which will justify the circumcision by way of faith, and uncircumcision by way of faith. <sup>31</sup>Do we then overthrow the law through faith? Absolutely not! Rather, we uphold the law.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The diatribe continues with the interlocutor's implied objection: if circumcision can become uncircumcision (2:25), why be Jewish at all? Paul takes this objection seriously rather than dismissing it — his answer affirms real advantage while denying automatic immunity from judgment.
2. Paul says *prōton* ('first'), suggesting a list, but never returns to give a second or third point — he is sidetracked by the implications of his first point. The word *logia* ('oracles, sayings') refers to the Scriptures, particularly God's covenant promises to Israel. The passive *epistēthēsan* ('were entrusted') emphasizes both privilege and responsibility.
3. The wordplay on *pistis* is central: *ēpistēsan* ('were unfaithful/unbelieving'), *apistia* ('unfaithfulness'), and *pistin tou theou* ('faithfulness of God') all share the same root. 'Some' (*tines*) is an understatement — Paul is diplomatic. The verb *katargēsei* ('nullify, render ineffective') is a strong word Paul uses frequently for the cancellation of a power or reality.
4. The exclamation *mē genoito* ('may it never be!') is Paul's strongest negation, used ten times in Romans. We render it 'absolutely not' rather than the KJV's 'God forbid,' which imports God's name where the Greek does not. Paul quotes Psalm 51:4 (LXX 50:6), where David acknowledges God's righteousness in judging. The application is that God's faithfulness stands regardless of human failure — when the two are weighed, God is always vindicated.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 51:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The verb *synistēsīn* ('demonstrates, commends, establishes') suggests that human sin inadvertently showcases God's righteousness by contrast. The parenthetical *kata anthrōpon legō* ('I speak according to a human perspective') is Paul's disclaimer that this objection represents flawed human reasoning, not his own theology.
6. Paul's *reductio ad absurdum*: if God cannot punish sin that highlights his righteousness, then God cannot judge anyone, since all sin ultimately serves to display divine attributes. But God's role as world-judge is non-negotiable in Jewish theology (Genesis 18:25).
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 18:25. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The first-person singular shifts from the corporate 'our' (v. 5) to the individual 'my' — Paul voices the objection from the sinner's own perspective. The verb *eperisseusen* ('abounded, overflowed') anticipates the 'where sin increased, grace overflowed' language of 5:20.
8. Paul reveals that opponents have caricatured his gospel of grace as moral license — an accusation he takes up again in 6:1 and 6:15. The phrase *hōn to krima endikon estin* ('their condemnation is just') delivers a sharp verdict on those who distort the gospel into antinomianism. Paul does not argue the point here but dismisses it with a judicial pronouncement.
9. The verb *proechometha* is debated — it can mean 'are we better?' (middle) or 'are we at a disadvantage?' (passive). The context favors 'are we better?' with the answer 'not at all.' The phrase *hyph' hamartian* ('under sin') presents sin as a ruling power, not just a collection of misdeeds — a personification Paul develops in chapters 5-7. This is the thesis that the following Scripture chain will support.
10. Paul begins a *catena* (chain) of Old Testament quotations, primarily from the Psalms, to establish universal human sinfulness. This verse echoes Psalm 14:1-3 (LXX 13:1-3) and Ecclesiastes 7:20. The emphatic double negative (*ouk...oude heis*) leaves no exceptions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 14:1-3 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ecclesiastes 7:20 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. Continuing from Psalm 14:2. The two deficiencies — understanding and seeking — correspond to the intellectual and volitional dimensions of the human failure described in 1:21-23. The claim is not that people never have religious impulses but that no one naturally and consistently pursues the true God.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 14:1-3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

- 12.** The conclusion of the Psalm 14 quotation. The verb *exeklinan* ('turned aside, deviated') uses a road metaphor — humanity has left the right path. The verb *ēchreōthēsan* ('became worthless, became useless') means to become sour or rancid, like spoiled milk — a vivid image of moral corruption.
- 12.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 14:1-3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 13.** Paul draws from Psalm 5:9 (LXX 5:10) and Psalm 140:3 (LXX 139:3). The anatomy of sin moves from throat to tongue to lips — speech organs become instruments of death. The 'open grave' metaphor suggests speech that brings death and corruption. The progression creates a portrait of verbal violence.
- 13.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 5:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 13.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 140:3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 14.** From Psalm 10:7 (LXX 9:28). The word *aras* ('cursing') and *pikrias* ('bitterness') complete the anatomy of sinful speech — from the throat (v. 13a) through the tongue (v. 13b) and lips (v. 13c) to the mouth (v. 14).
- 14.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 10:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 15.** From Isaiah 59:7. The quotation shifts from organs of speech to feet — from verbal violence to physical violence. The adjective *oxeis* ('swift, quick, sharp') suggests eagerness for bloodshed.
- 15.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 59:7-8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 16.** Continuing Isaiah 59:7. The nouns *syntrimma* ('destruction, ruin, crushing') and *talaipōria* ('wretchedness, misery') describe the devastation that sinful humanity leaves in its wake.
- 16.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 59:7-8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 17.** From Isaiah 59:8. The word *eirēnēs* ('peace') corresponds to the Hebrew *shalom* — the wholeness and well-being that humanity was created for but has abandoned. The path they follow produces the opposite of *shalom*.
- 17.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 59:7-8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 18.** From Psalm 36:1 (LXX 35:2). This final quotation names the root cause: the absence of reverent awe before God. In the wisdom tradition, 'the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom' (Proverbs 9:10). Without this fear, the moral collapse described in the preceding quotations is inevitable.
- 18.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 36:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 18.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Proverbs 9:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 19.** Paul draws a crucial inference: the Old Testament quotations (vv. 10-18) address Jews first ('those under the law'), so Jews cannot claim exemption from the universal indictment. The result is universal: 'every mouth silenced' — no defense can be offered. The adjective *hypodikos* ('accountable, liable to judgment') is a legal term meaning 'under judicial sentence.'
- 20.** Paul echoes Psalm 143:2 (LXX 142:2). The phrase *ex ergōn nomou* ('by works of the law') has been debated: does it mean 'by doing what the law commands' or 'by the identity markers (circumcision, food laws, Sabbath) that define the Jewish community'? Both dimensions are likely in view. The word *sarx* ('flesh') here means 'human being' — no mortal creature can achieve right standing through law-keeping. The law's function is diagnostic, not curative: it identifies sin but cannot heal it.
- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 143:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 21.** The adverb *nyini* ('but now') is both temporal (the Christ-event has happened) and logical (the argument has reached its resolution). The perfect tense *pephanerōtai* ('has been revealed and remains revealed') emphasizes the permanence of this disclosure. The phrase *chōris nomou* ('apart from the law') qualifies the means, not the content: the righteousness is consistent with the law but does not come through law-keeping.
- 22.** The phrase *dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou* ('through faith in/of Jesus Christ') is the center of the 'pistis Christou' debate. The objective genitive reading ('faith in Jesus Christ') makes human faith the instrument by which righteousness is received. The subjective genitive reading ('the faithfulness of Jesus Christ') makes Christ's own fidelity the ground. Both are theologically valid; we render the traditional objective genitive. The phrase *ou gar estin diastolē* ('there is no distinction') eliminates any Jew-Gentile differential in access to salvation.
- 23.** The aorist *hēmarton* ('sinned') views humanity's sin as a historical fact, while the present tense *hysterountai* ('fall short, lack') describes an ongoing condition. The phrase 'glory of God' (*doxēs tou theou*) refers to the divine image and splendor humanity was created to reflect (cf. 1:23 and 8:29-30) — sin has caused humanity to lose its designed glory. The prefix *hystero-* suggests falling behind, being left wanting.

24. Three metaphors converge: legal (*dikaoumenoi*, 'being justified' — declared righteous in court), commercial (*dōrean*, 'freely, as a gift' — without payment), and redemptive (*apolytrōseōs*, 'redemption' — liberation by payment of a ransom). The word *apolytrōsis* originally described the purchase of a slave's freedom and echoes the Hebrew *ga'al* (kinsman-redemption) tradition.
25. The verb *proetheto* ('put forward, set forth publicly') indicates a deliberate, public divine act — not something hidden but something God displayed openly. The word *hilastērion* can be translated 'propitiation' (turning away wrath), 'expiation' (cleansing sin), or 'mercy seat' (the place of atonement). We render 'propitiation' because the context of divine wrath (1:18) demands resolution, but the mercy seat allusion is noted in the expanded rendering.
25. The phrase *dia pisteōs* ('through faith') specifies how the propitiation is received by the individual. The phrase *en tō autou haimati* ('by his blood') specifies the means of the atoning act — the death of Christ. The word *paresin* ('passing over') differs from *aphesis* ('forgiveness') — it means a temporary passing by, not permanent cancellation, suggesting that God's forbearance in the old covenant awaited the cross for final resolution.
26. The phrase *dikaion kai dikaionta* ('just and the justifier') is the theological climax of the passage. The same root (*dik-*) appears in both words, underscoring that God's justifying act is itself an expression of his justice, not a contradiction of it. The phrase *en tō nyn kairō* ('at the present time') contrasts with the past era of forbearance — the cross is the moment when God's righteousness is definitively displayed.
27. The word *kauchēsis* ('boasting') returns from 2:17, 23. If justification is by grace through faith, no one can claim credit. Paul uses *nomos* ('law') in an unusual sense here — 'principle' or 'system' rather than the Mosaic Torah. The 'law of faith' is the principle that right standing before God comes through trust, not achievement.
28. The verb *logizometha* ('we reckon, hold, conclude') is a deliberate summary statement. This verse became the watchword of the Protestant Reformation. Luther famously added 'alone' (*allein*) after 'faith' in his German translation — the word is not in the Greek but captures Paul's intent in this context. The phrase *chōris ergōn nomou* ('apart from works of the law') does not mean faith is opposed to obedience but that the ground of justification is trust in Christ, not law-keeping performance.
29. Paul's argument now appeals to monotheism: if there is one God (the fundamental Jewish confession, the *Shema*), then he must be God of all peoples, not Jews exclusively. The theological ground for Gentile inclusion is not a new revelation but the oldest confession in Israel's faith.
30. Paul varies the prepositions — *ek pisteōs* ('from/by faith') for the circumcised and *dia tēs pisteōs* ('through faith') for the uncircumcised — but the variation is likely stylistic rather than theologically significant. Both groups are justified by the same faith. The one God has one means of justification for all.
31. The verb *katargoumen* ('abolish, overthrow, nullify') is the same word from verse 3. Paul anticipates the charge that justification by faith makes the law irrelevant. His emphatic denial (*mē genoito*) is followed by the claim that faith actually 'establishes' (*histanomen*, 'causes to stand') the law. How faith upholds the law is not explained here but is developed through the Abraham argument in chapter 4 and the Spirit's work in chapter 8.

## 4

**Summary:** *Romans 4 presents Abraham as the paradigmatic case of justification by faith. Paul argues from Genesis 15:6 that Abraham was reckoned righteous through faith, not works — and that this reckoning occurred before circumcision (Genesis 17), making Abraham the father of both believing Gentiles and believing Jews. David is cited as a second witness to the blessedness of being reckoned righteous apart from works. Paul concludes by showing that Abraham's faith — trusting God to bring life from the deadness of his body and Sarah's womb — is the prototype of Christian faith in the God who raised Jesus from the dead.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *Paul's exegesis of Genesis 15:6 is one of the most influential readings of any Old Testament text in Christian history. The entire argument hinges on the Greek verb *logizomai* ('to reckon, credit') — used eleven times in this chapter. The chronological argument (vv. 9-12) is precise: Genesis 15 (faith reckoned as righteousness) precedes Genesis 17 (circumcision) by at least fourteen years, proving that Abraham's right standing predated and was independent of circumcision. The chapter redefines who Abraham's true children are.*

**Translation Friction:** *The relationship between Paul's reading of Abraham and James 2:21-24 (which argues Abraham was justified by works) has been debated since the Reformation. Paul and James use 'justify' in different senses and address different situations. We render Paul's Greek faithfully without harmonizing with James. The phrase 'apart from works' must be understood in Paul's specific argumentative context — he is not denying that genuine faith produces obedience (cf. 1:5, 'obedience of faith').*

*Connections: Genesis 15:6 is the foundational text, also cited in Galatians 3:6 and James 2:23. The David quotation comes from Psalm 32:1-2. The promise to Abraham (v. 13) draws on Genesis 12:1-3 and 17:4-5. Abraham's faith in the life-giving God (v. 17) connects to 2 Corinthians 1:9 and Hebrews 11:17-19. The resurrection formula in verse 25 echoes Isaiah 53:4-5, 12.*

<sup>1</sup>What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, found? <sup>2</sup>For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about — but not before God. <sup>3</sup>For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." <sup>4</sup>Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. <sup>5</sup>But to the one who does not work but trusts in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness. <sup>6</sup>Just as David also speaks of the blessedness of the person to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: <sup>7</sup>"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; <sup>8</sup>Pronounced a blessing on is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. <sup>9</sup>Is this blessedness then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say, "Faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness." <sup>10</sup>How then was it credited — when he was circumcised or uncircumcised? It was not after but before he was circumcised. <sup>11</sup>He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be credited to them as well, <sup>12</sup>The Parent of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision sole, but who as well conduct your lives in the steps of that trust of our Parent Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. <sup>13</sup>For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup>For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is emptied and the promise is nullified. <sup>15</sup>For the law produces wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. <sup>16</sup>That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring — not only to those who are of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, <sup>17</sup>Indeed, as it is written, I have made you a Father of numerous nations,) prior to him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. <sup>18</sup>Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed that he would become the father of many nations, just as it had been spoken to him: "So shall your offspring be." <sup>19</sup>Without weakening in his faith, he considered his own body, which was as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb. <sup>20</sup>Yet he did not waver in unbelief regarding God's promise but was strengthened in his faith, giving glory to God, <sup>21</sup>Being fully persuaded that, what he had sworn, he was able also to perform. <sup>22</sup>That is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." <sup>23</sup>Now the words "it was credited to him" were not written for Abraham's sake alone, <sup>24</sup>However, for us also, to whom it will be imputed, if we trust in on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; <sup>25</sup>Who was handed over for our wrongdoings, and was brought back again for our justification.

#### TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *kata sarka* ('according to the flesh') most likely modifies 'forefather' — Abraham is the physical ancestor of the Jewish people. Some scholars attach it to 'found' — what did Abraham discover by human effort? The former reading is more natural syntactically. Paul begins with Abraham because he is the foundational figure of Jewish identity and the recipient of the covenant promises.
2. Paul concedes the hypothetical: if justification were by works, boasting would be warranted. The critical qualifier is 'not before God' — human achievement may impress humans, but no one can stand before God on the basis of personal merit. The word *kauchēma* ('ground for boasting') differs from *kauchēsis* ('act of boasting') in 3:27.
3. Paul quotes Genesis 15:6 (LXX), the theological foundation of the entire chapter. The verb *episteusen* ('believed, trusted') is the aorist of *pisteuō* — Abraham placed his trust in God's promise. The verb *elogisthē* ('was credited, reckoned') is the key term: righteousness was not earned but counted to Abraham's account by God's sovereign decision. The same quotation appears in Galatians 3:6 and James 2:23.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 15:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Paul uses an employment analogy: a worker's pay (*misthos*) is not a gift but a debt the employer owes. If justification were earned, God would be obligated to pay — but grace, by definition, is unearned. The contrast between *charin* ('grace, gift') and *opheilēma* ('debt, obligation') is absolute.

5. The phrase *ton dikaionta ton asebe* ('the one who justifies the ungodly') is shocking by Old Testament standards. Proverbs 17:15 declares 'he who justifies the wicked is an abomination to the LORD.' Yet Paul claims this is exactly what God does — he declares righteous those who are not righteous in themselves. The paradox is resolved by the *hilotērion* of 3:25: God can justify the ungodly because the penalty has been paid.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Proverbs 17:15 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Paul introduces a second witness (David) following the legal principle of two witnesses. The word *makarismōn* ('blessedness, pronouncement of blessing') is a declaration of well-being, not a description of emotion. David, like Abraham, received God's grace despite — and in the midst of — serious sin.
7. Paul quotes Psalm 32:1-2 (LXX 31:1-2), traditionally attributed to David after his sin with Bathsheba. The two parallel lines use different vocabulary: *anomia* ('lawless deeds') and *hamartiai* ('sins') are forgiven and covered respectively. The verb *epekalyphthēsan* ('were covered') echoes the Hebrew *kippur* ('to cover, atone') — the very language of atonement.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 32:1-2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The double negative *ou mē* with the subjunctive *logisētai* creates the strongest possible denial: the Lord will absolutely never reckon sin to this person's account. The same verb *logizomai* now describes what God does not do — he refuses to enter sin into the ledger. Justification is not only the crediting of righteousness but the non-crediting of sin.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 32:1-2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. Paul now poses the decisive question that will determine whether Abraham is the father of Jews only or of all believers. The argument hinges on chronology: when was faith credited as righteousness?
10. The chronological argument is simple but devastating: Genesis 15:6 (the crediting of righteousness) precedes Genesis 17 (the institution of circumcision) by at least fourteen years in the biblical narrative. Abraham was justified while still technically a Gentile. This means circumcision was not the basis of his right standing.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 15:6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 17 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. Paul redefines circumcision: it is a *sēmeion* ('sign') and *sphragida* ('seal') — a confirmation of a righteousness already received, not the means of obtaining it. Like a seal on a completed document, circumcision authenticated what faith had already accomplished. The word 'father' (*patēr*) establishes Abraham's spiritual paternity of Gentile believers.
12. The verb *stoichousin* ('walk in line, follow in step') is a military metaphor — walking in formation, following the same path. Jewish believers must follow Abraham's faith-path, not merely bear his physical mark. Abraham is father of believing Gentiles (v. 11) and of believing Jews (v. 12), but not of unbelieving Jews — a radical redefinition of Abrahamic lineage.
13. The phrase *klēronomon kosmon* ('heir of the world') goes beyond the specific land promise of Genesis 12-15. Jewish tradition had already expanded Abraham's inheritance to cosmic scope (cf. Sirach 44:21). Paul sees this as fulfilled in the gospel's universal reach. The word *spermati* ('seed, offspring') is collective, pointing to all Abraham's descendants — both physical and spiritual.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 12-15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The verbs *kekenōtai* ('has been emptied, voided') and *katērgētai* ('has been nullified') describe devastating consequences: if law-keeping is the condition of inheritance, then faith becomes meaningless and the promise is cancelled. Paul argues that law and promise are different modes of God's relating to his people — promise is unconditional and prior.
15. Paul identifies the law's actual function: not to save but to define and expose sin, thereby activating wrath. The word *parabasis* ('transgression, violation') differs from *hamartia* ('sin') — *parabasis* is specifically the conscious violation of a known commandment. Sin existed before the law (5:13), but transgression (conscious law-breaking) requires a law to break.
16. Paul links faith, grace, and the certainty of the promise in a logical chain: because it is by faith, it is by grace; because it is by grace, it is guaranteed (*bebaian*, 'firm, secure, reliable'). If the promise depended on human performance, it would be uncertain. The phrase 'father of us all' includes Paul's Gentile readers in Abraham's family.
17. Paul quotes Genesis 17:5. The verb *tethika* ('I have made/appointed') is a perfect tense — God's declaration makes it an accomplished fact even before the physical fulfillment. The two divine attributes — 'giving life to the dead' and 'calling into existence what does not exist' — describe creation *ex nihilo* and resurrection. These are the powers Abraham trusted and the powers that raised Jesus (v. 24).
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 17:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

- 18.** The paradox *par' elpida ep' elpidi* ('against hope, in hope') captures the nature of faith: the circumstances offered no ground for hope (humanly speaking), yet Abraham chose to hope based on God's word. The quotation is from Genesis 15:5, where God tells Abraham to count the stars — the very context of the Genesis 15:6 quotation.
- 18.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 15:5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 19.** Some manuscripts read *ou katenoēsen* ('he did not consider') while the SBLGNT reads *katenoēsen* without the negative — meaning Abraham did consider the obstacles but was not overcome by them. This is the harder and likely original reading: faith is not denial of reality but trust in God despite reality. The word *nenekrōmenon* ('made dead, deadened') uses the same root as *nekrous* ('dead') in verse 17, connecting Abraham's body to the God who raises the dead.
- 20.** The verb *diekrithē* ('wavered, doubted, was divided') literally means 'to be divided against oneself.' Abraham was not internally torn between faith and doubt. Instead, he was *enedunamōthē* ('was empowered, strengthened') — the passive suggests God strengthened his faith. The participle *dous doxan* ('giving glory') shows that faith and worship are inseparable: trusting God's promises is the highest form of glorifying him.
- 21.** The participle *plērophorētheis* ('being fully convinced, fully assured') means to be carried to full measure — Abraham's conviction was complete, not partial. The logic of faith is simple: God promised; God is able; therefore it will happen. The focus is on God's ability (*dynatos*), not Abraham's worthiness.
- 22.** Paul returns to Genesis 15:6, closing the circle of the argument. The conjunction *dio* ('therefore, for this reason') shows that the faith described in verses 18-21 is what Genesis 15:6 was talking about — trust in God's promise against all odds.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 15:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 23.** Paul explicitly states his hermeneutical principle: Old Testament narratives are not merely historical records but have ongoing relevance for later believers. Scripture was written 'for us' (v. 24). This does not mean the original context is irrelevant but that the pattern of faith established in Abraham is paradigmatic.
- 24.** The parallel between Abraham's faith and Christian faith is precise: Abraham believed in the God who gives life to the dead (v. 17); Christians believe in the God who raised Jesus from the dead. The object of faith is the same life-giving God; only the specific act differs. The title 'our Lord' (*ton kyrion hēmōn*) applies to the risen Jesus the Septuagint title for YHWH.
- 25.** This verse is likely a pre-Pauline creedal formula that Paul quotes. The verb *paredothē* ('was delivered up, handed over') echoes Isaiah 53:12 (LXX) and the same verb used of God 'giving over' in 1:24, 26, 28 — but now the direction is reversed. In chapter 1, God gave humanity over to sin; here, God gives his Son over for sinners. The word *dikaiōsin* ('justification') appears only here and in 5:18 in Paul's letters — it is the noun form of *dikaioō* ('to justify'). The preposition *dia* with the accusative can mean 'because of' or 'for the purpose of' — Christ was raised both because our justification was accomplished and in order to secure it.
- 25.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 53:12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

## 5

*Summary: Romans 5 opens with the results of justification: peace with God, access to grace, hope of glory, and the ability to rejoice even in suffering (vv. 1-11). God's love is poured into believers' hearts through the Holy Spirit, and Christ's death for the ungodly is the supreme proof of that love. The chapter then shifts to a sweeping Adam-Christ comparison (vv. 12-21): through one man sin and death entered the world; through one man grace and life overflow. Where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more.*

*What Makes This Remarkable: Verses 1-11 present the most comprehensive summary of the benefits of justification in the New Testament. The 'boasting in suffering' sequence (vv. 3-5) — suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, character produces hope — is not Stoic endurance but eschatological hope grounded in the Holy Spirit. The Adam-Christ typology (vv. 12-21) is Paul's most ambitious theological construction, treating the entire human race as represented by two figures. The rhetorical crescendo of 'much more' (*pollō mallon*, vv. 9, 10, 15, 17) drives the argument: if God did the harder thing (dying for enemies), how much more will he do the easier thing (saving those now reconciled).*

*Translation Friction: Verse 12 contains a famously difficult clause: eph' hō pantes hēmarton ('because all sinned'). This has been read as 'because all sinned [in Adam]' (Augustine), 'because all sinned [individually]' (Pelagius), or 'with the result that all sinned.' We render the causal sense ('because all sinned') while noting the ambiguity. The precise nature of Adam's headship over humanity — federal representation, biological inheritance, or archetypal pattern — is debated.*

*Connections: The peace and reconciliation themes (vv. 1, 10-11) connect to 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. The Adam-Christ typology is developed further in 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49. The Spirit's role in pouring out love (v. 5) anticipates Romans 8. The 'reign of grace through righteousness' (v. 21) prepares for the 'shall we sin that grace may abound?' question of 6:1.*

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>By whom as well we possess access by path of trust into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in confident expectation of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>Not only that, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup>Indeed, patience, experience. And experience, hope: <sup>5</sup>Indeed, hope makes not ashamed. Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us. <sup>6</sup>For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>For one would scarcely die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person someone might even dare to die. <sup>8</sup>But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup>How much more then, having now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath. <sup>10</sup>For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. <sup>11</sup>Not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. <sup>12</sup>Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned — <sup>13</sup>For until the instruction of Moses wrongdoing was in the world — but sin is not imputed when there is no law. <sup>14</sup>Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like Adam's transgression. Adam is a type of the one who was to come. <sup>15</sup>But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, how much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man, Jesus Christ, overflowed to the many. <sup>16</sup>And the gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. <sup>17</sup>For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all people, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all people. <sup>19</sup>For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. <sup>20</sup>Now the law came in alongside so that the trespass would increase. But where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more, <sup>21</sup>That as sin has reigned to death, even so might grace reign by way of righteousness to eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. A significant textual variant exists: some manuscripts read echomen ('we have,' indicative) while others read echōmen ('let us have,' subjunctive). The indicative is preferred (SBLGNT) because Paul is stating the result of justification, not issuing an exhortation. The whole section (vv. 1-11) describes what is true of the justified, not what they should pursue.
2. The word prosagōgēn ('access, introduction, approach') is a court term — the prosagōgeus was the official who introduced visitors to a king. Christ is the one who ushers believers into the royal presence of grace. The perfect tense hestēkamen ('we stand') indicates a settled, secure position. The verb kauchōmetha ('we boast, rejoice, exult') resumes the boasting theme from 2:17 and 3:27 — boasting is not eliminated but redirected from self to God's glory.
3. The shift from rejoicing in hope (v. 2) to rejoicing in suffering (v. 3) is deliberate and paradoxical. The Greek thlipsis ('tribulation, suffering, pressure') refers to the afflictions that accompany faith in the present age. Paul does not say suffering is good but that it produces something good. The verb katergazetai ('produces, works out, accomplishes') describes a process with an intended outcome.
4. The word dokimēn ('proven character, tested quality') describes metal that has passed through fire and been verified as genuine. The KJV's 'experience' misses this — the idea is character that has been tested and approved. The chain of progression (suffering endurance character hope) is not automatic but describes the Spirit-empowered process of maturation.

5. The verb *ekkechytai* ('has been poured out') is a perfect tense — the pouring happened and the love remains. The image is of abundant, overflowing love. This is the first mention of the Holy Spirit in Romans since 1:4, and it introduces the Spirit's crucial role that will dominate chapter 8. The phrase 'love of God' (*agapē tou theou*) is primarily God's love for us (subjective genitive), not our love for God, as the following verses (6-10) demonstrate.
6. The word *asthenōn* ('weak, powerless, helpless') describes humanity's inability to save itself. The phrase *kata kairon* ('at the right time, at the appointed time') echoes Galatians 4:4 ('when the fullness of time had come'). Paul uses three terms to describe those for whom Christ died: 'weak' (v. 6), 'sinners' (v. 8), and 'enemies' (v. 10) — an escalating description of unworthiness.
7. Paul distinguishes between *dikaioi* ('righteous' — one who meets obligations) and *agathos* ('good' — one who goes beyond obligations, who is generous and beneficent). Even for such people, voluntary death is rare. The word *tolma* ('dare') suggests that dying for another requires exceptional courage. The point of the comparison: what Christ did (dying for the ungodly) exceeds what anyone would do even for the best of people.
8. The verb *synistēsai* ('demonstrates, proves, shows') is present tense — God's love is not a past event but an ongoing demonstration. The cross is the permanent exhibit of divine love. The phrase *eti hamartōlōn ontōn hēmōn* ('while we were still sinners') is the crucial qualifier: God's love is not a response to human worthiness but an initiative toward the unworthy.
9. The first of the 'much more' (*pollō mallon*) arguments. The logic: if God did the costly thing (justifying enemies by Christ's blood), how much more will he do the less costly thing (preserving the already-justified from final wrath). The wrath' (*tēs orgēs*) with the definite article points to the eschatological day of wrath (2:5). Justification is past; salvation from wrath is future — a reminder that salvation has a 'not yet' dimension.
10. The word *echthroi* ('enemies') is the strongest of the three descriptions (weak, sinners, enemies). Reconciliation (*katallassō*) is a relational metaphor — the restoration of a broken relationship. The two-stage argument: reconciliation comes through Christ's death; ongoing salvation comes through his life (his resurrection life and continuing intercession, cf. 8:34). This 'much more' is the second in the series.
11. The section that began with peace (v. 1) ends with rejoicing. The word *katallagēn* ('reconciliation') is better than the KJV's 'atonement,' which in modern English suggests the means of reconciliation rather than the reconciled state itself. The verb *elabomen* ('we received') is aorist — reconciliation is a completed gift, already possessed.
12. This verse begins a sentence Paul never completes — the 'just as' (*hōsper*) expects a 'so also' that does not arrive until verse 18. The parenthetical material (vv. 13-17) interrupts the comparison. The phrase *eph' hō pantes hēmarton* is one of the most debated in the New Testament. The Latin Vulgate's 'in quo' ('in whom') led to the Augustinian doctrine of original sin — all sinned 'in Adam.' The Greek more naturally reads 'because' (*eph' hō* as a causal conjunction). We render the causal sense while acknowledging the complexity.
12. Sin is personified as an invading power that 'entered' (*eisēlthen*) the world. Death came 'through' (*dia*) sin — death is sin's consequence and agent. Paul traces the universal human condition to a historical origin in Adam.
13. Paul addresses a logical problem: if sin is transgression of a known law, how can sin exist before the law was given? His answer: sin was present but not formally 'counted' (*elogeitai*, an accounting term meaning 'charged to one's account'). The word *elogeitai* is related to *logizomai* from chapter 4 but emphasizes formal bookkeeping.
14. The verb *ebasileusen* ('reigned') personifies death as a king — a monarch whose rule extends over all humanity from Adam to Moses (the pre-law period). People died even though they had not sinned by violating a specific divine command as Adam had. The word *typos* ('type, pattern, figure') introduces typology: Adam foreshadows Christ. Paul will now show how the type and the antitype both correspond and differ.
15. Paul insists the analogy breaks down because the gift far exceeds the trespass. The third 'much more' (*pollō mallon*). The word *charisma* ('gift of grace, free gift') shares the root of *charis* ('grace'). The phrase *hoi polloi* ('the many') in Semitic idiom means 'the totality, the great number' — not 'many but not all.' The verb *eperisseusen* ('overflowed, abounded') means the gift doesn't merely match the damage but far surpasses it.
16. A second contrast: the judgment (*krima*) came from one sin (Adam's) and resulted in condemnation (*katakrima*); the gift (*charisma*) dealt with many trespasses and resulted in justification (*dikaiōma*, 'righteous verdict, acquittal'). The asymmetry is staggering: one sin condemnation for all; many sins justification for all who believe. Grace is not merely proportional to sin but exponentially exceeds it.
17. The fourth 'much more.' The stunning shift: in the Adam-regime, death reigned over people; in the Christ-regime, people reign over death. Believers are not merely rescued from death's kingdom but enthroned in life's kingdom. The phrase *perisseian tēs charitōs* ('abundance of grace') uses the language of overflow and excess. The gift is not just righteousness but the gift of righteousness — *dikaiōsynē* as something received, not achieved.
18. Paul finally completes the sentence begun in verse 12. The parallel is precise: one trespass (*paraptōmatos*) all people condemnation; one righteous act (*dikaiōmatos*) all people justification of life. The phrase *dikaiōsin zōēs* ('justification of life') ties justification to its result — not merely a legal verdict but life itself. The 'all people' (*pantas anthrōpous*) in the second half has been debated: universalists read it as universal salvation; most interpreters qualify it by the reception language of verse 17 ('those who receive').
19. The contrast between *parakoēs* ('disobedience' — literally 'hearing amiss') and *hypakoēs* ('obedience' — literally 'hearing under, heeding') connects to 1:5 ('obedience of faith'). Christ's obedience refers to his entire life of faithful submission to the Father's will, culminating in the cross (cf. Philippians 2:8). The verb *katestathēsan/katastathēsontai* ('were constituted, will be constituted') may mean 'made' or 'appointed to the category of.'
20. The verb *pareisēlthen* ('came in alongside, entered as a side-issue') is striking — the law is not the main storyline but a subsidiary element in the Adam-Christ drama. The purpose clause *hina pleonasē* ('so that the trespass would increase') is intentionally provocative: the law's purpose was not to reduce sin but to multiply it (by making sin conscious and deliberate, cf. 7:7-13). The verb *hypereperisseusen* ('super-abounded, overflowed exceedingly') is a double-compound superlative — Paul coins an extravagant word to express the extravagance of grace.

21. The chapter concludes with two personified monarchs: sin reigned through death (its instrument), and grace now reigns through righteousness (its instrument) leading to eternal life. The phrase *dia dikaiosynēs* ('through righteousness') is crucial — grace does not bypass righteousness but operates through it. God's grace and God's justice are not in competition. The chapter ends where every major section of Romans ends — with Jesus Christ our Lord.

## 6

*Summary: Romans 6 answers the objection provoked by 5:20-21: if grace increases where sin increases, should believers keep sinning to get more grace? Paul's emphatic answer is no — believers have died to sin through baptism into Christ's death and have been raised to walk in newness of life. The old self was crucified so that the body of sin would be rendered powerless. Believers are now dead to sin and alive to God. The chapter then addresses a second form of the question (v. 15): since believers are under grace, not law, can they sin freely? Again no — they have changed masters, from sin leading to death to obedience leading to righteousness. They are now slaves of righteousness.*

*What Makes This Remarkable: Paul's baptismal theology here is the most developed in his letters. Baptism is not merely a ritual of initiation but a participation in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. The 'old self' (palaios anthrōpos, v. 6) was co-crucified with Christ — a past, completed event. The slavery metaphor (vv. 15-23) is deliberately provocative: true freedom is not autonomy but willing submission to the right master. The chapter's logic is identity-based: believers do not avoid sin to become righteous; they avoid sin because they are righteous — their identity has changed.*

*Translation Friction: The relationship between the indicative ('you have died to sin') and the imperative ('do not let sin reign') is central to Pauline ethics and has been variously interpreted. We render both as Paul states them without resolving the tension. The phrase 'body of sin' (sōma tēs hamartias, v. 6) may mean 'the sinful body,' 'the body dominated by sin,' or 'sin considered as a body/corporate entity.'*

*Connections: The baptismal language connects to Galatians 3:27 and Colossians 2:12. The 'old self/new self' contrast develops in Ephesians 4:22-24 and Colossians 3:9-10. The slavery-to-righteousness theme echoes 1 Corinthians 7:22. The 'wages of sin is death' conclusion (v. 23) is one of the most quoted verses in Christian tradition.*

<sup>1</sup>What shall we say then? Should we continue in sin so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup>Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup>Or do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup>For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup>We know this: that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup>For the one who has died has been set free from sin. <sup>8</sup>Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup>We know that Christ, having been raised from the dead, will never die again. Death no longer has mastery over him. <sup>10</sup>For the death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. <sup>11</sup>In the same way, consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. <sup>12</sup>Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its desires. <sup>13</sup>Do not present your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness. <sup>14</sup>For sin will not have mastery over you, since you are not under law but under grace. <sup>15</sup>What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Absolutely not! <sup>16</sup>Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey — either of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? <sup>17</sup>But thanks be to God that although you were once slaves of sin, you have become obedient from the heart to the pattern of teaching to which you were entrusted, <sup>18</sup>Having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. <sup>19</sup>I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. <sup>20</sup>For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup>What fruit did you reap at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of

those things is death. <sup>22</sup>But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you reap leads to sanctification, and the outcome is eternal life. <sup>23</sup>For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The deliberative subjunctive *epimenōmen* ('should we continue, shall we remain') poses a question Paul's opponents actually raised (cf. 3:8). The verb *epimenō* means to remain in a place or state — to persist in sin as a way of life. Paul takes the objection seriously because it follows logically from 5:20 if grace is misunderstood as mere permission.
2. The aorist *apethanomen* ('we died') describes a definitive past event, not an ongoing process. The dative *tē hamartia* ('to sin') indicates separation — death severs the relationship. Paul's argument is not moral exhortation ('you should not sin') but ontological declaration ('you have died to sin') — continuing in sin contradicts who believers now are.
3. The phrase *eis Christon Iēsoun* ('into Christ Jesus') indicates incorporation — baptism unites the believer to Christ's person and story. The phrase *eis ton thanaton autou* ('into his death') specifies the particular aspect of Christ's story that baptism enacts. Paul assumes his readers know the basic baptismal theology — the question 'do you not know?' (*ē agnoeite*) implies established teaching.
4. The compound verb *synetaphēmen* ('we were co-buried') emphasizes union with Christ — his burial became our burial. The phrase *dia tēs doxēs tou patros* ('through the glory of the Father') attributes resurrection power to the Father's *kavod* — his weighty, substantial, overwhelming power. The phrase *kainotēti zōēs* ('newness of life') is qualitative: not merely continued existence but a fundamentally different kind of life. The verb *peripatēsōmen* ('we might walk') uses the Hebrew metaphor of 'walking' for daily conduct.
5. The adjective *symphytoi* ('grown together, united, fused') suggests organic union, like a graft into a living tree. The word *homoīōmati* ('likeness, form') indicates that baptism is an enacted likeness of Christ's death, not the death itself. The future *esometha* ('we will be') may refer to the final bodily resurrection or to present resurrection-life — the ambiguity is likely intentional.
6. The phrase *palaios anthrōpos* ('old self, old person, old humanity') refers to who the believer was in Adam — the entire pre-Christ identity. The verb *synestaurōthē* ('was co-crucified') is an aorist passive — a completed event, not an ongoing process. The verb *katargēthē* ('might be rendered powerless, nullified, put out of commission') does not mean 'destroyed' (KJV) but 'made ineffective' — the body is not annihilated but freed from sin's control. The verb *douleuein* ('to serve as a slave') identifies the prior condition as slavery.
7. The verb *dedikaiōtai* ('has been justified, freed, acquitted') is the same verb used for justification in chapters 3-5, here applied to the believer's liberation from sin's mastery. A dead person has no further obligation to a former master. Paul applies a legal principle: death cancels all claims.
8. The conditional *ei* ('if') assumes the reality of the condition — 'since we died with Christ.' The verb *syzēsomen* ('we will co-live') is future, suggesting that while death with Christ is past and completed, the fullness of life with Christ awaits the resurrection. However, present resurrection-life is also implied (cf. v. 4, 'walk in newness of life').
9. The verb *kyrieuei* ('has mastery, lords over, dominates') treats death as a would-be lord — but Christ's resurrection broke its claim permanently. The adverb *ouketi* ('no longer') implies death once had a temporary hold on Christ during his passion but was decisively defeated at the resurrection.
10. The word *ephapax* ('once for all') is emphatic — Christ's death was a unique, unrepeatable event. The dative *tē hamartia* ('to sin') parallels *tō theō* ('to God'): Christ's death severed the connection to sin's realm; his life is directed entirely toward God. This pattern — death to sin, life to God — is the template for Christian existence (v. 11).
11. The verb *logizesthe* ('consider, reckon, count') is the same word used for God's reckoning in chapter 4. Here believers are told to reckon themselves what God has already declared them to be — dead to sin and alive to God. This is not self-deception but faith appropriating an accomplished reality. The phrase *en Christō Iēsou* ('in Christ Jesus') is Paul's most characteristic phrase, denoting the new sphere of existence in which the believer lives.
12. The shift from indicative (vv. 2-11, what is true) to imperative (vv. 12-14, what to do) is the hallmark of Pauline ethics: become what you are. The verb *basileuetō* ('let reign') echoes the personification of sin as king from 5:21. The phrase *thnētō sōmati* ('mortal body') acknowledges that the body remains subject to death and therefore vulnerable to sin's attempts to reassert control.
13. The word *hopla* can mean 'instruments' or 'weapons' — the military connotation fits the context of two competing kingdoms. The verb *paristanete/parastēsate* shifts from present imperative (stop the ongoing practice) to aorist imperative (make a decisive commitment). The phrase *hōsei ek nekrōn zōntas* ('as those alive from the dead') grounds the imperative in the indicative — believers can choose God because they have already been raised with Christ.
14. This is a promise, not a command: sin will not master you. The reason is surprising: not 'because you try harder' but 'because you are under grace, not under law.' Paul implies that law actually empowers sin rather than defeating it (a theme he develops in chapter 7). Grace, not moral effort, is sin's antidote. This statement provokes the next question in verse 15.
15. A second version of the opening question (v. 1), now triggered by verse 14. The verb *hamartēsōmen* is aorist subjunctive — 'should we commit acts of sin?' (punctiliar) rather than the present tense of verse 1 ('should we continue in sin?' — habitual). Paul addresses both the lifestyle of sin and individual sinful acts.

16. Paul introduces the slavery metaphor that dominates the rest of the chapter. The logic is straightforward: everyone serves someone. The only question is which master. The two options are mutually exclusive: sin death, or obedience righteousness. There is no neutral ground, no true autonomy. The second option ('obedience') is the opposite of sin, not a separate concept from faith (cf. 1:5, 'obedience of faith').
17. The past tense *ête* ('you were') marks a definitive change of status. The phrase *ek kardias* ('from the heart') indicates genuine, interior transformation, not mere external compliance. The phrase *typon didachēs* ('pattern of teaching') refers to the body of apostolic instruction about the gospel. The passive *paredothēte* ('you were entrusted/delivered') is unusual — normally teaching is delivered to people, but here people are delivered to teaching. The gospel is the master to whom they have been handed over.
18. The passive *eleutherōthentes* ('having been freed') attributes liberation to God's action. The paradox is deliberate: freedom from sin is slavery to righteousness. True freedom is not the absence of all obligation but service to the right master. The language of slavery is uncomfortable — Paul will acknowledge this in verse 19.
19. Paul apologizes for the slavery metaphor — *anthrōpinon legō* ('I speak in human terms') acknowledges that comparing service to God with slavery is inadequate. The phrase 'weakness of your flesh' means their limited human capacity to grasp spiritual realities. The progression *anomia eis anomian* ('lawlessness to lawlessness') describes sin's self-compounding nature; the parallel *hagiasmon* ('sanctification, holiness') describes the progressive outworking of the new identity.
20. The ironic 'freedom' — when enslaved to sin, they were 'free' from righteousness, meaning righteousness had no claim on them. This is not genuine freedom but its perverse inversion. Paul is pointing out the absurdity: no one boasts of that kind of freedom.
21. The agricultural metaphor of 'fruit' (*karpos*) asks about the harvest of the former life. The answer is shame and death. The verb *epaischynesthe* ('you are ashamed') uses the same root as 1:16 ('I am not ashamed of the gospel') — the contrast is pointed. The word *telos* ('end, outcome, goal') can mean both 'result' and 'destination.'
22. The 'but now' (*nyni de*) mirrors 3:21 — marking the decisive change from the old situation to the new. The fruit contrast is complete: sin's fruit shame and death (v. 21); God's slavery sanctification and eternal life (v. 22). The word *hagiasmon* ('sanctification') here denotes the progressive transformation of the believer's life.
23. The word *opsōnia* ('wages, soldier's pay, rations') is a military term for the compensation a soldier earns. Sin pays what it owes: death. The contrast with *charisma* ('free gift') is absolute: death is earned; eternal life is given. Paul deliberately avoids saying 'the wages of righteousness is eternal life' — life is never a wage earned but always a gift received. The chapter ends, as always in Romans, with the phrase 'in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

## 7

**Summary:** *Romans 7 explores the believer's relationship to the law. Using a marriage analogy, Paul argues that death releases one from legal obligations — believers have died to the law through Christ's body to belong to the risen Christ. He then defends the law itself: the law is not sin, but sin used the law's commandment to provoke desire and bring death. The chapter's second half (vv. 14-25) contains Paul's famous description of inner conflict — wanting to do good but doing evil instead — culminating in the cry 'Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?'*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *The identity of the 'I' in verses 14-25 is one of the most debated questions in Pauline scholarship. Is Paul describing (1) his pre-conversion experience as a Jew under the law, (2) the ongoing struggle of the Christian believer, (3) Adam's fall, or (4) unregenerate humanity seen from a Christian perspective? The shift from past tense (vv. 7-13) to present tense (vv. 14-25) is the primary evidence for reading it as present Christian experience, though this is not conclusive. The passage has resonated profoundly with readers across centuries precisely because the struggle it describes is universally recognizable.*

**Translation Friction:** *We render the present tense of vv. 14-25 as present tense without resolving whether Paul describes Christian or pre-Christian experience. The marriage analogy (vv. 1-4) has been criticized as imprecise — in the analogy, the husband dies; in the application, the believer dies — but Paul's point is the legal principle (death ends obligation), not a precise one-to-one correspondence.*

**Connections:** *The marriage analogy connects to 2 Corinthians 11:2 and Ephesians 5:25-32. The 'I' passage echoes Ovid's Medea ('I see and approve the better, I follow the worse') and similar Greco-Roman moral psychology. The cry of verse 24 is answered by 8:1-2. The role of the law in provoking sin connects to Galatians 3:19-24. The 'law of sin' (v. 25) anticipates the 'law of the Spirit' (8:2).*

<sup>1</sup>Or do you not know, brothers and sisters — for I am speaking to those who know the law — that the law has authority over a person only as long as that person lives? <sup>2</sup>For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law regarding the husband. <sup>3</sup>So then, if she is joined to another man while her husband is living, she will be called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she is joined to another man, she is not an adulteress. <sup>4</sup>Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another — to him who was raised from the dead — in order that we may bear fruit for God. <sup>5</sup>For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. <sup>6</sup>But now we have been released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code. <sup>7</sup>What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Absolutely not! Yet I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." <sup>8</sup>But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. <sup>9</sup>I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life, <sup>10</sup>I died — and the commandment, which was ordained to life, I discovered to be to death. <sup>11</sup>For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. <sup>12</sup>So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good. <sup>13</sup>Did what is good, then, become death to me? Absolutely not! It was sin — in order that sin might be exposed as sin — producing death in me through what is good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful. <sup>14</sup>For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. <sup>15</sup>For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. <sup>16</sup>Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law that it is good. <sup>17</sup>But as it is, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. <sup>18</sup>For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do what is right is present with me, but the ability to carry it out is not. <sup>19</sup>For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want — that is what I keep doing. <sup>20</sup>Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. <sup>21</sup>So I find this principle at work: when I want to do good, evil lies close at hand. <sup>22</sup>For I delight in God's law in my inner being, <sup>23</sup>However, I see another law in my members, warring opposed to the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. <sup>24</sup>Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup>Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The parenthetical 'those who know the law' (ginōskousin nomon) addresses hearers familiar with Torah, likely Jewish Christians or God-fearers in the Roman church. The verb *kyrieuei* ('has authority, exercises lordship') echoes 6:9 and 6:14 — the question is who or what has mastery. Paul's principle is basic: legal obligations bind the living, not the dead.
2. The adjective *hypandros* ('under a man, married') is a legal term for a woman under marital authority. The verb *katērgētai* ('is released, discharged, freed') is the same word used for 'rendered powerless' in 6:6. Death dissolves legal bonds. The illustration draws on the Torah's own marriage laws.
3. The verb *chrēmāteisei* ('will be designated, called, publicly labeled') is a formal, official designation — not mere gossip but a legal status. Paul's point is established: death changes legal relationships. The analogy is imperfect by design — Paul is illustrating a principle, not constructing an allegory.
4. In the application, it is the believer who dies (to the law), not the law itself. The phrase *dia tou sōmatos tou Christou* ('through the body of Christ') refers to Christ's physical death on the cross, in which believers participate (6:3-6). The word *heteros* ('another') is the second husband in the analogy — the risen Christ. The purpose of the new union is fruitfulness (*karpophorēsōmen*, 'bear fruit'), contrasting with the 'fruit of death' in verse 5.
5. The phrase *en tē sarki* ('in the flesh') describes the pre-conversion state dominated by the sinful nature, not merely physical existence. The explosive phrase *ta dia tou nomou* ('those through the law') directly states that the law aroused sinful passions — a claim Paul will develop in verses 7-13. The fruit imagery is inverted: instead of fruit for God (v. 4), the old life produced fruit for death.
6. The verb *katērgēthēmen* ('we have been released, discharged') echoes verses 2-3. The contrast between 'newness of Spirit' (*kainotēti pneumatos*) and 'oldness of letter' (*palaiotēti grammatos*) parallels 2:29 and anticipates 8:2-4. The Spirit replaces the written code as the governing principle of the believer's life. This does not mean the law's content is abandoned but that the mode of obedience has changed.
7. Paul defends the law against the implication of verse 5. The law is not sinful but diagnostic — it reveals sin. The tenth commandment (*ouk epithymēseis*, 'you shall not covet,' Exodus 20:17) is chosen because covetousness is an internal desire, not an external act. This suggests that the law's deepest function is to expose the interior disposition of the heart, not merely to regulate behavior. The switch to first person 'I' (*egō*) begins here.

7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 20:17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The word *aphormēn* ('opportunity, base of operations, launching point') is a military term for a beachhead from which to mount an attack. Sin is personified as a strategist who uses the commandment as a base of operations. The paradox is that the good commandment became the instrument of evil. The phrase *chōris nomou hamartia nekra* ('apart from the law, sin is dead') does not mean sin does not exist without law but that it lies dormant, unactivated.
9. The phrase 'I was alive apart from the law' likely alludes to Adam's pre-fall state in Eden or to Paul's pre-bar-mitzvah childhood before conscious moral accountability. The verb *anezēsen* ('came back to life, revived') implies sin was dormant and the commandment reawakened it. The language echoes Genesis 2-3: a command given, a prohibition, and sin exploiting the prohibition.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 2-3:. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The ironic reversal: the commandment was *eis zōēn* ('toward life') by design but *eis thanaton* ('toward death') in effect. Leviticus 18:5 promises 'the one who does these things will live by them,' but in the hands of sin, the commandment became an instrument of death. Paul is not blaming the law but the power of sin that hijacks it.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 18:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The verb *exēpatēsen* ('deceived, thoroughly deluded') echoes Genesis 3:13, where Eve says 'the serpent deceived me.' Paul presents sin as the true serpent — the commandment is the tree, and sin is the deceiver who uses the prohibition to entice. The verb *apekteinen* ('killed') makes sin a murderer who uses the law as its weapon.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 3:13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. Paul's conclusion exonerates the law completely. Three adjectives defend the commandment: *hagia* ('holy' — set apart by God), *dikaia* ('righteous' — in accord with God's character), and *agathē* ('good' — beneficial in purpose). The problem is not the law but sin's exploitation of it. This is Paul's most positive statement about the law in Romans.
13. The double purpose clause is important: the law exposes sin's true nature. By using something good (the commandment) to produce something evil (death), sin reveals itself as *kath' hyperbolēn hamartōlos* ('exceedingly sinful, sinful beyond measure'). The law functions as a diagnostic that makes the disease visible in its full severity.
14. The shift to present tense begins here and continues through verse 25. The adjective *pneumatikos* ('spiritual') affirms the law's divine origin. The adjective *sarkinos* ('made of flesh, fleshly') describes the human condition in stark contrast. The phrase *pepramenos hypo tēn hamartian* ('sold under sin') uses slave-market language — a person sold into slavery to a master called Sin. This echoes 1 Kings 21:20, 25 (LXX), where Ahab is said to have 'sold himself to do evil.'
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Kings 21:20. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The verb *katēgazomai* ('accomplish, produce, carry out') describes the actual result of one's actions. The verb *ginōskō* ('know, understand') here means 'comprehend, recognize as mine' — the 'I' is bewildered by its own behavior. The three-part confession — I do not do what I want; I do what I hate — describes the fragmentation of the will that sin produces. The language resonates with Ovid's *Medea*: 'video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor' ('I see the better and approve it; I follow the worse').
16. The verb *sympḗmi* ('agree, consent, concur') means that the divided will of the 'I' — wanting the good but doing the evil — proves that the law is *kalos* ('good, beautiful, admirable'). The desire for good, even when unfulfilled, is itself a testimony to the law's goodness.
17. Paul distinguishes the 'I' (the willing self that approves the good) from 'sin dwelling in me' (the alien power that produces the evil). This is not an evasion of responsibility but an analysis of the human predicament: sin has colonized the self. The verb *oikouō* ('dwelling, residing') presents sin as a resident alien occupying the territory of the self.
18. The crucial qualifier *tout' estin en tē sarki mou* ('that is, in my flesh') limits the claim. Paul does not say the self is entirely devoid of good — the inner self desires the good (v. 22) — but the flesh (the unredeemed human condition) is incapable of producing it. The verb *parakeitai* ('is present, lies at hand') means the will is available but the execution is not.
19. A restatement of verse 15 with heightened intensity. The verb *prassō* (present tense, 'I keep doing') emphasizes the repetitive, habitual nature of the failure. The parallel structure — 'the good I want / I do not do' and 'the evil I do not want / I practice' — creates a rhetorical cage from which the 'I' cannot escape.
20. A repetition of verse 17, reinforcing the conclusion: the true 'I' and indwelling sin are distinguishable. This is not philosophical dualism (two equal powers) but a description of the enslaved will — the self wants the good but is overpowered by sin's occupation.
21. The word *nomos* ('law') here means 'principle' or 'pattern' rather than the Torah — a regularity Paul has discovered through experience. The verb *parakeitai* ('lies close at hand, is present') from verse 18 now applies to evil rather than the desire for good. Evil is always the closer companion.

22. The verb *synēdomai* ('I delight in, rejoice with') expresses genuine joy in God's law — this is not reluctant compliance but heartfelt approval. The phrase *esō anthrōpon* ('inner person, inner self') describes the deepest part of the self, the part that aligns with God's purposes. This inner delight in the law echoes Psalm 1:2 and 119:97.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 1:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. Three 'laws' (principles) are in play: the law of God (v. 22), the law of the mind (*tō nomō tou noos*, the rational self that approves God's law), and the law of sin (*tō nomō tēs hamartias*, sin's governing principle operating in the body). The military metaphors *antistrateuomenon* ('waging war against') and *aichmalōtizonta* ('capturing, taking prisoner') depict an internal battle the 'I' is losing. This sets up the desperate cry of verse 24.
24. The exclamation *talaipōros* ('wretched, miserable, pitiable') is a cry of anguish, not self-pity. The phrase *sōmatos tou thanatou toutou* ('this body of death') may mean 'this body doomed to death,' 'this body in which death operates,' or 'this deathly body.' The question 'who?' (*tis*) is the crucial word — the 'I' has exhausted all self-rescue options and can only look outside itself for deliverance.
25. The thanksgiving answers the question of verse 24: deliverance comes through Jesus Christ. The summary statement that follows describes the dual reality: the mind (*nous*) serves God's law, while the flesh (*sarx*) serves sin's law. This tension, unresolved in chapter 7, is resolved in chapter 8 through the Spirit. The phrase *autos egō* ('I myself') emphasizes that this divided condition describes the same person — not two people but one person in two simultaneous states.

## 8

**Summary:** *Romans 8 is the climax of Paul's theological argument, moving from no condemnation (v. 1) to no separation (v. 39). The Spirit — mentioned only once in chapters 1-7 (apart from 1:4 and 5:5) — appears over twenty times here, replacing the law as the governing power of the believer's life. The Spirit sets free from sin and death, fulfills the law's requirement, gives life, adopts believers as God's children, and intercedes for them. Paul then discusses the groaning of creation, the groaning of believers, and the groaning of the Spirit, all awaiting final redemption. The chapter concludes with one of the most soaring passages in all of Scripture: God works all things together for good, and nothing in all creation can separate believers from God's love in Christ Jesus.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *This chapter moves from cosmic theology (creation groaning) to intimate personal assurance (the Spirit crying 'Abba, Father') to majestic doxology (nothing can separate us). The 'golden chain' of verse 29-30 (foreknew, predestined, called, justified, glorified) presents salvation as an unbreakable divine sequence. The shift to 'glorified' in the past tense (*edoxasen*) — treating the future consummation as already accomplished — is one of the boldest grammatical choices in the New Testament. The chapter's final question-and-answer series (vv. 31-39) is structured as a courtroom drama with God as judge, Christ as advocate, and all possible accusers silenced.*

**Translation Friction:** *The phrase 'the mind set on the flesh is death' (v. 6) and 'those who are in the flesh cannot please God' (v. 8) have been variously interpreted. We render them as describing the unregenerate state, not the ongoing struggle of believers. The 'groaning' of creation (v. 22) uses language of childbirth, not despair — the groaning is productive, anticipating new birth. The list of potential separators (vv. 35, 38-39) reflects first-century cosmological categories (angels, rulers, height, depth) that may correspond to spiritual powers.*

**Connections:** *The 'no condemnation' of v. 1 answers the condemnation of 5:16, 18. The Spirit's work fulfilling the law (v. 4) resolves 7:14-25. The adoption language (vv. 15-17, 23) connects to Galatians 4:4-7. The groaning of creation (vv. 19-22) develops Genesis 3:17-19. The 'all things work together for good' (v. 28) is one of the most quoted promises in Scripture. The Psalm 44:22 quotation (v. 36) is the only direct quotation in the chapter.*

1There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as a sin offering, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not following the flesh, but following the Spirit. 5For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. 7For the mind set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law — indeed, it cannot. 8Those who are in the flesh

cannot please God. <sup>9</sup>You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup>But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. <sup>12</sup>So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors — not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup>For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup>For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. <sup>15</sup>For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption as children, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" <sup>16</sup>The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup>If children, then heirs. Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be as well glorified as one. <sup>18</sup>For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is about to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup>For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God. <sup>20</sup>For the creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will, but because of him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup>Indeed, because the creature itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the God's children. <sup>22</sup>For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. <sup>23</sup>And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we eagerly await adoption as children — the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup>For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what they see? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with endurance. <sup>26</sup>Likewise the Spirit also helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. <sup>27</sup>And he who searches hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to God's will. <sup>28</sup>And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup>For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. <sup>30</sup>And those whom he predestined, he also called; and those whom he called, he also justified; and those whom he justified, he also glorified. <sup>31</sup>What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup>He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup>Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup>Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died — more than that, who was raised — who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. <sup>35</sup>Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written: "For your sake we are being put to death all day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." <sup>37</sup>Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors by way of him that loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor rulers, neither things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The SBLGNT text is shorter than the KJV, omitting 'who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' This longer reading appears in later manuscripts and was likely assimilated from verse 4. The word *ara* ('therefore') connects to the entire argument of chapters 1-7: because of justification by faith, union with Christ in death and resurrection, and release from the law, there is now no condemnation.
1. The adverb *nyn* ('now') is both temporal (in the present age of grace) and logical (given the preceding argument). The preposition *en* ('in') *Christō Iēsou* marks the foundational Pauline concept of incorporation into Christ.
2. Two 'laws' (governing principles) are contrasted: the law of the Spirit of life and the law of sin and death (introduced in 7:23, 25). The Spirit is the new governing power that replaces sin's regime. The SBLGNT reads *se* ('you,' singular) rather than *me* ('me'), though manuscripts vary. The aorist *ēleutherōsen* ('set free') points to a completed liberation.
3. The phrase *to adynaton tou nomou* ('the impossibility of the law') identifies the law's limitation: not a defect in the law itself but in the flesh it addressed (cf. 7:12-14). The phrase *en homoiōmati sarkos hamartias* ('in the likeness of sinful flesh') is carefully worded: Christ took real human flesh (not merely its appearance) but without the dominion of sin. The phrase *peri hamartias* ('concerning sin' / 'for sin') may be a technical term for a sin offering (cf. Leviticus 4-5 LXX, where *peri hamartias* translates the Hebrew *chatta't*). We render 'as a sin offering' to capture this allusion.

3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 4-5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The word dikaiōma ('righteous requirement, just demand') is singular — the law's fundamental demand. The passive plērōthē ('might be fulfilled') does not specify whether believers fulfill it actively or Christ fulfills it on their behalf — likely both are in view. The Spirit enables the obedience the law demanded but the flesh could not produce. This resolves 3:31 ('do we overthrow the law through faith? We uphold it').
5. The verb phronousin ('set their minds on, are oriented toward, give attention to') describes a fundamental orientation of the whole person, not merely intellectual focus. The two groups — kata sarka ('according to the flesh') and kata pneuma ('according to the Spirit') — represent two modes of human existence, not two parts of every person.
6. The word phronēma ('mindset, orientation, way of thinking') appears only in Romans 8 in the New Testament (vv. 6, 7, 27). It describes not individual thoughts but a settled disposition. The flesh-oriented mindset results in thanatos ('death') — not merely physical death but spiritual separation from God. The Spirit-oriented mindset results in zōē ('life') and eirēnē ('peace,' the Hebrew shalom — wholeness and reconciliation with God).
7. The word echthra ('hostility, enmity') is not mere indifference but active opposition to God. The flesh-orientation is structurally incapable of submission to God's law — oude gar dynatai ('nor is it able'). This is not about effort but capacity: the flesh-mind cannot obey God no matter how hard it tries. This explains why the law was 'weakened by the flesh' (v. 3).
8. The phrase en sarki ontes ('being in the flesh') describes an unregenerate state, not the mere fact of having a physical body. Believers still have physical bodies but are no longer 'in the flesh' in Paul's theological sense — they are 'in the Spirit' (v. 9). The verb aresai ('to please') echoes the Old Testament language of what is pleasing to God.
9. Paul uses three titles interchangeably: 'the Spirit' (to pneuma), 'the Spirit of God' (pneuma theou), and 'the Spirit of Christ' (pneuma Christou) — indicating that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. The conditional eiper ('if indeed, assuming that') assumes the condition is true for his readers. The negative statement is defining: possession of the Spirit is the essential mark of belonging to Christ.
10. The interchange continues: verse 9 said the Spirit is in you; verse 10 says Christ is in you — the Spirit mediates Christ's indwelling. The body remains 'dead' (nekron) in the sense that it is mortal and still subject to sin's legacy of physical death. But the Spirit is 'life' (zōē) — present tense reality, not merely future promise. The phrase dia dikaiosynēn ('because of righteousness') can mean 'because of the righteousness God has granted' or 'for the purpose of righteous living.'
11. The logic is simple and powerful: the same Spirit who raised Jesus now lives in believers; therefore, that Spirit will do the same work in their mortal bodies. The verb zōpoiēsei ('will make alive, give life') points to bodily resurrection, not merely spiritual vitality. The phrase ta thnēta sōmata ('your mortal bodies') — bodies that still die — will be transformed. The Spirit's current indwelling is the guarantee of future resurrection.
12. The word opheilētai ('debtors, those under obligation') sets up a contrast Paul does not explicitly complete: we are not debtors to the flesh (the implicit completion: we are debtors to the Spirit). The believer's obligation is to the Spirit who gave life, not to the flesh that produced death.
13. The conditional presents a stark binary: flesh-living death; Spirit-empowered mortification life. The verb thanatoute ('you put to death, you kill') is violent and active — not passive resignation but active assault on sinful habits. Crucially, this is done pneumatī ('by the Spirit') — not by willpower alone but by the Spirit's power. The 'deeds of the body' (praxeis tou sōmatos) are the sinful behaviors the unredeemed body habitually performs.
14. The verb agontai ('are led, guided, driven') is present passive — an ongoing experience of the Spirit's direction. The word huiōi ('sons') in the ancient world denoted legal heirs regardless of gender; we render 'children' to reflect the inclusive scope while noting that 'sons' carried specific inheritance rights in Roman law that Paul will exploit in verses 15-17.
15. The contrast between 'spirit of slavery' and 'Spirit of adoption' defines the change: the old relationship to God was fear-based; the new is family-based. The verb krazomen ('we cry out') is a strong word suggesting spontaneous, Spirit-driven exclamation — not a quiet prayer but an instinctive cry of a child to a parent. The switch from 'you' (elabete) to 'we' (krazomen) includes Paul himself in the experience.
16. The compound verb symmartyrei ('bears witness together with, co-testifies') implies two witnesses: the Holy Spirit and the believer's own spirit. Together they confirm the reality of adoption. We render 'himself' (auto) rather than the KJV's 'itself' because the Spirit is personal. The word tekna ('children') differs from huiōi ('sons') — tekna emphasizes the familial relationship, huiōi the legal status.
17. The logic: children heirs co-heirs with Christ. In Roman law, all children inherited equally. The compound syn- ('together with') appears three times: synklēronomoi ('co-heirs'), sympaschomen ('co-suffer'), and syndoxasthōmen ('co-glorified'). The path to glory passes through suffering — not as a condition to be earned but as the pattern of Christ's own journey.
18. The verb logizomai ('I reckon, consider, calculate') is the same word used for God's reckoning righteousness (4:3). Paul makes a deliberate cost-benefit calculation: present suffering versus future glory. The result is that suffering is axiā ('worthy, equivalent') — the scales are not even close. The phrase eis hēmas ('to/in us') can mean the glory will be revealed 'to us' (we will see it) or 'in us' (we will embody it). Both are true.
19. The word apokaradokia ('eager expectation, anxious longing') is a vivid compound: apo (away) + kara (head) + dokeō (to watch) — literally 'craning the neck forward to see.' Creation itself is personified as expectantly waiting. The 'revealing of the children of God' (apokalypsin tōn huiōn tou theou) refers to the final manifestation of believers' glorified identity at the return of Christ.

- 20.** The word *mataiotēti* ('futility, emptiness, purposelessness') echoes Ecclesiastes' refrain 'vanity of vanities' (*hebel* in Hebrew). Creation was subjected to this futility *ouch hekousa* ('not willingly') — it did not choose this condition. The one who subjected it is most likely God (in response to Adam's sin, Genesis 3:17-19), though some identify Adam. The crucial qualifier is *eph' helpidi* ('in hope') — the subjection was not final but forward-looking.
- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 3:17-19 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 21.** Creation's destiny is linked to humanity's: when God's children are glorified, creation itself will be liberated. The phrase *douleias tēs phthoras* ('bondage to decay/corruption') describes the second law of thermodynamics in theological terms — everything deteriorates. The phrase *eleutherian tēs doxēs* ('freedom of glory') is the opposite: the liberated creation will share in the glory of the redeemed.
- 22.** The compound verbs *systemazei* ('groans together') and *synōdinei* ('labors in birth-pain together') use the *syn-* prefix to indicate that all of creation participates. The childbirth metaphor is significant: the groaning is not death-agony but labor-pain — it anticipates new birth, not extinction. The phrase *achri tou nyn* ('until now') indicates this is the current reality.
- 23.** Three groanings: creation (v. 22), believers (v. 23), and the Spirit (v. 26). Believers groan despite having the *aparchēn tou pneumatōs* ('firstfruits of the Spirit') — the Spirit is the initial installment of the full harvest. The word *hiothesian* ('adoption') reappears: believers already have adoption (v. 15) but await its full consummation — the redemption of the body at resurrection.
- 24.** The aorist *esōthēmen* ('we were saved') points to the decisive moment of salvation while the context makes clear that salvation has a 'not yet' dimension — the body's redemption is still future. Hope by definition involves the unseen; visible possession would eliminate the need for hope.
- 25.** The word *hypomonēs* ('endurance, patient steadfastness') is the same virtue produced by suffering in 5:3-4. The chain continues: hope is not passive but actively enduring, pressing through the present age toward the promised future.
- 26.** The compound verb *synantilambantai* ('helps, comes to assist alongside') pictures the Spirit as one who takes hold of a burden together with the one carrying it. The honest admission *ouk oidamen* ('we do not know') is pastoral: believers often lack the words or clarity for prayer. The Spirit's *stenagmois alalētois* ('wordless groanings, sighs beyond speech') correspond to the groanings of creation (v. 22) and believers (v. 23). The Spirit translates human helplessness into effective intercession.
- 27.** The 'one who searches hearts' is God (cf. 1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Chronicles 28:9; Jeremiah 17:10). God understands the Spirit's wordless intercession because the Spirit intercedes *kata theon* ('according to God,' in alignment with God's will). The prayers the Spirit offers on behalf of believers are always perfectly aligned with what God purposes.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Samuel 16:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Chronicles 28:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 17:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** Some manuscripts read 'God works all things together for good' (*ho theos panta synergei*), making God the explicit subject. The SBLGNT reading (*panta synergei*) can mean 'all things work together' or 'he [God] works all things together.' Either way, God's sovereignty is the theological point. The promise is not that all things are good but that they are worked together (*synergei*) for good — even suffering, even what seems pointless. The qualifying phrase *tois agapōsin ton theon* ('for those who love God') and *tois kata prothesin klētois* ('those called according to purpose') identifies the recipients.
- 29.** The 'golden chain' begins. The verb *proegnō* ('foreknew') in biblical usage means more than advance knowledge — it implies intimate, relational knowing and choosing (cf. Amos 3:2). The verb *proōrisen* ('predestined, predetermined') specifies the goal of God's knowing: conformity to Christ's image (*symmorphous tēs eikonos*). The phrase 'firstborn among many brothers and sisters' (*prōtotokon en pollois adelphois*) makes Christ the eldest in a large family, not an only child.
- 29.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Amos 3:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 30.** Five links: foreknew predestined called justified glorified. Each step leads inevitably to the next — no one is lost between links. The most stunning word is the final one: *edoxasen* ('glorified') is in the aorist (past) tense, treating the future glorification of believers as already accomplished. From God's perspective, the outcome is so certain it can be spoken of as a completed fact. This is called the 'proleptic aorist' — the future made present by divine certainty.
- 31.** The rhetorical questions of verses 31-35 form a courtroom crescendo. The first question — 'if God is for us, who can be against us?' — is not the claim that no one opposes believers (they clearly do) but that no opposition can ultimately prevail. The preposition *hyper* ('for, on behalf of') means God is an active advocate, not a neutral bystander.
- 32.** The verb *epheisato* ('spared') echoes Genesis 22:16 (LXX), where God says to Abraham 'you did not spare (*ouk epheisō*) your only son.' Paul presents the cross as God's own *Aqedah* — what Abraham was willing to do, God actually did. The verb *paredōken* ('gave over, handed over') is the same word used of God 'giving over' humanity in 1:24, 26, 28 — now inverted: God gives over his own Son for the sake of those he once gave over to judgment. The 'much more' argument: if God gave the greater gift (his Son), the lesser gifts (all things) are guaranteed.

32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 22:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
33. The verb *enkalesei* ('bring a charge, accuse') is a legal term for a formal prosecution. The answer is that no accuser can stand because the Judge himself has declared the verdict: justified. The word *eklektōn* ('chosen ones, elect') emphasizes divine initiative in salvation.
34. Four actions of Christ silence condemnation: he died (atonement), was raised (vindication), sits at God's right hand (authority, cf. Psalm 110:1), and intercedes (ongoing advocacy). The verb *entynchanei* ('intercedes, intervenes on behalf of') presents the risen Christ as believers' permanent advocate before God. The phrase *mallon de* ('more than that, rather') corrects the first statement — the resurrection, not just the death, is the decisive factor.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 110:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. The list of seven potential separators moves from general suffering to violent death. These are not hypothetical — Paul experienced all of them (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:23-27). The phrase 'love of Christ' (*agapēs tou Christou*) is primarily Christ's love for us (subjective genitive), not our love for him. The question expects the answer 'no one and nothing.'
36. Paul quotes Psalm 44:22 (LXX 43:23), a communal lament from Israel's history. The Psalm describes suffering that comes not from sin but from faithfulness to God ('for your sake'). Paul applies it to the church's present experience: suffering is the norm for God's people, not the exception. Yet even this does not separate from Christ's love.
36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 44:22. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
37. The verb *hypernikōmen* ('we super-conquer, we overwhelmingly prevail') is another Pauline superlative compound — not merely victory but overwhelming triumph. The preposition *en* ('in') is significant: believers conquer not by escaping suffering but in the midst of it. The phrase *dia tou agapēsantos* ('through the one who loved') identifies Christ's love as the power source for this conquest.
38. The perfect tense *pepeismai* ('I am and remain convinced') expresses settled, unshakable certainty. Paul lists potential separators in pairs: death/life (the two modes of existence), angels/rulers (supernatural powers), present/future (all time). The word *archai* ('rulers, principalities') and *dynameis* ('powers') refer to cosmic spiritual authorities, whether benign or hostile. Paul asserts that even the most powerful spiritual beings in the universe cannot override God's love.
39. The final pair *hypsōma/bathos* ('height/depth') may refer to astrological terms for the highest and lowest points of a celestial body's orbit, encompassing all cosmic space. The sweeping phrase *tis ktisis hetera* ('any other created thing') is a catch-all: if Paul has missed anything in his list, this covers it. The conclusion lands on 'the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord' — all of God's love is mediated through Christ. The chapter that began with 'no condemnation' ends with 'no separation.' The phrase *en Christō Iēsou tō kyriō hēmōn* closes the chapter with the same formula that ends chapters 5, 6, and 7.

## 9

**Summary:** *Romans 9 opens a new section (chapters 9-11) addressing the most pressing theological problem raised by Paul's gospel: if righteousness comes by faith apart from the law, what about Israel? Has God's word failed? Paul expresses his deep anguish over Israel's unbelief, then argues that God's word has not failed because not all descended from Israel are truly Israel. God's purposes have always operated by sovereign election — choosing Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau. Paul defends God's right as Creator to show mercy and harden as he chooses, using the potter-and-clay metaphor. The chapter concludes by arguing that Gentiles have obtained the righteousness of faith while Israel, pursuing righteousness through the law, stumbled over Christ — the stumbling stone.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *Paul's anguish (vv. 1-5) is extraordinary — he wishes he could be cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of his kinspeople. This is the same Paul who just declared nothing can separate from Christ's love. The list of Israel's privileges (v. 4-5) is one of the fullest in the New Testament: adoption, glory, covenants, law, worship, promises, patriarchs, and the Messiah. The potter-clay metaphor (vv. 19-24) is drawn from Isaiah 29:16, 45:9, and Jeremiah 18:1-10. The chapter's argument about divine sovereignty is counterbalanced by chapters 10-11, which emphasize human responsibility and God's ultimate purpose of mercy.*

**Translation Friction:** *The tension between divine sovereignty (God hardens whom he wills, v. 18) and human responsibility (Israel pursued works rather than faith, v. 32) is one of the deepest theological tensions in Scripture. We render both emphases without harmonizing them. The Pharaoh hardening (v. 17) must be read alongside Exodus, where Pharaoh also hardens his own heart. The 'vessels of wrath' and 'vessels of mercy' language*

*(vv. 22-23) has been debated between Calvinist and Arminian interpreters for centuries.*

Connections: *The Old Testament quotations are extensive: Genesis 21:12 (v. 7), Genesis 18:10 (v. 9), Genesis 25:23 (v. 12), Malachi 1:2-3 (v. 13), Exodus 33:19 (v. 15), Exodus 9:16 (v. 17), Isaiah 29:16/45:9 (v. 20), Hosea 2:23/1:10 (vv. 25-26), Isaiah 10:22-23 (vv. 27-28), Isaiah 1:9 (v. 29), Isaiah 8:14/28:16 (v. 33).*

<sup>1</sup>I am speaking the truth in Christ — I am not lying, as my conscience confirms in the Holy Spirit — <sup>2</sup>Indeed, that I have remarkable heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. <sup>3</sup>For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers and sisters, my kinspeople according to the flesh — <sup>4</sup>They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. <sup>5</sup>To them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. <sup>6</sup>It is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. <sup>7</sup>Indeed, neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children — but, In Isaac will your seed be called. <sup>8</sup>This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. <sup>9</sup>For this is what the promise said: "About this time I will return, and Sarah shall have a son." <sup>10</sup>And not only that, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our ancestor Isaac — <sup>11</sup>(For the offspring while not yet brought into the world, neither possessing done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, <sup>12</sup>Indeed, not of works, but of him that calleth;) it was stated to her, The elder will serve the younger. <sup>13</sup>As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." <sup>14</sup>What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? Absolutely not! <sup>15</sup>And I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion, for he says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. <sup>16</sup>So then it depends not on human will or effort, but on God who has mercy. <sup>17</sup>For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might display my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." <sup>18</sup>So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. <sup>19</sup>You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who has resisted his will?" <sup>20</sup>But who are you, a mere human, to argue back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" <sup>21</sup>Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? <sup>22</sup>What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with great patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, <sup>23</sup>Indeed, that he might make known the riches of all his splendor on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared to glory, <sup>24</sup>Indeed us, whom he has known as, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? <sup>25</sup>As indeed he says in Hosea: "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'" <sup>26</sup>"And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'children of the living God.'" <sup>27</sup>And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel were as the sand of the sea, only a remnant will be saved, <sup>28</sup>Indeed, since he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness — because a short work will the Lord make upon the world. <sup>29</sup>And as Isaiah predicted: "If the Lord of Hosts had not left us offspring, we would have become like Sodom and been made like Gomorrah." <sup>30</sup>What shall we say then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have obtained it — that is, a righteousness that is by faith; <sup>31</sup>However, Israel, which followed following the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. <sup>32</sup>Why? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were based on works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, <sup>33</sup>As it is written, take notice, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence — and whosoever believes on him will not be ashamed.

#### TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul invokes a triple oath: truth in Christ, denial of falsehood, and the witness of his Spirit-informed conscience. This unusually intense affirmation signals that what follows is deeply personal and potentially misunderstood. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, must demonstrate that his gospel does not represent indifference to Israel.
2. The word *lypē* ('grief, sorrow') is strong; *odynē* ('anguish, sharp pain') is stronger. The adjective *adialeiptos* ('unceasing, constant') — the same word used for prayer in 1:9 — means this grief never leaves Paul. His pain over Israel's unbelief is not occasional but perpetual.
3. The verb *ēuchomēn* (imperfect) can mean 'I was wishing' or 'I could wish' — either a past wish or a present hypothetical. The word *anathema* ('accursed, devoted to destruction') is the Greek equivalent of Hebrew *cherem* — total separation from God. Paul echoes Moses in Exodus 32:32, who asked God to blot him from the book of life for Israel's sake. The irony is stunning: Paul who just said nothing can separate from Christ's love now

wishes for separation on behalf of others.

3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 32:32 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Paul lists eight privileges of Israel: (1) *hiothesia* — adoption as God's son (Exodus 4:22), (2) *doxa* — God's glory-presence (the *Shekinah*), (3) *diathekai* — the covenants (Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic), (4) *nomothesia* — the giving of the Torah, (5) *latreia* — the temple worship system, (6) *epangeliai* — the covenant promises. The plural *diathekai* ('covenants') is notable — God made multiple covenants with Israel.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 4:22. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The final two privileges: (7) the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) and (8) the Messiah himself. The phrase *to kata sarka* ('according to the flesh') limits Christ's Israelite identity to his human nature. The doxological clause *ho ōn epi pantōn theos eulogētos* ('who is God over all, blessed forever') is one of the most debated punctuation questions in the New Testament. It can be read as (a) a statement about Christ: 'who is God over all, blessed forever' or (b) a separate doxology to God the Father: 'God who is over all be blessed forever.' We follow reading (a), which is the more natural Greek syntax.
6. This is the thesis of chapters 9-11. The verb *ekpeptōken* ('has fallen, has failed') means to fall to the ground, to prove empty. Paul's answer to the apparent failure of God's promise is a redefinition of Israel: physical descent does not automatically equal covenant membership. There is an 'Israel within Israel' defined by God's electing purpose.
7. Paul quotes Genesis 21:12. Abraham had two sons — Ishmael and Isaac — but only Isaac was the child of promise. Physical descent from Abraham did not automatically make Ishmael an heir. The principle of selective election operates within the family from the very beginning.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 21:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Paul draws the theological conclusion: *tekna tēs sarkos* ('children of the flesh,' born by natural means) are distinguished from *tekna tēs epangelias* ('children of the promise,' born by God's word). The verb *logizetai* ('are counted, reckoned') is the same verb from chapter 4 — divine reckoning, not human achievement, determines who belongs to Abraham's true line.
9. Paul quotes Genesis 18:10, 14. Isaac's birth was not a natural event but a supernatural fulfillment of God's promise to a barren, elderly couple. The point: God's people are constituted by divine promise, not natural processes.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 18:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Paul introduces a stronger example. With Isaac and Ishmael, one could argue the difference was due to different mothers (Sarah vs. Hagar). With Jacob and Esau, the same mother (Rebekah) and the same father (Isaac) produced two sons, eliminating any argument based on parentage. The Greek *koitēn echousea* ('having a bed/conception') is a euphemism for sexual intercourse and conception.
11. Paul emphasizes that God's choice was made before the twins' birth and before any action — good or bad — that could serve as a basis for merit. The phrase *kat' eklogēn prothesis* ('purpose according to election') places the ground of God's choice in his own purpose, not in foreseen human merit.
12. Paul quotes Genesis 25:23. The reversal of primogeniture — the elder serving the younger — is a consistent pattern in Genesis (Ishmael/Isaac, Esau/Jacob, Manasseh/Ephraim). God's choice does not follow human convention but divine freedom. The phrase *ek tou kalountos* ('from the one who calls') makes God's calling the sole basis of election.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 25:23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Paul quotes Malachi 1:2-3, written over a thousand years after the twins. 'Hated' (*emisēsa*) in Semitic idiom can mean 'loved less' or 'not chosen' (cf. Genesis 29:31; Luke 14:26) — it denotes non-election rather than personal animosity. Malachi's original context concerns the nations of Israel and Edom, not merely the individuals Jacob and Esau.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Malachi 1:2-3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 29:31 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The objection is predictable: if God chooses before birth without regard to works, is that unjust? Paul's *mē genoito* is emphatic. The word *adikia* ('injustice, unrighteousness') is the negation of *dikaioσynē* — the charge is that God's election violates his own righteousness.
15. Paul quotes Exodus 33:19, God's response to Moses' request to see his glory. The double statement (mercy/mercy, compassion/compassion) is a Hebrew idiom emphasizing divine freedom: God's mercy is determined by God's own will. This was spoken in a context of grace — God had just forgiven the golden calf incident.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 33:19 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

16. The three sources are contrasted: not the willing person (tou thelontos), not the running person (tou trechontos, a metaphor for striving), but God who shows mercy (tou eleountos theou). Human desire and effort, however sincere, cannot compel divine mercy. This does not eliminate human response but grounds the possibility of response in prior divine initiative.
17. Paul quotes Exodus 9:16. The verb *exēgeira* ('I raised up, I brought onto the stage') does not necessarily mean God created Pharaoh for the purpose of destruction but that God elevated him to power and sustained him through the plagues to display divine power. The purpose is the proclamation of God's name throughout the earth — even Pharaoh's hardening serves a redemptive-historical purpose.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 9:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. Paul draws the double conclusion: God's sovereignty operates in both directions — mercy and hardening. The verb *sklērynei* ('hardens') echoes the Exodus narrative where God hardened Pharaoh's heart. This must be read in its full Exodus context, where Pharaoh also hardened his own heart (Exodus 8:15, 32). Divine hardening is judicial — confirming a direction already chosen — not arbitrary.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 8:15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The diatribe partner objects: if God's will is irresistible, how can God blame anyone? This is the logical conclusion of verse 18 pushed to its extreme. The verb *anhestēken* ('has resisted, has stood against') is a perfect tense — who has ever successfully opposed God's purpose? Paul takes the objection seriously but reframes it.
20. Paul's response appeals to the Creator-creature distinction. The verb *antapokrinomenos* ('arguing back, answering in opposition') implies presumptuous back-talk. The potter-clay metaphor draws on Isaiah 29:16, 45:9, and Jeremiah 18:1-10. The point is not that human questions are illegitimate but that the creature has no standing to put the Creator on trial.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 29:16 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 18:1-10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The word *exousian* ('right, authority, power') establishes the potter's prerogative. The phrase *ek tou autou phyrmatos* ('out of the same lump') emphasizes that the difference between vessels is not in the material but in the potter's purpose. We render *eis atimian* as 'for common use' rather than 'for dishonor' — the contrast is between special and ordinary, not necessarily between good and evil. However, in context, Paul is building toward the 'vessels of wrath' in verse 22.
22. The sentence begun here continues through verse 24. The phrase *skēuē orgēs* ('vessels of wrath') describes those destined for judgment. The participle *katērtismena* ('prepared, fitted') is in the middle/passive voice and does not specify who did the preparing — God, the individuals themselves, or sin. This ambiguity may be intentional. The phrase *en pollē makrothymia* ('with great patience') shows that even toward vessels of wrath, God exercises long-suffering restraint.
23. The contrast with verse 22 is significant: the vessels of wrath are described with a passive participle (*katērtismena*, 'prepared' — agent unspecified), while the vessels of mercy are described with an active verb (*proētoimasen*, 'he prepared beforehand' — God is the explicit agent). This asymmetry suggests that God actively prepares the vessels of mercy but does not actively prepare the vessels of wrath in the same direct way.
24. The vessels of mercy are now identified: 'us' — both Jewish and Gentile believers. God's electing purpose, which operated within Israel (choosing Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau), now operates beyond Israel's ethnic boundaries to include Gentiles.
25. Paul quotes Hosea 2:23 (LXX). In Hosea's original context, the promise of restoration refers to Israel itself — the unfaithful northern kingdom. Paul applies it to Gentile inclusion: those who were outside the covenant ('not my people') are now called God's people. This typological reading sees the same pattern of grace operating in a new context.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Hosea 2:23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. Paul quotes Hosea 1:10 (LXX 2:1). The reversal is total: the location of rejection becomes the location of adoption. 'The living God' (*theou zōntos*) contrasts with dead idols and reinforces the theme of God's life-giving power (cf. 4:17).
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Hosea 1:10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. Paul now turns from Gentile inclusion to the painful reality of Israel's partial rejection, quoting Isaiah 10:22-23. The word *hypoleimma* ('remnant') introduces a concept central to prophetic theology: God always preserves a faithful core within the nation, even when the majority falls away. The verb *krazei* ('cries out') suggests urgency and prophetic passion.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 10:22-23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The phrase *logon syntelōn kai syntemnōn* ('completing and cutting short the word/sentence') describes God's decisive, swift judicial action. The LXX text Paul uses differs from the Hebrew of Isaiah 10:23. The point: God's judgment will be thorough and final.

28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 10:22-23 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
29. Paul quotes Isaiah 1:9. The title kyrios sabaōth ('Lord of Hosts/Armies') transliterates the Hebrew YHWH Tseva'ot. The comparison with Sodom and Gomorrah — total destruction — emphasizes that even the remnant exists only by God's grace, not by human merit. The word sperma ('seed, offspring') echoes the Abrahamic promise.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 1:9. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. The irony is sharp: Gentiles who were not even trying to achieve righteousness received it, while Israel who was intensely pursuing it missed it. The verb katelaben ('obtained, grasped, attained') suggests catching something that was not being chased. The qualifier ek pisteōs ('from faith') identifies the kind of righteousness obtained.
31. The verb diōkōn ('pursuing') is the same verb used for pursuit in a race or persecution of an enemy — Israel was zealously, energetically chasing righteousness. The tragic verb ouk ephthasen ('did not arrive, did not reach') describes failure at the finish line. The phrase nomon dikaiosynēs ('law of righteousness') is debated — it may mean 'the law that would lead to righteousness' or 'the standard of righteousness.'
32. Paul diagnoses Israel's failure: wrong method, not wrong goal. They pursued righteousness as if (hōs) it could be achieved by works rather than received by faith. The verb prosekopsan ('stumbled against, struck against') introduces the stone metaphor that the following quotation develops. Israel's very zeal for the law became the obstacle to receiving the gospel.
33. Paul combines Isaiah 28:16 and Isaiah 8:14 — one text about a cornerstone, the other about a stumbling stone. The same Christ is both: a foundation for faith and an obstacle for unbelief. The promise 'will not be put to shame' (ou kataischynthēsetai) echoes 5:5 and 10:11. The pronoun ep' autō ('in him') personalizes the stone — it is not an abstract principle but Christ himself.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 28:16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

# 10

**Summary:** *Romans 10 continues Paul's argument about Israel. He affirms Israel's zeal for God while lamenting that it is not based on knowledge — they seek to establish their own righteousness rather than submitting to God's righteousness. Christ is the end (telos) of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Paul then presents the accessibility of the gospel through the 'word of faith' — no one needs to ascend to heaven or descend to the abyss, because the word is near, in your mouth and heart. Confession of Jesus as Lord and belief in his resurrection lead to salvation. The chapter concludes with the famous missionary logic: calling requires believing, believing requires hearing, hearing requires a preacher, preaching requires being sent. Paul ends by noting that Israel heard but did not obey.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *Verses 4 — 'Christ is the telos of the law' — is one of the most consequential verses for understanding Paul's theology of the law. The word telos can mean 'end' (termination), 'goal' (purpose), or 'fulfillment' (completion). Each reading has different theological implications. Verses 6-8 are a creative midrash on Deuteronomy 30:12-14, replacing the Torah with Christ. The preaching logic of verses 14-15 has been foundational to Christian missionary theology. The Isaiah 52:7 quotation ('how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news') has become iconic.*

**Translation Friction:** *The meaning of telos in verse 4 is the primary exegetical challenge. We render 'end' (culmination/goal) and note the range. The relationship between 'the righteousness of faith' (vv. 6-8) and Moses' words in Deuteronomy 30 is a bold hermeneutical move by Paul that has been variously assessed.*

**Connections:** *The Deuteronomy 30:12-14 reinterpretation (vv. 6-8) connects to Baruch 3:29-30. The missionary sending logic (vv. 14-15) cites Isaiah 52:7 and connects to Matthew 28:19-20. The 'word of faith' (v. 8) connects to the 'obedience of faith' bookend (1:5; 16:26). Isaiah 53:1 (v. 16), Psalm 19:4 (v. 18), Deuteronomy 32:21 (v. 19), and Isaiah 65:1-2 (vv. 20-21) all contribute.*

<sup>1</sup>Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. <sup>2</sup>For I can testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but it is not based on knowledge. <sup>3</sup>For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. <sup>4</sup>For Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. <sup>5</sup>For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law: "The person

who does these things will live by them." <sup>6</sup>But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" — that is, to bring Christ down — <sup>7</sup>or 'Who will go down into the depths below?' (that is, to bring Christ back from the dead). <sup>8</sup>But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" — that is, the word of faith that we proclaim. <sup>9</sup>That if you shalt confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt trust in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shalt be saved. <sup>10</sup>For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. <sup>11</sup>For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." <sup>12</sup>For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, richly blessing all who call on him. <sup>13</sup>For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." <sup>14</sup>How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? <sup>15</sup>And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" <sup>16</sup>But not all have obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" <sup>17</sup>So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. <sup>18</sup>But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have: "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." <sup>19</sup>But I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, "I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry." <sup>20</sup>Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me." <sup>21</sup>But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul reaffirms his personal anguish (cf. 9:1-3). The word *eudokia* ('desire, delight, good pleasure') expresses a deep longing of the will, not merely a wish. The fact that Paul prays for Israel's salvation implies it is still possible — they are not irreversibly rejected. Some manuscripts read 'for Israel' (hyper tou Israēl) rather than 'for them' (hyper autōn); the SBLGNT follows the shorter reading.
2. Paul speaks from personal experience — he himself had the same misdirected zeal before his conversion (Philippians 3:6; Galatians 1:14). The word *zēlon* ('zeal, jealousy, enthusiasm') is positive but insufficient. The word *epignōsin* ('full knowledge, recognition, understanding') with the *epi-* prefix implies accurate, deep comprehension rather than mere information.
3. The word *agnoontes* ('being ignorant, not recognizing') does not excuse Israel but diagnoses their error. The phrase *idian dikaiosynēn* ('their own righteousness') is righteousness achieved by human effort — Paul's pre-conversion pursuit (Philippians 3:9). The verb *hypētagēsan* ('submitted') suggests that receiving God's righteousness requires surrender of self-generated righteousness.
4. The word *telos* ('end, goal, culmination, fulfillment') is deliberately ambiguous: Christ is both the goal toward which the law pointed and the termination of the law as a means of achieving righteousness. We render 'culmination' to capture both dimensions. The qualifier *panti tō pisteuonti* ('to everyone who believes') universalizes the offer — not just Jews or just Gentiles but everyone. This verse is the theological hinge between Israel's failed pursuit (v. 3) and the accessibility of faith-righteousness (vv. 5-13).
5. Paul quotes Leviticus 18:5. The 'do and live' principle defines law-righteousness: perfect obedience yields life. But as Paul has shown (3:20; 7:7-13), no one actually achieves this. The law's righteousness is real but unattainable by sinful humanity. This sets up the contrast with faith-righteousness in the following verses.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 18:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Paul personifies faith-righteousness as a speaker and paraphrases Deuteronomy 30:12-14. In Moses' original context, the point was that the Torah was accessible — no one needed to go to heaven to find it. Paul applies the same accessibility to Christ: the gospel does not require impossible feats. The interpretive gloss 'that is, to bring Christ down' (*tout' estin Christon katagein*) replaces Moses' reference to the commandment with Christ.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 30:12-14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Deuteronomy 30:13 originally said 'who will cross the sea?' Paul substitutes 'the abyss' (*abyssos*), the realm of the dead, and interprets it as referring to Christ's resurrection. No human effort is needed to accomplish incarnation (v. 6) or resurrection (v. 7) — God has already done both. The gospel is near, not distant.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 30:12-14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 30:14. What Moses said about the Torah, Paul says about the gospel: it is near, accessible, ready to be received. The phrase *rhēma tēs pisteōs* ('word of faith') identifies the gospel message that demands and enables faith. The two locations — mouth and heart — correspond to the confession and belief of verse 9.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 30:12-14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. This is the earliest Christian confession formula. The verbal confession *kyrion Iēsoun* ('Jesus is Lord') was the baptismal declaration and the most concise summary of Christian faith. In the Roman world, 'Lord' (*kyrios*) was a title for Caesar; confessing Jesus as Lord was both a theological claim and a political act. The heart-belief specified is the resurrection — the historical event that vindicated Jesus' identity. Mouth (external confession) and heart (internal belief) together constitute saving faith.
10. Paul reverses the order of verse 9 (mouth/heart heart/mouth), creating a chiasmic structure. The two clauses are not describing two separate events but two dimensions of one reality: believing leads to righteousness (*dikaiosynēn*, justification), and confessing leads to salvation (*sōtērian*). These are not sequential steps but simultaneous aspects of faith.
11. Paul returns to Isaiah 28:16 (quoted in 9:33) but adds the crucial word *pas* ('everyone') — making the promise explicitly universal. No one who trusts Christ will be disappointed or disgraced. The verb *kataischynthēsetai* ('will be put to shame') has eschatological force: at the final judgment, those who believed will be vindicated.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 28:16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The phrase *ou diastolē* ('no distinction') echoes 3:22. The universality of sin (3:22-23) corresponds to the universality of salvation (10:12-13). The participle *ploutōn* ('being rich, bestowing richly') describes God's generosity as inexhaustible — there is enough grace for all who call.
13. Paul quotes Joel 2:32 (LXX 3:5). In Joel's original context, 'the Lord' (*kyrios*) translates YHWH. Paul applies this to Jesus as Lord — those who call on Jesus' name receive the salvation promised to those who call on YHWH's name. This is one of the clearest implicit affirmations of Christ's divine status in Paul's letters.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Joel 2:32 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. Paul constructs a chain of necessary conditions working backward from calling to believing to hearing to preaching. Each link depends on the prior one. The logic establishes the necessity of gospel proclamation — faith is not a spontaneous human achievement but a response to a proclaimed message. The Greek *hou ouk ēkousan* can mean 'whom they have not heard' (hearing Christ himself through the preacher) or 'of whom they have not heard' (hearing about Christ).
15. The chain's final link: preaching requires sending (*apostalōsin*, from *apostellō* — the root of 'apostle'). Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7, which describes messengers bringing news of Israel's return from exile. Paul applies it to gospel preachers. The SBLGNT has a shorter quotation than the KJV, omitting 'the gospel of peace' — which appears in the fuller Isaiah text.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 52:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The verb *hypēkousan* ('obeyed') equates believing the gospel with obeying it — consistent with the 'obedience of faith' framework (1:5; 16:26). Paul quotes Isaiah 53:1, the opening of the Suffering Servant passage. The word *akoē* ('what is heard, report, message') connects to the hearing-chain of verse 14. Isaiah's lament is that the message was proclaimed but not believed.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 53:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. Paul summarizes the chain: faith originates in hearing (*ex akoēs*), and hearing is mediated by the word of Christ (*dia rhēmatos Christou*). The SBLGNT reads 'word of Christ' (*Christou*) rather than the KJV's 'word of God' (*theou*) — the critical text attributes the gospel message specifically to Christ. The *rhēma* ('word, message, spoken word') is the concrete, proclaimed gospel.
18. Paul addresses a potential excuse: perhaps Israel did not hear. He refutes this with Psalm 19:4 (LXX 18:5), which originally described creation's testimony to God. Paul applies it to the gospel's proclamation — the message has reached everywhere. Israel's failure is not for lack of hearing.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 19:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. A second potential excuse: perhaps Israel did not understand. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 32:21 — God himself predicted that he would provoke Israel's jealousy through Gentile inclusion. The Gentiles, once considered 'no nation' (*ouk ethnei*) and 'foolish' (*asynetoi*), now receive what Israel rejected. This theme of provoking jealousy will be central to 11:11-14.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 32:21. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. Paul quotes Isaiah 65:1. The verb *apitolma* ('dares, is bold enough') acknowledges that Isaiah's statement is provocative. God was found by those not seeking him and revealed himself to those not asking — this is the Gentile experience of unexpected grace. The verbs are passive/reflexive from God's perspective: God actively reveals himself to those who had no claim on him.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 65:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

21. Paul quotes Isaiah 65:2. The image of God stretching out his hands (*exepetasa tas cheiras*) is one of the most poignant in Scripture — God reaching out, arms extended, to a people who refuse to come. The two adjectives *apeithonta* ('disobedient, rebellious') and *antilegonta* ('contradicting, opposing') describe Israel's active resistance, not passive ignorance. The chapter ends with this image of divine longing and human stubbornness — but the outstretched hands suggest God has not given up. This sets up chapter 11's argument.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 65:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

# 11

**Summary:** *Romans 11 resolves the Israel question. Paul asks: has God rejected his people? No — Paul himself is proof. A remnant exists by grace. The rest were hardened, but their stumbling has brought salvation to the Gentiles, which will in turn provoke Israel to jealousy. Using the olive tree metaphor, Paul warns Gentile believers not to boast against the natural branches — if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare the grafted ones either. Paul then reveals a mystery: a partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, and so all Israel will be saved. The chapter concludes with a doxology praising the depth of God's wisdom and knowledge.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *The 'mystery' of verse 25-26 is one of the most debated passages in the New Testament. 'All Israel will be saved' has been interpreted as (1) all ethnic Israel will eventually believe, (2) the elect from Israel across all generations, or (3) the full people of God (Jew and Gentile). The olive tree metaphor (vv. 17-24) is Paul's most vivid illustration of the relationship between Israel and the church — Gentile believers are grafted into Israel's olive tree, not the reverse. The concluding doxology (vv. 33-36) is one of the most sublime passages of theological worship in all of Scripture.*

**Translation Friction:** *The meaning of 'all Israel' (*pas Israēl*) in verse 26 is the central interpretive challenge. We render the Greek as given and note the range of interpretations. The olive tree metaphor involves botanically unusual grafting (wild branches onto a cultivated tree), which Paul himself acknowledges as 'contrary to nature' (v. 24).*

**Connections:** *The Elijah narrative (vv. 2-4) draws from 1 Kings 19:10-18. The hardening motif quotes Deuteronomy 29:4, Isaiah 29:10, and Psalm 69:22-23. The olive tree may allude to Jeremiah 11:16. The 'deliverer from Zion' quotation (v. 26) combines Isaiah 59:20-21 and Isaiah 27:9. The doxology echoes Isaiah 40:13 and Job 41:11.*

1I ask then, has God rejected his people? Absolutely not! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. 2God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says about Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? 3"Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have torn down your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life." 4But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5So too at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. 6But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. 7What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was pursuing. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, 8According as it is recorded, God has granted them the inner life of slumber, sight that they should not witness, and ears that they should not hear;) to this day. 9And David says: "Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them; 10Let their eyes grow dark so they cannot see, and let their backs be bent under the burden forever. 11So I ask, did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Absolutely not! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. 12Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! 13Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my physical nature, and may rescue some of them. 15For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? 16If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among them and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, 18Boast not opposed to the branches. But if you boast, you bearest not the root, but the root you. 19Then you will say, "Branches were

broken off so that I might be grafted in." <sup>20</sup>True enough. They were broken off because of their unbelief, and you stand by faith. So do not be arrogant, but be afraid. <sup>21</sup>For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. <sup>22</sup>Consider then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness toward you — provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. <sup>23</sup>And even they, if they do not persist in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. <sup>24</sup>For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree! <sup>25</sup>For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of this mystery — lest you be wise in your own sight — that a partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, <sup>26</sup>So all Israel will be saved — as it is written, There will come out of Sion the Deliverer, and will turn away ungodliness from Jacob: <sup>27</sup>"And this will be my covenant with them, when I take away their sins." <sup>28</sup>Regarding the gospel, they are enemies for your sake; but regarding election, they are beloved for the sake of the patriarchs. <sup>29</sup>For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. <sup>30</sup>For just as you were once disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, <sup>31</sup>In deed, even so have these also now not believed, that by way of your mercy they also may obtain mercy. <sup>32</sup>For God has consigned all to disobedience, so that he may have mercy on all. <sup>33</sup>Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how untraceable his ways! <sup>34</sup>Since who has known what the Lord is thinking? or who has been his advisor? <sup>35</sup>"Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" <sup>36</sup>Are all things — to whom be glory for ever, for of him, and through him, and to him. Amen.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *apōsato* ('pushed away, rejected') echoes the language of Psalm 94:14 (LXX 93:14): 'the LORD will not reject his people.' Paul offers himself as exhibit A: if God had rejected Israel, Paul — a thoroughbred Israelite — would not be an apostle. The tribe of Benjamin was significant: it remained loyal to the house of David and was the tribe of Israel's first king, Saul (Paul's namesake).
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 94:14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The verb *proegnō* ('foreknew') links back to 8:29 — God's foreknowledge is not mere advance awareness but relational choosing. A people whom God foreknew cannot be ultimately rejected. The verb *entynchanei* ('appeals, intercedes') is the same word used for Christ's intercession in 8:34, but here Elijah intercedes against Israel.
3. Paul quotes 1 Kings 19:10, 14 (with slight modifications from the LXX). Elijah's despair is absolute — he believes he is the sole remaining faithful person in Israel. The historical parallel to Paul's time is clear: apparent wholesale rejection of God's purposes.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Kings 19:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The word *chrēmatismos* ('divine reply, oracle') is a formal, authoritative response. God corrects Elijah's perception: seven thousand remained faithful. The verb *katelipon* ('I kept, I reserved for myself') is emphatic — God preserved the remnant by his own initiative. The phrase *emautō* ('for myself') makes the remnant God's personal possession. Paul quotes 1 Kings 19:18.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Kings 19:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Paul applies the Elijah precedent to his own era: just as God preserved seven thousand in Elijah's day, so now a remnant of Jewish believers exists. The phrase *kat' eklogēn charitos* ('according to the election of grace') identifies grace, not merit, as the basis of remnant membership.
6. Paul states the logical incompatibility of grace and works as bases for election. The SBLGNT omits the longer reading found in the KJV ('But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work'), which appears in later manuscripts. The principle is absolute: if the remnant is chosen by grace, works cannot be the basis — the two are mutually exclusive.
7. Paul distinguishes two groups within Israel: *hē eklogē* ('the elect,' the remnant that believed) and *hoi loipoi* ('the rest,' the majority). The verb *epōrōthēsan* ('were hardened, made callous') is a divine passive — God hardened them, as in 9:18. The word *pōrōsis* suggests the formation of a callus or the hardening of stone.
8. Paul combines Deuteronomy 29:4 (LXX) and Isaiah 29:10. The word *katanyxeōs* ('stupor, deep sleep, numbness') describes a spiritual insensibility — aware of God's truth yet unable to perceive it. The phrase *heōs tēs sēmeron hēmeras* ('until this present day') extends the condition from Moses and Isaiah's time to Paul's own.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 29:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 29:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. Paul quotes Psalm 69:22-23 (LXX 68:23-24), attributed to David. The 'table' (trapeza) may symbolize the Torah or the temple sacrifices — Israel's privileges become the very instruments of their ensnaring when they cling to them as substitutes for faith in Christ.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 69:22-23. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The continuation of Psalm 69:23. Darkened eyes and bent backs describe a people burdened and blinded. The phrase *dia pantos* ('forever, continually') seems final — but Paul will argue in the following verses that this hardening is not permanent. The Psalm's imprecatory language is applied typologically, not as Paul's personal wish.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 69:22-23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. Paul distinguishes between stumbling (*ptaiō*, a temporary misstep) and falling (*piptō*, a permanent collapse). Israel stumbled but did not fall permanently. The divine purpose behind Israel's trespass is twofold: (1) salvation goes to the Gentiles, and (2) Israel is provoked to jealousy by Gentile faith. This jealousy is redemptive, not destructive — it is meant to draw Israel back.
12. Another 'how much more' (*posō mallon*) argument: if Israel's rejection produced worldwide blessing, Israel's acceptance will produce something even greater. The word *plērōma* ('fullness, full number, full inclusion') is the positive counterpart to 'failure' (*hēttēma*) — the full restoration of Israel.
13. Paul turns to address the Gentile believers in Rome directly. The verb *doxazō* ('I glorify, magnify, honor') applied to his ministry means he takes his apostolic role seriously and exercises it strategically.
14. Paul reveals his strategy: by successfully evangelizing Gentiles, he hopes to provoke his fellow Jews (*mou tēn sarka*, 'my flesh,' i.e., his kinspeople) to jealousy. The modest 'some of them' (*tinas ex autōn*) is realistic — Paul does not expect all Israel to believe through his personal ministry.
15. The parallel is breathtaking: rejection (*apobolē*) world reconciliation; acceptance (*proslēmpsis*) life from the dead. The phrase *zōē ek nekrōn* ('life from the dead') may mean (1) the general resurrection at the end of the age, triggered by Israel's restoration, or (2) a spiritual renewal of extraordinary proportions. Either way, Israel's future restoration will produce something beyond what their rejection produced.
16. Two analogies making the same point: the part consecrates the whole. The 'firstfruits' (*aparchē*) and 'root' (*rhiza*) likely refer to the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob), whose consecration sanctifies their descendants (the 'lump' and 'branches'). The reference to Numbers 15:17-21, where a portion of dough was offered to consecrate the whole batch, supports this reading.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 15:17-21. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The olive tree metaphor begins. The natural branches (Israel) were partially broken off; the wild olive shoot (Gentile believers) was grafted in. The word *tines* ('some') is crucial — not all branches were broken off. The Gentile believer shares in (*synkoinōnos*, 'co-partaker of') the root's richness. The olive tree represents the covenant people of God, rooted in the patriarchs.
18. The verb *katakauchō* ('boast against, exult over') is a compound suggesting boasting at the expense of others. The corrective is theologically fundamental: Gentile Christians are supported by Israel's heritage ('the root bears you'), not the reverse. The church does not replace Israel but is grafted into Israel's covenant story.
19. Paul voices the Gentile believer's triumphalist logic: Israel's rejection was for our benefit. While there is a partial truth (cf. v. 11), the tone of self-congratulation is dangerous.
20. Paul concedes the factual point (*kalōs*, 'true enough, granted') but redirects the conclusion. The dative *pistei* ('by faith') is the only basis for the Gentile believer's standing — not ethnic merit or moral superiority. The imperative *phobou* ('fear, be afraid') is a warning: the same God who broke off natural branches can break off grafted ones.
21. The verb *epheisato* ('spared') echoes 8:32, where God 'did not spare his own Son.' The argument from lesser to greater: if God did not spare the natural (*kata physin*) branches who had prior claim, Gentile grafts should not presume on his patience.
22. The word *chrēstotēta* ('kindness, goodness') and *apotomia* ('severity, sternness' — literally 'cutting off') describe two aspects of God's character, both equally real. The conditional *ean epimenēs* ('if you continue') introduces a genuine warning: standing in grace is maintained by continuing in faith. The threat *ekkopēsē* ('you will be cut off') is addressed to Gentile believers corporately.
23. The door remains open: Israel's unbelief is not a permanent condition but can be reversed. The phrase *dynatos estin ho theos* ('God is able') appeals to divine power — the same God who raised the dead (4:17) can restore broken branches.
24. Paul acknowledges the botanical oddity: grafting wild stock onto cultivated stock is *para physin* ('contrary to nature') — normally the reverse is done. If God performed this unnatural grafting for Gentiles, how much more easily can he regraft Israel's own natural branches into their own tree. The phrase *tē idia elaiā* ('their own olive tree') is poignant — Israel belongs to this tree.

- 25.** Paul uses his disclosure formula (cf. 1:13) to reveal a *mystērion* ('mystery') — not something secret but something previously hidden now revealed. The mystery has three elements: (1) the hardening is partial (*apo merous*, 'from a part'), (2) it is temporary (*achris hou*, 'until'), and (3) its terminus is the entry of 'the fullness of the Gentiles' (to *plērōma tōn ethnōn*). The purpose of revealing this mystery is to prevent Gentile arrogance (en *heautois phronimoi*, 'wise in your own estimation').
- 26.** The phrase *pas Israēl* ('all Israel') is the interpretive crux. The word *houtōs* ('in this way, thus') points to the process described: through the dynamic of Gentile fullness provoking Jewish response. Paul quotes Isaiah 59:20-21 with modifications. 'The Deliverer' (*ho rhyomenos*) is Christ at his return. 'All Israel' most likely refers to the ethnic nation as a whole (not every individual but the nation as an entity), consistent with the Mishnaic usage of 'all Israel' (Sanhedrin 10:1).
- 26.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 59:20-21. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 27.** Paul quotes from Isaiah 27:9 (LXX), connecting it to the new covenant promise. The word *diathēkē* ('covenant') echoes Jeremiah 31:31-34 — the new covenant includes the forgiveness of sins. Israel's salvation will be a covenant act of divine grace, not human achievement.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 59:20-21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 27:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 31:31-34. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** Paul holds two realities in tension: in terms of their present response to the gospel, unbelieving Israel is in opposition (*echthroi*, 'enemies'); in terms of God's eternal purpose, they remain *agapētoi* ('beloved'). The ground of their belovedness is not their own merit but the patriarchs — God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- 29.** The word *ametamelēta* ('irrevocable, without regret, not to be taken back') is the theological anchor: God does not revoke his gifts or calling. What was given to Israel (the privileges listed in 9:4-5) remains theirs. God's faithfulness to his covenant promises is permanent.
- 30.** Paul traces a providential pattern: Gentile disobedience → Gentile mercy (through Israel's faithfulness in preserving Scripture and producing the Messiah); Israel's disobedience → Gentile mercy (through the gospel going to the nations). The verb *ēpēthēsate* ('were disobedient') and *ēlēthēte* ('received mercy') summarize the Gentile journey.
- 31.** The pattern continues: Israel's present disobedience serves the purpose of their future mercy. The phrase *tō hymeterō eleēi* ('by the mercy shown to you') means that Gentile mercy provokes Jewish jealousy (v. 11), which leads to Jewish mercy. The word *nyn* ('now') appears twice in some manuscripts — the SBLGNT includes both, emphasizing present-tense mercy.
- 32.** The verb *synekleisen* ('shut up together, imprisoned, consigned') presents God as deliberately allowing universal disobedience — not because he delights in sin but because universal disobedience is the prerequisite for universal mercy. If anyone could claim self-achieved righteousness, mercy would be unnecessary. The double *tous pantas* ('all...all') encompasses both Jew and Gentile. This verse is the theological conclusion of chapters 9-11 and arguably of Romans 1-11.
- 33.** Paul erupts into doxology. The exclamation *ō bathos* ('O depth!') expresses wonder at the fathomless nature of God's plan. Three divine attributes are celebrated: *ploutou* ('riches' — abundance of resources), *sophias* ('wisdom' — skill in deploying resources), and *gnōseōs* ('knowledge' — comprehensive awareness). The adjectives *anexeraunēta* ('unsearchable, beyond investigation') and *anexichniastoi* ('untraceable, beyond tracking') mean God's ways cannot be fully mapped by human reason.
- 34.** Paul quotes Isaiah 40:13 (LXX). The rhetorical questions expect the answer 'no one.' God does not consult advisors; his wisdom is self-generated. This is not an anti-intellectual statement but a confession that divine wisdom exceeds human capacity.
- 34.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 40:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 35.** Paul alludes to Job 41:11. No one has put God in their debt. God is the ultimate source; all things flow from him. The verb *proedōken* ('gave first, gave in advance') implies a prior gift that creates obligation — no such gift exists. God's mercy is free because no one can establish a prior claim.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Job 41:11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 36.** The threefold prepositional phrase encompasses all reality: *ex autou* ('from him' — origin), *di' autou* ('through him' — sustenance), *eis auton* ('to him' — destination). All things come from God, are sustained by God, and exist for God's glory. The doxology 'to him be glory forever, Amen' brings the theological argument of chapters 1-11 to a fitting conclusion before the ethical exhortations of chapters 12-16 begin.

## 12

**Summary:** *Romans 12 marks the transition from theological argument (chapters 1-11) to ethical exhortation (chapters 12-16). Paul urges believers to present their bodies as living sacrifices and to be transformed by the renewing of their minds (vv. 1-2). He then addresses the body of Christ: each member has different gifts — prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, mercy — and all should function within their calling. The chapter concludes with a series of rapid-fire ethical instructions about genuine love, honoring one another, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, overcoming evil with good, and living at peace with everyone.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *Verses 1-2 function as the hinge of the entire letter — the 'therefore' (oun) connects all of chapters 1-11 to all of chapters 12-16. The theological indicative becomes the ethical imperative. The concept of 'living sacrifice' (thysia zōsa) is a deliberate paradox: sacrifices are normally dead. Paul redefines worship from temple ritual to total-life offering. The phrase 'be transformed by the renewing of your mind' (metamorphousthe tē anakainōsei tou noos) uses the same verb as Christ's transfiguration (Mark 9:2). The rapid ethical commands of vv. 9-21 echo the Sermon on the Mount and Proverbs.*

**Translation Friction:** *The phrase logikēn latreian (v. 1) is difficult: 'rational worship,' 'spiritual worship,' or 'reasonable service'? Each translation captures a different dimension. We render 'true and proper worship' but note the alternatives. The gifts list (vv. 6-8) is not systematic or exhaustive — it differs from 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4.*

**Connections:** *The living sacrifice language (v. 1) transforms Old Testament sacrificial theology (Leviticus 1-7). The body metaphor (vv. 4-5) parallels 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. The 'overcome evil with good' (v. 21) echoes Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:38-48. The command to bless persecutors (v. 14) directly reflects Jesus' words (Luke 6:28).*

<sup>1</sup>Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good, pleasing, and perfect. <sup>3</sup>For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you: do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. <sup>4</sup>For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup>So we, being numerous, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of yet another. <sup>6</sup>Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: if prophecy, in proportion to faith; <sup>7</sup>Or ministry, let us remain on our ministering — or he that teaches, on teaching. <sup>8</sup>Or he that exhorteth, on encouragement — he that gives, allow him do it with generosity. He that ruleth, with diligence. He that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. <sup>9</sup>Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. <sup>10</sup>Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup>Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice in hope, be patient in affliction, be persistent in prayer. <sup>13</sup>Contribute to the needs of the saints and pursue hospitality. <sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup>Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. <sup>17</sup>Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of everyone. <sup>18</sup>If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all people. <sup>19</sup>Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord." <sup>20</sup>To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on his head." <sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb parastēsai ('to present, offer') is the same word used for presenting sacrifices at the altar (cf. 6:13). Three adjectives describe the sacrifice: zōsan ('living' — not dead), hagian ('holy' — set apart for God), euareston ('pleasing' — acceptable to God). The phrase logikēn latreian is notoriously difficult. We render 'true and proper worship,' capturing both the rational and the fitting dimensions.

2. Two contrasting verbs: *sychēmatizesthe* ('be conformed, shaped by external pressure') and *metamorphousthe* ('be transformed, changed from within'). The first suggests external molding; the second suggests organic, internal change. The word *aïōni* ('age') refers to the present world-system, not geography. The verb *dokimazein* ('to test, prove, discern') means evaluating and approving what is genuinely excellent. Three adjectives describe God's will: *agathon* ('good'), *euaireston* ('pleasing'), *teleion* ('perfect, complete, mature').
3. Paul uses four forms of the *phronein* ('think, have a mindset') word group in rapid succession — a wordplay impossible to reproduce in English. The compound *hyperphronein* ('to over-think, to think arrogantly') is contrasted with *sōphronein* ('to think soundly, soberly'). The 'measure of faith' (*metron pisteōs*) determines one's function within the body — different gifts reflect different allocations of faith.
4. Paul introduces the body metaphor he develops more extensively in 1 Corinthians 12. The word *praxin* ('function, activity, practice') emphasizes that different members have different roles — diversity of function is by design.
5. The phrase *en Christō* ('in Christ') defines the sphere in which the many become one. The phrase *allēlōn melē* ('members of one another') emphasizes mutual interdependence — each believer belongs not just to the body but to every other member.
6. The word *charismata* ('gifts of grace') shares the root of *charis* ('grace') — gifts are grace-given, not self-generated. The phrase *analogian tēs pisteōs* ('proportion of faith') means prophecy should be exercised within the bounds of sound faith, not exceeding one's measure.
7. The word *diakonian* ('service, ministry') is the root of 'deacon.' Paul's instruction is simple: whatever your gift, devote yourself to it. The repeated *en* ('in') construction emphasizes focus and dedication to one's calling.
8. Three gifts receive qualifiers: giving should be done *en haplotēti* ('with generosity, sincerity, simplicity'), leading *en spoudē* ('with diligence, eagerness, earnestness'), and mercy *en hilarotēti* ('with cheerfulness, gladness'). The last word gives us 'hilarity' — mercy should not be grudging but joyful. The list covers intellectual (prophecy, teaching), practical (service, giving, leadership), and relational (exhortation, mercy) gifts.
9. The adjective *anypokritos* ('genuine, unhypocritical, without pretense') contains the root *hypokrisis* ('hypocrisy, play-acting'). Love must be real, not performed. The verb *apostygountes* ('abhorring, detesting viscerally') is a strong word — revulsion, not mere disapproval. The verb *kollōmenoi* ('clinging to, being glued to') suggests adhesion — goodness should stick.
10. The word *philadelphia* ('brotherly love') and *philostorgoi* ('warmly affectionate') combine family love terms. The phrase *allēlous proēgoumenoi* ('outdoing one another, taking the lead in honoring') creates a competition of generosity rather than self-promotion.
11. Three rapid commands: negative (not *oknēroi*, 'lazy, sluggish'), positive (*zeontes*, 'boiling, on fire' — the Spirit is compared to boiling water), and directional (*douleuontes*, 'serving as a slave to the Lord'). Some manuscripts read 'serving the time' (*kairō*) instead of 'serving the Lord' (*kyriō*), but the SBLGNT reads *kyriō*.
12. Three more rapid commands forming a triad: hope rejoicing (looking forward), affliction patience (enduring the present), prayer persistence (sustained communion with God). The verb *proskarterountes* ('persisting, being devoted to, not giving up') implies consistent, unwavering prayer.
13. The verb *koinōnountes* ('sharing, participating in, contributing to') implies personal involvement, not distant charity. The verb *diōkontes* ('pursuing, chasing after') is the same verb used for pursuing righteousness (9:30) — hospitality should be actively sought out, not merely offered when convenient. The word *philoxenian* ('hospitality, love of strangers') was a crucial virtue in the ancient world where travelers depended on hosts.
14. This directly echoes Jesus' teaching (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:28). The verb *eulogeite* ('bless, speak well of, invoke good upon') is the opposite of *katarasthe* ('curse, invoke evil upon'). The repetition of 'bless' (*eulogeite kai mē katarasthe*) emphasizes the command — the natural response to persecution is cursing; the Christ-shaped response is blessing.
15. Two infinitives of purpose expressing empathy: shared joy and shared grief. The simplicity of the command belies its difficulty — it is often harder to rejoice with others' success than to weep with their sorrow. Both require genuine emotional identification with another person.
16. Three commands about social orientation: (1) to *auto phronountes* ('think the same thing' — unity of mind), (2) *tois tapeinois synapagomenoi* ('being carried along with the humble' — identifying with those of low status), (3) *mē ginesthe phronimoi par' heautois* ('do not become wise in your own eyes' — quoting Proverbs 3:7). The word *tapeinois* can be masculine ('humble people') or neuter ('humble things').
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Proverbs 3:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The prohibition against retaliation (*kakon anti kakou*, 'evil in exchange for evil') echoes 1 Thessalonians 5:15 and 1 Peter 3:9. The verb *pronoumenoi* ('giving thought to, planning for, considering in advance') suggests that honorable conduct requires deliberate planning, not merely spontaneous reaction. Paul quotes Proverbs 3:4 (LXX).
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Proverbs 3:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The double qualifier — *ei dynaton* ('if possible') and to *ex hymōn* ('so far as it depends on you') — is realistic: peace is not always achievable because it requires two willing parties. The believer's responsibility is to do everything within their power to maintain peace while recognizing that others may refuse.
19. The address *agapētoi* ('beloved') softens the stern command. The phrase *dote topon tē orgē* ('give place to the wrath') means step aside and let God handle justice. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 32:35. Relinquishing vengeance is not passive acceptance of injustice but active trust that God will judge

rightly.

19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 32:35. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. Paul quotes Proverbs 25:21-22. The 'burning coals' (anthrakas pyros) metaphor is debated: it may mean (1) causing the enemy's shame and repentance, (2) an Egyptian ritual of carrying coals on the head as a sign of contrition, or (3) intensifying divine judgment. The context (overcoming evil with good, v. 21) favors the redemptive reading — kindness produces contrition.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Proverbs 25:21-22 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The chapter's concluding command summarizes the entire ethical section's approach: the Christian response to evil is not passive acceptance or retaliatory violence but active goodness that defeats evil on its own terms. The verb *nika* ('conquer, overcome, prevail') uses battle language — this is spiritual warfare waged with the weapons of kindness, generosity, and love.

# 13

**Summary:** *Romans 13 addresses three topics: the believer's relationship to governing authorities (vv. 1-7), the debt of love that fulfills the law (vv. 8-10), and the urgency of the present eschatological moment (vv. 11-14). Paul argues that governing authorities are instituted by God and serve as his agents for order; therefore believers should submit, pay taxes, and give proper respect. He then summarizes the law's commands under the single command to love one's neighbor. The chapter concludes with an appeal to wake from sleep, cast off the works of darkness, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *The passage on governing authorities (vv. 1-7) is one of the most consequential and controversial texts in Christian political theology. Written to Christians in Rome — the seat of imperial power — it enjoins submission to the very government that would soon persecute them under Nero. The passage must be read alongside Revelation 13 (where the state is the beast), Acts 5:29 ('we must obey God rather than men'), and the broader biblical witness about unjust governments. The love-fulfills-the-law argument (vv. 8-10) is remarkably concise and anticipates the fuller treatment in Galatians 5:14.*

**Translation Friction:** *The scope of submission to governing authorities (vv. 1-7) has been extensively debated. Paul's statement appears absolute but was written in a specific context (the relatively stable early years of Nero's reign) and must be balanced with the rest of Scripture. We render the text as given without limiting or extending its application. The clause 'there is no authority except from God' (v. 1) has been used to justify tyranny; this is a misreading that ignores the purpose clause (v. 4) — authorities are God's servants for good.*

**Connections:** *The submission to authorities echoes Jesus' 'render to Caesar' teaching (Mark 12:17) and 1 Peter 2:13-17. The love-command summary (v. 9) quotes Leviticus 19:18, as does Jesus (Mark 12:31) and James (James 2:8). The 'put on Christ' language (v. 14) connects to Galatians 3:27 and the baptismal 'clothing with Christ.' The eschatological urgency (vv. 11-12) echoes 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8.*

<sup>1</sup>Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been established by God. <sup>2</sup>Therefore whoever resists the authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. <sup>3</sup>For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval, <sup>4</sup>Since he is the minister of God to you for good. But if you do that which is evil, be afraid. Since he beareth not the sword in vain — since he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. <sup>5</sup>Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. <sup>6</sup>For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. <sup>7</sup>Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed. <sup>8</sup>Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup>For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>10</sup>Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. <sup>11</sup>Besides this, you know the time, that the hour has already come for

you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. <sup>12</sup>The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. <sup>13</sup>Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup>Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *pasa psychē* ('every soul, every person') includes all believers without exception. The verb *hypotassethō* ('be subject, be subordinate') is a military term for ranking under authority. The passive *tetagmenai* ('have been established, ordered, arranged') attributes the existence of governing structures to God's providential ordering. This does not mean every governmental action is divinely approved but that the institution of governance itself is God's provision for human society.
2. The verb *antitassomenos* ('resists, opposes, sets oneself against') uses the same root as *hypotassō* in verse 1 — it is the opposite of submission. The word *krima* ('judgment') here likely means judgment from the governing authority (cf. vv. 3-4) rather than eternal damnation — the KJV's 'damnation' is too strong.
3. Paul describes the ideal function of government: rewarding good and punishing evil. This describes how government should function and often does function, not an absolute guarantee. When government reverses these functions — punishing good and rewarding evil — other biblical principles (obedience to God above all, prophetic critique of injustice) come into play.
4. The word *diakonos* ('servant, minister') is used twice: the governing authority serves God's purposes. The phrase *tēn machairan phorei* ('bears the sword') refers to the government's authority to use coercive force, including capital punishment. The word *ekdikos* ('avenger, agent of justice') describes the government as executing a function that belongs ultimately to God (12:19). Paul draws a direct line between God's wrath (1:18; 2:5) and its earthly administration through government.
5. Paul gives two motivations for submission: fear of punishment (*dia tēn orgēn*, 'because of wrath') and moral conviction (*dia tēn syneidēsin*, 'because of conscience'). The higher motivation is conscience — knowing that submission to legitimate authority is right before God.
6. The word *leitourgoi* ('ministers, public servants') is a cultic/liturgical term (from which we get 'liturgy') — governing authorities perform a kind of divine service. The verb *proskarterountes* ('attending to, being devoted to') suggests diligent, sustained attention to governing duties.
7. The word *opheilas* ('what is owed, debts') connects to the 'debt of love' in verse 8. Paul lists four obligations: *phoron* ('direct taxes, tribute'), *telos* ('indirect taxes, customs, tolls'), *phobon* ('fear, respect'), and *timēn* ('honor'). The movement from financial to personal obligations broadens the scope of civic duty. This echoes Jesus' 'render to Caesar' teaching (Mark 12:17).
8. The transition from civic obligations (v. 7) to love's obligation (v. 8) uses the same vocabulary of 'owing' (*opheilete*). All debts can be discharged except one: the debt of love, which remains perpetually outstanding. The perfect tense *peplērōken* ('has fulfilled') indicates that love is the complete and ongoing fulfillment of the law's demands.
9. Paul lists four of the Ten Commandments (all from the 'second table' — obligations to neighbor) and subsumes them under Leviticus 19:18. The verb *anakephalaioitai* ('is summed up, is recapitulated, is brought under one heading') means love is not a replacement for the specific commands but their summary and fulfillment. The SBLGNT omits 'you shall not bear false witness,' which appears in some manuscripts.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 20:13-17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 19:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Paul states love's relationship to the law in both negative (does no harm) and positive (fulfills) terms. The word *plērōma* ('fulfillment, completion, fullness') is the same word used for the 'fullness of the Gentiles' (11:25) and the 'fullness of Christ' (Ephesians 4:13). Love fills up the law's requirements completely.
11. The word *kairon* ('time, season, decisive moment') denotes not clock time (*chronos*) but the strategic, eschatological moment. The metaphor of sleep (*hypnos*) represents spiritual complacency. The word *sōtēria* ('salvation') here refers to the consummation — the return of Christ and final redemption — which draws closer with each passing day.
12. Two metaphors: clothing (casting off/putting on) and light/darkness. The 'night' is the present evil age; the 'day' is the coming age of Christ's return. The word *hopla* ('armor, weapons') — the same word from 6:13 — indicates that the Christian life is a battle requiring divine equipment. Light is not merely moral goodness but the radiance of the approaching day.
13. The adverb *euschēmonōs* ('properly, decently, honorably') means living as if the day has already arrived. Three pairs of vices are listed: *kōmois/methais* ('orgies/drunkenness' — excesses of consumption), *koitais/aselgeiais* ('sexual immorality/sensuality' — excesses of the body), *eridi/zēlō* ('quarreling/jealousy' — excesses of the ego). The word *koitais* (literally 'beds') is a euphemism for illicit sexual activity.
14. The metaphor of 'putting on' (*endysasthe*) Christ echoes the baptismal language of Galatians 3:27 — Christ is the garment that covers and transforms the believer. The phrase *tēs sarkos pronoian mē poieisthe* ('do not make provision for the flesh') means do not plan or prepare for sin — starve the flesh of opportunity. This verse was famously the one that Augustine read in the garden at his conversion (Confessions VIII.12.29), which immediately ended his struggle with sexual temptation.

## 14

**Summary:** *Romans 14 addresses disputes between the 'weak' and 'strong' within the Roman church over food restrictions and the observance of special days. Paul argues that both positions are legitimate expressions of faith and that neither group should despise or judge the other, since each person stands or falls before their own Lord. The chapter establishes key principles: the kingdom of God is not about food and drink but about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit; each person will give an account to God; and no one should put a stumbling block before a brother or sister for whom Christ died.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *Paul's pastoral approach here is remarkable for its balance. He clearly agrees with the 'strong' that all foods are clean (v. 14, 'I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself'), yet he devotes the entire chapter to urging the strong not to use their correct theology as a weapon against the weak. The twice-repeated 'Christ died and lived again' formula (vv. 9, 15) grounds the ethics of tolerance in Christology. The quotation of Isaiah 45:23 (v. 11) — a monotheistic confession in Isaiah — is applied to Christ as the one before whom every knee will bow.*

**Translation Friction:** *The identity of the 'weak' and 'strong' is debated. The weak may be Jewish Christians maintaining Torah food laws, Gentile Christians influenced by ascetic philosophy, or a mixed group with various scruples. Paul does not fully identify them, and the labels 'weak' and 'strong' may reflect the groups' own self-designations or Paul's assessment. The statement 'nothing is unclean in itself' (v. 14) appears to set aside Levitical food laws entirely, which raises questions about the continuity of Torah for Jewish believers.*

**Connections:** *The 'weak and strong' discussion parallels 1 Corinthians 8-10 (food offered to idols). The phrase 'we do not live to ourselves' (v. 7) echoes Galatians 2:20. The Isaiah 45:23 quotation (v. 11) is also used in Philippians 2:10-11. The 'stumbling block' language (v. 13) connects to the stumbling stone of 9:32-33. The kingdom language (v. 17) echoes Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God.*

<sup>1</sup>As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. <sup>2</sup>One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. <sup>3</sup>Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. <sup>4</sup>Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. <sup>5</sup>One person considers one day more sacred than another, while another considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. <sup>6</sup>The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. <sup>7</sup>For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. <sup>8</sup>For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. <sup>9</sup>For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. <sup>10</sup>Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. <sup>11</sup>And every tongue will confess to God, for it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to me. <sup>12</sup>So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. <sup>13</sup>Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. <sup>14</sup>I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it is unclean. <sup>15</sup>For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. <sup>16</sup>So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. <sup>17</sup>For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup>Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by others. <sup>19</sup>So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. <sup>20</sup>Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. <sup>21</sup>It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. <sup>22</sup>The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no

reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. <sup>23</sup>But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

#### TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *proslambanesthe* ('welcome, accept, receive into fellowship') is the same word used for God's acceptance of believers (v. 3, 15:7). The phrase *diakriseis dialogismou* ('quarrels over opinions, disputes about doubtful matters') indicates that the issues in question are matters of conscience, not core doctrine.
2. The 'strong' believer's faith extends to all foods without restriction. The 'weak' believer restricts their diet to vegetables (*lachana*), likely to avoid any possibility of eating unclean meat or meat associated with idol sacrifice. The vegetarian practice appears to be a strategy of avoidance rather than a principled vegetarianism.
3. Paul identifies the characteristic sins of each group: the strong tend to *exoutheneito* ('despise, look down on, treat with contempt') the weak as backward, while the weak tend to *krineteo* ('judge, condemn') the strong as worldly. Both responses are forbidden because God has welcomed (*proselabeto*) both.
4. The metaphor is from household slavery: a servant (*oiketen*, 'household slave') answers to his own master, not to another household's slaves. The believer's 'master' (*kyrio*) is Christ. The promise 'he will be upheld' (*stathesetai*) expresses confidence that God sustains his servants even when they err on secondary matters.
5. A second issue emerges: the observance of special days, likely Sabbaths and Jewish festivals. Paul's approach is the same as with food — both positions are acceptable. The verb *plerophoreitho* ('be fully convinced, be fully assured') demands that each person act from genuine conviction, not from peer pressure or unexamined habit.
6. Paul's criterion is not the practice itself but the intention behind it: both the one who eats and the one who abstains do so *kyrio* ('to the Lord, for the Lord'). The act of thanksgiving (*eucharistei to theo*) is the evidence that both practices are oriented toward God. The SBLGNT omits the clause about the one who does not observe the day, found in some manuscripts.
7. This verse universalizes the principle: the Christian life in its entirety — living and dying — belongs to the Lord, not to the individual. Self-autonomy is displaced by christological ownership.
8. The threefold repetition builds to the climactic declaration *tou kyriou esmen* ('we belong to the Lord'). This ownership by Christ is the basis for Christian freedom from human judgment — since we belong to the Lord, only his verdict matters. The structure is liturgical, almost creedal.
9. The SBLGNT has the shorter reading: 'died and lived' (*apethanen kai ezesen*) rather than 'died, rose, and lived' in the Textus Receptus. The purpose of Christ's death and resurrection is lordship (*kyrieuse*) over all human existence, encompassing death and life. This lordship is the basis for his exclusive right to judge his servants.
10. Paul addresses both groups in turn — the judging weak and the despising strong — using the second person singular for direct challenge. The phrase *bemati tou theou* ('judgment seat of God') refers to the eschatological tribunal. The SBLGNT reads 'God' rather than 'Christ' (found in some manuscripts), though both refer to the same judgment.
11. Paul quotes Isaiah 45:23, prefaced with the oath formula from Isaiah 49:18 ('As I live'). In Isaiah, YHWH declares that every knee will bow to him — the ultimate monotheistic claim. Paul applies this to the final judgment, where God (through Christ, as in Philippians 2:10-11) will be the universal judge.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 45:23. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 49:18. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The phrase *logon dosei* ('will give an account, will render a word') is judicial language — each person will explain their life directly to God. The emphasis on 'himself' (*heautou*) makes judging others irrelevant: focus on your own account, not your neighbor's.
13. Paul plays on the word *krinomen* ('judge'): stop judging each other and instead make a judgment (*krinate*) about your own behavior. The terms *proskomma* ('stumbling block') and *skandalon* ('hindrance, trap, cause of falling') refer to actions that cause a weaker believer to violate their conscience.
14. Paul reveals his own position: he sides with the strong. The double attestation 'I know and am persuaded' (*oida kai pepeismai*) is emphatic. The word *koinon* ('common, unclean') is the technical term for ritually impure food (cf. Mark 7:2, Acts 10:14). Yet Paul immediately qualifies: if someone's conscience regards a food as unclean, for that person it is unclean. Conscience has real moral authority even when objectively mistaken.
15. The verb *lypeitai* ('is grieved, is distressed') indicates real spiritual harm, not mere annoyance. The command 'do not destroy' (*me apollye*) uses a strong word — *apollymi* means to ruin or bring to utter loss. The climactic phrase 'for whom Christ died' (*hyper hou Christos apethanen*) is the ultimate argument: if Christ valued this person enough to die for them, how can you not sacrifice a food preference for them?

16. The 'good' (to agathon) refers to the strong believer's legitimate freedom. The verb blasphemeistho ('be blasphemed, be spoken evil of') indicates that misusing freedom provokes others to slander the faith. Freedom exercised without love becomes a scandal.
17. This is one of Paul's rare uses of 'the kingdom of God' (he basileia tou theou), a phrase more common in the Gospels. The triad of dikaiosyne ('righteousness'), eirene ('peace'), and chara ('joy') defines the kingdom's essence in relational rather than ritual terms. The phrase 'in the Holy Spirit' (en pneumati hagio) indicates that these qualities are Spirit-produced, not humanly achieved.
18. Serving Christ 'in this' (en touto) — in righteousness, peace, and joy — gains both divine acceptance (euairestos to theo) and human approval (dokimos tois anthropois). The word dokimos ('approved, tested and found genuine') is a technical term for metals that have passed the assayer's test.
19. The verb diokomen ('let us pursue') is the same word used for pursuing hospitality (12:13) — peace and mutual edification require active effort. The word oikodomes ('building up, edification') is an architectural metaphor: the community is a building under construction, and every member's actions either build it up or tear it down.
20. The phrase to ergon tou theou ('the work of God') refers to the believing community or the individual believer — both are God's workmanship. Paul again affirms the strong position: panta kathara ('all things are clean,' echoing Jesus' teaching in Mark 7:19). Yet clean food becomes a moral problem when it causes others to stumble.
21. Paul extends the principle beyond food to wine and 'anything' (the open-ended category) that might cause a brother to stumble. The word kalon ('good, noble, right') describes the moral quality of voluntary self-restriction for the sake of others. The SBLGNT has a shorter reading than the Textus Receptus.
22. Paul addresses the strong: your freedom is real, but it is between you and God — do not flaunt it. The macarism ('blessed is') describes the person whose conscience is clear about their choices. The verb dokimazei ('approves, tests and approves') indicates thoughtful, examined freedom rather than careless license.
23. The verb diakrinomenos ('doubting, hesitating, being divided in mind') describes an unsettled conscience. The principle is profound: acting against one's conscience, even if the action is objectively permissible, is sin because it does not proceed from faith. The closing maxim — 'whatever is not from faith is sin' — has broad application beyond food disputes: it establishes conscience informed by faith as the necessary basis for all Christian conduct.

# 15

**Summary:** *Romans 15 concludes the 'weak and strong' discussion by pointing to Christ as the ultimate example of bearing with others rather than pleasing oneself. Paul grounds mutual acceptance in Scripture, citing a chain of Old Testament texts that promise the inclusion of the Gentiles in God's praise. He then describes his own apostolic ministry as a priestly service bringing the Gentile offering to God, recounts his missionary strategy of preaching where Christ has not been named, and outlines his travel plans — first to Jerusalem with the collection from Macedonia and Achaia, then to Rome en route to Spain. The chapter closes with an urgent request for prayer as Paul faces danger in Judea.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *The density of Old Testament quotations in vv. 9-12 is striking: Paul strings together Psalm 18:49, Deuteronomy 32:43, Psalm 117:1, and Isaiah 11:10 in rapid succession, all demonstrating that Gentile inclusion was always God's plan. Paul's self-description as a 'priestly minister' (leitourgon, v. 16) performing the 'priestly service' (hierourgounta) of the gospel is unique in his letters — he reimagines his apostolic mission in cultic terms, with the Gentiles themselves as the acceptable offering. The collection for Jerusalem (vv. 25-27) represents Paul's concrete attempt to bind Jewish and Gentile churches together, and his anxiety about its reception (v. 31) reveals the real tensions in the early church.*

**Translation Friction:** *Paul's claim to have 'fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ' from Jerusalem to Illyricum (v. 19) raises historical questions — did Paul personally evangelize every region, or does he mean he established representative churches? His planned trip to Spain (v. 24, 28) is mentioned nowhere else in the undisputed letters, and whether he ever reached Spain remains debated. The collection's theological logic (v. 27) — Gentiles owe material gifts because they received spiritual blessings — has been read as either a voluntary gesture of gratitude or an obligatory debt.*

*Connections: The 'bearing with the weak' theme (vv. 1-3) directly continues chapter 14 and parallels 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. Christ quoting Psalm 69:9 (v. 3) connects to John 2:17. The Isaiah 11:10 citation (v. 12) links to the 'root of Jesse' in Revelation 5:5 and 22:16. The collection for Jerusalem (vv. 25-28) is discussed in detail in 2 Corinthians 8-9 and referenced in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 and Galatians 2:10. Paul's request for prayer (vv. 30-32) foreshadows the events of Acts 21:27-36.*

<sup>1</sup>Now we who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. <sup>2</sup>Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. <sup>3</sup>For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." <sup>4</sup>For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. <sup>5</sup>May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>so that together, with one voice, you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup>Therefore welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. <sup>8</sup>For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, <sup>9</sup>and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "For this reason I will praise you among the nations, and sing to your name." <sup>10</sup>And again it says, "Rejoice, O nations, together with his people." <sup>11</sup>And again, "Praise the Lord, all nations, and let all the peoples extol him." <sup>12</sup>And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, the one who rises to rule the nations; in him the nations will hope." <sup>13</sup>May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. <sup>14</sup>I myself am convinced about you, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another. <sup>15</sup>But on some points I have written to you rather boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God <sup>16</sup>to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, serving as a priest of God's gospel, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. <sup>17</sup>In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to boast in my work for God. <sup>18</sup>For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience — by word and deed, <sup>19</sup>by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God — so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. <sup>20</sup>and so I make it my ambition to preach the gospel not where Christ has already been named, so that I would not build on another person's foundation, <sup>21</sup>but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand." <sup>22</sup>This is the reason why I have so often been prevented from coming to you. <sup>23</sup>But now, since I no longer have room for work in these regions and have longed for many years to come to you, <sup>24</sup>I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while. <sup>25</sup>But at present I am going to Jerusalem to serve the saints there. <sup>26</sup>For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. <sup>27</sup>They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material things. <sup>28</sup>When I have completed this task and have delivered this fruit to them safely, I will set out for Spain by way of you. <sup>29</sup>I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ. <sup>30</sup>I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, <sup>31</sup>that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, <sup>32</sup>so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. <sup>33</sup>Now the God of wholeness remain with you all. Amen.

#### TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *opheilomen* ('we ought, we are obligated') indicates moral duty, not mere recommendation. The word *asthenēmata* ('weaknesses, failings') refers to the scruples of the weak conscience, not moral failures. The word *bastazein* ('to bear, carry') implies active support, like carrying a burden, not passive tolerance.
2. The phrase *eis to agathon* ('for his good') qualifies the pleasing — not flattery or people-pleasing, but genuinely seeking the other's benefit. The word *oikodomēn* ('building up, edification') continues the architectural metaphor from 14:19.

3. Paul quotes Psalm 69:9 (LXX 68:10), a psalm widely used in the NT as a passion psalm (cf. John 2:17, 15:25, 19:28-29; Acts 1:20). The logic is christological: if Christ himself absorbed insults directed at God rather than pleasing himself, believers must likewise absorb inconvenience for the sake of others. Christ is both the model and the motive for self-denial.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 69:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Paul articulates a hermeneutical principle: the entire Old Testament (hosa proographē, 'whatever was written beforehand') serves the instruction of the present community. The Scriptures produce two things: hypomonē ('endurance, steadfast patience') and paraklēsis ('encouragement, comfort'). Together these sustain elpida ('hope'), a key Pauline virtue.
5. This is a wish-prayer: Paul asks God to give what the Scriptures teach. The phrase to auto phronein ('to think the same thing, to be of one mind') does not mean uniformity of opinion but a shared disposition oriented toward Christ. The standard kata Christon Iēsoun ('according to Christ Jesus') means Christ is the model for the community's unity.
6. The adverb homothymadon ('with one mind, unanimously') is characteristic of Luke-Acts (Acts 1:14, 2:46) but rare in Paul. The phrase 'with one mouth' (en heni stomati) is a vivid image of united worship. The goal of mutual acceptance is not mere tolerance but doxological unity — praise that rises from a reconciled community.
7. This verse is the conclusion of the weak/strong argument that began at 14:1. The verb proslambanesthe ('welcome, receive') echoes 14:1 and 14:3. The SBLGNT reads hymas ('you') rather than hēmas ('us') in the Textus Receptus. The purpose clause eis doxan tou theou ('for the glory of God') gives the ultimate rationale: mutual welcome among believers glorifies God.
8. Paul describes Christ's earthly ministry as diakonon peritomēs ('servant of the circumcision') — Christ served the Jewish people first. This fulfilled two purposes: to demonstrate God's faithfulness (alētheias theou) and to confirm (bebaiōsai) the covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Christ's Jewish ministry is the prerequisite for Gentile inclusion.
9. The Gentiles glorify God for eleous ('mercy') rather than for faithfulness to promises — mercy, because they had no covenant claim. Paul begins a catena of four OT quotations proving Gentile inclusion. The first is from Psalm 18:49 (LXX 17:50, = 2 Samuel 22:50), where David praises God 'among the nations.'
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 18:49. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Samuel 22:50. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The second quotation is from Deuteronomy 32:43 (LXX), the Song of Moses. The nations are summoned to rejoice with (meta) God's people — not as outsiders observing, but as participants alongside Israel. The LXX reading differs from the MT here, and Paul follows the LXX.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 32:43 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The third quotation is Psalm 117:1 (LXX 116:1), the shortest psalm. It commands all nations (panta ta ethnē) and all peoples (pantes hoi laoi) to praise the Lord. Paul reads this as a prophetic summons that is now being fulfilled in the Gentile churches.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 117:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The fourth quotation is Isaiah 11:10 (LXX), climaxing the chain with an explicitly messianic text. The 'root of Jesse' (rhiza tou Iessai) refers to the Messiah as David's descendant. The LXX's 'rising to rule' (ho anistamenos archein) may carry resurrection overtones for Paul. The word elpiousin ('will hope') connects to the theme of hope that frames this section (vv. 4, 13).
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 11:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. This benediction closes the theological argument of the letter (chs. 1-15:13). God is named ho theos tēs elpidos ('the God of hope'), picking up the hope theme from the preceding quotations. The prayer asks for joy and peace (echoing 14:17) that overflow (perisseuein) into hope. The source of this overflow is the Holy Spirit's power (dynamei pneumatōs hagiou), not human effort.
14. Paul begins the personal section of the letter with a diplomatic affirmation of the Roman church's maturity. The triad — agathōsynēs ('goodness'), gnōseōs ('knowledge'), and the ability to nouthetein ('instruct, admonish') — indicates they do not need an apostle to resolve their disputes. This is pastoral tact: Paul has spent four chapters correcting them while affirming their competence.
15. The adverb tolmēroteron ('more boldly, rather daringly') acknowledges that writing to a church he did not found required courage. He softens this with apo merous ('on some points, in part') and epanamimnēskōn ('reminding'), framing his letter as a refresher, not a rebuke. His authority rests on charin ('grace') — his apostolic commission from God.
16. This verse contains Paul's most explicitly priestly self-description. He is a leitourgon ('minister, liturgical servant') who performs hierourgounta ('priestly service') with the gospel. The prospora tōn ethnōn ('offering of the Gentiles') is ambiguous: it could mean the offering that the Gentiles themselves constitute (genitive of apposition) or the offering that the Gentiles bring. The former reading is more likely — the Gentile believers are the sacrificial offering Paul presents to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

17. Paul's *kauchēsīn* ('boasting, ground for pride') is qualified: it is *en Christō Iēsou* ('in Christ Jesus') and concerns *ta pros ton theon* ('things pertaining to God'). This is not self-congratulation but a recognition of what God has accomplished through him. The 'boasting in Christ' language recalls 1 Corinthians 1:31 and 2 Corinthians 10:17.
18. Paul insists he will only report what Christ has done through him (*di' emou*), not claim credit for others' work. The goal is *hypakoēn ethnōn* ('obedience of the Gentiles'), echoing the letter's opening (1:5) and closing (16:26). The phrase *logō kai ergō* ('by word and deed') encompasses Paul's preaching and his practical ministry.
19. Paul claims a ministry confirmed by *sēmeiōn kai teratōn* ('signs and wonders'), a phrase rooted in Exodus traditions (Deut 34:11). The geographical scope — from Jerusalem to Illyricum (modern Albania/Croatia) — describes an arc through the eastern Mediterranean. The verb *peplērōkenai* ('I have fulfilled, completed') does not mean every person was reached but that representative churches were planted throughout this region.
20. The verb *philotimoumenon* ('aspiring, making it a point of honor') reveals Paul's missionary strategy: pioneer evangelism in unreached areas. He avoids building on another's *themelion* ('foundation'), using the same construction metaphor as 1 Corinthians 3:10-11. This explains why he has not yet visited Rome — someone else founded that church.
21. Paul quotes Isaiah 52:15 (LXX), part of the fourth Servant Song. In Isaiah, the nations are astonished by the Servant's suffering and exaltation. Paul applies this to his pioneer missionary work — he fulfills the prophetic vision by bringing the message to those who have never heard. The quotation also functions as a scriptural warrant for his strategy.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 52:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The verb *enekoptomēn* ('I was hindered, cut off') explains why Paul has never visited Rome — not lack of desire (1:13) but the demands of his pioneer work in the East. The passive voice may imply divine direction or simply the pressure of circumstances.
23. The remarkable claim *mēketi topon echōn* ('no longer having a place') indicates Paul considers his work in the eastern Mediterranean complete — not that every person is converted, but that churches are established in each region. The word *epipothian* ('longing, deep desire') expresses personal affection for a church he has never visited.
24. Spain (Spanian) represents the western frontier of the known world — Paul's ambition is to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth. The verb *propemphthēnai* ('to be sent on, to be helped on one's way') is a technical term for providing material support for a missionary journey (cf. 1 Cor 16:6, 3 John 6). Paul diplomatically signals he needs Rome's logistical support for the Spanish mission. Whether he ever reached Spain is unknown from his letters; 1 Clement 5:7 may refer to it.
25. Before Rome and Spain, Paul must first go to Jerusalem. The verb *diakonōn* ('serving, ministering') describes his role as bearer of the collection. The 'saints' (*hagiois*) refers to the Jerusalem church, which Paul consistently identifies as the mother community.
26. The collection is a major project spanning several years (cf. 1 Cor 16:1-4, 2 Cor 8-9, Gal 2:10). Macedonia and Achaia (northern and southern Greece) are the contributing regions. The word *koinōnian* ('sharing, participation') frames the gift as an act of fellowship, not charity. The phrase *tous ptōchous tōn hagiōn* ('the poor among the saints') specifies economic need in the Jerusalem church.
27. Paul establishes a theological logic of reciprocity: the Gentiles are *opheiletai* ('debtors') to Jerusalem because they received *pneumatikois* ('spiritual things') — the gospel, the Scriptures, the Messiah himself. In return, they should share *sarkikois* ('fleshly, material things'). The verb *leitourgēsai* ('to serve, to render service') has cultic overtones, elevating the financial gift to an act of worship.
28. The verb *sphragisamenos* ('having sealed') likely means 'having delivered securely' — as one seals a document or package to guarantee its integrity. The *karpon touton* ('this fruit') refers to the collection, described as the fruit of the Gentile churches' faith and love. Paul's travel plan is clear: Jerusalem first, then Rome, then Spain.
29. Paul expresses confidence (*oida*, 'I know') that his visit will bring *plērōmati eulogias* ('fullness of blessing'). The SBLGNT omits 'of the gospel' (*euangelion*) found in the Textus Receptus. The 'blessing of Christ' encompasses both Paul's teaching and the spiritual enrichment of mutual fellowship.
30. Paul's appeal is unusually urgent, invoking both Christ and the Spirit (a trinitarian formula). The verb *synagōnisasthai* ('to struggle alongside, to contend together') portrays prayer as combat — Paul is heading into danger and needs the Romans' active intercession, not passive well-wishes. The phrase *tēs agapēs tou pneumatōs* ('the love of the Spirit') is unique in Paul.
31. Paul has two fears: first, physical danger from *hoi apeithountes* ('the disobedient, the unbelieving') in Judea; second, the possibility that the Jerusalem church might reject the collection. Both fears proved well-founded — Acts 21:27-36 records his arrest in Jerusalem, and the acceptance of the collection is never explicitly confirmed in Acts. The verb *rhythō* ('may I be rescued') is the same word used in the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:13).
32. The ultimate goal of Paul's prayer request: to arrive in Rome *en chara* ('with joy'), not as a prisoner. The verb *synanapausōmai* ('may I be refreshed together with') is a compound expressing mutual refreshment — Paul expects to receive as well as give. The phrase *dia thelēmatos theou* ('by the will of God') submits all his plans to divine sovereignty. Ironically, Paul did reach Rome — but as a prisoner (Acts 28:16).
33. A brief peace benediction using the title *ho theos tēs eirēnēs* ('the God of peace'), which Paul also uses in 16:20, Philippians 4:9, and 1 Thessalonians 5:23. If the letter originally ended here (as some scholars propose), this would be a fitting conclusion. The 'amen' seals the benediction as a liturgical prayer.

## 16

**Summary:** *Romans 16 opens with a commendation of Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, and then unfolds the longest greeting list in any Pauline letter — naming twenty-six individuals and several households. The greetings reveal a remarkably diverse community: Jews and Gentiles, men and women, slaves and free, with women prominently featured in leadership roles. After the greetings, Paul inserts a sharp warning against those who cause divisions and put obstacles before the community, urging the Romans to avoid them. The letter closes with greetings from Paul's companions in Corinth and a grand doxology praising God who is able to strengthen the believers according to the revelation of the mystery now disclosed through the prophetic Scriptures to all nations.*

**What Makes This Remarkable:** *The greeting list is a goldmine for understanding the early Roman church. Women hold prominent roles: Phoebe is a diakonos ('deacon') and prostatis ('patron/benefactor'); Prisca is named before her husband Aquila (vv. 3-4), suggesting her greater prominence; Junia (v. 7) is described as 'outstanding among the apostles'; and Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and Persis are all commended for hard labor in the Lord. The diversity of names — Latin, Greek, and Jewish — reflects Rome's cosmopolitan character. Several names are attested in Roman inscriptions for imperial slaves and freedpersons, suggesting the church drew heavily from the slave and freed population.*

**Translation Friction:** *Romans 16:7 is a famous crux: is Iounian ('Junia') a woman's name or the contracted male form 'Junias'? The overwhelming scholarly consensus now identifies Junia as a woman, and 'outstanding among the apostles' (episēmoi en tois apostolois) as indicating she was an apostle, not merely known to the apostles. The doxology (vv. 25-27) poses a textual problem: some manuscripts place it after 14:23, others after 15:33, and some omit it entirely. Its Pauline authorship has been questioned, though its theology is consistent with Paul. The warning passage (vv. 17-20) is surprisingly harsh compared to the rest of the letter and may address a specific situation Paul has learned about.*

**Connections:** *Prisca and Aquila (v. 3) appear in Acts 18:2-3, 18:18-26, 1 Corinthians 16:19, and 2 Timothy 4:19. Epāenetos as the 'first convert in Asia' (v. 5) connects to Paul's Ephesian ministry (Acts 19). The 'crushing of Satan' language (v. 20) echoes Genesis 3:15. The 'mystery now revealed' theme of the doxology (vv. 25-26) parallels Colossians 1:26-27 and Ephesians 3:4-6. The phrase 'obedience of faith' (v. 26) forms an inclusio with 1:5, bracketing the entire letter.*

<sup>1</sup>I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, <sup>2</sup>so that you may welcome her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and help her with whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron and benefactor of many, and of myself as well. <sup>3</sup>Greet Prisca and Aquila, my coworkers in Christ Jesus, <sup>4</sup>who risked their own necks for my life. Not only I give thanks to them, but so do all the churches of the Gentiles. <sup>5</sup>Greet also the church that meets in their house. Greet my dear friend Epāenetos, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia. <sup>6</sup>Greet Mary, who has worked very hard for you. <sup>7</sup>Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews and my fellow prisoners. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. <sup>8</sup>Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. <sup>9</sup>Greet Urbanus, our coworker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. <sup>10</sup>Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. <sup>11</sup>Greet my fellow Jew Herodion. Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. <sup>12</sup>Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Greet the dear Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. <sup>13</sup>Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me as well. <sup>14</sup>Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who are with them. <sup>15</sup>Give my greetings to Philologus and Julia, to Nereus and his sister, and to Olympas, along with all the believers who gather with them. <sup>16</sup>Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send you greetings. <sup>17</sup>I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the teaching that you have learned. Avoid them. <sup>18</sup>For such people do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. <sup>19</sup>For the report of your obedience has reached everyone. I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil. <sup>20</sup>The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. <sup>21</sup>Timothy, my

coworker, sends greetings to you, as do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my fellow Jews. <sup>22</sup>I, Tertius, the one who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord. <sup>23</sup>Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, sends you greetings. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus greet you. <sup>24</sup>The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen. <sup>25</sup>Now to the one who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept silent for long ages <sup>26</sup>but now disclosed and made known through the prophetic Scriptures, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith among all the nations — <sup>27</sup>to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be glory forever. Amen.

## TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul uses the formal verb *synistēmi* ('I commend, I introduce officially'), a technical term for letters of recommendation in the ancient world. Phoebe is likely the bearer of the letter to Rome. She is identified with the title *diakonon* ('deacon, minister') — the same word used for church officers in Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The church at Cenchreae was the port town east of Corinth, confirming Paul writes from the Corinthian area.
2. Paul asks the Romans to welcome Phoebe *axiōs tōn hagiōn* ('in a manner worthy of the saints') and to assist her in whatever *pragmati* ('matter, business') she requires — she may be conducting personal or church business in Rome. The title *prostatis* ('patron, benefactor') indicates Phoebe was a woman of wealth and social standing who supported the church financially and perhaps legally. Paul himself benefited from her patronage.
3. Prisca (the formal Latin name; Priscilla is the diminutive used in Acts) is named before Aquila in four of six NT references, suggesting her greater prominence in ministry. They were Jewish Christians expelled from Rome by Claudius's edict (Acts 18:2), met Paul in Corinth, moved to Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19, 1 Cor 16:19), and have now returned to Rome. Paul calls them *synergous* ('coworkers'), his highest term of commendation.
4. The phrase *ton heautōn trachēlon hypethēkan* ('they placed their own neck under,' i.e., risked decapitation) refers to a specific life-threatening episode, possibly during the Ephesian crisis (Acts 19:23-41, cf. 1 Cor 15:32, 2 Cor 1:8-10). The gratitude extends beyond Paul to all the Gentile churches — Prisca and Aquila's service had wide impact.
5. Prisca and Aquila hosted a house church (*kat' oikon ekklēsiān*) — as they also did in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:19). Early Christians had no dedicated buildings; worship met in private homes. Epānetus is called *aparchē tēs Asias* ('firstfruit of Asia'), meaning the first convert in the Roman province of Asia (western Turkey). The SBLGNT reads 'Asia' rather than 'Achaia' (found in some MSS).
6. Mary (Marian) is a Jewish name (Hebrew Miriam). The verb *ekopiasen* ('labored hard, toiled') is Paul's standard term for strenuous ministry work (cf. 1 Cor 15:10, Gal 4:11, Phil 2:16). The SBLGNT reads *eis hymas* ('for you,' i.e., for the Roman church) rather than *eis hēmas* ('for us').
7. This verse is among the most discussed in Pauline studies. Andronicus and Junia are *syngeneis* ('fellow Jews, relatives') and *synaichmalōtous* ('fellow prisoners') — they shared imprisonment with Paul, though when and where is unknown. The identification of Junia as a woman is supported by the unanimous testimony of patristic commentators and by the fact that the male name 'Junias' does not exist in any ancient inscription or text. They became Christians before Paul (*pro emou*), placing their conversion in the earliest years of the church, possibly in Jerusalem.
8. *Ampliatius* (*Ampliaton*) is a common Latin slave name, attested frequently in inscriptions from the imperial household. The name appears in the catacomb of Domitilla in Rome in an elaborately decorated tomb, suggesting this early Christian of humble origin achieved honored status in the community.
9. *Urbanus* (Latin for 'city person') is another common slave name in Roman inscriptions. He is called *synergon* ('coworker'), Paul's term for ministry partners. *Stachys* (Greek for 'ear of grain') is a rare name but attested among members of the imperial household in Rome.
10. *Apelles* is called *dokimon* ('approved, tested and found genuine') — the same word used in 14:18 for the believer approved by God. The phrase *tous ek tōn Aristoboulou* ('those from [the household] of Aristobulus') likely refers to slaves or freedpersons of an Aristobulus who may not himself be a Christian. A possible identification is the grandson of Herod the Great who lived in Rome.
11. Herodion's name suggests a connection to the Herodian dynasty, possibly a freedman. He is *syngenē mou* ('my fellow Jew'). The household of Narcissus — specified as those who are *en kyriō* ('in the Lord'), indicating not all household members were Christians — may be the household of the famous freedman Narcissus who served under Emperor Claudius. After Narcissus's death, his slaves would have passed to the emperor.
12. Three more women commended for ministry labor. *Tryphaena* and *Tryphosa* (names derived from *tryphē*, 'daintiness') may be sisters or even twins — the pairing of similar names was common. Both are *tas kopiōsas* ('those laboring'), using the standard Pauline term for strenuous ministry. *Persis* (a name meaning 'Persian woman') receives the intensified commendation *polla ekopiasen* ('labored much'), with the past tense possibly indicating advanced age or a completed phase of work.
13. *Rufus* is *ton eklekton en kyriō* ('the chosen one in the Lord') — either a general description of all believers as 'elect' or a special commendation of Rufus as an outstanding Christian. Mark 15:21 identifies Simon of Cyrene as 'the father of Alexander and Rufus,' and if Mark's gospel was written for a Roman audience, this may be the same Rufus. Paul's description of Rufus's mother as *kai emou* ('and mine') indicates she had cared for Paul with maternal kindness.

14. These five names are all common slave or freedman names in Roman inscriptions. They are grouped together with 'the brothers who are with them' (tous syn autois adelphous), suggesting they form a distinct house church. The two names Hermēn and Herman (both derived from the god Hermes) indicate the prevalence of pagan theophoric names among early Christians of slave origin.
15. Another cluster forming a probable second house church. Philologus and Julia may be husband and wife — both names are common among imperial slaves. Nereus is known from Roman mythology (a sea god), and the name appears in inscriptions of the imperial household. The unnamed sister of Nereus is one of several women whose contributions are acknowledged even without a name. Olympas may be a shortened form of Olympiodorus.
16. The 'holy kiss' (philēmati hagiō) was a liturgical greeting in early Christian worship (cf. 1 Cor 16:20, 2 Cor 13:12, 1 Thess 5:26, 1 Pet 5:14). The claim that 'all the churches of Christ' (hai ekklēsiai pasai tou Christou) send greetings is bold — Paul speaks as the apostle to the Gentiles with authority to represent the wider church. This is the only time the phrase 'churches of Christ' appears in Paul.
17. The warning is abrupt after the warm greetings — Paul shifts to urgent imperative. The verb skopein ('watch out for, keep your eye on') implies active vigilance. The troublemakers create dichostasias ('divisions, dissensions') and skandala ('stumbling blocks, traps') that contradict the teaching the Romans received. The identity of these opponents is debated — they may be Judaizers, libertines, or false teachers of another kind.
18. The phrase tē heautōn koilia ('their own belly') may be literal (gluttons who violate food ethics) or metaphorical (self-serving in general); cf. Philippians 3:19. The words chrēstologias ('smooth talk, fine-sounding speech') and eulogias ('flattery, pleasant words') describe persuasive rhetoric used to manipulate. The akakōn ('innocent, naive, unsuspecting') are the vulnerable members of the community who lack discernment.
19. Paul balances his warning with affirmation: the Romans' obedience (hypakoē) is widely known (cf. 1:8). His desire that they be sophous eis to agathon ('wise toward the good') and akeriaous eis to kakon ('innocent toward evil') echoes Jesus' instruction to be 'wise as serpents and innocent as doves' (Matt 10:16). The word akeriaous ('unmixed, pure, innocent') means untainted by evil, not naive about its existence.
20. This verse combines a promise with a benediction. The phrase ho theos tēs eirēnēs ('the God of peace') appeared in 15:33. The crushing of Satan echoes Genesis 3:15 (LXX), where God promises that the woman's offspring will crush the serpent. The en tachei ('quickly, soon') expresses eschatological urgency. The SBLGNT omits the 'amen' found in some manuscripts after the grace benediction.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 3:15 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. Timothy is Paul's most prominent coworker, co-sender of six letters. Lucius may be Lucius of Cyrene (Acts 13:1), though identification is uncertain. Jason is likely the Jason of Thessalonica who hosted Paul (Acts 17:5-9). Sosipater may be the Sopater of Beroea mentioned in Acts 20:4. All three are called syngeneis ('fellow Jews, kinsmen').
22. A rare moment where the secretary (amanuensis) identifies himself. Tertius physically wrote the letter at Paul's dictation — a common practice in antiquity (cf. Gal 6:11, where Paul notes his own handwriting). The Latin name Tertius ('third') is a common slave name. His personal greeting en kyriō ('in the Lord') identifies him as a fellow believer, not merely a hired scribe.
23. Gaius is Paul's host and host to holēs tēs ekklēsias ('the whole church'), indicating his house is the main meeting place in Corinth (likely the Gaius of 1 Cor 1:14). Erastus holds the office of oikonomos tēs poleōs ('city treasurer, city steward'), one of the highest-ranking Christians mentioned in the NT. An inscription found in Corinth reads 'Erastus in return for his aedileship laid [this pavement] at his own expense.' Quartus ('fourth') is another Latin numerical name, likely indicating slave origin.
24. This grace benediction is absent from many early manuscripts of the SBLGNT tradition and is bracketed or omitted in critical editions. Some scholars regard it as a scribal addition harmonizing with v. 20b. If original, it serves as a second closing blessing before the doxology. Its placement varies across manuscript families, reflecting the complex textual history of Romans 16.
25. The doxology (vv. 25-27) is one of the most debated textual issues in Paul's letters. Some manuscripts place it after 14:23, others here, others in both locations, and some omit it. Its vocabulary has affinities with Colossians and Ephesians, leading some scholars to question Pauline authorship, though its themes are thoroughly Pauline. The phrase to euangelion mou ('my gospel') is characteristically Pauline (2:16, 2 Tim 2:8). The mystērion ('mystery') is not esoteric knowledge but God's previously hidden plan now revealed.
26. The mystery, once hidden, is now phanerōthentos ('made manifest, disclosed'). The means of disclosure is dia graphōn prophētikōn ('through the prophetic Scriptures') — the OT writings, now read in light of Christ. The phrase eis hypakoēn pisteōs ('for the obedience of faith') forms an inclusio with 1:5, bracketing the entire letter. The goal is universal: eis panta ta ethnē ('to all the nations').
27. The doxology reaches its climax: monō sophō theō ('to the only wise God') echoes 11:33-36 and Jewish liturgical formulations. The mediation of Jesus Christ (dia Iēsou Christou) is characteristic of Paul's theology — glory reaches God through Christ. The relative pronoun hō ('to whom') creates a grammatical ambiguity: does glory go to God or to Christ? The overall structure directs it to God through Christ. The final 'amen' seals the entire letter as an act of worship, concluding Paul's most systematic theological work.