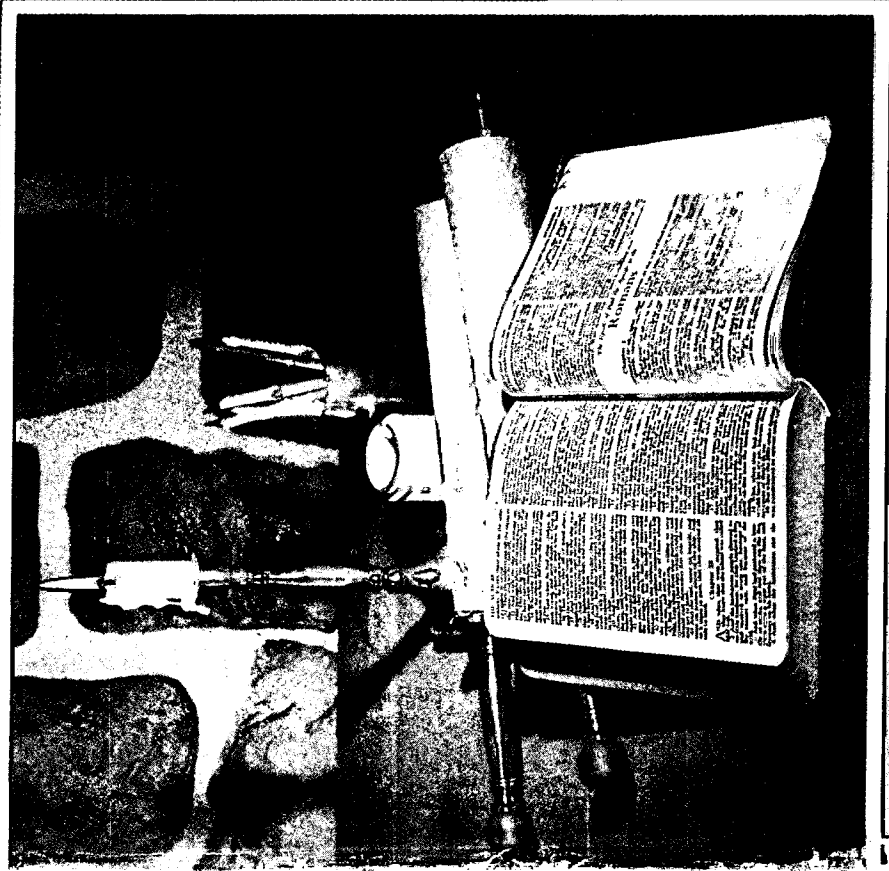


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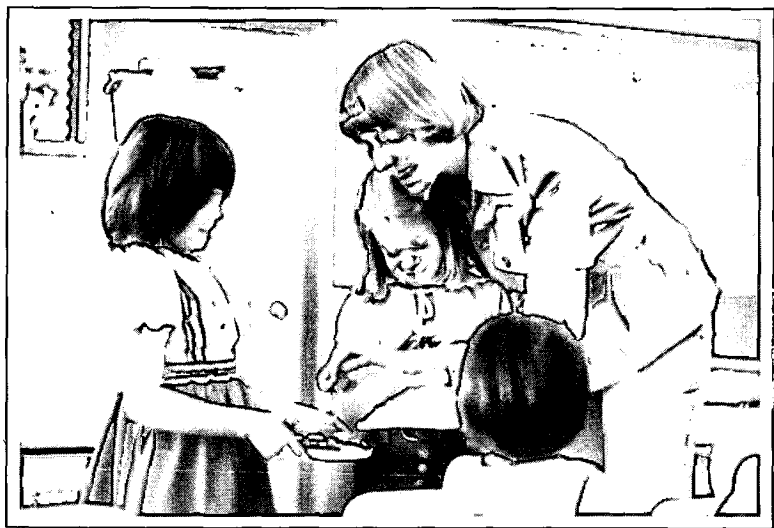
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Adult Sabbath School Lessons

Redemption in Romans



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General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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Dear Fellow Sabbath School Members:

Few things express so eloquently the cohesiveness of the world Seventh-day Adventist family as the traditional 13th Sabbath Special Projects Offering. More than a half million Sabbath School members in the Inter-American Division in grateful expectancy look to the world family for another display of Christian generosity through the 13th Sabbath Special Projects Offering for the first quarter of 1980. Adventist believers throughout Inter-America are confident that on this special date there will be another outpouring of sacrificial love by Seventh-day Adventists around the world.

The priority need for which the 13th Sabbath Special Projects Offering will be dedicated, is the completion of the Medical Center at Montemorelos University, in Mexico. This medical center, when completed, will provide much needed, practical on-the-job medical missionary training for medical students, nurses and ministerial students attending the university. The center will coordinate public health activities in a series of satellite clinics strategically located throughout the region of Nuevo Leon. These facilities will put into practice the medical missionary principles of the One who "went about doing good, and healing those that were oppressed."

Throughout the Inter-American Division territory are scores of 13th Sabbath projects that stand as mute, yet eloquent, monuments to the generosity of the world fraternity of Sabbath School members. These projects of the past are continuing to fulfill the divine commission of proclaiming the Advent message. As we look to March 29, 1980, we confidently say, "Thank you" in advance for making this 13th Sabbath Special Projects Offering the greatest and most important in our history. We crave your prayers, gifts and moral support, as together we seek to enlarge the Kingdom of God on earth, and hasten the return of our soon-coming Lord.

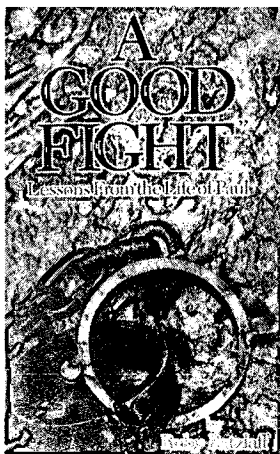
Sincerely yours in Christian service,

B. L. Archbold
President

There is nothing more powerful than a book whose time has come!

"A GOOD FIGHT," Lessons From the Life of Paul by Ruby Ratzlaff. A must for this quarter's Sabbath School lessons. Now as earth's history nears its climax, many of us will be called upon to stand before a modern Agrippa. Within the pages of this book Paul's exploits are simply drawn. It is the author's hope that from these pages will flow inspiration to modern apostles to exalt the risen Christ before an unbelieving world. Price—U.S. \$2.95.

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**You need to have
something in
order to share it,**

whether it be our daily bread or the bread of life.

In order to give the "Living Bread" we need to have a constant association with its author.

The more we have, the more we can share.

Our daily lesson study will keep our supply fresh and ready for use.

REDEMPTION IN ROMANS

Introduction

This quarter is devoted to the study of the book of Romans. In book study the student concentrates on a particular book to discover what God is trying to teach in that book. There is a reason God guided the church in including in the canon each of the 66 books that are in the Bible, and this reason needs to be discovered.

In true book study the student does not begin with a particular topic and then study what the book says about that topic. He carefully examines chapter after chapter to understand the basic theme that the inspired author has developed. This is called the inductive method of Bible study. It is one of the most fruitful methods of study because it examines all that is said in a particular book, and every part is examined in the context of the whole.

In our study of the book of Romans we will have to pass over rapidly certain sections of the book, because one quarter is too brief a time to study all the book's details. Despite this restriction, every effort has been made to present God's basic message in the book. Students who have the time and the inclination can undertake a more thorough study. They will be richly rewarded. The fact that we named the lessons "Redemption in Romans" is not intended to restrict the inductive study of the book in any way.

There is one rule of Bible study that is basic, especially in book study. This rule can be variously stated, but following is a simple form of it: In the study of the Bible one must seek to discover what the words of Scripture were designed to mean to those to whom they were first addressed; after that, what they mean for us today. This does not mean that what the Scriptures meant and what they mean in any given passage is necessarily different. But historical circumstances change. Seventh-day Adventists are fortunate to have the spirit of prophecy to apply the message of Scripture to our age.

Commenting on the Sermon on the Mount, Ellen White encourages the use of this rule in this way:

"Let us in imagination go back to that scene, and, as we sit with the disciples on the mountainside, enter into the thoughts and feelings that filled their hearts. Understanding what the words of Jesus meant to those who heard them, we may discern in them a new vividness and beauty, and may also gather for ourselves their deeper lessons."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 1.

Applied to the book of Romans, this rule means that we must discover first what the words of Paul meant to the Roman Christians. Paul had a particular reason for writing to the Roman congregation. There were certain issues he wished to clarify. These we must understand. But Paul did not write the letter merely for the benefit of the Roman Christians. Ellen White wrote:

"He hoped that other churches also might be helped by the instruction sent to the Christians at Rome; but how dimly could he foresee the far-reaching influence of his words! Through all the ages the great truth of justification by faith has stood as a mighty beacon to guide repentant sinners into the way of life. It was this light that scattered the darkness which enveloped Luther's mind and revealed to him the power of the blood of Christ to cleanse from sin. The same light has guided thousands of sin-burdened souls to the true Source of pardon and peace. For the epistle to the church at Rome, every Christian has reason to thank God."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 373, 374.

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ . . . : To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 1:1-7).

Ideally, in our study of the book of Romans, after a study of the historical background, we should begin with Romans 1:1 and then go through the entire book verse by verse. Because only one quarter has been allotted to the study of the book, we have had to be selective in certain parts of the book. However, the key chapters in which the basic message is contained will be thoroughly covered.

Before a person studies any one of the books of the Bible, he should ask certain questions:

1. Who is the author?
2. To whom was the book written?
3. Why was the book written?
4. When was the book written?

For the book of Romans, there is sufficient information in the book itself and elsewhere in the New Testament to answer these questions. The author was Paul (Rom. 1:1), formerly called Saul, a Hebrew who grew up in Tarsus, capital of the Roman province of Cilicia. He was educated in Jerusalem under the eminent Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), distinguishing himself as a zealous Pharisee (Phil. 3:4-6). Converted to Christianity when still a young man, he became one of Christianity's most ardent supporters, promoters, and defenders. Possessing a keen, logical mind, he wrote with conviction and clarity. In all he wrote 14 books of the New Testament if Hebrews is included. (Most scholars deny a Pauline authorship for Hebrews, but Seventh-day Adventists have generally upheld it.)

Romans is a letter addressed to the Christian congregation in Rome (Rom.

1:7). How a congregation became established in that city we do not know, but in this lesson we shall prove that point.

As to why the letter was written, that will be the subject of lesson 2.

When it was written will be established in this lesson by tracing the journeys of Paul and noting when he was when the letter was dispatched. However, discovering this will give us only the approximate date of writing. The exact year cannot be known with certainty, because there is insufficient chronological data in the New Testament to date the events of the life of Paul precisely.

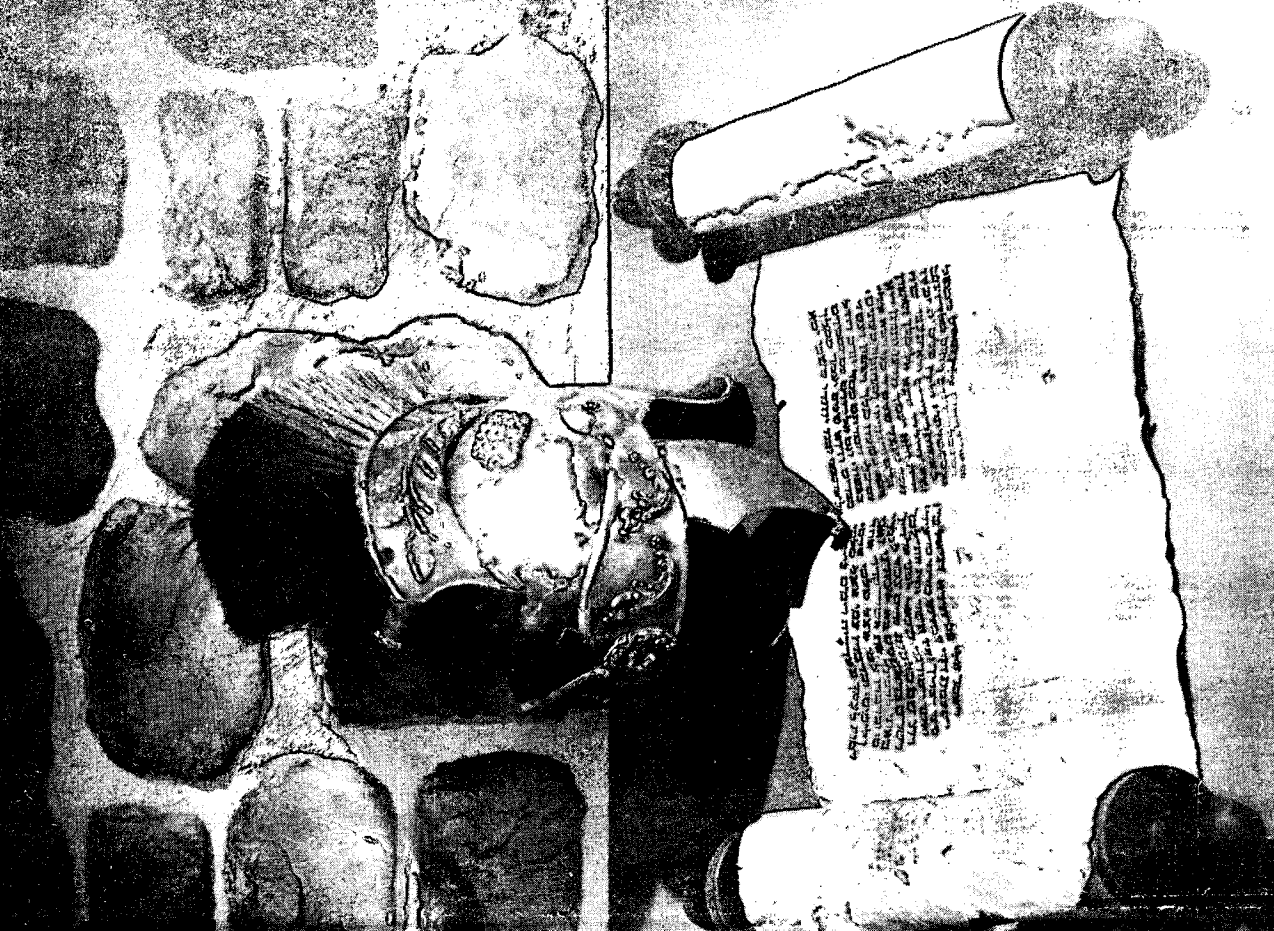
It is extremely important that a student of the book of Romans understand the book's historical background. If he does not, it will be difficult for him to know what Paul is saying in the book. Paul was writing to a specific group of Christians at a specific time for a specific reason.

We must in imagination go back in time, transport ourselves to Rome, become a member of the congregation there, and then, as a first-century church member, listen to what Paul is saying. After that we may draw lessons for ourselves.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **City of Origin**
(Rom. 16:1, 2)
2. **Date of Writing**
(Rom. 15:25, 26)
3. **Announcement of Intended Visit**
(Rom. 15:23, 24)
4. **Paul Reaches Rome**
(Acts 28:16)
5. **The Salutation**
(Rom. 1:7)
6. **World Reputation**
(Rom. 1:8)

Christianity Reaches Rome



Part 1
CITY OF
ORIGIN

In what city was Paul when he wrote the Epistle to the Romans?

"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also" (Rom. 16:1, 2).

Cenchreae was the eastern port of Corinth. Phoebe was a deaconess (Gr. *diakonos*) of the church of Cenchreae. She was probably the bearer of the letter to Rome. At any rate, she was traveling to Rome, and Paul wished to introduce her to the believers there. Paul's mention of Phoebe, a resident of greater Corinth, establishes Corinth as the city of origin of Paul's letter to the Romans.

One of the purposes of establishing the city of origin of the New Testament epistles is to ascertain the date of writing. Since Paul traveled much, knowing where he was at a particular time gives us a clue as to the date. In our next lesson we shall establish the date of his visit to Corinth during which he wrote the Roman letter.

The mention of what other Christians provides evidence that Corinth was the city of origin? Rom. 16:23; 1 Cor. 1:14; 2 Tim. 4:20.

Gaius was one of the converts Paul had baptized in Corinth, and of Erastus it is said that he "abode at Corinth."

"A paving block found near the large theater of Corinth contains an inscription stating that 'Erastus in return for the aedileship laid (the pavement) at his own expense.' . . . The liberal Erastus of the inscription may be the convert of Paul mentioned in Rom 16:23. . . . Paul informed Timothy in his last letter, shortly before his death, that Erastus had stayed behind in Corinth (2 Ti 4:20). If the . . . texts refer to the same individual, and he is identical with the Erastus mentioned in the inscriptions, then Erastus, a commissioner of streets and buildings at Corinth, had become one of Paul's converts. . . . However, the possibility that Paul refers to more than one Erastus should not be ruled out."—*S.D.A. Bible Dictionary*, p. 321.

The style of ancient letters was not like that of modern letters which give the address of the point of origin at the beginning. In the case of the letter to the Romans the place of writing is learned from incidental references.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 372-374.

Part 2
DATE OF
WRITING

During which visit to Corinth was the Epistle to the Romans written?

"Now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem" (Rom. 15:25, 26).

Paul established the church at Corinth on his second missionary journey, A.D. 49-52. (See Acts 18:1-18.) On his third journey, A.D. 53-58, he visited Corinth again (Acts 20:2, 3), and at this time he received offerings for the saints in Jerusalem (Acts 24:17; 1 Cor. 16:1-5). Since Paul did not arrive in Corinth till near the end of his journey (arriving perhaps late in A.D. 57 and leaving early in A.D. 58), the Epistle to the Romans was written probably in the early months of A.D. 58.

What other important churches had Paul visited on his third missionary journey? Acts 18:23.

Visiting the Galatian churches, Paul discovered that during his absence false teachers, often called Judaizers, had visited these churches, convincing the members to submit to circumcision and to keep other precepts of the law of Moses. Discovering what had happened, Paul became extremely upset (Gal. 3:1-4). Fearing that his opponents might reach Rome before he arrived, Paul wrote a letter (Romans) to forestall the same tragedy happening in Rome. It is believed that the Epistle to the Galatians was written also from Corinth during Paul's three months there on his third missionary journey, perhaps shortly after his arrival. Perhaps the letter to the Romans was written after the one to the Galatians. At any rate, it is the more reasoned of the two, and its tone is calmer. On the purpose of writing Romans, Ellen White says:

"In his epistle to the Romans, Paul set forth the great principles of the gospel. He stated his position on the questions which were agitating the Jewish and the Gentile churches, and showed that the hopes and promises which had once belonged especially to the Jews were now offered to the Gentiles also."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 373.

The statement "He [Paul] stated his position on the questions which were agitating the Jewish and Gentile churches" is significant. It is important in the study of any book of the Bible to know the occasion for the book's being written and the aim the author had in mind in writing the book. Hence it is important for our understanding of the Epistle to the Romans to know what were the questions agitating the Jewish and Gentile churches. Next week's lesson will deal with these questions.

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Bible Dictionary, p. 922.

**Part 3
ANNOUNCEMENT
OF INTENDED
VISIT****What other reason did Paul have for writing to the Roman believers?****“But now having no more place in these parts, and having a desire these many years to come unto you; whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company” (Rom. 15:23, 24).**

The great missionary to the Gentiles felt constantly impelled to take the gospel to hitherto unentered areas, leaving others to labor in areas where the gospel had been established. In the days when Christianity was young and the laborers were few it would have been a waste of valuable missionary power for Paul to work in already entered areas. He said, “So have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation,” so that “they that have not heard shall understand” (Rom. 15:20, 21).

It was not Paul’s purpose to settle down at Rome. It was his aim to evangelize Spain. He hoped to get the support of the Christians in Rome for this venture.

“After many unavoidable delays, Paul at last reached Corinth. . . .

“During his sojourn at Corinth, Paul found time to look forward to new and wider fields of service. His contemplated journey to Rome especially occupied his thoughts. To see the Christian faith firmly established at the great center of the known world was one of his dearest hopes and most cherished plans. A church had already been established in Rome, and the apostle desired to secure the co-operation of the believers there in the work to be accomplished in Italy and in other countries. To prepare the way for his labors among these brethren, many of whom were as yet strangers to him, he sent them a letter announcing his purpose of visiting Rome and his hope of planting the standard of the cross in Spain.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 372, 373.

THINK IT THROUGH**What impetus would be given to the spread of the gospel if all evangelistic workers covered their territories so thoroughly that they too could say, “But now having no more place in these parts”?**

“What the church needs in these days of peril is an army of workers who, like Paul, have educated themselves for usefulness, who have a deep experience in the things of God, and who are filled with earnestness and zeal. Sanctified, self-sacrificing men are needed; men who will not shun trial and responsibility; men who are brave and true.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 507.

FURTHER STUDY*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, pp. 467, 468.

Part 4
PAUL REACHES
ROME **"When we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him" (Acts 28:16).**

When Paul reached Jerusalem at the end of his third missionary journey with his offering for the poor, collected in the congregations of Europe and Asia Minor, unexpected events awaited him. He was arrested and fettered. After being held prisoner for two years at Caesarea, he appealed to Caesar. Some three years after his arrest he arrived at Rome, still a prisoner. This was a very different arrival from the one he had planned when he announced in his letter to the Roman Christians that he intended to visit them.

In what evangelistic work did Paul engage? Acts 28:17, 23, 24, 30, 31.

"When the Christian churches first learned that Paul was to visit Rome, they looked forward to a signal triumph of the gospel in that city. Paul had borne the truth to many lands; he had proclaimed it in great cities. Might not this champion of the faith succeed in winning souls to Christ even in the metropolis of the world? But their hopes were crushed by the tidings that Paul had gone to Rome as a prisoner. . . .

"Not by Paul's sermons, but by his bonds, was the attention of the court attracted to Christianity. It was as a captive that he broke from so many souls the bonds that held them in the slavery of sin. Nor was this all. He declared: 'Many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.' Philipians 1:14."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 463, 464.

"During Paul's imprisonment the converts to Christianity had become so numerous as to attract the attention and arouse the enmity of the authorities. The anger of the emperor was especially excited by the conversion of members of his own household."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 487.

THINK IT THROUGH

To what extent have we seen seeming setbacks and misfortunes in our lives turn into victories for the gospel? (See Phil. 1:12.)

"While apparently cut off from active labor, Paul exerted a wider and more lasting influence than if he had been free to travel among the churches as in former years. As a prisoner of the Lord, he had a firmer hold upon the affections of his brethren; and his words, written by one under bonds for the sake of Christ, commanded greater attention and respect than they did when he was personally with them."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 454.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 447-452.

Part 5
THE SALUTATION **How are the recipients of the Epistle to the Romans described?**

"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1:7).

Beloved of God. While it is true that God loves the world, in a special sense God loves those who have chosen Him, those who have responded to His love. This is true also in the human sphere. We love in a special way those who love us, for with them there is a mutual exchange of affection. Love demands response. When the response is not forthcoming, love is limited in its fullest expression.

Called to be saints. In some editions of the King James Version "to be" is in italics, which means that the translators have supplied the words. They can be left out. When they are omitted we get the expression "called saints," that is, "designated saints."

"Saints" is the translation of the Greek *hagioi*, which literally means "holy ones." Holy means "dedicated." A saint is one who has dedicated himself to God. He may still have a long way to go in sanctification, but the fact that he has chosen Christ as his Lord designates him a "saint" in the Bible meaning of the term.

Because of the current use of "saint" for one extraordinarily charitable, patient, and self-denying, the biblical term is often misunderstood. Because of this circumstance, certain modern translations use for *hagioi* terms such as "dedicated people" (NEB), "his [God's] own people" (TEV), and "Christ's men and women" (Phillips).

Those who had accepted the Christian faith in Rome, Paul calls *hagioi*, a term almost equivalent to "Christians," if by "Christian" is meant one sincerely dedicated to Christ.

"If you would be a saint in heaven, you must first be a saint on earth. The traits of character you cherish in life will not be changed by death or by the resurrection."—*The Adventist Home*, p. 16.

THINK IT THROUGH

If the Bible repeatedly calls the members of the early Christian congregations saints (compare 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1, etc.), what would you conclude about the use of "saints" for members of the Christian community today?

"The eternal God has drawn the line of distinction between the saint and the sinner, between converted and unconverted. The two classes do not blend into each other imperceptibly, like the colors of a rainbow, but are as distinct as midday and midnight."—*Messages to Young People*, p. 390.

FURTHER STUDY

My Life Today, p. 273.

Part 6
WORLD
REPUTATION

What reputation had the believers in the church of Rome gained?

“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world” (Rom. 1:8).

It is not known how the congregation in Rome became established. The tradition that the church was founded by Peter or Paul is without historical foundation. Perhaps lay persons established it, converts on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2), who visited or moved to Rome. Or perhaps at some later period converts moving to Rome witnessed to their faith in that world capital.

It is surprising that, in a few decades from Pentecost, a congregation that apparently had received no apostolic visit should be so widely known. “Notwithstanding the opposition, twenty years after the crucifixion of Christ there was a live, earnest church in Rome. This church was strong and zealous, and the Lord worked for it.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1067. The church must have had strong leadership. Probably the gifts of the Spirit had miraculously supplied leadership and other abilities. (See 1 Cor. 10:28.)

“Faith” here probably includes the broader sense of faithfulness, that is, faithfulness to the new way they had discovered.

How confident was Paul in the experience of the Roman believer? Rom. 15:14.

The three items that Paul selects as worthy of note in the Roman Christians' experience are:

1. “Full of goodness.” Would people say this of our own experience? As they associate with us, is it the abundance of goodness in us that attracts their attention?

2. “Filled with all knowledge.” The Bible repeatedly emphasizes the importance of enlightenment, information, and knowledge. Christians are urged to study the Bible and to become well informed as to its teachings. “The words, ‘A new heart also will I give you,’ mean, ‘A new mind will I give you.’ A change of heart is always attended by a clear conviction of Christian duty, an understanding of truth.”—*My Life Today*, p. 24.

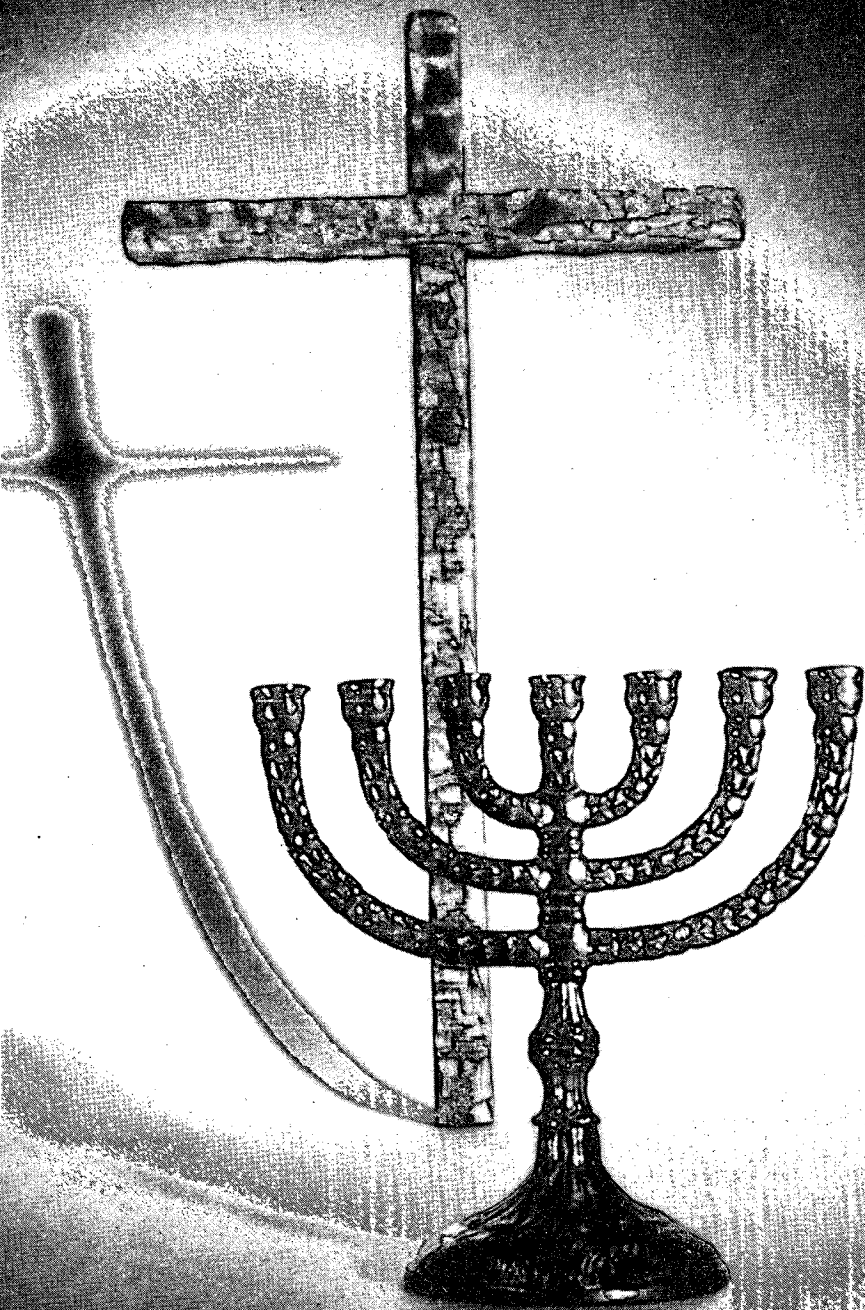
3. “Able . . . to admonish one another.” No man can thrive spiritually if he isolates himself from his fellowmen. They need his encouragement and he should develop the ability to encourage others with his words.

THINK IT THROUGH

Has the church in my city gained a reputation in the whole world? If so, for what? For its faith? Or its faithfulness?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 706.



Jew Versus Gentile

"The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

The first converts to Christianity were all Jews. The apostles preached first in Jerusalem. If, before accepting Christianity, these converts had been morally upright people, their life-style changed little after accepting Christianity. The New Testament gives no indication that the Jews were asked to drop immediately the practice of circumcision, or to ignore the Jewish festivals.

But when the Gentiles began to accept Christianity, immediately important questions arose. Should the Gentiles submit to circumcision? to what extent should they keep other Jewish laws? It wasn't long before a widespread controversy arose. Finally a council was called at Jerusalem to

settle the matter. (See Acts 15.) Despite a firm decision not to trouble the Gentiles with a plethora of Jewish requirements, Judaizing teachers continued to plague the churches, causing widespread disruption. These false teachers were especially successful in the Galatian churches. In his letter to the Galatians Paul vigorously attacked the false doctrines of these teachers.

Hoping to forestall a similar situation arising in the church at Rome, Paul wrote them as well. This is the letter we are studying this quarter. Unless we understand that in his letter Paul is meeting the arguments of the Judaizers, we will not understand it fully. When he speaks of "deeds of the law," he is speaking primarily of the insistence of the Judaizing teachers that the entire Jewish law be kept. To be "under the law" is primarily to be subject to the entire Jewish law.

Because of the importance of this background to an understanding of the letter to the Romans, we are spending an entire lesson on this subject. Understanding what Paul's letter meant to those who first heard it will help us to draw valid lessons from it for today.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Old Testament Salvation**
(Lev. 18:5)
2. **Old and New Testament Religion Compared**
(John 1:17)
3. **Classifications of Jewish Law**
(Lev. 27:34)
4. **The Judaizers**
(Acts 15:1)
5. **Council Decision**
(Acts 15:19, 20, 28)
6. **The Galatian Heresy**
(Gal. 1:6, 7)

Part 1
DLD TESTAMENT
SALVATION

By what means had the Jews been taught that life would come to them?

“Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord” (Lev. 18:5). (Compare Rom. 10:5.)

In order to comprehend the book of Romans correctly, it is necessary to understand the point of controversy between Paul and the Judaizers. The Judaizers were Jewish converts to Christianity who insisted that Gentile Christians should be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. It seemed to the Jews that Paul was teaching another way of salvation when he set forth faith in the Messiah as the ground of salvation. Although this aspect of faith in a Messiah to come had been taught by the sacrificial system, it appears that the true import had not been grasped, at least not by the majority of the Jews. Otherwise, the basic requirements had not changed. “The conditions of salvation are ever the same. Life, eternal life, is for all who will obey God’s law.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 931.

“The terms of the ‘old covenant’ were, Obey and live: ‘If a man do, he shall even live in them’ (Ezekiel 20:11; Leviticus 18:5); but ‘cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.’ Deuteronomy 27:26. The ‘new covenant’ was established upon ‘better promises’—the promise of forgiveness of sins and of the grace of God to renew the heart and bring it into harmony with the principles of God’s law.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 372.

How may God’s requirements be summed up? Micah 6:8.

“But if the Abrahamic covenant contained the promise of redemption, why was another covenant formed at Sinai? In their bondage the people had to a great extent lost the knowledge of God and of the principles of the Abrahamic covenant. . . .

“ . . . The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God’s law; and they readily entered into covenant with God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 371, 372.

Although the old covenant was intended to be temporary, to last only until the Abrahamic covenant was understood, by and large the Israelites never made this transition. In Paul’s day the Jews were still largely under the stipulations and conditions of the old covenant.

THINK IT THROUGH

While professing to live under the new covenant, how can I avoid in practice living under the old? (See Heb. 8:10-13.)

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 370-373.

**Part 2
OLD AND NEW
TESTAMENT
RELIGION
COMPARED**

What is the difference between the religion of the Old Testament and that of the New?

“The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17).

“The requirement of God under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement He made in Paradise—harmony with His law, which is holy, and just, and good. The gospel does not weaken the claims of the law; it exalts the law and makes it honorable. Under the New Testament, no less is required than was required under the Old Testament. Let no one take up with the delusion so pleasant to the natural heart, that God will accept of sincerity, no matter what may be the faith, no matter how imperfect may be the life. God requires of His child perfect obedience.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 373, 374.

What did Jesus state were the conditions for eternal life? John 3:16.

Perhaps the greatest difference between the religion of the Old Testament and that of the New is the fact that the New Testament era was introduced by the coming of the Messiah—Jesus of Nazareth. He was sent by God to be the Saviour. Men could not ignore Him and expect to be saved. Only through the atonement He provided could they have their sins forgiven. Only by the imputation of His perfect life could they stand before God without condemnation.

Old Testament saints looked forward to the blessings of the Messianic age. In New Testament times men were confronted with the question, Would they accept Jesus of Nazareth whom God had sent as the Messiah, their Saviour? If they believed on Him—that is, if they accepted Him for whom He truly was and committed themselves to Him—they would be saved.

The basic moral requirements remained unchanged in the New Testament, for these were founded in the character of God and of Christ. Perfect obedience to the moral law was required in both Old and New Testament times.

Ritual requirements changed—the sacrifices eventually were discontinued. Type had met antitype—circumcision was discontinued and baptism was introduced.

Helping both Jew and Gentile to understand what was involved in this transition from Judaism to Christianity was one of Paul's principal aims in the book of Romans. It would take time to make the transition.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 27-30.

Part 3
CLASSIFICATIONS
OF JEWISH LAW

What various laws were the Jews expected to keep?

“These are the commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel in mount Sinai” (Lev. 27:34). (See also Ex. 16:26; 18:20; 20:1-17; 21:1; Lev. 1:1-3; 11:2, 9, 13, 29; 12:2; 25:18.)

It is convenient for us to classify Old Testament laws into various categories: (1) moral law, (2) ceremonial law, (3) civil law, (4) statutes and judgments, (5) health laws.

This classification is in part artificial. In actuality some of these categories are interrelated, and there is considerable overlap. The ancients did not see them as separate and distinct.

The moral law is basically the Ten Commandment law (Ex. 20:1-17). This law sums up the moral requirements of man. These ten precepts are amplified and applied in various statutes and judgments throughout the first five books of the Bible. These amplifications show what it meant to keep the law of God in various situations. Not unrelated are the civil laws. These, too, are based on the moral law. These define a citizen's relationship to civil authorities and to his fellow citizens. They name the penalties for various infractions.

The ceremonial law regulated the sanctuary ritual, describing the various offerings and the individual citizen's responsibilities. The feast days are specified and their observance defined.

The health laws overlap the other laws. The various laws relating to uncleanness define ceremonial uncleanness, and yet go beyond this to include hygienic and health principles. Laws regarding clean and unclean meats are based on physical considerations.

While the Jew probably largely thought of all of these laws as a package, having all come from God, he must have made certain distinctions in his mind. The Ten Commandment law had been spoken by God directly to the people. This would set it apart as especially important. The other laws had been relayed through Moses. The sanctuary ritual could be kept only when a sanctuary was in operation.

The civil laws, at least in large part, could be no longer imposed after the Jews lost their independence and came under the civil control of another nation. Many of the ceremonial precepts could no longer be observed after the temple was destroyed. Also, after the Messiah came, many of the types had met their antitype and no longer had validity.

As used in the book of Romans, "law" has various meanings, as will be pointed out. It is important that its wide scope be understood.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 310-312.

Part 4
THE JUDAIZERS

What point of controversy arose shortly after the establishment of the Christian church?

“Certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1).

“While the apostles united with the ministers and lay members at Antioch in an earnest effort to win many souls to Christ, certain Jewish believers from Judea ‘of the sect of the Pharisees’ succeeded in introducing a question that soon led to wide-spread controversy in the church and brought consternation to the believing Gentiles. With great assurance these Judaizing teachers asserted that in order to be saved, one must be circumcised and must keep the entire ceremonial law. . . .

“The Jews had always prided themselves upon their divinely appointed services, and many of those who had been converted to the faith of Christ still felt that since God had once clearly outlined the Hebrew manner of worship, it was improbable that He would ever authorize a change in any of its specifications. They insisted that the Jewish laws and ceremonies should be incorporated into the rites of the Christian religion. They were slow to discern that all the sacrificial offerings had but prefigured the death of the Son of God, in which type met antitype, and after which the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation were no longer binding.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 188, 189.

What course was suggested to settle this dispute? Acts 15:2.

Who were some of the participants who delivered speeches at the conference? Acts 15:7, 12, 13.

THINK IT THROUGH

What can the calling and conduct of the Jerusalem conference teach me with regard to the church member's relationship to church government?

“While looking to God for direct guidance, he [Paul] was ever ready to recognize the authority vested in the body of believers united in church fellowship. He felt the need of counsel, and when matters of importance arose, he was glad to lay these before the church and to unite with his brethren in seeking God for wisdom to make right decisions. Even ‘the spirits of the prophets,’ he declared, ‘are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.’ 1 Corinthians 14:32.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 200.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 188-192.

**Part 5
COUNCIL
DECISION**

What decision was reached at the Jerusalem council?

“Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.”

“For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things” (Acts 15:19, 20, 28).

The decision was against the contentions of the Judaizers. These troublemakers insisted that the Gentile converts “be circumcised and . . . keep the entire ceremonial law” and that “the Jewish laws and ceremonies should be incorporated into the rites of the Christian religion.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 189.

How did Peter characterize the Jewish laws? Acts 15:10.

Through their oral traditions the Jews had so bound about the laws of God with regulations of their own that Peter’s characterization was indeed correct. The Jews in the apostles’ day thought that the way to keep these various laws was to do what the rabbis had prescribed.

How were the Gentile converts to relate to the moral law? There never was any controversy between Paul and the Judaizers as to whether the moral law should be observed by the Gentile converts. This law, spoken by God, is as eternal as God Himself and is a transcript of His character.

How united was the vote of the council? Acts 15:22.

It was heartening that a point that could have split wide open the infant church could be thus amicably settled.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why were the four items named selected for special mention in the decree announcing the decision of the conference?

“The Gentiles, however, were to take no course which should materially conflict with the views of their Jewish brethren, or which would create prejudice in their minds against them. The apostles and elders therefore agreed to instruct the Gentiles by letter to abstain from meats offered to idols, from fornication, from things strangled, and from blood. They were required to keep the commandments and to lead holy lives. The Gentiles were assured that the men who had urged circumcision upon them were not authorized to do so by the apostles.”—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 308.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 194-197.

Part 6
THE GALATIAN
HERESY

What disruption had the Judaizers brought about in the Galatian churches?

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:6, 7).

"Through the influence of false teachers who had arisen among the believers in Jerusalem, division, heresy, and sensualism were rapidly gaining ground among the believers in Galatia. These false teachers were mingling Jewish traditions with the truths of the gospel. Ignoring the decision of the general council at Jerusalem, they urged upon the Gentile converts the observance of the ceremonial law."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 383.

"Christ, the true foundation of the faith, was virtually re-nounced for the obsolete ceremonies of Judaism."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 385.

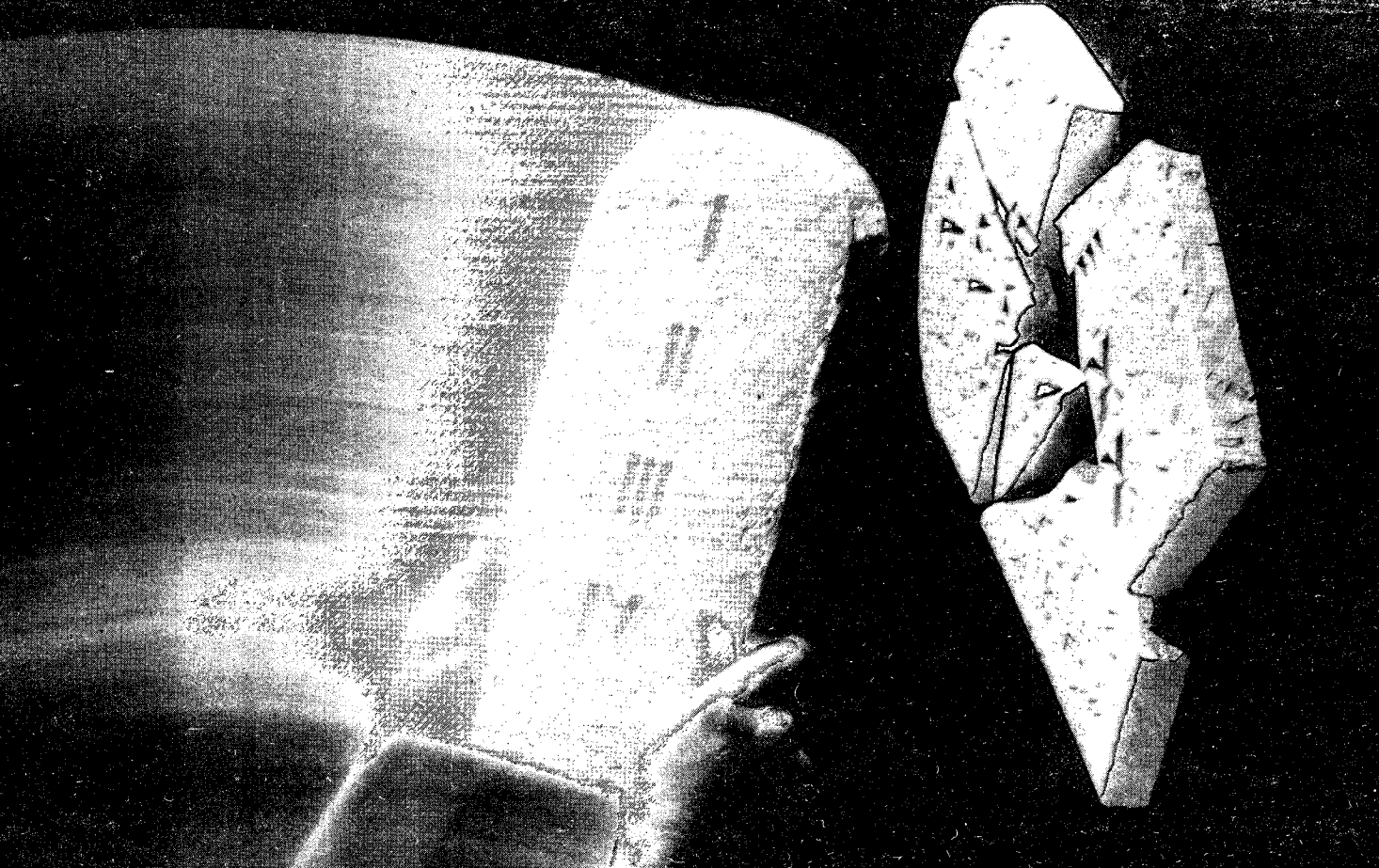
The reason for bringing up the Galatian problem here is that it was the Galatian situation that in a large degree prompted the content of the letter to the Romans. In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul develops further the theme of the Epistle to the Galatians. The Judaizers were contending that the law God had given them through Moses was important and should be observed by Gentile converts. Paul was trying to show its true place and function. He didn't want the Judaizers to gain a foothold in Rome as they had done in Galatia.

It is oversimplification simply to decide whether in Galatians and Romans Paul is speaking of ceremonial or moral laws. Historically, the argument, as Ellen White has confirmed it, was whether or not Gentile converts should be required to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. The Jerusalem council had already ruled on this question, but the Judaizers refused to follow its decision. In all the argumentation the necessity of observing the moral law was never really challenged. Fundamentalist and evangelical Christians who find in Galatians and in Romans arguments against the moral law misread Paul. They need to familiarize themselves with the historical backgrounds of these epistles and discover that the binding claims of the moral law had never been called into question.

Keeping in mind the distinction between the historical meaning and the lessons we today may draw from the book will greatly help us in our understanding of this important epistle. To discover what the epistle meant to those to whom it was written and by whom it was first read and what it means to us today is a basic principle to follow in the interpretation of Scripture.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 383-388.



All Have Sinned

“All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

In this lesson Paul lays the groundwork for his presentation of the basic theme of the book of Romans, justification by faith.

Unless a person acknowledges that he is unrighteous, he will sense no need for justification (God’s declaring or accepting of a man as righteous). So long as a man justifies himself, he will not seek God’s justification. Therefore the first step in the justification event is that a person recognize himself as a helpless, hopeless sinner.

In building his argument Paul presents first the terrible depravity of the Gentiles. These have sunk as low as they have because they have pushed God from their memories. They had the revelation of God in nature, but turned against it and corrupted themselves. (See Rom. 1:19-32.)

“Paul now proceeds to explain that the Jews are no less guilty than the Gentiles and that they also need the provisions of the same plan of salvation. He shows that the Jews have enjoyed greater light than the heathen, and yet they have done the same things. Much of what has been said about the Gentiles in ch. 1:18-32 also applies to the Jews, for they too have sinned against knowledge and conscience.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 484.

Paul presents both Jews and Gentiles as guilty before God because of their sins and thus subject to the

wrath of God. To escape the wrath, Paul is offering them the righteousness of God, that is, the righteousness God accepts or regards as valid. This righteousness is not earned; it comes as a gift. Men receive it when they accept Christ. Man’s feeble efforts to do right can never be accepted by God as a ground for justification.

“Let no one take the limited, narrow position that any of the works of man can help in the least possible way to liquidate the debt of his transgression. This is a fatal deception. If you would understand it, you must cease haggling over your pet ideas, and with humble hearts survey the atonement.

“This matter is so dimly comprehended that thousands upon thousands claiming to be sons of God are children of the wicked one, because they will depend on their own works. God always demanded good works, the law demands it, but because man placed himself in sin where his good works were valueless, Jesus’ righteousness alone can avail. Christ is able to save to the uttermost because He ever liveth to make intercession for us.”—*Ellen G. White Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1071.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Basic Theme of Book**
(Rom. 1:16, 17)
2. **All Come Short**
(Rom. 3:23)
3. **Sin Brings Degradation**
(Rom. 1:21, 22)
4. **A Stinging Indictment**
(Rom. 2:1)
5. **All Need Repentance**
(Rom. 2:4)
6. **God’s Plan Succeeds**
(Rom. 3:1, 2)

Part 1
BASIC THEME
OF BOOK

What is the basic theme of the Epistle to the Romans?

"I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live' " (Rom. 1:16, 17, RSV).

Several key words occur in this passage:

1. *Gospel*. This word is the translation of a Greek word meaning literally "good message," or "good news." Standing alone, the word may refer to any good message; but, modified as it is in this passage by the phrase "of Christ," it means "the good news about the Messiah" ("Christ" is the transliteration of the Greek word meaning "Messiah"). The good news is that the Messiah has come and men may be saved by believing in Him.

2. *Righteousness*. This word refers to the quality of right. A specialized meaning of this word is developed in the book of Romans, which we shall bring out as our study of the book proceeds. It should also be pointed out that in Romans 1:17 the word is qualified by the phrase "of God." It is righteousness that comes from God or righteousness God has provided.

3. *Faith*. In Greek the words translated "believe" and "faith" (KJV) in this passage are the verb and noun forms of the same word: *pisteuō* (believe), *pistis* (belief or faith). The meaning of "faith" as related to salvation will unfold as we progress in the study of Romans.

"The righteousness of Christ is revealed from faith to faith; that is, from your present faith to an increased understanding of that faith which works by love and purifies the soul."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1067.

While there is salvation for those who have faith, what is reserved for those who do not have faith? Rom. 1:18.

Either men become righteous through faith, or the wrath of God comes against them for their unrighteousness.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why are Christians sometimes ashamed of the gospel of Christ? What gave Paul boldness to profess his faith?

"The truth may be ashamed of us because our course of action is not in harmony with its pure principles, but we need never be ashamed of the truth. As you have opportunity, confess your faith. When anyone asks you, give him a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 81.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "God's Love for Man," pp. 9-15.

Part 2
ALL COME
SHORT

What was one of the important points that Paul sought to establish early in his Epistle to the Romans?

"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

"All" means Jew, Gentile, old, young, rich, poor, bond, free, professional, blue collar worker.

The Jews had no problem admitting that the Gentiles were hopeless, abandoned sinners. But to acknowledge that they, too, were sinners in need of salvation was more than most of them were willing to do.

What is meant by the phrase "glory of God"? It has been variously interpreted. Perhaps the simplest interpretation is to give to the phrase the meaning it has in First Corinthians 11:7, "He [man] is the image and glory of God." In Greek the word for "glory" may be considered as loosely equivalent to the word for "image." Sin has marred the image of God in man. Sinful man falls far short of reflecting the image or glory of God.

"The central theme of the Bible, the theme about which every other in the whole book clusters, is the redemption plan, the restoration in the human soul of the image of God."—*Education*, p. 125.

What series of proof texts did Paul use to describe man's sinful condition apart from Christ? Rom. 3:10-18.

This passage is a series of quotations from the Old Testament. (See marginal references if your Bible has them.)

The first step in becoming a Christian is for a person to acknowledge his utter sinfulness, hopelessness, and helplessness. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring about such conviction. If the sinner does not resist Him, the Spirit will lead him to tear away his mask of self-defense, pretense, and self-justification and to cast himself upon Christ, pleading His mercy: "God be merciful to me, the sinner!" (Luke 18:13, NASB).

THINK IT THROUGH

What is it that leads the human heart to justify itself rather than to acknowledge its imperfections?

"Many are deceived concerning the condition of their hearts. They do not realize that the natural heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. They wrap themselves about with their own righteousness, and are satisfied in reaching their own human standard of character; but how fatally they fail when they do not reach the divine standard, and of themselves they cannot meet the requirements of God."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 320.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "The Sinner's Need for Christ," pp. 17-22.

Part 3
SIN BRINGS
DEGRADATION

What happens to men who refuse to acknowledge God's claims upon them?

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. 1:21, 22).

"In its human wisdom the world cannot know God. Its wise men gather an imperfect knowledge of God from His created works, and then in their foolishness they exalt nature and the laws of nature above nature's God. Those who have not a knowledge of God through an acceptance of the revelation He has made of Himself in Christ, will obtain only an imperfect knowledge of Him in nature; and this knowledge, so far from giving elevated conceptions of God, and bringing the whole being into conformity to His will, will make men idolaters."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 295.

How low did men and women fall in their degradation? Rom. 1:23-32.

The Jews had no difficulty agreeing with Paul that the condition of the Gentiles was most degraded. They felt a strong superiority over them. A Jew, reading this part of Paul's letter, was unprepared for the shock Paul was about to administer by telling him that he was equally sinful. (See Rom. 2:1.)

THINK IT THROUGH

To what extent may the present permissive age be the result of modern man's unwillingness to retain God in his knowledge?

"A terrible picture of the condition of the world has been presented before me. Immorality abounds everywhere. Licentiousness is the special sin of this age. Never did vice lift its deformed head with such boldness as now. The people seem to be benumbed, and the lovers of virtue and true goodness are nearly discouraged by its boldness, strength, and prevalence. The iniquity which abounds is not merely confined to the unbeliever and the scoffer. Would that this were the case, but it is not. Many men and women who profess the religion of Christ are guilty. Even some who profess to be looking for His appearing are no more prepared for that event than Satan himself. They are not cleansing themselves from all pollution. They have so long served their lust that it is natural for their thoughts to be impure and their imaginations corrupt. It is as impossible to cause their minds to dwell upon pure and holy things as it would be to turn the course of Niagara and send its waters pouring up the falls."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 346.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 146, 147.

Part 4
A STINGING
INDICTMENT

What stinging indictment did Paul make against the Jews who felt that they were vastly superior to the Gentiles, especially in moral behavior?

"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things" (Rom. 2:1).

"Do not think yourself better than other men, and set yourself up as their judge. Since you cannot discern motive, you are incapable of judging another. In criticizing him, you are passing sentence upon yourself; for you show that you are a participant with Satan, the accuser of the brethren."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 314.

What specific sins of which the Jews were guilty equally with the Gentiles did Paul enumerate? Rom. 2:21-24.

The Jews were depending for salvation upon the fact that they were Jews and that God had particularly favored them above other nations. The Jews had been entrusted with a knowledge of salvation, but this knowledge was not merely for their own benefit; they were to pass on this knowledge to other nations.

Circumcision was the sign of being a Jew. But this sign was worthless unless it represented conduct worthy of a worshiper of God. "For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision" (Rom. 2:25).

Today baptism is a symbol of commitment to Christ, but if the one baptized lives unworthy of Christ, his baptism is meaningless. "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom. 2:13).

What new definition of the term "Jew" did Paul give? Rom. 2:27-29.

This announcement stung the pride of the Jews, but Paul uttered it in love. He was seeking to win his countrymen. They needed to cease looking to their literal descent from Abraham as giving them special advantages, such as a supposed automatic acceptance with God. They were now told that their Gentile neighbors who had accepted God's plan were true Jews along with believing Jews, whereas the erring descendants of Abraham had lost the right to that name.

THINK IT THROUGH

To what extent is it possible that a knowledge of our own weaknesses helps us to detect more readily the faults of others and thus to be judgmental?

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 492-494.

**Part 5
ALL NEED
REPENTANCE**

What is the purpose of God's goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering?

"Despise thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. 2:4).

If all have sinned, then all need repentance. The Jews were willing to acknowledge that the Gentiles stood in need of repentance but refused to admit that they needed it also.

We should notice that God's goodness leads, not forces, sinners to repentance. God uses no coercion. He is infinitely patient and seeks to draw all men by His love.

But many despise God's goodness or interpret it to mean that God condones sin and won't do what He has promised.

What comes to those who resist God's love and remain impenitent? Rom. 2:5, 6, 8, 9.

Disobedience is given as the cause of their suffering the indignation and wrath of God. It is clear, then, that those who, through repentance, escape God's wrath will be obedient. Paul describes them as working (verse 10).

Frequently throughout the book of Romans Paul emphasizes the need of good works. Justification by faith without the deeds of the law must never be construed to mean that good works have no place in the Christian life.

What comes to those who allow the goodness of God to lead them to repentance? Rom. 2:7, 10.

Verse 7 is significant in the light of the theme of the book of Romans—righteousness by faith. Here salvation is described as coming to those who seek for it "by patient continuance in well doing." Therefore human effort plays a significant part in the total experience of salvation.

The reason many people misapply the book of Romans, claiming that it teaches that works have nothing to do with salvation, is that they already have their ideas formulated and they bend Scripture to fit their ideas. But the Bible must not be used like a fiddle on which one plays any tune he chooses.

In our study of Romans we should resolve first to listen to Paul, to find out what he meant to tell the Roman Christians. Then we should pray for the help of the Holy Spirit to draw valid lessons for us today, based on what Paul was actually saying, not on what one could possibly bend the words to mean—to discover what the author, Paul, moved by the Holy Spirit, meant to say by the words he used.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 365, 366; *Christ's Object Lessons*, "Lost, and Is Found," pp. 200-206.

**Part 6
GOD'S PLAN
SUCCEEDS**

Since the Jew was found to be as guilty before God as the Gentile, of what value, if any, had been God's revelation to him?

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:1, 2).

The oracles (Greek *logia*, "brief sayings") were the instructions given through Moses concerning the divine will.

Because the Jews repeatedly failed and, especially in Paul's day, had committed the ultimate failure in the rejection of the Messiah, God's efforts on their behalf had not been a total failure. Paul raises the question, "What if some did not believe?" (verse 3). There were those in various periods who found salvation through the "logia of God."

But as a nation the Israelites failed repeatedly to fulfill their divine purpose. The nation suffered repeated reverses and captivities as a result, but during all this time there were individuals who found a saving relationship with their God.

But nationally, except for brief periods, the history of the Jews had been a disaster. Finally, as the parable says (Matt. 21:43), the kingdom of God, the privilege of being God's peculiar evangelistic agency was taken away.

How did Paul meet the charge that the failure of the Jews cast a reflection on God's integrity? Rom. 3:3, 4.

Here, as elsewhere in the book of Romans, Paul squelches any possible criticism of God or of God's dealings with the human family. His vigorous response should be a warning to modern, arrogant man who feels free to criticize God.

How did Paul meet the slanderous charge lodged against him? Rom. 3:5-8.

The Jews were quick to pick whatever flaws they could in the content of Paul's gospel. If righteousness is by faith and not by works, they contended, then people's sinning did God a good turn, for it gave Him an opportunity to reveal His goodness and forgiveness. Then, they said, God should not hold the sinner guilty. Paul did not even bother to answer the argument.

THINK IT THROUGH

When tempted to question God's leading in our lives, how can we reassure ourselves that God's way is always the best way?

"God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 224.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "The Lord's Vineyard," pp. 291-294.

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Rom. 3:28).

In this lesson we come to the basic theme of the book of Romans, justification by faith.

As we have mentioned earlier, because of limitations of time, we cannot go through the entire epistle verse by verse. Thus in the first three lessons we have selected verses here and there from chapters 1 to 3. But in this lesson we concentrate on a certain passage, Romans 3:19-28.

This does not mean that the verses omitted are unimportant. In fact, the student should read them as he has opportunity. Since in lessons one through three the thrust of Paul’s argument has been explained, the meaning of the omitted verses should be clear.

In Romans justification by faith is contrasted with justification by law keeping. The Jews tried to make themselves acceptable to God by their law keeping but failed miserably. They lacked the faith element both in Old Testament times, when they should have trusted in the Saviour to come, and in New Testament times, when they should have trusted the Saviour who had come.

Paul presents acceptance of the Messiah as the ground of justification. But much more than an intellectual acceptance of the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was the Sent of God is required. Faith includes commitment and an acceptance of the way of life the Messiah prescribes.

We should be aware of the fact that when we speak of justification by faith, we are using a figure based on the law court. The transgressor of the law comes before a judge and is condemned to death for his transgressions. But a substitute appears and takes the transgressor’s

sins upon himself, thus clearing the sinner who, by accepting the substitute, stands before the judge, not only cleared of his guilt, but regarded as never having committed the sins for which he was hailed into court.

But even more than that happens. The substitute, who has a perfect record, also offers the pardoned sinner his own perfect law keeping so that the pardoned sinner stands before the judge, not only as having never sinned, but as having always lived a good life.

While in Romans and Galatians Paul uses the figure of the law court, he does not always describe the salvation act by this figure. Nor do other Bible writers. Note, for example, the answers of Jesus to those who came to Him inquiring as to how to be saved. The salvation event can be variously described. However, in Romans, the law court figure is prominent and should be clearly understood. In turn it ought not to be superimposed on discussions employing other figures. Each writer should be permitted to describe the salvation process as the Holy Spirit impressed him to do.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. Law Cannot Save (Rom. 3:19)**
- 2. Faith and Righteousness (Rom. 3:21)**
- 3. Grace and Justification (Rom. 3:24)**
- 4. Elements of Justification (Rom. 3:25)**
- 5. Focus of Justification (Rom. 3:26, 27)**
- 6. Faith and Works (Rom. 3:28)**

Justified by Faith

PRIDE

DOE, JANE

that sports car sure looks good-
don't need it- but people will know
I'm around.
That dress will knock their eyes out.
Did you hear what happened
to Joe and Mary?
I'll do the dusting later
I'm tired of being cutshort in those
committee meetings
I'm going to get even with them
Don't bother me - I'm wat
I've given enough already
I think I'll stay up
the "late late" show
I don't think they use
of paper anymore. I
it at home for str

**NOT
GUILTY**

ALIENATION
NEGLECT
SELFISHNESS
INTEMPERANCE
DISHONESTY



Part 1 **What is the law's function?**
LAW CANNOT
SAVE

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19).

Paul is here using the term "law" in its broad sense as the Jew in his day understood it. By the term "Torah" (the Hebrew word for "law") a Jew even today thinks particularly of God's instruction in the Pentateuch, but also more generally in the entire Old Testament. The moral law, plus the amplification of this in the statutes and judgments, as well as the ceremonial precepts, were a part of this instruction. Because of this, we may think of the law here as the system of Judaism.

To be under the law means to be under its jurisdiction, as were the Jews under the Torah. The law reveals a person's shortcomings and thus one's guilt before God. It cannot remove that guilt, but hopefully the sense of guilt will lead the sinner to seek a remedy.

As we apply the book of Romans in our day when Jewish law is no longer a factor, we think of law particularly in terms of moral law. This law can save us no more than could the system of Judaism save the Jews. To save is not the moral law's function. Its function is to reveal God's character and to show people wherein they fall short of reflecting that character.

What is lawkeeping unable to accomplish and why? Rom. 3:20.

We must at this point remember the basic argument of the Judaizers: "In order to be saved, one must be circumcised and must keep the entire ceremonial law."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 188, 189.

Whatever law it is—moral, ceremonial, civil, or all combined—a keeping of any or all in and of itself will not make a man just in God's sight.

"Though the law cannot remit the penalty for sin, but charges the sinner with all his debt, Christ has promised abundant pardon to all who repent, and believe in His mercy. The love of God is extended in abundance to the repenting, believing soul. The brand of sin upon the soul can be effaced only through the blood of the atoning Sacrifice. No less an offering was required than the sacrifice of Him who was equal with the Father. The work of Christ—His life, humiliation, death, and intercession for lost man—magnifies the law, and makes it honorable."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 371.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 236-239.

Part 2
FAITH AND
RIGHTEOUSNESS

When Jesus came, what new kind of righteousness was manifested?

"Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets" (Rom. 3:21).

This new righteousness is contrasted with the righteousness of the law, which was the righteousness with which the Jew was familiar.

The new righteousness is called "the righteousness of God"; that is, a righteousness that comes from God, a righteousness that God provides, and one that He accepts as valid.

"Righteousness is obedience to the law. The law demands righteousness, and this the sinner owes to the law; but he is incapable of rendering it. The only way in which he can attain to righteousness is through faith. By faith he can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of His Son to the sinner's account. Christ's righteousness is accepted in place of man's failure, and God receives, pardons, justifies, the repentant, believing soul, treats him as though he were righteous, and loves him as He loves His Son."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 367.

How is the righteousness of God received? Rom. 3:22.

The faith of Jesus Christ is here doubtless faith in Jesus Christ (objective genitive). As it operates in the Christian life faith is much more than intellectual assent. Faith in Jesus Christ is accepting Him as Saviour, substitute, and surety. It is choosing His way of life. It is trusting Him.

Both of the words "faith" and "believe" appear in Romans 3:22. In English a distinction is sometimes made between believing and having faith. We have observed before that no such distinction exists in Greek. The word for faith is *pistis*, the word for believe is *pisteuō*. *Pistis* and *pisteuō* are the noun and verb forms of the same word.

"Faith is the condition upon which God has seen fit to promise pardon to sinners; not that there is any virtue in faith whereby salvation is merited, but because faith can lay hold of the merits of Christ, the remedy provided for sin. Faith can present Christ's perfect obedience instead of the sinner's transgression and defection. When the sinner believes that Christ is his personal Saviour, then, according to His unfulfilling promises, God pardons his sin, and justifies him freely. The repentant soul realizes that his justification comes because Christ, as his substitute and surety, has died for him, is his atonement and righteousness."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 366, 367.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "Faith and Acceptance," pp. 49-51.

Part 3
GRACE AND
JUSTIFICATION

How is God's grace related to justification?

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24).

What is justification? The Greek word *dikaioō* translated "justify" may mean "make righteous" or "declare righteous," or "consider righteous." The precise meaning in any instance must be determined by the context. It is built on the same root as is the word *dikaios*, which means "righteous." There is also the word *dikaosunē*, "righteousness," and the word *dikaiōma*, "righteous requirement."

Unfortunately, the English language uses words built on different roots to translate the various words built on only one root in the Greek. As a result the close connection between "justification" and "righteousness" is not always seen. Before justification, a person is unrighteous, hence unacceptable to God. After justification he is regarded as righteous, hence acceptable.

Grace means favor. God's grace is not only the favor He shows; it is also that which God does for a person whom He favors. When a sinner turns to God for salvation, it is an act of grace to consider or declare that person to be righteous.

"Grace is unmerited favor. The angels, who know nothing of sin, do not understand what it is to have grace exercised toward them; but our sinfulness calls for the exercise of grace from a merciful God."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 331, 332.

Justification is presented in Romans as a punctiliar act; that is, it happens at a point of time. One moment the sinner is outside, unrighteous, and unaccepted; the next moment, following justification, he is inside, accepted, and righteous.

Thus the person who is in Christ looks upon justification as a past act, one that took place when he surrendered himself fully to Christ. "Being justified" (Rom. 5:1) is, literally, "having been justified."

Of course, if the justified sinner should fall away and then return to Christ, justification would again occur. Also, if reconversion is considered a daily experience, there is a sense in which justification might be considered a repeating experience. Ellen White speaks of justification being "retained." (See *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 366.)

THINK IT THROUGH

What part does Jesus Christ play in God's justifying act?

"Grace is unmerited favor, and the believer is justified without any merit of his own, without any claim to offer to God. He is justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, who stands in the courts of heaven as the sinner's substitute and surety."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 398.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 331-335.

**Part 4
ELEMENTS OF
JUSTIFICATION**

What are various significant elements in the justification act?

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:25).

Propitiation. The Greek word thus translated, *hilastērion*, occurs in the New Testament only here and in Hebrews 9:5, where it is translated "mercy seat."

"As used here in Rom. 3:25, and in this context describing the offer of justification and redemption through Christ, *hilastērion*, 'propitiation,' seems to represent the fulfillment of all that was typified by the *hilastērion*, 'mercy seat,' in the OT sanctuary. By His sacrificial death, Jesus has been set forth as the means of atonement, expiation (see DA 469), propitiation (see SC 15), reconciliation. There is perhaps no one English word that can adequately portray all that this implies."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 506.

God is represented as the one providing the propitiation. The Father and the Son cooperate together in the work of redemption. Each plays His part. Some Christians seem to forget this. So often, when discussing redemption, they mention only Christ, as though the Father were not involved. This is not the way the salvation act is presented in Romans or in the New Testament generally. (See Rom. 1:1-3, 7, 8; 1 Cor. 1:3, 4; etc.) When the two members of the Deity are mentioned together, God the Father is usually mentioned first, as in the verses above.

Remission of sins. It is our sins that make us unacceptable to God. We can do nothing of ourselves to cancel our sins. But in the plan of redemption God has provided a way for these sins to be remitted through faith in Christ's blood.

The word for "remission" is the Greek *paresis*, literally "passing over" or "passing by." It is a different word than the one translated "forgiveness" in the New Testament.

The "passing over" is in no sense an ignoring of sins. God can pass over the sins of the past because by His death Christ has paid the penalty for all men's sins. Anyone, therefore, who has "faith in his blood" can have his sins remitted, for Christ has already died for them (1 Cor. 15:3).

THINK IT THROUGH

When God remits sins, how completely is the sinner free of them?

"Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Things New and Old," pp. 128, 129.

**Part 5
FOCUS OF
JUSTIFICATION**

In justification by faith, what is the central focus?

"To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith" (Rom. 3:26, 27).

The good news that Paul was anxious to share with all who would listen was that there was available to man "his [that is, God's] righteousness." Through long centuries the Jews had focused on their own righteousness. "They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3).

After their return from Babylonian captivity, the Jews tried scrupulously to keep the law. They realized that it had been their transgression of the law that led to their captivity. (See 2 Chron. 36:14-17.) Because they did not wish to repeat their mistake, their lawyers and rabbis outlined in minute detail how each precept of the Old Testament was to be kept. For example, they defined the length of a Sabbath day's journey as 2000 cubits. They determined by weight or type what constituted a burden that was not to be carried on the Sabbath day. Their tithing laws were minutely detailed.

In Jesus' day these various laws existed orally. A short time later they were written down. The Mishnah details this oral tradition. After its production, Jewish rabbis commented on the Mishnah. These comments were eventually combined with the Mishnah in the Talmud.

To the Jew, to worship God correctly meant to keep these oral traditions, which they took to be not human laws but a God-endorsed detailing of how God's law was to be kept.

Thus the Jewish mind was focused almost completely on self, on how a person could keep all the minute details of oral tradition in order to please God.

Jesus severely attacked this oral tradition. He said, "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9).

What a relief it must have been for the scrupulous Jew to discover that he could look away from himself to God's righteousness and that by accepting it he could be accepted by God.

Because of the cross of Calvary God can declare sinners righteous and still be considered just in the eyes of the universe. Satan can point no accusing finger at God, for Heaven had made the supreme sacrifice. Satan had accused God of asking of the human race more than He was willing to give. The cross refutes this claim.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 386, 387.

**Part 6
FAITH AND
WORKS****What conclusion did Paul draw from his discussion of God's righteousness?****"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28).**

In the historical context Paul was speaking of law in its broad sense of the system of Judaism. No matter how conscientiously a Jew tried to live under this system, if he failed to accept Jesus as the Messiah, he could not be justified.

This verse (Rom. 3:28) is Paul's conclusion from his claim that the law of faith excludes boasting. If a man were justified by his own actions, he could boast about it. But when he is justified because Jesus is the object of his faith, then the credit clearly belongs to God who justified and not to the man who is justified. All the glory is to God. Ellen White asks, "What is justification?" and then answers: "It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 456.

"Works of law cannot atone for past sins. Justification cannot be earned. It can only be received by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Therefore, in this sense, works of law have nothing to do with justification. To be justified without works means to be justified without there being anything in ourselves to merit justification."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 509.

But many Christians have misunderstood and misapplied this text. They say all one has to do is to believe. They depreciate works and the keeping of even the moral law. Thus they completely misread Paul. Paul attaches great importance to the keeping of the moral law, both in the book of Romans, and elsewhere. His point is that the keeping of the law is not the *means* of justification, but he has previously established that the justified person is a doer of the law. (See Rom. 2:13.)

Ellen White wrote much on the relation of faith and works. Notice one such passage:

"Works will never save us; it is the merit of Christ that will avail in our behalf. Through faith in him, Christ will make all our imperfect efforts acceptable to God. The faith we are required to have is not a do-nothing faith; saving faith is that which works by love, and purifies the soul. He who will lift up holy hands to God without wrath and doubting, will walk intelligently in the way of God's commandments.

"If we are to have pardon for our sins, we must first have a realization of what sin is, that we may repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance. We must have a solid foundation for our faith; it must be founded on the word of God, and its results will be seen in obedience to God's expressed will."—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, June 16, 1890.

FURTHER STUDY*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 373, 374.

“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law” (Rom. 3:31).

Lesson 5 is important for several reasons, one being to help us to meet the charges of those who, because of our insistence that the moral law must be kept, say that we are legalists. These opponents quote principally the books of Romans and Galatians to support their charge.

They quote texts such as Romans 3:20, “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight”; and Galatians 3:24, 25, “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”

In our lessons thus far in the book of Romans we have made it clear that “law” is used in a broader sense than simply comprehending moral law. Only as we draw lessons from Romans for our day do we think of the moral law as especially applicable.

The argument as to which law is referred to in Romans and Galatians is old. Some have insisted that it is the ceremonial law; others the moral. It is helpful on this point to examine Ellen White’s statements concerning the meaning of the term “law” in these books. (Since the theme of the two books is identical, and the two books were written at essentially the same time and to meet the same arguments, we are assuming that what is said concerning the law in one book can be applied to the other.)

Concerning the situation giving rise to Paul’s arguments regarding law in the book of Galatians, Ellen White said, “These false teachers were mingling Jewish tradition with the truths of the gospel. Ignoring the decision of the general council at Jerusalem, they urged upon the

Gentile converts the observance of the ceremonial law.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 383.

But Ellen White did not restrict the application of the term to the ceremonial law, because, as we derive lessons from the book, we can draw in the moral law. Thus she says, “I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 233.

In another statement where she speaks of what the Holy Spirit is saying today in the law statements of these books she says, “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24). In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 234.

We recommend Ellen White’s interpretation of “law” in Romans and Galatians as the best answer to our critics. For example in Romans 7:6 Paul says that the Christian is “delivered from the law.” Here applies the rule of distinguishing between what the Scriptures meant to the Christian members in Paul’s day and what they mean to us today. In Paul’s day it meant the Jewish law system; for us today it means the moral law.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The Law Established**
(Rom. 3:31)
2. **Grace or Debt**
(Rom. 4:4, 5)
3. **Promise and Law**
(Rom. 4:13)
4. **Law and Old Covenant**
(Rom. 4:14)
5. **Ethical Conduct Under Grace**
(Rom. 3:8; 6:15)
6. **Law and Transgression**
(Rom. 4:15, 16)

Justification and the Law



Part 1
THE LAW
ESTABLISHED

How did Paul answer a common charge of the Judaizers against him?

“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law” (Rom. 3:31).

The Jews used the term “law” to refer to the entire body of God’s revelation through Moses. They called the first five books of the Old Testament the law (the Torah). They held the perverted notion that the way to keep this law was to keep it as the rabbis had prescribed. They accused Paul of preaching against the law. (See Acts 21:28.)

While Paul opposed the oral traditions of the Jews, he never spoke against the Scriptures themselves. In this passage in the book of Romans he makes the emphatic statement that faith does not make void what God has revealed. In fact faith establishes the Torah as being true.

To what incident in the law did Paul point as proof of his statement that faith establishes the law? Rom. 4:1-5.

The chapter divisions in the Bible were inserted arbitrarily many centuries after the Bible was written. Actually chapter four is an illustration of the assertion of chapter 3:31, showing that faith as the ground of justification was already a theme of the law. The chapter division here is misleading.

In the Torah is the narrative of Abraham. According to this narrative Abraham was accounted righteous because he “believed God.” Therefore the Torah itself teaches righteousness by faith. Hence any implication that faith makes void (Greek *katargeō* “renders useless,” “invalidates”) the law is completely false because faith affirms that which the Torah teaches.

To what other Old Testament scripture did Paul appeal as supporting his thesis of faith? Rom. 4:6-8.

Paul cites Psalm 32:1, 2. He sets forth David’s restoration to divine favor after his affair with Bathsheba as an example of justification by faith. It certainly wasn’t any works that David performed that won him acceptance. Forgiveness was an act of God’s grace. Here, then, was another example from the Torah of the operation of faith. (Torah was often used of the Holy Scriptures generally on the principle that the most important gave its name to the whole; see John 10:34; 12:34.)

In view of Paul’s use of “law” in this context, is Romans 3:31 a good text to prove that the Ten Commandments are still binding in the Christian era? Definitely. This is the application of the text today, when Jewish law is no longer an issue. This is the way Ellen White repeatedly uses this verse.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 307, 308.

Part 2 Why is it that one trying to earn justification will fail of
GRACE OR DEBT achieving it?

"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:4, 5).

So long had the Jews believed that justification or acceptance with God resulted from a meticulous keeping of the Torah, that they found it difficult to grasp the glorious truth that justification was granted as a free gift of grace to all who believed. It was not a debt God owed them for law keeping.

One's relationship with God is affected by the way he understands justification. If he believes he must earn acceptance, his thinking is turned inward toward self-effort. If he grasps the glorious truth that justification is a gift from God, his center of focus becomes God.

In what way did the experience of Abraham demonstrate that the Gentiles were eligible for eternal life? Rom. 4:9-12.

It was difficult for the Jews to accept the fact that the uncircumcised Gentiles had equal status with them before God. Paul appealed to the law they revered as teaching that justification is in no way dependent upon whether a man is circumcised and that it is freely available to all men regardless of race.

"The sinner must come in faith to Christ, take hold of His merits, lay his sins upon the Sin Bearer, and receive His pardon. It was for this cause that Christ came into the world. Thus the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the repenting, believing sinner. He becomes a member of the royal family."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 215.

When Abraham was justified (Gen. 15:6), he was not circumcised. Later he was circumcised. Thus Abraham became uniquely the father of both the uncircumcised and the circumcised.

THINK IT THROUGH

If I am given to race prejudice, the recognition of what fact should lead me to abandon it?

"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:26).

"In that age of caste, when the rights of men were often unrecognized, Paul set forth the great truth of human brotherhood, declaring that God 'hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.' In the sight of God all are on an equality."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 238.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 388.

**Part 3
PROMISE
AND LAW****In what sense is "law" used in the following scripture?****"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith" (Rom. 4:13).**

"Promise" and "law" are here contrasted. Paul is seeking to establish an Old Testament base for his teaching of righteousness by faith. He finds an example in Abraham, whom all the Jews accepted as their ancestor. Acceptance or justification had come to Abraham quite apart from law. God made a promise to Abraham that he was to be "heir of the world." Abraham believed this promise, that is, he accepted the role that it implied. As a result God accepted him and worked through him to save the world.

"There was given to Abraham the promise, especially dear to the people of that age, of a numerous posterity and of national greatness: 'I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.' [Gen. 12:2.] And to this was added the assurance, precious above every other to the inheritor of faith, that of his line the Redeemer of the world should come: 'In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.' [Gen. 12:3.]"—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 125.

With reference to the promise to Abraham, at what time was the law introduced? Gal. 3:7-9, 14-17.

Four hundred and thirty years from the time the promise was given to Abraham brings us to the establishment of the Israelite economy at Sinai. While it is true that the Ten Commandments were spoken by God Himself from Sinai's heights, this incident was not their origin. The moral law is as old as God Himself. God said to Abraham, "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my . . . laws" (Gen. 26:5).

Therefore "law" in this Galatian passage cannot refer to the moral law *per se*. It refers to the whole system of laws given at Sinai which were the basis of the old covenant. It was to this covenant that the Jews looked for salvation. Thus "law" in this Galatian passage is loosely synonymous with "old covenant." The moral law is included in—in fact is the base of—the old covenant, but to single it out is to imply that the moral law originated at Sinai.

This definition of law as the Jewish system is important to grasp, because certain groups of evangelical Christians brand as a legalist anyone teaching that the moral law should be observed. But these Christians misread Paul, who was simply trying to say that with the coming of the Messiah men could not be saved under Judaism.

FURTHER STUDY*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 363, 364.

Part 4
LAW AND OLD
COVENANT

What circumstance would make faith of none effect?

"If they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect" (Rom. 4:14).

If men could be saved by keeping the Jewish laws there would be no need for "faith," the element which Paul was presenting as the ground of salvation. But the case of Abraham proved that heirship came through promise not through law. Therefore, if the Jews wished to be saved, they would have to abandon trust in their works for salvation and accept the Abrahamic promise, now fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah.

How did Paul explain the seeming contradiction between "law" to which the Jews looked for life and the promise according to which a man becomes an heir through faith? Gal. 3:21-23.

The law, or old-covenant experience, was necessary in order to teach the Jews their need of a Saviour, to show them that without God's power they could never meet His requirements.

"If the Abrahamic covenant contained the promise of redemption, why was another covenant formed at Sinai? In their bondage the people had to a great extent lost the knowledge of God. . . .

" . . . Living in the midst of idolatry and corruption, they had no true conception of the holiness of God, of the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts, their utter inability, in themselves, to render obedience to God's law, and their need of a Saviour. All this they must be taught."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 371.

The problem was, as mentioned earlier, that the Jews never fully learned the lesson the old covenant was designed to teach. But when the Messiah came—or, as Paul says, when "faith came"—they could no longer avoid a decision.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what way is it possible to live under an old-covenant type of experience today?

"The principle that man can save himself by his own works lay at the foundation of every heathen religion. . . . Wherever it is held, men have no barrier against sin."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 35, 36.

"If Satan can succeed in leading man to place value upon his own works as works of merit and righteousness, he knows that he can overcome him by his temptations, and make him his victim and prey. . . . Strike the door-posts with the blood of Calvary's Lamb, and you are safe."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Sept. 3, 1889.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 125-127.

Part 5
ETHICAL
CONDUCT
UNDER GRACE

How is the keeping of the law of God related to justification?

“And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just” (Rom. 3:8).

“What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid” (Rom. 6:15).

There are a number of texts in Romans that seem to speak depreciatingly of law keeping. For example, Romans 3:20. “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” But we have already pointed out that the expression “law” as used in Paul’s day was a much broader term, including various laws (see lesson 2, especially for Tuesday). When “law” is spoken of historically, the term becomes almost synonymous with “Judaism” or “old covenant.”

But it comes out clearly in the book of Romans that the justified person leaves off his sinning. Paul was slanderously accused of teaching that it was proper for the Christian to sin, that, in fact, by sinning the Christian would give God’s grace an opportunity for broader demonstration. Paul emphatically denied this charge. Chapters 6 to 8 emphasize living a life of victory over sin. Thus a life of obedience to the law of God is the fruit of justification.

The law of God is also related to justification in another way, as we have earlier pointed out.

In justification Christ’s perfect law keeping is imputed to the sinner. “Righteousness is obedience to the law. The law demands righteousness, and this the sinner owes to the law; but he is incapable of rendering it. The only way in which he can attain to righteousness is through faith. By faith he can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of His Son to the sinner’s account.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 367.

But the fact that the obedience of Christ is imputed to the account of a person in justification does not free him from future obedience to the law of God. In fact it obligates him all the more. The atonement was made precisely because the law could not be abrogated or altered.

“In order for man to be saved, and for the honor of the law to be maintained, it was necessary for the Son of God to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin. He who knew no sin became sin for us. He died for us on Calvary. His death shows the wonderful love of God for man, and the immutability of His law.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 240.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 762, 763.

Part 6
LAW AND
TRANSGRESSION

What contrast did Paul draw to emphasize that salvation could no longer be found in Judaism?

“Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all” (Rom. 4:15, 16).

The Jews were so wedded to their Torah, “law,” that Paul found it difficult to wean them away from it. “The Jews had always prided themselves upon their divinely appointed services, and many of those who had been converted to the faith of Christ still felt that since God had once clearly outlined the Hebrew manner of worship, it was improbable that He would ever authorize a change in any of its specifications.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 189.

Surely it should have been evident to the Jews in Paul’s day that their law (Torah) was not saving them. In the first place, “the law worketh wrath” (Rom. 4:15), and while professing to keep it, they were treasuring up wrath to themselves against the day of wrath (Rom. 2:5). But grace is related to faith, not to law. (See Rom. 4:16.)

Furthermore, as a nation they had already experienced much wrath for all their sins. Since God had revealed Himself in a special way to the Jews, committing to them His oracles, expecting them to share this knowledge with the other nations, they carried a special responsibility. When they failed not only in this responsibility but also in their personal lives, the nation suffered repeated reverses and captivities.

The history of the Jews was written “for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Cor. 10:11). The Jews suffered wrath because they failed to fulfill God’s purpose for them. Today the Christian church has been called to evangelize the world. How effectively is it fulfilling its responsibility?

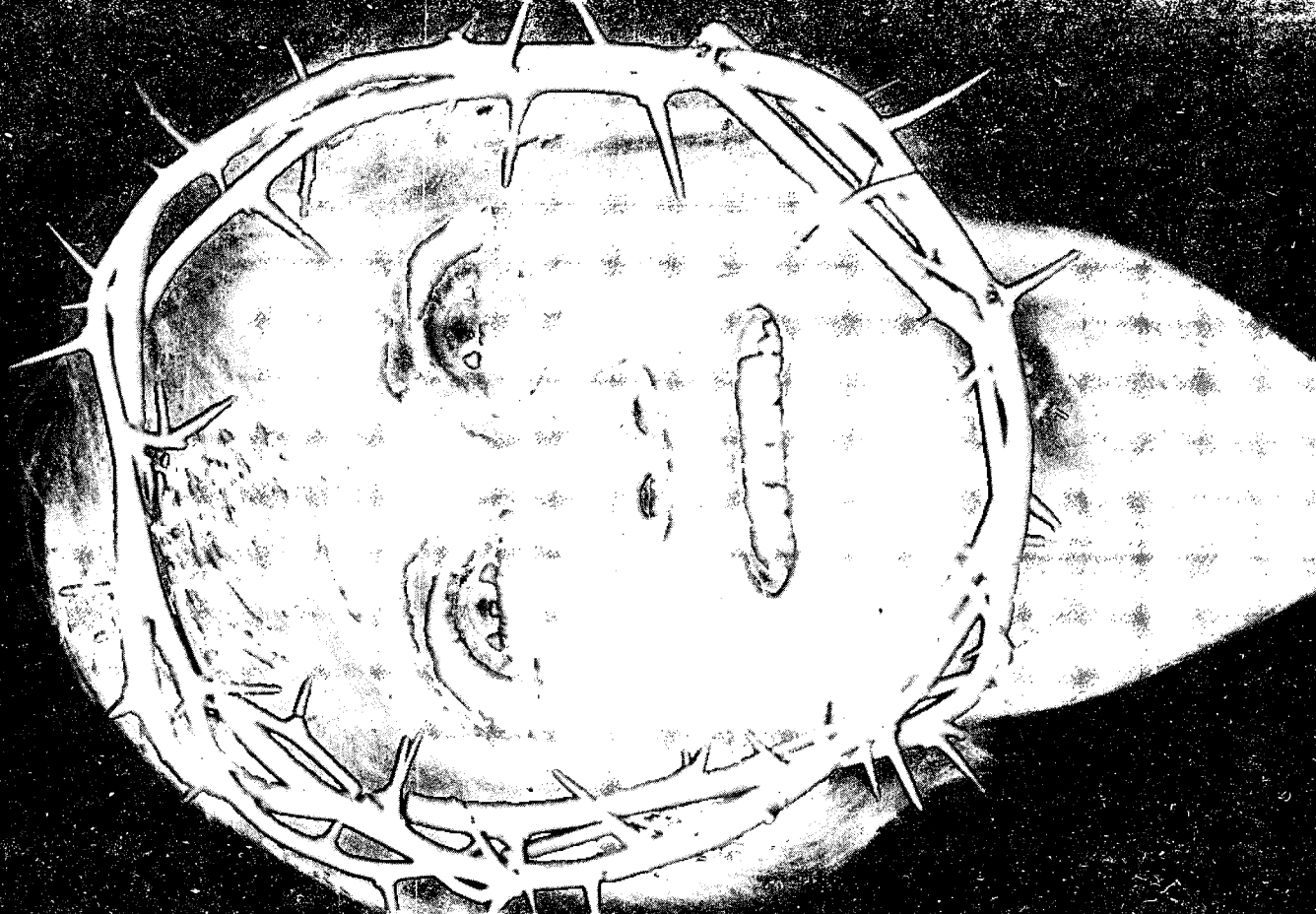
THINK IT THROUGH

What lessons can I learn from the failure of God’s ancient people?

“The record of Israel’s forgetfulness has been preserved for our enlightenment. . . . Had the Adventists in the early days still trusted to the guiding Hand that had been with them in their past experience . . . years ago the inhabitants of the earth would have been warned, the closing work would have been completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 115, 116.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, p. 608.



Blessings of Justification

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:1, 2).

From this point onward, at least for some chapters, we will proceed on a verse-by-verse basis. Since this week's lesson covers chapter 5, it is suggested that the entire chapter be read as an introduction to the week's study.

Paul has established the point that justification or acceptance with God comes only through faith in Jesus Christ. Now he pauses briefly in his line of argument to exult in this glorious truth. Through Adam men received nothing but condemnation and death; through Jesus Christ they receive justification and life.

Wherever the truth of justification by faith is received today it brings the same exultation. This was the experience of those who received it wholeheartedly when the subject of justification by faith was given emphasis at the 1888 General Conference session in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and in subsequent years at camp meeting and other gatherings.

Ellen White describes the results of the preaching of the message of Christ our righteousness at the Ottawa, Kansas, camp meeting in 1889: “One of our young ministering brethren said

that he had enjoyed more of the blessing and love of God during that meeting than in all his life before. Another stated that the trials, perplexities, and conflicts which he had endured in his mind had been of such a character that he had been tempted to give up everything. He had felt that there was no hope for him, unless he could obtain more of the grace of Christ; but through the influence of the meetings he had experienced a change of heart, and had a better knowledge of salvation through faith in Christ. He saw that it was his privilege to be justified by faith; he had peace with God, and with tears confessed what relief and blessing had come to his soul. At every social meeting many testimonies were borne as to the peace, comfort, and joy the people had found in receiving light.

“We thank the Lord with all the heart that we have precious light to present before the people, and we rejoice that we have a message for this time which is present truth. The tidings that Christ is our righteousness has brought relief to many, many souls, and God says to His people, ‘Go forward.’” —*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 356, 357.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Peace and Joy**
(Rom. 5:1)
2. **Fortitude in Tribulation**
(Rom. 5:3)
3. **God Seeking Man**
(Rom. 5:6-8)
4. **Death Swallowed Up**
(Rom. 5:12)
5. **Law Awakens Need**
(Rom. 5:13, 14)
6. **Christ Versus Adam**
(Rom. 5:18, 19)

**Part 1
PEACE
AND JOY**

As a result of our having been justified by faith, what is our new relationship with God?

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1).

"Being justified" is literally "having been justified." The Greek verb represents the action as completed. We have been declared righteous, or regarded as righteous, not through any deeds of law but through our having accepted Jesus Christ. The perfect life that Jesus lived on this earth has been imputed to us. God regards that we did the deeds of Jesus. His perfect law-keeping is credited to us. At the same time, all of our sins have been laid on Jesus. God has reckoned that Jesus did them. They have been paid for by the death of the Son of God. What more glorious news could there be for the sinner?

In Romans 5:1 a number of Greek manuscripts read, "let us have peace," instead of "we have peace." Some translations reflect the earlier reading. Either reading fits the context. If "let us have peace" is accepted, it suggests an appeal to step into the glorious experience that God designed for the justified person. Because it sounds too good to be true, the newly justified person needs encouragement to believe it and act upon it.

Being at peace with God, what will be the justified sinner's emotional response? Rom. 5:2.

Joy and rejoicing are frequent themes of Bible writers, both in the Old Testament and in the New. No greater exultation can be found than the joy that follows justification. With it the shallow joys of illegitimate pleasure cannot be compared.

Here "the hope of the glory of God" probably has reference to the future glory to be revealed at the end of the age. Then this hope spoken of by Paul is the same as the "blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

"There is great need that Christ should be preached as the only hope and salvation. When the doctrine of justification by faith was presented . . . it came to many as water comes to the thirsty traveler. The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, seemed a precious thought."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 360.

THINK IT THROUGH

Unless I have experienced the peace that comes through justification, how enthusiastically and convincingly can I share with others the good news?

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Encyclopedia article, "Justification."

Part 2
FORTITUDE IN
TRIBULATION**For the justified person, what besides hope is a ground for rejoicing?****"We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience" (Rom. 5:3).**

The Greek word translated "glory" in verse 3 is the one translated "rejoice" in verse 2. If it is translated "rejoice" in verse 3 also as in the Revised Standard Version, the connection between verses 2 and 3 is more clearly seen. A justified person can rejoice in tribulation because he has fixed his faith and trust in Jesus Christ. He has confidence that God will work all things for good. He will consider it an honor to suffer for Christ's sake. (See 1 Peter 4:13.)

"Trial is part of the education given in the school of Christ, to purify God's children from the dross of earthliness. It is because God is leading His children that trying experiences come to them. Trials and obstacles are His chosen methods of discipline, and His appointed conditions of success. He who reads the hearts of men knows their weaknesses better than they themselves can know them. He sees that some have qualifications which, if rightly directed, could be used in the advancement of His work."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 524.

"They [God's servants] are joyful in the tribulation which they experience while pressed by the enemy. These willing servants are gaining an experience and forming a character which will do honor to the cause to God."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 510.

What progression will be seen in the person living in grace? Rom. 5:3-5.

Patience. The Greek word thus translated (*hupomonē*) means steadfast endurance. This is the type of endurance that tribulation develops in the one who maintains his faith, and who does not lose sight of his hope of the glory of God. The opposite type of experience is described by Ellen White as follows: "As soon as God proves them, and tests their faith, they waver, they stand feebly, swaying first one way, then the other. They have not the genuine article that Paul possessed, that could glory in tribulation because 'tribulation worketh patience.'"—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 514.

Experience. The Greek word thus translated (*dokimē*) means literally "the quality of being approved," hence "character," that is "approved character." Tests patiently or steadfastly endured develop an approved character.

Hope. Endurance and approval naturally give rise to hope.

THINK IT THROUGH**How does Paul's ladder compare with Peter's ladder described in Second Peter 1:5-7?****FURTHER STUDY***The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 470-472.

Part 3
GOD
SEEKING MAN

Who took the initial step in reconciling man to God?

"When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. . . . But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:6-8).

When Adam and Eve shamefully and inexcusably transgressed the divine requirement, God took the first steps toward reconciliation. Ever since, God has taken the initiative in providing a way of salvation and in inviting men to accept it. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son" (Gal. 4:4). On the cross Christ bore the sins of the whole world, past, present, and future. Any man can have all his sins remitted simply by turning from his sins and accepting Him.

From what does justification guarantee that a man will be saved? Rom. 5:9.

Wrath—ultimate separation from God and annihilation—is the terrible fate that awaits the sinner. (See Rom. 1:18.) The third angel's message describes in the most fearful terms the wrath that will fall upon the worshipers of the beast. (See Rev. 14:9-11.) As the blood on the doorposts of the Israelites in Egypt on the eve of their departure protected the firstborn from the wrath that befell Egypt's firstborn, so the blood of Jesus Christ guarantees that one who has been justified and retains that status will be protected when God's wrath finally destroys sin.

Whereas Christ's death effects reconciliation, what does Christ's life accomplish? Rom. 5:10.

Some commentators have seen in this passage of Scripture a reference to the life that Christ lived on this earth during which He wrought a perfect character which He now offers to impute to us. While this is certainly what Christ's perfect life accomplished, Paul seems to be emphasizing the fact that whereas Christ died, He rose again and is alive forevermore. (See Heb. 7:25.) Because He lives, we are saved. If He had remained in the tomb, our hopes would have perished with Him.

Mentioning for the third time in the present chapter the Christian's joy, what new grounds of rejoicing does Paul cite? Rom. 5:11.

This is the only time in the New Testament of the King James Version that the word "atonement" occurs. The word is used here in its literal sense of reconciliation.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 383, 384.

Part 4
DEATH
SWALLOWED UP**What tragic results followed Adam's transgression and why?****"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).**

Death is an enemy. When God created the human family He designed that its members should live forever. With few exceptions men do not want to die. They cling tenaciously to life. Death seldom comes without accident or through painful, lingering diseases. No wonder people dread to die.

One of the most glorious aspects of the gospel is the news that death has been swallowed up in life. Jesus passed through the portals of the tomb and burst its bonds. He says, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:18). Because Jesus has the keys, the enemy can no longer hold his victims in the grave.

Commentators have argued more over this passage of Scripture than over most others. Perhaps the reason is, as the *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, volume 6, page 529, says, that these commentators "attempt to use the passage for purposes other than Paul intended."

One point they argue over is, In what way was Adam's sin passed on to his posterity? Did Adam's descendants share the guilt of Adam's sin, or are they guilty before God because of their own sin?

While these may be interesting questions to raise, it is doubtful that Paul was here intending to clarify these deeply theological issues. More likely he is reemphasizing what he has already stated, "for all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23), Adam being the first sinner. Men need to recognize that they are sinners. Only as they recognize this will they see their need of a Saviour.

"Many are deceived concerning the condition of their hearts. They do not realize that the natural heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. They wrap themselves about with their own righteousness, and are satisfied in reaching their own human standard of character."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 320.

THINK IT THROUGH**How much good will come from blaming my ancestor, Adam, for the sin state I am in?**

"Concerning the creation of Adam it is said, 'In the likeness of God made He him;' but man, after the Fall, 'begat a son in his own likeness, after his image.' While Adam was created sinless, in the likeness of God, Seth, like Cain, inherited the fallen nature of his parents."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 80.

FURTHER STUDY*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 60-62.

Part 5
LAW AWAKENS
NEED

Why does Paul introduce the thought that “sin is not imputed when there is no law”?

“Until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come” (Rom. 5:13, 14).

The phrase “until the law” is paralleled with the statement “from Adam to Moses.” The law here spoken of is the system introduced by Moses at Sinai, which instituted the Jewish economy. In Galatians 3:17 it is stated that the “law” came 430 years after the promise to Abraham, which again brings us to the time of the Exodus.

“Until the law” means until the detailing of God’s requirements in the various laws given to Israel at Sinai. Some might argue that until God thus fully revealed His will, He could not hold men responsible for transgressing that will. Sinning “after the similitude of Adam’s transgression” means sinning against a known, expressly stated requirement. It is true that prior to Sinai the human race generally had only a limited revelation of God. Of course Abraham and his descendants had a much greater knowledge, but they comprised only a minute fraction of the pre-Sinai world. Nevertheless the people in that world died, as Paul here points out. Death passed upon *all* men. Though they had not sinned against an expressly revealed command, yet they had sinned. They had the revelations of God in nature, to which they had not responded and thus were held guilty. “The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen . . . ; so that they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:20).

For what purpose did God reveal Himself more fully in the “law”? Rom. 5:20, 21.

The instruction given at Sinai included the moral law, though it had existed before. But this was the first time, according to the Bible, that this law was written and widely proclaimed. This law was amplified in various statutes, judgments, and laws.

When the Israelites began to compare themselves with the divine requirements, they discovered that they fell far short. In other words, “the offense” abounded. They suddenly realized the extent of their transgressions. The purpose of such a revelation was to help them to see their need of a Saviour and to drive them to accept the grace so freely offered by God.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what way is our waywardness today after “the similitude of Adam’s transgression”?

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Encyclopedia article, “Law.”

Part 6
CHRIST
VERSUS ADAM

What contrast does Paul make between Adam and Christ?

"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:18, 19).

"As related to the first Adam, men receive from him nothing but guilt and the sentence of death. But Christ steps in and passes over the ground where Adam fell, enduring every test in man's behalf. He redeems Adam's disgraceful failure and fall by coming forth from the trial untarnished. This places man on vantage ground with God. It places him where, through accepting Christ as his Saviour, he becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Thus he becomes connected with God and Christ."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1074.

"The second Adam was a free moral agent, held responsible for His conduct. Surrounded by intensely subtle and misleading influences, He was made less favorably situated than was the first Adam to lead a sinless life. Yet in the midst of sinners He resisted every temptation to sin, and maintained His innocence. He was ever sinless."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1074.

How are Adam's and Christ's acts contrasted in Romans 5:15-17?

The word "gift" occurs five times in verses 15 through 17. Paul is emphasizing that justification is not earned; it comes as a gift. (Compare Rom. 4:15; 6:23.) Men receive it by believing on Jesus, which means fixing the faith or trust on Jesus Christ, accepting Him for who He is, and accepting His plan for their lives. This was such a new thought to the Jews that Paul needed to give it emphasis. They had been taught that God's favor must be earned by diligent attention to all God's requirements. Paul was not saying that accepting justification as a gift gives the receiver a right to ignore God's moral requirements. In subsequent chapters he tells them that meeting the moral standards is possible only for one who is justified.

THINK IT THROUGH

Adam's original sin had far-reaching consequences, bringing suffering upon many. Are there ways in which our sins, too, bring suffering to others? Give examples.

"It is impossible for any of us to live in such a way that we shall not cast an influence in the world."—*The Adventist Home*, p. 33.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 363, 364.



Victory Over Sin

“Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14).

Having paused in chapter 5 to exult in the blessings of justification by faith, Paul proceeds to answer a question naturally arising from an emphasis of faith: Where do works come in? “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” he inquires (Rom. 6:1).

Chapter 6 is his answer. The motivations for rightdoing that he presents are unique, not often highlighted in modern-day appeals for proper ethical behavior.

In any discussion of justification by faith and of Christ our righteousness, the question naturally arises, How is sanctification related to these? Seventh-day Adventists are familiar with the manner in which Ellen White relates justification and sanctification: “The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 35.

What does Paul have to say in the book of Romans about sanctification? The word “sanctification” appears nowhere in the book of Romans. “Sanctified” occurs once, in chapter 15:16, where Paul says that “the offering up of the Gentiles” is “sanctified by the Holy Ghost.”

Does this mean that Paul has nothing to say about what is commonly understood by sanctification? Not at all. Paul has much to say about it. He simple does not call it sanctification.

It should be remembered that when sanctification is discussed by Adventists, for example, as a work of a lifetime, they are using the word with its theological, not necessarily biblical, meaning. In the Bible “to sanctify” means “to dedicate,” usually, in the context, to God. Thus, to be sanctified is often presented as a past completed act. For example, “all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32) is literally “all that have been sanctified.” “To them that are sanctified” (1 Cor. 1:2) is literally “to them which have been sanctified.” The sanctified ones in this definition are the ones dedicated to God. They are called “saints” (sanctified ones, in Greek from the same root as “sanctify”).

But this biblical usage of “sanctify” in no way denies the important doctrine of sanctification and the fact that sanctification is the work of a lifetime. The Bible strongly endorses this doctrine, but it generally uses other terms to describe it.

Although the terms “sanctify” and “sanctification” do not appear in Romans 6, the chapter could be entitled “Sanctification.” The subject is victory over sin. Obedience is emphasized.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. Grace Is Not License**
(Rom. 6:1, 2)
- 2. Sin Personified**
(Rom. 6:12)
- 3. Grace and Victory**
(Rom. 6:14)
- 4. Two Contending Masters**
(Rom. 6:16)
- 5. Entire Consecration**
(Rom. 6:19)
- 6. Wages Versus Gift**
(Rom. 6:23)

Part 1
GRACE IS
NOT LICENSE

Having observed that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20), how did Paul forestall the possible conclusion that sin is a good thing because it provides an opportunity for grace to be operative?

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:1, 2).

"God forbid" (Greek *mē genoito*) is a strong negation meaning literally "may it not be," or "may it not become." The KJV translation "God forbid" is an idiomatic translation, substituting for the Greek idiom an English idiom signifying strong negation. The Greek phrase does not have the word "God."

Paul follows an interesting line of argument in chapter 6 as to why a justified person should not sin. We should note it carefully. To begin with he says, we shouldn't sin because we have died to sin. Then he explains what he means.

What aspect of water baptism signifies that the one baptized leaves off sinning? Rom. 6:3-5.

Immersion in the waters of baptism represents burial. What is buried? The "old man" of sin—that is, the body committing sin, or the body dominated or ruled by sin. As a result this "body of sin" is destroyed so that we no longer serve sin. In Romans 6 sin is personified as a master who rules over his servants. Once the "body of sin" that served Mr. Sin is destroyed, sin's mastery over it ceases. The one who rises from the watery grave comes up a new person who no longer serves Mr. Sin. He now walks in newness of life.

What further lessons does baptism teach? Rom. 6:8-11.

The important point in these verses is that Christ, having died, died once and for all. He is now alive forevermore. Death can no more rule Him. So the Christian who is baptized has died to sin once and for all and should never again come under its dominion.

"At our baptism we pledged ourselves to break all connection with Satan and his agencies, and to put heart and mind and soul into the work of extending the kingdom of God. . . . The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are pledged to cooperate with sanctified human instrumentalities."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1075.

THINK IT THROUGH

Are the reasons Paul here sets forth for not sinning the reasons that motivate me not to yield when I am tempted to sin?

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 6, pp. 1074, 1075.

Part 2
SIN
PERSONIFIED**By what figure is sin further described?****"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. 6:12).**

The word "reign" shows that "sin" is here represented as a king. The Greek word here translated "reign" means, literally, "to be a king," or "to function as a king." Mr. Sin is all too willing to assume kingship of our mortal bodies and dictate their behavior.

When Paul says "let not sin . . . reign," he implies that the justified person can choose to prevent Mr. Sin's setting himself up as king in the life. This is where the action of the will comes in.

"What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can *choose* to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 47.

The Greek word translated "lusts" means "desires." So far as the word itself is concerned, the desires may be either for good things or for bad things. When Mr. Sin reigns he will make us desire all kinds of evil things. These desires will be strong and almost irresistible. We will want to do the things King Sin suggests. The writer of the hymn "My Jesus I Love Thee" speaks of the "pleasures of sin" which, in the Seventh-day Adventist *Church Hymnal*, number 276, have been changed to "follies of sin." It is true, they are follies. Nevertheless, King Sin offers pleasures in which his subjects will strongly desire to indulge.

The "therefore" in this verse is important. It goes back to what has been said before, specifically to what has been said in verses 10 and 11. The baptized person is now living "unto God." That is, God is the center of his new life. He is serving God, doing what pleases God. Since this is the case, he cannot serve King Sin at the same time. He is "alive unto God through Jesus Christ." Notice how the Father and the Son are closely associated in the work of redemption. Often in gospel preaching only Christ is exalted. The Father ought not thus to be ignored. In the Pauline writings the Father and the Son are given equal honor and attention.

THINK IT THROUGH**How do I cease to be a citizen of King Sin's dominion?****FURTHER STUDY***Messages to Young People*, pp. 105, 106.

Part 3
GRACE AND
VICTORY**What determines whether sin will reign over us?**

“Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14).

This verse is one of the key statements in the book of Romans. To understand it correctly we must know what Paul here means by the expression “under the law.” We have already pointed out that in the context of the book of Romans “law” is used in its wider application of the body of law delivered to the Jews at Sinai. In many of its occurrences “law” is synonymous with “Jewish economy” or “the old covenant.” The moral law was a part of this system, but the meaning of “law” in Romans must not be restricted to “moral law”; otherwise we will have Paul saying that the moral law originated at Sinai, which is not true.

Paul is saying in Romans 6:14 that the person living “under the law,” that is, under the Jewish economy as it functioned in his day, will be ruled by sin. He will not have victory over sin. Paul has already stated this clearly in chapter 2. (See Rom. 2:1, 21-24.) Now he repeats it in another context for further emphasis.

But a person living under grace will have victory over sin. Accepting Jesus Christ as the Messiah, being justified by Him, being baptized into His death, having the “old man” destroyed, rising to walk in newness of life—these are the things that will dethrone King Sin so that he will no longer reign.

But cannot the phrase “under the law” be interpreted to mean “under condemnation of the moral law”? This is an application we may make of this verse today. But first we must understand what the words of Paul meant to those who first heard them. Then we may draw lessons for our own times. As Seventh-day Adventists have applied this text, they have taught that “under the law” means “under condemnation of the law.” This has been their answer to those who have claimed from this text that the moral law has been abolished.

THINK IT THROUGH

How did Jesus demonstrate that victory over sin is possible?

“He [Jesus] did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ’s humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 123.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 384.

**Part 4
TWO
CONTENDING
MASTERS****What new reason does Paul give for not sinning?**

“Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to any one as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?” (Rom. 6:16, RSV).

Paul comes back to the point again that the new life of faith does not grant liberty to sin. In fact, the life of faith makes possible victory over sin.

Having personified sin as a king ruling over his subjects, Paul now returns to the figure of sin as a master demanding obedience of his servants. Paul points out that a person has a choice of masters. He does not have to serve Mr. Sin. He can serve Mr. Righteousness. It is foolish to serve Mr. Sin because that kind of service results in death.

The vacuum created by leaving off sinning is filled with positive righteousness. Here the obedience is described as directed toward doctrine. Doctrine means teaching. The Roman Christians had been taught the principles of the Christian faith, which they now obeyed. Doctrine plays an important role in the salvation process. It must never be depreciated.

“A profession of Christianity without corresponding faith and works will avail nothing. No man can serve two masters. The children of the wicked one are their own master’s servants; to whom they yield themselves servants to obey, his servants they are, and they cannot be the servants of God until they renounce the devil and all his works. It cannot be harmless for servants of the heavenly King to engage in the pleasures and amusements which Satan’s servants engage in, even though they often repeat that such amusements are harmless. God has revealed sacred and holy truths to separate His people from the ungodly and purify them unto Himself. Seventh-day Adventists should live out their faith.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 404.

How does Paul further describe a change of masters? Rom. 6:18.

Until conversion or until being justified, all men are servants of Mr. Sin. Then when they come under faith they are freed from the cruel master they have served. But this does not leave them free to do as they choose. They immediately choose a new master and obey him.

THINK IT THROUGH

In my struggles against temptation, how often am I motivated by the reasons for not yielding that Paul gives in the passages above? Would a strong determination not to become again a servant of the cruel Mr. Sin help me gain the victory?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, p. 466.

**Part 5
ENTIRE
CONSECRATION****To whom are the different parts and organs of the body to be dedicated?****"I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Rom. 6:19).**

"After the manner of men." Paul wishes to mention some specifics that normally he would not wish to mention. But because of the weakness of the flesh, the frailties of human nature, he decides to spell them out.

Uncleanness is impurity. Sexual impurity is here implied. In the service of Mr. Sin the sex organs have been used to commit various forms of unlawful deeds, including perversion. Paul had already called attention to these in chapter 1:24-32.

The Greek word translated "iniquity" literally means "lawlessness." It is this word that is translated "transgression of the law" in the King James Version of First John 3:4. The parts of the body—the hands, the feet, the eyes, the ears, the mouth—had been used to perform all kinds of lawless deeds in the service of Mr. Sin.

Now, Paul says, as all of these organs and parts of the body were dedicated to the service of Mr. Sin, so now they are to be dedicated to the service of Mr. Righteousness.

THINK IT THROUGH**If the eyes are used to feast upon pornographic portrayals and literature, to whose service are they dedicated? If the sex organs are gratified in any way otherwise than God designed, to whose service are they dedicated?**

Long before the dawn of our permissive era and long before the theater entered our living rooms via the TV, Ellen White said concerning the theater: "Among the most dangerous resorts for pleasure is the theater. Instead of being a school of morality and virtue, as is so often claimed, it is the very hotbed of immorality. Vicious habits and sinful propensities are strengthened and confirmed by these entertainments. Low songs, lewd gestures, expressions, and attitudes, deprave the imagination and debase the morals. Every youth who habitually attends such exhibitions will be corrupted in principle. There is no influence in our land more powerful to poison the imagination, to destroy religious impressions, and to blunt the relish for the tranquil pleasures and sober realities of life than theatrical amusements."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 652, 653.

If Ellen White thus characterized the theater of her time, what evaluation would she place upon the movies and entertainment programs in today's television?

FURTHER STUDY

The Adventist Home, pp. 327-333.

**Part 6
WAGES
VERSUS GIFT**

How did Paul sum up his illustration of the two masters, one or the other of which every member of the human race serves?

“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

A master is expected to pay his servants wages. Mr. Sin (sin is personified in Romans 6) pays wages to those who serve him. His wages are death. Who would work for such wages? No one in his right mind would be expected to. But, deceived by Satan, almost the entire human race is foolishly serving Mr. Sin.

How does Mr. Righteousness reward those who serve Him? He doesn't even call His reward wages. He calls it a gift freely bestowed upon those who choose Him as master.

Romans 6:23 is often quoted to show that the penalty for sin—that is, the transgression of the law—is death. Certainly sin's penalty is death. But in addition to seeing death as sin's penalty, we should see sin as Paul describes it in Romans 6—as a master dominating his servants, duping them by paying them off with the ridiculous wages of death.

What contrast is made between the service of those who serve Mr. Sin and that of those who serve Mr. Righteousness? Rom. 6:20-22.

In his development of the figure of the two masters, Paul calls attention to the fact that the service of one master means freedom from the service of the other. Thus this passage becomes a powerful appeal to anyone who is serving Mr. Sin. This tyrant offers nothing but death as pay for doing shameful things; therefore, a reasonable person should desire emancipation from such service. Those who serve Mr. Righteousness do things that are upright and praiseworthy, not with the idea of thus earning their salvation, but as a fruit of their new experience. The reward comes as a gift. This gift principle is illustrated in Christ's parable of the workmen in the vineyard. (See Matt. 20:1-16.) No matter how long he worked, each workman received the same amount.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is it possible to serve Mr. Sin and Mr. Righteousness at the same time? (See Matt. 6:24.) Does Mr. Sin object?

“Double-minded men and women are Satan's best allies. Whatever favorable opinion they may have of themselves, they are dissemblers. All who are loyal to God and the truth must stand firmly for the right because it is right.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1086.

FURTHER STUDY

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, “The True Motive in Service” (Matt. 6:24), pp. 93-95; *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 365.

“Now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter” (Rom. 7:6).

Perhaps over few chapters of the Bible have there been more differences of opinion than over Romans 7. Concerning the issues involved, the *S.D.A. Bible Commentary* says: “The meaning of vs. 14-25 has been one of the most discussed problems in the whole epistle. The main questions have been as to whether the description of such intense moral struggle could be autobiographical, and, if so, whether the passage refers to Paul’s experience before or after his conversion. That Paul is speaking of his own personal struggle with sin seems apparent from the simplest meaning of his words (cf. vs. 7-11; SC 19; 3T 475). It is surely also true that he is describing a conflict that is more or less experienced by every soul confronted by and awakened to the spiritual claims of God’s holy law.

“More important is the question as to which period in his experience Paul is depicting. Some commentators hold that the description is of Paul’s current experience as a converted Christian. . . . Other commentators believe that the struggle must have been before his conversion.”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 554.

We shall allow the student of these Sabbath School lessons to draw his own conclusions. Doubtless not all in any one class will see Romans 7 exactly alike. We do not regard this a serious matter. Let the Holy Spirit impress each student with the lesson He wishes that student to draw.

Notice how Ellen White applies a portion of Romans 7 contextually: “It is not enough to perceive the loving-kindness of God, to see the benevolence, the fatherly tenderness, of His character. It is not enough to discern the wisdom and justice of His law, to see that it is founded upon the eternal principle of love. Paul the apostle saw all this when he

exclaimed, ‘I consent unto the law that it is good.’ ‘The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.’ But he added, in the bitterness of his soul-anguish and despair, ‘I am carnal, sold under sin.’ Romans 7:16, 12, 14. He longed for the purity, the righteousness to which in himself he was powerless to attain, and cried out, ‘O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?’ Romans 7:24, margin.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 19.

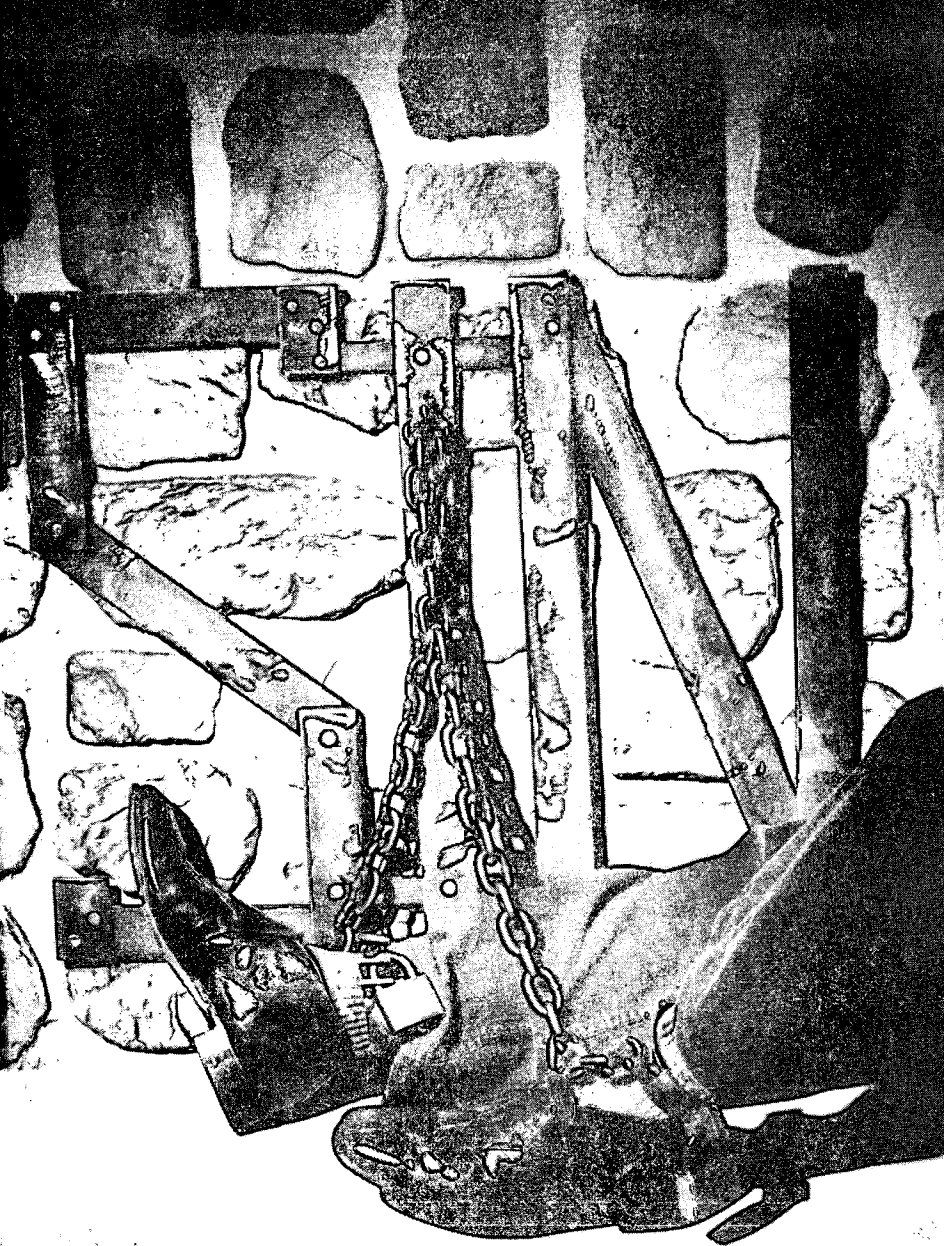
It is also important to observe that a person does not go from conversion and justification to immediate and mature victory. There is a period of growth. Victory comes as a person senses his nothingness and that without Christ he can do nothing.

The following statement from Ellen White is significant: “So will it be with all who behold Christ. The nearer we come to Jesus, and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly shall we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the less shall we feel like exalting ourselves. There will be a continual reaching out of the soul after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the heart before Him. At every advance step in our Christian experience our repentance will deepen. We shall know that our sufficiency is in Christ alone and shall make the apostle’s confession our own: ‘I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.’ Romans 7:18.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 561.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. Delivered From the Law (Rom. 7:6)**
- 2. Illustration From Marriage (Rom. 7:1, 2)**
- 3. Law’s Function (Rom. 7:7)**
- 4. Law Exalted (Rom. 7:12)**
- 5. Slavery to Sin (Rom. 7:16, 17)**
- 6. Wretchedness of Enslavement (Rom. 7:24)**

Oldness of the Letter



**Part 1
DELIVERED
FROM THE LAW****What difference does deliverance from the law make in the type of service we render to God?****“Now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter” (Rom. 7:6).**

To understand Romans 7 one must understand what Paul means by the term “law.” In verse 7 Paul quotes from the law: “Thou shalt not covet.” Since this is one of the precepts of the Decalogue, some have concluded that Paul is here speaking of the moral law. He says “the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (verse 12). This statement, too, fits the moral law.

But is the moral law something from which the Christian is delivered, as verse 6 says? Hardly. It is necessary to give to “law” here the broader meaning to which we have already referred, namely that “law” here means the system of Judaism introduced at Sinai 430 years after the promise to Abraham. (See Gal. 3:17.)

The argument between Paul and the Jews centered on this point: “How is it that what God gave to the Jews as an integral part of being saved is no longer valid?”

The moral law was the basis of Jewish economy and of the old covenant. Hence the moral law is involved in Romans 7. Especially, as we draw lessons for ourselves today from Romans 7, we should think of the moral law.

As has been repeatedly pointed out in our study of the book of Romans thus far, the permanence of the moral law was never an issue between Paul and the Judaizers. The moral law is as permanent as God Himself. When Paul was speaking of people being delivered from the “law,” he certainly did not mean the moral law. He meant deliverance from Judaism as the way of salvation.

After a person is delivered from the law, he no longer serves in the oldness of the letter—trying to keep all the multitudinous precepts of the ancient system as a ground of salvation—but in newness of spirit, led by the Holy Spirit. This point is developed in chapter 8.

“Paul desires his brethren to see that the great glory of a sin-pardoning Saviour gave significance to the entire Jewish economy. He desired them to see also that when Christ came to the world, and died as man’s sacrifice, type met antitype.

“After Christ died on the cross as a sin offering the ceremonial law could have no force. Yet it was connected with the moral law, and was glorious. The whole bore the stamp of divinity, and expressed the holiness, justice, and righteousness of God.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S. D. A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1095.

FURTHER STUDY*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 236-241.

Part 2
ILLUSTRATION
FROM MARRIAGE

What illustration does Paul use to prove that the law of which he was speaking has limited jurisdiction over man?

“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband” (Rom. 7:1, 2).

Paul's illustration in Romans 7:1-6 is somewhat involved, but a careful analysis of the passage will help us to follow his reasoning.

In yesterday's lesson we established the point that the law of which Paul is here speaking is the system of worship established at Sinai. The Jews had difficulty grasping the fact that this system, given to them of God, should come to an end with the coming of the Messiah. The illustration Paul is here using was designed to help them to see this point.

A woman is married to a man. The law binds her to him as long as he lives. During his lifetime she cannot consort with other men without being branded as an adulteress. But when he dies, she is free from that law that bound her to her husband (verse 3).

How does Paul apply the illustration of the law of marriage to the system of Judaism? Rom. 7:4, 5.

This is a difficult passage, but the general idea is clear. As the death of her husband delivered the woman from the law of her husband, so the death of the old life in the flesh, through Jesus Christ, delivers the Jew from the law he had been expected to keep until the Messiah fulfilled its types.

Now the Jews were free to remarry. They were invited to marry the risen Messiah and thus bring forth fruit to God.

This illustration was one more device Paul used to convince the Jew that he was now free to abandon the ancient system.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I refute the antinomian who uses Romans 7:1-7 to prove that the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross?

“God's people, whom He calls His peculiar treasure, were privileged with a two-fold system of law; the moral and the ceremonial. The one, pointing back to creation to keep in remembrance the living God who made the world, whose claims are binding upon all men in every dispensation, and which will exist through all time and eternity. The other, given because of man's transgression of the moral law. . . . Each is clear and distinct from the other.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1094.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 212-215.

**Part 3
LAW'S
FUNCTION**

Having mentioned that the "law" was temporal, and that the Christian has been delivered from it, how did Paul proceed to show that "law" performed an important function?

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. 7:7).

We must keep in mind again the sense in which Paul is using the term "law." As explained in the lesson for Sunday, the sense is that "law" is the system of worship introduced at Sinai. The moral law was the basis of this system. Hence Paul could quote from it as well as from any other section of it. However, when the system passed away at the death of Christ, the moral law continued in force. In fact, it became the basis also of the new covenant.

In what way is sin dead without the commandment? Rom. 7:8-11.

God revealed Himself to the Jews, telling them in detail what was right and what was wrong in moral, civil, ceremonial, and health matters. He also explained the penalties for violating the various laws. Violation of the revealed will of God is here defined as sin.

Thus, Paul explains, he would not have known it was a sin to covet without having been informed of that fact by the "law."

Since sin is the violation of the revealed will of God, where the revealed will is unknown, there is no awareness of sin. Hence there is no awareness of condemnation to death, and the person ignorantly living contrary to that revealed will is described as being alive; whereas sin, being unable to condemn, is described as being dead. When that revealed will is made known to a person, he comes to recognize that he is a sinner and is under condemnation and death. In this sense he dies.

In his line of argument here and throughout this section, Paul is trying to build a bridge to lead the Jew, who reveres the "law," to Christ. He is showing that the "law" was necessary, but that its function was limited, and more was needed.

In this section Paul is relating his own experience of coming under conviction. "The apostle Paul, in relating his experience, presents an important truth concerning the work to be wrought in conversion. He says, 'I was alive without the law once'—he felt no condemnation; 'but when the commandment came,' when the law of God was urged upon his conscience, 'sin revived, and I died.' Then he saw himself a sinner, condemned by the divine law. Mark, it was Paul, and not the law, that died."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1076.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 466-468.

Part 4
LAW EXALTED**In what way did Paul show his reverence for the law?****"Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12).**

Paul has declared the Christian to be "delivered from the law" (verse 6). Because the Jews revered the law, he exalts it in every way possible. He is saying this in Romans 7: The law is good in every way, but man needs Jesus Christ.

This verse is frequently quoted by Seventh-day Adventists as describing specifically the moral law, and correctly so, if it is remembered that, when this is done, an application is made of this passage to our own time and condition. Speaking to us today, this passage exalts the moral law.

Whom does Paul blame for his condition of "death," and whom does he exonerate? Rom. 7:13.

In this verse both "sin" and "law" are personified. Paul is trying to present the "law" in the best sense possible. He chooses to blame Mr. Sin, not Mr. Law, for his terrible sinful condition—his working "all manner of concupiscence [lust]" (verse 8). Using the good Mr. Law as a standard of conduct, Mr. Sin showed Paul up to be a terrible sinner.

Why was sin so successful in showing up Paul as a terrible sinner? Rom. 7:14, 15.

Carnal means fleshly. Paul needed Jesus Christ. Only Jesus Christ could take away the condemnation (Rom. 8:1). Only Jesus Christ could free him from slavery to sin. Paul needed to be born again.

Paul describes himself as "sold under sin." He is a slave to sin. He has no freedom. He can't do what he wants to do. He tries to do what the good law tells him to do, but sin won't let him. What a terrible enslavement!

By this illustration Paul was trying to show the Jew his need of the Messiah. He had already told him that victory is possible only under grace (Rom. 6:14). This same thought is reemphasized in Romans 7. Living under the "law" means enslavement to Mr. Sin, who is a merciless master.

THINK IT THROUGH**What is the danger in hiding behind a verse such as Romans 7:15 as an excuse for sinning?**

"There is no safety nor repose nor justification in transgression of the law. Man cannot hope to stand innocent before God, and at peace with Him through the merits of Christ, while he continues in sin."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 213.

FURTHER STUDY*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 308-310.

**Part 5
SLAVERY
TO SIN**

What is implied in Paul's continuing to sin, despite his best efforts to do right?

"If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. 7:16, 17).

Using the law as a mirror, the Holy Spirit convicts a person that he is displeasing God by not fulfilling the requirements of the law. By his efforts to meet those requirements the sinner shows that he agrees that the law is good.

To win the Jew, Paul was doing his utmost to present the "law" in the best possible light. Paul's inability to do right was not the law's fault but sin's fault.

What points that Paul had already made did he repeat for emphasis? Rom. 7:18-20.

To impress upon a person his need of Christ, the Holy Spirit often leads him through an "old-covenant" type of experience. Ellen White describes Israel's experience as follows:

"The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God's law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, 'All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.' Ex. 24:7. . . . Only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God, and bowed down to worship a graven image. They could not hope for the favor of God through a covenant which they had broken; and now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of the Saviour revealed in the Abrahamic covenant."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 371, 372.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the reason many people believe Romans 7 describes a Christian's normal experience?

Unfortunately, by failing to renew their dedication to Christ daily, many Christians are, in effect, serving Mr. Sin. However, they would be the last to admit this. They rationalize that in reality they are undergoing the normal experience of sanctification and that they simply still have a long way to go. Thus, instead of taking known sins to Christ and asking Him for victory over them, they hide behind Romans 7, which tells them, they think, that it is impossible to do right. In reality, this chapter is saying that it is impossible to do right when a person is enslaved to Mr. Sin, but victory is possible in Jesus Christ.

FURTHER STUDY

My Life Today, p. 323; *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 451-454.

Part 6
WRETCHEDNESS
OF ENSLAVEMENT

How did Paul feel about being a slave to Mr. Sin?

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7:24).

The question, What is the body of this death? is best answered from the context of this passage as discussed below.

What two elements within him were in conflict? Rom. 7:23.

The law in his members (the members are the parts of the body, the organs) is equated with the law of sin. In reality it is the law by which sin, his master, rules him. “With the flesh” Paul says, he served “the law of sin” (Rom. 7:25). But serving sin and obeying its law means death. (See Rom. 7:10, 11, 13.) Hence his body, made up of its members and organs, as it was now functioning in obedience to sin, could fittingly be described as “the body of this death.”

The law of the mind is God’s law, God’s revelation of His will. Under conviction of the Holy Spirit, Paul consented to this law. His mind resolved to keep it, but when he tried, he couldn’t.

How only can men and women be emancipated from slavery to Mr. Sin? Rom. 7:25.

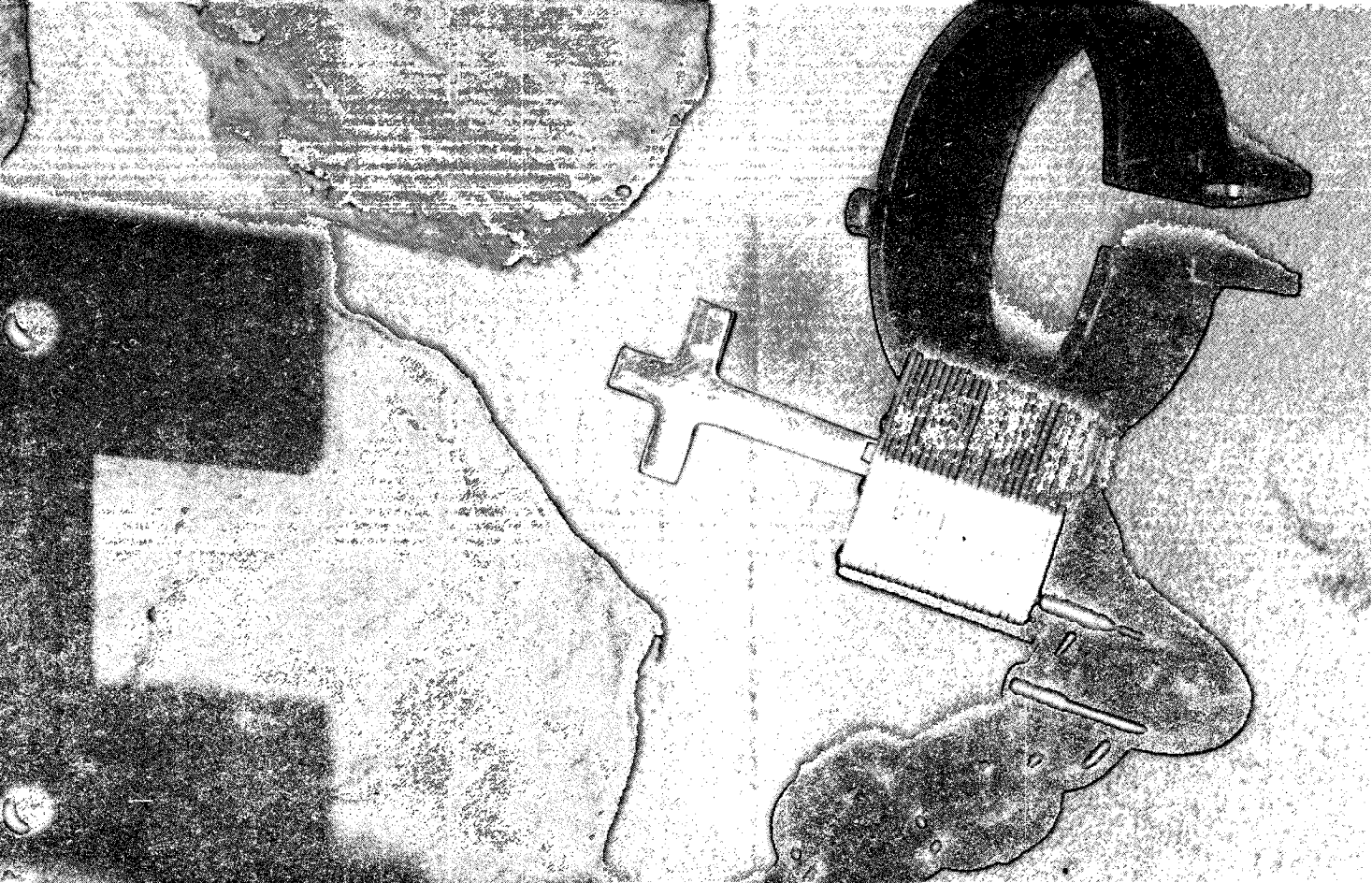
“Some have wondered why, after reaching the glorious climax in the expression ‘I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord,’ Paul should refer once more to the struggles of the soul from what he apparently had been delivered. Some understand the expression of thanksgiving as a parenthetical exclamation. They believe that such an exclamation follows naturally the cry, ‘Who shall deliver?’ They hold that before proceeding with an extended discussion of the glorious deliverance (ch. 8) Paul summarizes what he has said in the preceding verses and confesses once again to the conflict against the forces of sin.

“Others suggest that by ‘I myself’ Paul means, ‘left to myself, leaving Christ out of the picture.’”—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 558.

“Of ourselves we are no more capable of living a holy life than was the impotent man capable of walking. There are many who realize their helplessness, and who long for that spiritual life which will bring them into harmony with God; they are vainly striving to obtain it. In despair they cry, ‘O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?’ Rom. 7:24, margin.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 203.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 84, 85.



Freedom in Christ

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1).

Romans 8 is Paul’s answer to Romans 7. In Romans 7 Paul speaks of frustration, failure, and condemnation. In Romans 8 the condemnation is gone and there is freedom and victory. It has come about through Jesus Christ.

Paul was saying in Romans 7, If you refuse to accept Jesus Christ, the wretched experience of Romans 7 will be yours. You will be slaves to sin, unable to do what you choose to do. In Romans 8 he says, Christ Jesus offers you deliverance from sin, freedom to do the good you choose, and enabling power to meet the divine requirement.

This freedom was purchased at infinite cost. Christ the Son of God took humanity. He came “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (verse 3). As a result, the righteous requirement of the law can be fulfilled in us (verse 4). In other words, Christ made victory over sin as well as meeting the positive requirements of the law possible. By contrast “the carnal mind . . . is not

subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (verse 7).

Chapter 8 is another chapter that could be entitled “Sanctification,” although the word does not occur there. As we mentioned in our introduction to lesson 7, Paul deals at length with what is commonly comprehended under the term “sanctification,” without using the term.

In chapter 8 the Christian is represented as (1) walking after the Spirit, that is, following the Spirit’s directions (verse 4); (2) as minding the things of the Spirit (verse 5); (3) by implication, subject to the law of God (verse 7); (4) as mortifying, that is, putting to death, the deeds of the body (verse 13).

All this is possible “in Christ Jesus,” because of the enabling power provided through the Holy Spirit.

We regret that, because of space limitations, we cannot cover all of Romans 8. Verses 18 through 39 are not covered in our lessons. This is in no way intended to imply that they are unimportant. In fact they contain some of the most precious promises in the whole Bible. It is suggested that at some time during the week these verses be read.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Freedom From Condemnation**
(Rom. 8:1)
2. **Importance of Incarnation**
(Rom. 8:3)
3. **Enabling Power**
(Rom. 8:4)
4. **Two Classes of People**
(Rom. 8:5, 6)
5. **Test of Experience**
(Rom. 8:9, 14)
6. **Adoption Versus Bondage**
(Rom. 8:15)

**Part 1
FREEDOM FROM
CONDEMNATION****For what group of people is there no condemnation?****"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1).**

"In Christ Jesus" is a common phrase in the Pauline writings. For a person to be in Christ Jesus means that he has accepted Christ as his Saviour. He trusts Him implicitly, and has decided to make Christ's way of life his way. The result is a close personal union with Christ.

"In Christ Jesus" is contrasted with "in the flesh" (verse 8). It is also contrasted with the experience detailed in chapter 7, where Paul describes the person under conviction before his surrender to Christ as carnal, that is, "in the flesh" and as "sold under sin" (verse 14), meaning that he is a slave to sin. He is under condemnation of death (verses 11, 13, 24). He serves the "law of sin" (verses 23, 25). He is in a terrible state of wretchedness (verse 24).

Then he surrenders to Jesus, and what a change is wrought! The condemnation is gone! What a glorious redemption!

If you are using translations other than the King James Version, you may find that the clause "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" is missing. The reason for this is that certain Greek manuscripts do not have this phrase. It is not lost, however, for it appears in all manuscripts in verse 4.

What frees a person from slavery to sin? Rom. 8:2.

"The law of the Spirit of life" here means Christ's plan for saving man as contrasted with "the law of sin and death," which was described in chapter 7 as the law by which Mr. Sin ruled his subjects, the end of which was death. By contrast Christ's law brings life and freedom.

"Every soul that refuses to give himself to God, is under the control of another power. He is not his own. He may talk of freedom, but he is in the most abject slavery. . . . While he flatters himself that he is following the dictates of his own judgment, he obeys the will of the prince of darkness. Christ came to break the shackles of sin-slavery from the soul."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 466.

THINK IT THROUGH**What ideas for witnessing the good news effectively can I pick up from this section of the book of Romans?**

"All who receive the gospel message into the heart will long to proclaim it. The heaven-born love of Christ must find expression. Those who have put on Christ will relate their experience."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 125.

FURTHER STUDY*The Great Controversy*, pp. 253-256.

Part 2
IMPORTANCE OF
INCARNATION

What was the law unable to accomplish? In what way did God supply the lack?

“What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3).

“Law” is again used here of the system of Judaism. The Jews readily accepted the revelation God gave them at Sinai and entered into a covenant relationship with God.

Good as God’s revelation is, no one can live up to it without the help Christ provides. Yet many professed Christians try. We call them moralists.

God provided a remedy by “sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,” and He “condemned sin in the flesh.” The incarnation of Christ was an important step in the plan of salvation. It is proper to exalt the cross, but in the outworking of the plan of salvation Christ’s life “in the likeness of sinful flesh” was extremely important too.

“One honored of all heaven came to this world to stand in human nature at the head of humanity, testifying to the fallen angels and to the inhabitants of the unfallen worlds that through the divine help which had been provided, every one may walk in the path of obedience to God’s commands. . . .

“Our ransom has been paid by our Saviour. No one need be enslaved by Satan. Christ stands before us as our all-powerful helper.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 309.

“Satan represents God’s law of love as a law of selfishness. He declares that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts. The fall of our first parents, with all the woe that has resulted, he charges upon the Creator, leading men to look upon God as the author of sin, and suffering, and death. Jesus was to unveil this deception. As one of us He was to give an example of obedience. For this He took upon Himself our nature, and passed through our experiences. ‘In all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren.’ Heb. 2:17. If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us. Therefore, Jesus was ‘in all points tempted like as we are.’ Heb. 4:15. He endured every trial to which we are subject. And He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man, He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God. . . . His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 24.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 246, 247, 250, 251.

Part 3
ENABLING
POWER**As a result of God's sending His Son, what is now possible?****"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4).**

In Greek we have a word for righteousness here different from most of the earlier occurrences of "righteousness," for example, in Romans 3:21. Note again the close connection in Greek between key words in Romans, all built on the same root.

1. *Dikaioō*—to declare or regard as righteous. This is the word commonly translated "justify."

2. *Dikaioōsunē*—righteousness from the point of view of the quality of righteousness.

3. *Dikaioōma*—righteous requirement. This is the word that occurs in Romans 8:4.

As a result of what God has done in sending Christ, it is now possible for us to meet the righteous requirement of the law, that is, to do the right things that the law requires. "Under the law" (Rom. 6:14) this was impossible; "in Christ" it is possible.

"Those who are adopted into the family of God are transformed by His Spirit. Self-indulgence and supreme love for self are changed to self-denial and supreme love for God. No man inherits holiness as a birthright, nor can he, by any methods that he can devise, become loyal to God. 'Without me,' Christ says, 'ye can do nothing' (John 15:5). Human righteousness is as 'filthy rags.' But with God all things are possible. In the strength of the Redeemer, weak, erring man can become more than conqueror over the evil that besets him."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 310.

"Walk" is an idiomatic expression signifying "to conduct oneself." "After" here has the Old English meaning "according to." "Flesh" here denotes unregenerate man, whether before or after conviction. To walk after the flesh is to be controlled by selfish desires.

To walk after the Spirit is to fulfill the righteous requirement of the law. Only through the help of the Holy Spirit can a man meet this requirement. Only in Christ Jesus is there freedom to do what the law requires. Apart from Christ there is no such freedom. The one who is enslaved to sin finds it impossible to do the good he chooses to do. (See Rom. 7:15, 18.)

What part does the Spirit play in a Christian's walk "after the Spirit"?

"Having brought conviction of sin, and presented before the mind the standard of righteousness, the Holy Spirit withdraws the affections from the things of this earth and fills the soul with a desire for holiness."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 52, 53.

FURTHER STUDY*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 671, 672.

**Part 4
TWO CLASSES
OF PEOPLE**

What two classes of people are there in the world, and how are they distinguished?

"They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:5, 6).

"After," here again, is used in the Old English sense of "according to" (Greek *kata*).

"Mind" here means to set the mind on. The one group sets its mind on fulfilling natural desires. The other group sets its mind on the things of the Spirit, to follow His dictates. Since the set of the mind determines actions, the two groups follow different courses.

What is the carnal mind unable to do? Rom. 8:7, 8.

To have one's mind set on fulfilling the desires of the natural heart is, in reality, a state of enmity against God. One whose mind is thus set is unconcerned about doing the will of God. He may even be in rebellion against God, openly flouting His law.

But the point that Paul wishes especially to emphasize is that apart from Christ it is impossible to keep the law of God. Again and again Paul returns to this point. No matter how hard one tries, he cannot. (See Rom. 7:15, 18, 19.)

Paul's special purpose in the line of argument here was to persuade the Jews that they needed more than their "Torah" (law). By their conduct they had shown that in spite of having the divine revelation they were guilty of the same sins of which the Gentiles were guilty (chapter 2). The lesson of all this was that they needed the Messiah. Without Him they would be slaves of sin, unable to escape sin's dominion.

This was Paul's answer to the Jews who couldn't understand why it was that what God had given them in the Old Testament was not enough for salvation. Paul admitted it was all good, but they also needed to accept the Messiah who had now come.

"By His life and His death, Christ proved that . . . sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 762.

THINK IT THROUGH

How does one go about securing the divine power that is needed to obey God's law?

"Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. . . . Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can 'be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.' Rom. 3:26."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 762.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Like Unto Leaven," pp. 95-98.

**Part 5
TEST OF
EXPERIENCE**

By what test can a person ascertain whether he belongs to Christ?

"Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9).

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

The life "in the flesh" is contrasted with life "in the Spirit." The life "in the Spirit" is a life controlled by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. He is here called the Spirit of Christ perhaps in the sense that He is a representative of Christ and through Him Christ dwells in the believer (verses 9, 10).

What will the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead do for the Christian whom He indwells? Rom. 8:10, 11.

Paul here returns to a figure he used in Romans 6:1-11. Figuratively, in baptism "the body of sin," that is, the body that served sin, is destroyed. The "old man is crucified with him" (Rom. 6:6). "He that is dead is freed from sin" (Rom. 6:7). But as in baptism there is not only a burial but also a resurrection, so the person baptized rises to walk in newness of life.

Being made alive by the Spirit obligates a person to do what? Rom. 8:12, 13.

"Mortify" means to put to death. Notice who it is that puts to death the deeds of the body—it is "ye," the Christian himself. Thus the salvation process is not all a God event; man must cooperate. God does not destroy human freedom. Even after the old man of sin is destroyed, it is still possible to sin. To the Colossians Paul wrote, "Mortify [put to death] therefore your members which are upon the earth" (Col. 3:5).

Thus after conversion there will still be a struggle against sin. But the difference is that the person whom the Spirit indwells now has available divine power for victory. Furthermore, since he has been so miraculously freed from the slave master Sin, he is obligated never to serve him again.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can one tell whether the Spirit of God is dwelling in him?

"The heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth 'the fruits of the Spirit.'"—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 372.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "To Meet the Bridegroom," pp. 419, 420.

Part 6
ADOPTION
VERSUS BONDAGE

How does Paul describe the new relationship in Christ of the one freed from slavery to sin?

"Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15).

Negatively the new relationship is described as freedom from fear. A slave is in bondage. He lives in a state of constant fear from his master. He stands to gain nothing from his long years of service.

Not so the one who accepts Jesus Christ. First, he renders voluntary service. Second, he serves without fear, for "perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18). Third, adopted as a son, he becomes an heir to an inheritance of infinite worth.

"The spirit of bondage is engendered by seeking to live in accordance with legal religion, through striving to fulfill the claims of the law in our own strength. There is hope for us only as we come under the Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1077.

What gives us the assurance that God has indeed accepted us as children? Rom. 8:16.

The inward witness of the Spirit confirms our acceptance. While it is not safe to go by feeling merely, the one who to the best of his understanding has followed the light of the Word will hear an inward authenticating voice assuring him that he has been accepted as a child of God.

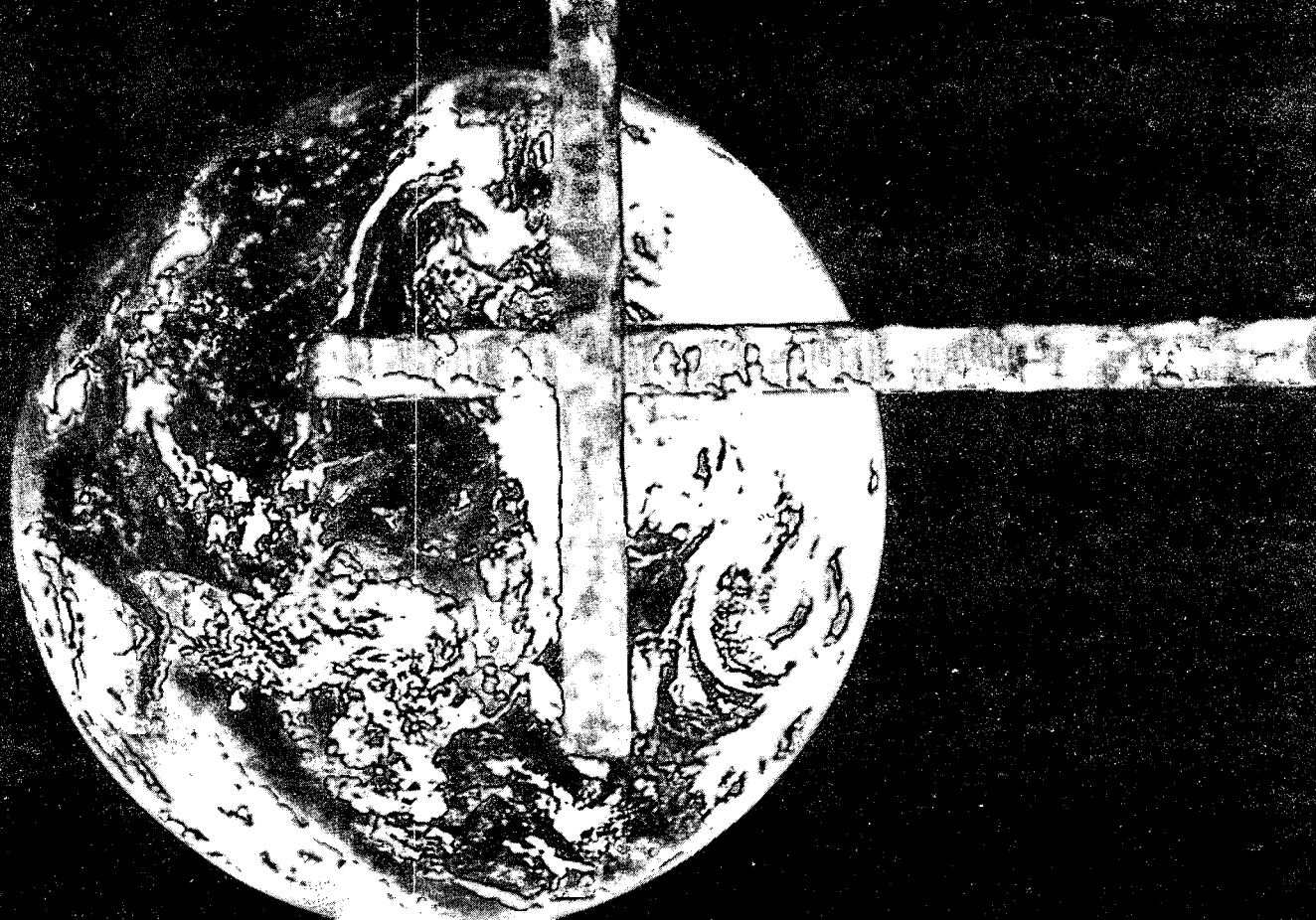
Becoming a child of God involves us in what kind of a relationship with Christ? Rom. 8:17.

"The plan of salvation does not offer believers a life free from suffering and trial this side of the kingdom. On the contrary, it calls upon them to follow Christ in the same path of self-denial and reproach. . . . It is through such trial and persecution that the character of Christ is reproduced and revealed in His people. . . . By sharing in the sufferings of Christ we are educated and disciplined and made ready to share in the glories of the hereafter."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, pp. 568, 569.

"The chain that has been let down from the throne of God is long enough to reach to the lowest depths. Christ is able to lift the most sinful out of the pit of degradation, and to place them where they will be acknowledged as children of God, heirs with Christ to an immortal inheritance."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 229.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, p. 113; *Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 126-129.



Redemption for Jew and Gentile

“Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth” (Rom. 9:18).

Chapter 9 has been a cause of great perplexity to many minds, especially verses such as 13: “As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated”; and 15: “For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

It has been difficult for Bible students to harmonize these verses and others in this chapter with the concept that man is free to choose. Some find support here for the doctrine that certain ones are elected to be saved, others to be lost. But the Scriptures do not sustain this doctrine.

How is Romans 9 to be understood? Again we appeal to the rule that we must discover what Paul meant by the words he used. We must not concentrate merely on the words.

Paul is following a line of argument in which he attempts to show God's right to reject the Jews as His chosen people and to elect the Gentiles. After all, God is the One who carries the ultimate responsibility of evangelizing the world. Therefore, why can He not choose as His agents whom He wills? So long as God cuts no one off from the opportunity of salvation, such an action on God's part should be allowed. He would be operating fully in harmony with His character.

So long as it is remembered that Romans 9 is not dealing with the personal salvation of the persons it

names, but with their call to do a certain work, the chapter presents no difficulties.

Doubtless the general question of predestination will be raised in many minds this week. It will be helpful in any discussion of this subject to study the following statement by Ellen White on election.

“There is an election of individuals and a people, the only election found in the word of God, where man is elected to be saved. Many have looked at the end, thinking they were surely elected to have heavenly bliss; but this is not the election the Bible reveals. Man is elected to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. He is elected to put on the armor, to fight the good fight of faith. He is elected to use the means God has placed within his reach to war against every unholy lust, while Satan is playing the game of life for his soul. He is elected to watch unto prayer, to search the Scriptures, and to avoid entering into temptation. He is elected to have faith continually. He is elected to be obedient to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, that he may be, not a hearer only, but a doer of the word. This is Bible election.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 453, 454.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Paul's Burden for the Jews**
(Rom. 9:3)
2. **God's Freedom to Choose**
(Rom. 9:12, 13)
3. **Example of God's Freedom**
(Rom. 9:17, 18)
4. **God Chooses Christians**
(Rom. 9:22-24)
5. **Scripture Support**
(Rom. 9:25)
6. **Reason for Failure**
(Rom. 9:30-32)

Part 1
PAUL'S BURDEN
FOR THE JEWS

How did Paul express his great burden for the salvation of his fellow Israelites?

"I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:3).

Remember Paul's purpose in the book of Romans. Among other things he was trying to explain why God had largely turned from the Jews and was now extending salvation to the Gentiles. Had God gone back on His promises? the Jews wondered.

What special advantages had God extended in the past to the Israelites? Rom. 9:4, 5.

God needed a missionary people to evangelize a world that had gone into idolatry. He chose the Israelites and revealed Himself to them. He planned that they become a model nation and thus attract other peoples to a worship of the true God.

"It was God's purpose that by the revelation of His character through Israel men should be drawn unto Him. To all the world the gospel invitation was to be given. Through the teaching of the sacrificial service Christ was to be uplifted before the nations, and all who would look unto Him should live. . . . As the numbers of Israel increased they were to enlarge their borders, until their kingdom should embrace the world."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 290.

How did Paul explain the apparent nonfulfillment of God's promises? Rom. 9:6-12.

Paul is building a line of argument in which he will show that the promise made to Israel has not completely failed. There exists a remnant through whom God still aims to work.

To establish the validity of the remnant idea, Paul dips back into Israelite history. He shows that God has always been selective: (1) God did not choose all the seed of Abraham to be His covenant people, only the line of Isaac. (2) He did not choose all of the descendants of Isaac, only those of Jacob.

Paul concludes, as chapter 9 develops, that the existence of a remnant shows that the word of God has taken some effect. It has not completely failed, as some might allege.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I bring myself to the place where I would be willing to be accursed for some of my kinsmen and friends?

"Moses realized how dreadful would be the fate of the sinner; yet if the people of Israel were to be rejected by the Lord, he desired his name to be blotted out with theirs."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 326.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 374-377.

Part 2
GOD'S FREEDOM
TO CHOOSE**How can God's contrasting attitudes toward Jacob and Esau be explained?****"It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:12, 13).**

It is impossible properly to understand Romans 9 until one recognizes that Paul is not speaking of individual election to salvation. He is here speaking of particular roles God was calling upon certain people to play. God wanted Jacob to be the progenitor of the people who would be His special evangelizing agency in the world. There is no implication in this passage that Esau could not be saved. God wanted him to be saved as much as He desires all men to be saved. (See 1 Tim. 2:4.) In fact, as pointed out in yesterday's lesson, Esau and his descendants could have united themselves with the chosen people.

What does Paul once more warn against? Rom. 9:14.

"God forbid" is an idiomatic translation of a Greek phrase denoting strong negation.

In what area is it that the choice is entirely God's? Rom. 9:15.

Paul is not here speaking of individual salvation, because in that area God extends mercy to all, for He "will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. 2:4). "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). But God can choose nations to play a role, and, while they can refuse to play that role, they cannot prevent God's choice. No matter how hard Esau may have willed it, He could not have become the progenitor of the Messiah nor of the chosen people.

THINK IT THROUGH**When I am tempted to think that I have little choice in my life's outcome, how can I reassure myself that in the vital area of salvation I have a choice?**

"There was no arbitrary choice on the part of God by which Esau was shut out from the blessings of salvation. The gifts of His grace through Christ are free to all. There is no election but one's own by which any may perish. God has set forth in His word the conditions upon which every soul will be elected to eternal life—obedience to His commandments, through faith in Christ. God has elected a character in harmony with His law, and anyone who shall reach the standard of His requirement will have an entrance into the kingdom of glory."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 207.

FURTHER STUDY*The Great Controversy*, pp. 261, 262.

Part 3
EXAMPLE OF
GOD'S FREEDOM

What does the experience of Pharaoh show with regard to God's freedom?

"The scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth" (Rom. 9:17, 18).

In dealing with Egypt at the time of the Exodus in the manner He did, God was working for the salvation of the human race. God's revelation of Himself in the plagues of Egypt and in the deliverance of His people was designed to reveal to the Egyptians as well as to other nations that the God of Israel indeed was the true God. It was designed to be an invitation for the peoples of the nations to abandon their gods and to worship Him.

Obviously the Pharaoh who was on the throne at the time of the Exodus had already made his choice against God, so that in hardening his heart God was not cutting him off from the opportunity of salvation. The hardening was against the appeal to let Israel go, not against God's appeal for Pharaoh to accept personal salvation.

What warning did Paul utter against criticism of the acts of God? Rom. 9:19, 20.

"No finite mind can fully comprehend the character or the works of the Infinite One. We cannot by searching find out God. To minds the strongest and most highly cultured, as well as to the weakest and most ignorant, that holy Being must remain clothed in mystery. But though 'clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne.' Psalm 97:2, R.V. We can so far comprehend His dealing with us as to discern boundless mercy united to infinite power. We can understand as much of His purposes as we are capable of comprehending; beyond this we may still trust the hand that is omnipotent, the heart that is full of love."—*Education*, p. 169.

THINK IT THROUGH

When tempted to question God's leading in my life, how can I reassure myself that He has my best interests at heart?

"We have no reason to doubt God's word because we cannot understand the mysteries of His providence. In the natural world we are constantly surrounded with wonders beyond our comprehension. Should we then be surprised to find in the spiritual world also mysteries that we cannot fathom? The difficulty lies solely in the weakness and narrowness of the human mind."—*Education*, p. 170.

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 1, pp. 1099, 1100.

**Part 4
GOD CHOOSES
CHRISTIANS**

When the Israelites as the chosen people failed in fulfilling their evangelizing role, whom did the Lord call to fulfill it?

"What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" (Rom. 9:22-24).

"Willing" here means "wishing" (Greek *theō*). Although the Jews, for their many failures to fulfill the divine purpose, had suffered repeated reverses, God had not allowed them to experience total wrath, even though they deserved it.

"Fitted to destruction" means "ready for destruction." In His freedom to do as He chooses, God had shown mercy toward the Jews. If they did not object to God's mercy to them, they should not object to God's further act in transferring to the Christian church, made up of believing Jews and Gentiles, the role previously assigned to the chosen people.

This loss of their role many Jews found difficult to accept. But the line of argument thus far in chapter 9 has been to show God's right to make choices of peoples and groups to fulfill specific roles.

Some people believe that in chapter 9 Paul lends support to the doctrine of predestination, namely, that some persons are elected to be saved, others to be lost. But this is not what Paul is dealing with here. Every person living today has the right to be saved, and all those who have lived in the past have had the right to be saved. This includes Esau and the Pharaoh of the Exodus whom Paul mentions. Paul is dealing with role assignments, not with individual salvation. When this point is grasped, the difficulty with Romans 9 vanishes.

Thus it is today. Every person is invited to be saved, but when it comes to assigning his lifework, God in His freedom makes the choice. He has designated a special place where each is to labor for God. A person has the power to refuse to fill that role. If he refuses, he must suffer the consequences.

THINK IT THROUGH

How may I discover the special role God wants me to fulfill?

"He [Christ] gives 'to every man his work.' Each has his place in the eternal plan of heaven. Each is to work in co-operation with Christ for the salvation of souls. Not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansions than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 326, 327.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "The Lord's Vineyard," pp. 295, 296.

**Part 5
SCRIPTURE
SUPPORT****What Scripture did Paul quote to support God's choice of the Christians to fulfill the role formerly assigned Israel?****"As he saith also in Osee [Hosea], I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved" (Rom. 9:25).**

Paul quotes Hosea 2:23 in verse 25 and Hosea 1:10 in verse 26. God instructed Hosea to take "a wife of whoredoms" (Hosea 1:2) as an illustration of God's relationship with Israel who had gone a whoring after strange gods. The children born to this marriage were given names signifying God's rejection and punishment of idolatrous Israel. The third child was named *Lo-ammî* (Hosea 1:8) meaning literally "Not my people."

Not to leave the people without hope, Hosea predicted the day would come when, after punishing His people, God would restore their fortunes, take away their false gods, and make a covenant with them. (See Hosea 2:11-19.) At this point those who were *Lo-ammî*, "not my people," would become *Ammî*, "my people."

In Paul's day the *Ammî* were the "even us . . . not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles" (Rom. 9:24).

Compared to the large number of Israelites, how large did Isaiah predict would be the number saved? Rom. 9:27.

The fact that his kinsmen generally rejected the appeal of the gospel gave Paul "great heaviness and continual sorrow" in his heart (Rom. 9:2). But at least there was a remnant. God's promises have not failed.

What kind of work would God do upon the earth? Rom. 9:28.

In Romans 9:28 Paul quoted from Isaiah 28:22 in the Septuagint, which says that in a summary way God will deal with Israel's problem. The Hebrew of this passage, as translated in the KJV, reads as follows: "For I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth."

As we apply this verse today, we think of the summary work that God will perform soon in the final judgment.

THINK IT THROUGH**When the Lord cuts His work short, does it mean that certain people will not have the opportunity for salvation?**

"The Lord God of heaven will not send upon the world His judgments for disobedience and transgression until He has sent His watchmen to give the warning. He will not close up the period of probation until the message shall be more distinctly proclaimed. . . . Yet the work will be cut short in righteousness." —*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 19.

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 4, pp. 35, 36.

**Part 6
REASON FOR
FAILURE**

In the matter of attaining to righteousness, why was it that the Jews failed but the Gentiles succeeded?

“What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith” (Rom. 9:30-32).

In words that cannot be misunderstood Paul explains to his kinsmen why they are missing out on something God wishes them to have; more than that, on something they were actually pursuing but not achieving.

Interestingly, the Gentiles whom God had accepted had not even been striving for such acceptance. They had been pursuing their own interests and goals when the gospel message came to them. Grasping its value, they accepted it. God declared them righteous because they accepted Jesus Christ as their substitute. It was a transaction of faith.

The problem with Israel was that they stumbled at the stumbling stone (verse 33). The vast majority refused to accept Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah whom God had sent. He did not meet their expectations of the Messiah. What a loss they sustained! Righteousness was offered them as a gift. They turned it down.

What Old Testament scripture did Paul quote as predicting that acceptance of the Messiah would be a problem with some people? Rom. 9:33.

Here was a text from the Old Testament (Isa. 28:16) which the Jew revered, setting forth the importance of faith, the ingredient missing in the experience of the majority of the Jews.

THINK IT THROUGH

What stumbling stones in my life prevent the surrender of myself completely to the Messiah? Have I fully accepted righteousness by faith?

“He [the rich young ruler] wanted the heavenly treasure, but he wanted also the temporal advantages his riches would bring him. He was sorry that such conditions existed; he desired eternal life, but he was not willing to make the sacrifice. The cost of eternal life seemed too great, and he went away sorrowful; ‘for he had great possessions.’ . . .

“ . . . Thousands are passing through this ordeal, weighing Christ against the world; and many choose the world.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 520, 523.

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. *Encyclopedia* article, “Faith and Works.”

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin" (Rom. 11:1).

This lesson covers Romans 10 and 11, though with some omissions. It is suggested, however, that the entire chapters be read. The meaning of sections not interpreted should become clear in the light of what is being said about the rest of the chapters.

Again, the question needs to be carefully pondered, What is Paul teaching in these chapters? For example, in chapter 11:26 he says, "All Israel shall be saved." Is Paul here predicting that the time is coming when all living Israelites will turn to Christ? This is what some interpreters of prophecy expect to happen. If this is not what Paul is predicting, what is it? His argument must be carefully traced in these chapters.

The reason these interpreters expect all Israel to be converted is that they strongly emphasize the sovereignty of God. They believe that God cannot go back on His word. Once He has made a promise, He must bring it to pass.

It is on this point that Seventh-day Adventists differ with these interpreters. On the basis of Jeremiah 18:9, 10; Exodus 19:5, 6; Deuteronomy 28:1-3, 15, Seventh-day Adventists believe that the promises made to Israel were conditional on their obedience, and that, because of their failure to fulfill the divine purpose, the Israelites forfeited many of the promises. Ellen White says: "It should be remembered that the promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 67.

She also said, "The Lord had through Moses set before His people the result of unfaithfulness. By

refusing to keep His covenant, they would cut themselves off from the life of God, and His blessing could not come upon them."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 291.

Despite Israel's failure as a nation, God still loved the people and offered a modified fulfillment of the ancient promise that had elected them as the chosen people. This is Paul's theme in Romans 11.

If the Israelites had accepted God's plan, human history would have been vastly different. Even when Christ came, it was not yet too late for the Jews to accept their role.

"If Jerusalem had known what it was her privilege to know, and had heeded the light which Heaven had sent her, she might have stood forth in the pride of prosperity, the queen of kingdoms, free in the strength of her God-given power. . . . From her walls the dove of peace would have gone forth to all nations. She would have been the world's diadem of glory."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 577.

It is important that the principle of conditional prophecy be understood as a basis for an acceptable approach to Romans 11. Since few non-Adventist interpreters of prophecy accept the conditional principle, the Adventist position on Israel is almost unique.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. Zeal Without Knowledge**
(Rom. 10:2, 3)
- 2. The Election of Grace**
(Rom. 11:1, 2)
- 3. Fullness of the Jews**
(Rom. 11:11)
- 4. Grafted Branches**
(Rom. 11:16, 17)
- 5. A Mystery Revealed**
(Rom. 11:25)
- 6. Evangelism for the Jews**
(Rom. 11:28, 29)

Salvation for the Jews



Part 1
ZEAL WITHOUT
KNOWLEDGE

To what did Paul attribute Israel's failure to find acceptance with God?

"I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:2, 3).

Paul is here speaking of Israel as a nation, not the individual Israelite, many of whom accepted the Messiah and became the nucleus of the Christian church.

What burden did Paul express again in Romans 10:1?

"In this letter [to the Romans] Paul gave free expression to his burden in behalf of the Jews. Ever since his conversion, he had longed to help his Jewish brethren to gain a clear understanding of the gospel message. 'My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is,' he declared, 'that they might be saved.'

"It was no ordinary desire that the apostle felt. Constantly he was petitioning God to work in behalf of the Israelites who had failed to recognize Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 374.

Of what is Christ the end? Rom. 10:4.

This verse has been variously explained. First we should seek to understand what it means in its context. The Jews were "going about to establish their own righteousness" (Rom. 10:3) and seeking "the righteousness which is of the law" (Rom. 10:5).

They believed this righteousness could be obtained by diligent law keeping. Paul even quotes Moses in support of such a thesis, "That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (Rom. 10:5).

With the coming of the Messiah the true way of righteousness was presented. Righteousness was offered to all who would fix their faith in Christ. He was the one to whom the ancient ceremonial system had pointed. When He came, He put an end to the old system—the old covenant. In other words, Christ is the end of the law or the system of Judaism. In Christ is reasserted the truth that righteousness is of faith.

Some see in the word "end" (Greek *telos*) the meaning "objective." If this definition is adopted, Romans 10:4 means that Christ is the goal or objective toward which the law points. The system of Judaism was designed to lead to Christ.

How is righteousness achieved? Rom. 10:9, 10, 13.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 155, 156.

Part 2
THE ELECTION
OF GRACE**To what question did Paul express an emphatic denial?**

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew" (Rom. 11:1, 2).

In the first part of his answer to the question, "Hath God cast away his people?" Paul points to a remnant, an election of grace, as proof that God has not cast away His people. This election of grace was the group from among the Jews that accepted the Messiah. It should be remembered that the early converts to Christianity were all Jews—for example, the group that was converted on the Day of Pentecost. It took a special vision and miracle to convince Peter that the Gentiles, too, had equal access to the grace of Christ (Acts 15:7, 8; compare Acts 10) and that the gospel was to be carried to them as well.

But the existence of a remnant is only a part of Paul's answer to the question as to whether God has cast away His people. In the remainder of the chapter Paul develops a further idea.

What had happened to the vast majority of Israel? Rom. 11:7-10.

"Notwithstanding Israel's failure as a nation, there remained among them a goodly remnant of such as should be saved. At the time of the Saviour's advent there were faithful men and women who had received with gladness the message of John the Baptist, and had thus been led to study anew the prophecies concerning the Messiah. When the early Christian church was founded, it was composed of these faithful Jews who recognized Jesus of Nazareth as the one for whose advent they had been longing."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 376, 377.

Paul quotes frequently from the Old Testament—writings the Jews accepted as authoritative. Verse 8 combines ideas from Isaiah 6:9 and 29:10. Verses 9 and 10 are a quotation from Psalm 69:22, 23.

The Isaiah passages that Paul cites represent God as giving to Israel a spirit of slumber, preventing their seeing and hearing. Does God blind people's eyes to prevent them from seeing light that would lead them to salvation? Never! These passages must be understood in the light of our explanation of Romans 9 in last week's lesson. Paul is not talking of individual salvation but of the role of the nation of Israel. When as a nation Israel refused to fulfill Heaven's purpose for her, God had a right to turn from the Israelites to another people who would fulfill His purpose.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 474, 475.

**Part 3
FULLNESS
OF THE JEWS****What good did God work out of the failure of the Israelites?**

"I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy" (Rom. 11:11).

"Through the Jewish nation it was God's purpose to impart rich blessings to all peoples. Through Israel the way was to be prepared for the diffusion of His light to the whole world. The nations of the world, through following corrupt practices, had lost the knowledge of God. Yet in His mercy God did not blot them out of existence. He purposed to give them opportunity for becoming acquainted with Him through His church."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 286.

"The material advantages that Israel enjoyed were designed to arrest the attention and catch the interest of the heathen. . . . Ambassadors from one foreign country after another would come to discover, if they might, the great secret of Israel's success as a nation, and its leaders would have the opportunity of directing the minds of their visitors to the Source of all good things. . . . For a graphic picture of how one nation would have responded to the irresistible appeal radiating from an Israel faithful to God, see Isa. 19:18-22; cf. Ps. 68:31."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 29.

When the Israelites refused to fulfill the divine purpose, it meant that the Gentiles were offered an opportunity to join God's people. When God called the Christian church into existence, almost immediately the gospel invitation was extended to the Gentiles. "Through their fall" means through God's rejection of the Israelites as His chosen people. Now salvation had come to the Gentiles.

Immediately God turned the Gentiles' acceptance of the gospel into further advantage. Through it He hoped to provoke the Israelites to jealousy so that they too would seek for and find salvation.

If the rejection of the chosen people as a nation had worked to advantage, what would God's acceptance of the Israelites accomplish? Rom. 11:12-15.

There are two expressions in this passage that are parallel: (1) "their [the Israelites:] fulness" (verse 12); and (2) "the receiving of them [the Israelites]" (verse 15). Paul envisioned the diminishing and the casting away to be only temporary to be followed by fullness and reception. This is Paul's second answer to the question raised at the beginning of this chapter, "Hath God cast away his people?" What appears to be a casting away, he says, is only a temporary situation.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "The Lord's Vineyard," pp. 286-289.

**Part 4
GRAFTED
BRANCHES****To what does Paul liken the remnant in Israel?**

"If the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree" (Rom. 11:16, 17).

"Firstfruit" here refers to a part of a lump of dough, which anciently was dedicated to God. (See Num. 15:19-21.)

Paul introduces another figure of speech—an olive tree. "Paul likens the remnant in Israel to a noble olive tree, some of whose branches have been broken off."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 377. Thus the tree represents Israel not including the unbelieving Israelites. This illustration is used to prove that "God hath not cast away his people" (verse 2). The root and trunk are still there.

Into this tree the believing Gentiles have been grafted. But they are drawing their sap and vitality from the root and trunk which represent believing Israel.

Against what attitude were the Gentiles warned? Rom. 11:18-22.

What had happened to the Israelites could happen to believing Gentiles. The Bible teaches no doctrine of once saved, always saved. Only those who "continue in his goodness" will be saved.

No believer should boast of his own goodness or feel any superiority over his fellow human beings. His salvation was not earned; it was a gift. Hence no credit belongs to him.

What was Paul's hope regarding the branches which had been broken off? Rom. 11:23, 24.

Paul is pointing to the possibility that the broken-off branches could be grafted into the trunk from which they had been broken. In the expression of this possibility was an implied hope, which Paul later turns into a prediction.

THINK IT THROUGH**In the interpretation of illustrations or parables, what principles must be borne in mind?**

One must not become overly literal in the interpretation of an illustration. For example, in nature a severed branch, if it has been disconnected from its parent stock for some time, could not be expected to thrive if grafted back into the stock again. But in the application it was possible for Jews who had been rejected by God to be accepted through faith in the Messiah.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 377-380.

**Part 5
A MYSTERY
REVEALED**

As Paul reaches the crux of his argument in Romans 11, what mystery does He reveal?

"I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11:25).

What Paul is here saying is in reply to the question raised at the beginning of the chapter, "Hath God cast away his people?" His answer, of course, is No, and his explanation is (1) that the blindness (Greek *pōrōsis*, hardness) is only "in part," and (2) that it is only temporary "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

When "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in," what is to happen? Rom. 11:26, 27.

Two explanations have been given of these verses: (1) These verses predict a large influx of Jews into the Christian faith. (2) "All Israel" refers to spiritual Israel, the totality of those saved from among Jews and Gentiles. (See *S.D.A. Bible Commentary* on these verses.)

The context favors the first view, although the idea of a spiritual Israel is certainly valid and will be fulfilled.

Paul has already anticipated a "fulness" for the Jews (verse 12) and a "receiving of them" (verse 15). Now in verses 26 and 27 he quotes Old Testament Scriptures. (See Isa. 59:20, 21; Jer. 31:33, 34) to show that something special was to happen when the blindness would be removed.

"All Israel" must not be construed to mean every Israelite. Nowhere do the Scriptures preach universalism, either for the entire human race or for a particular segment. Paul was hoping to save "some of them" (verse 14). The "all Israel" is here contrasted with the remnant (verse 5). While a small remnant had accepted the Messiah, the majority were blinded and hardened. But when from this group large numbers would turn to the Lord, then it could be said that "all Israel," not only the remnant group Paul had mentioned, would be saved.

Commenting on Romans 11, Ellen White speaks of a time "in the closing proclamation of the gospel" when "many of the Jews" "will by faith receive Christ as their Redeemer."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 381.

"Among the Jews are some who, like Saul of Tarsus, are mighty in the Scriptures, and these will proclaim with wonderful power the immutability of the law of God. . . . As His servants labor in faith for those who have long been neglected and despised, His salvation will be revealed."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 381.

**Part 6
EVANGELISM
FOR THE JEWS**

What was the attitude of the Jews toward the gospel?

"As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:28, 29).

The "they" were the ones who in Paul's day were opposing the preaching of the gospel and were persecuting the church, as before his conversion Paul himself had done. But God had not given them up. The blindness would one day be removed, and many would turn to the Lord. Thus God's election of the Jews would yet stand.

Who are the "these" and the "they" mentioned in verse 31 and how is their experience contrasted with that of the believing Gentiles? Rom. 11:30, 31.

"In the closing proclamation of the gospel, when special work is to be done for classes of people hitherto neglected, God expects His messengers to take particular interest in the Jewish people whom they find in all parts of the earth. As the Old Testament Scriptures are blended with the New in an explanation of Jehovah's eternal purpose, this will be to many of the Jews as the dawn of a new creation, the resurrection of the soul. As they see the Christ of the gospel dispensation portrayed in the pages of the Old Testament Scriptures, and perceive how clearly the New Testament explains the Old, their slumbering faculties will be aroused, and they will recognize Christ as the Saviour of the world. Many will by faith receive Christ as their Redeemer. To them will be fulfilled the words, 'As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.' John 1:12."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 381.

THINK IT THROUGH

What can I do to bring the gospel to Jewish people in my vicinity?

"There is a mighty work to be done in our world. The Lord has declared that the Gentiles shall be gathered in, and not the Gentiles only, but the Jews. There are among the Jews many who will be converted, and through whom we shall see the salvation of God go forth as a lamp that burneth. There are Jews everywhere, and to them the light of present truth is to be brought. There are among them many who will come to the light, and who will proclaim the immutability of the law of God with wonderful power."—*Evangelism*, p. 578.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 77-79, 112-114; *Evangelism*, pp. 577-579.

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Living the Life of Faith-1

“Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

Early in our lessons (lesson 2) we dealt with the question of what, if any, is the difference between the religion of the Old Testament and that of the New. We quoted the following: “The conditions of salvation are ever the same. Life, eternal life, is for all who will obey God’s law.”—Ellen G. White *Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 931.

This statement makes it clear that God expected the same ethical behavior in both periods. Both before and after Christ, such behavior was to be motivated by the same principle—faith. As an aid to faith before the Messiah came, God provided a ritual system of sacrifices that prefigures the coming Messiah. These sacrifices ceased after the Messiah came.

As we have explained, at this point many Christians misunderstand Paul in the book of Romans. When he speaks negatively of the law, he is speaking of the obsolete ritual system plus the man-made interpretations and accretions, the total making up the Judaism of Paul’s day.

Chapters 13 to 15 of Romans are evidence that proper ethical behavior is clearly a requirement of the Christian. These chapters, containing a series of dos and don’ts, must have read to the Roman Christians much like, for example, Leviticus 19, sounded to the ancient Israelites.

The book of Romans contains no hint that proper moral behavior comes automatically to the one who is in Christ Jesus. The Christian needs to enlighten himself as to what the requirements are, to will to follow what is revealed to him as still required, and to avail himself of divine power without which he cannot meet the standard. In fact, because of the added revelation after Jesus came, the New Testament requirements, if anything, are more difficult. The New Testament believer had been given an example of proper moral behavior in Jesus Christ. He was to imitate the pattern. Here was no case of Christ’s having done it all for him.

All of this means that works are much a part of the life of faith. Paul never meant to depreciate works; in fact in chapter 13 to 15 he gives them strong emphasis. And this is no denial of what he has said earlier about righteousness by faith.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Living Sacrifices**
(Rom. 12:1)
2. **Mind Renewal**
(Rom. 12:2)
3. **Moral Teachings**
(Rom. 12:9, 10)
4. **Relationship to Government**
(Rom. 13:1)
5. **Relationships to Others**
(Rom. 13:8)
6. **Motivation for Right Living**
(Rom. 13:11)

Part 1
LIVING
SACRIFICES

With the doctrinal part of his letter being concluded, what does Paul begin to do?

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1).

With chapter 11 ends the doctrinal part of the book of Romans. Chapters 12 through 16 present practical instruction and contain personal notes. Nevertheless, these concluding chapters are also extremely important doctrinally, because they show how the life of faith is to be lived.

Once a person is justified by faith apart from deeds of law, is he still subject to the moral law? There are many dos and don'ts in the life of faith. A relationship of love with Christ does not guarantee that the believer will automatically bring forth good fruit. Strong personal effort is still required.

The law of Christ, if one wishes to term New Testament instruction in that way, contains many dos and don'ts. This is further proof of the fact that whatever Paul had said negatively concerning law in this epistle, he had said with reference to the obsolete Jewish system. The moral precepts are still all in force and are explained and amplified in the New Testament. No indication is given that it will be easy for the Christian to regulate his life by these moral precepts. He is promised divine power and the assurance that victory is possible, but he is still in the world of the enemy and will have to fight many a battle against powerful temptations.

It is unfortunate that the antinomian has made so much of the book of Romans. He declares Seventh-day Adventists to be legalists because he has misinterpreted Romans, claiming that the law from which the Christian has been delivered is the moral law instead of the obsolete Jewish system. That is why a correct understanding of the book of Romans is so important.

In Romans 12:1 Paul is alluding to Old Testament sacrifices. As anciently animals were sacrificed to God, so now Christians ought to yield their bodies to God, not to be killed, but as living sacrifices dedicated to serve God.

"[Rom. 12:1 quoted.] In the time of ancient Israel every offering brought as a sacrifice to God was carefully examined. If any defect was discovered in the animal presented, it was refused; for God had commanded that the offering be 'without blemish.' So Christians are bidden to present their bodies, 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.' In order to do this, all their powers must be preserved in the best possible condition."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 473.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 352, 353; *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 541, 542.

Part 2
MIND RENEWAL

What is the basis of all true transformation?

"Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Rom. 12:2).

Redemption is an intelligent process in all of its stages. The mind is the seat of action. There will be no change in behavior unless there is first a change in thinking.

If the Christian wishes to pattern his life according to the will of God, he must first ascertain what that will is. This is a mental process. But it is more than an intellectual process. An action of the will is involved. There must be a yielding to Jesus Christ.

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14).

"In the Bible the will of God is revealed. The truths of the Word of God are the utterances of the Most High. He who makes these truths a part of his life becomes in every sense a new creature. He is not given new mental powers, but the darkness that through ignorance and sin has clouded the understanding is removed. The words, 'A new heart also will I give you,' mean, 'A new mind will I give you.' A change of heart is always attended by a clear conviction of Christian duty, an understanding of truth. He who gives the Scriptures close, prayerful attention will gain clear comprehension and sound judgment, as if in turning to God he had reached a higher plane of intelligence."—*My Life Today*, p. 24.

What is the secret of harmonious relationships between fellow Christians? Rom. 12:3-8.

If each Christian would recognize his gifts and seek to perform his service within the orbit of these gifts, and would cease competing with others, there would be much greater harmony in the church of God.

"Many do not become what they might, because they do not put forth the power that is in them. They do not, as they might, lay hold on divine strength. Many are diverted from the line in which they might reach the truest success. Seeking greater honor or a more pleasing task, they attempt something for which they are not fitted."—*Education*, p. 267.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I discover what office God wants me to fill?

"The specific place appointed us in life is determined by our capabilities."—*Education*, p. 267.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "A Great Gulf Fixed," pp. 267-269.

Part 3
MORAL
TEACHINGS

Read Romans 12:9-21. In these verses is a series of moral teachings that deal with a Christian's relation to others.

"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:9, 10).

As in First Corinthians 12 and 13, after dealing with the gifts of the Spirit, Paul exalts love. Love (Greek *agapē*) is the more excellent way. "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Therefore love is the character of God. To love is to act toward others as God acts, to treat them as God treats them. The New Testament has two words in the Greek translated "to love." When distinguished in meaning, *agapaō* is the love which is principle, whereas *phileō* is the emotional love that exists between close friends and between members of a family. Christians are admonished to *agapaō*, not to *phileō*. For example, they are admonished to love their enemies. (See Matt. 5:44.) This is possible because the word is *agapaō*. Christians are to treat their enemies as God would treat them. It would be impossible to find toward them the same strong emotional feeling that one feels, for example, toward his spouse or his closest friend, and this is not required.

One might raise the question, Are the New Testament dos and don'ts any easier to keep than the Old Testament moral and ceremonial regulations? We may not wish to answer this question with a direct Yes or No. But several points are worth noting.

1. The reason the Old Testament regulations had become such a yoke of bondage was that with their traditions the Jews had so embellished God's simple commands that it became almost impossible to keep them. Shorn of these embellishments, they are probably no more difficult than the New Testament precepts.

2. God's salvation and power were available in Old Testament times by faith just as in New Testament times, although the Jews were not availing themselves of God's provisions and hence fell down in moral behavior. (See Romans 2.)

3. While motivations for proper moral behavior might be expected to be the same in both eras, there is the added factor that in New Testament times the Messiah had come. He had identified Himself with the human race. He had given a demonstration of what God is like. He had paid the infinite price for man's redemption. These were now accomplished facts instead of anticipated events. Men found it easier to understand God and to enter into a personal relationship with Him through Jesus Christ.

FURTHER STUDY

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, "The Spirituality of the Law" (Matthew 5:17), pp. 49-51.

Part 4
RELATIONSHIP
TO GOVERNMENT

What is to be the Christian's attitude toward civil government?

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1).

Read Romans 13:1-7. These verses define how a Christian living the life of faith is to relate himself to the government of the country in which he resides. He is to accept the civil authority as God-ordained and should pay his taxes.

For a time after Israel left Egypt their civil laws were dictated by God and mediated through a prophet—Moses. Today God has delegated civil authority to the various governments of the nations. Through them He is attempting to maintain a level of freedom and protection for individual citizens.

God holds these governments responsible for the way they administer justice. "Rulers are God's servants, and they are to serve their time as His apprentices. It is for their good that they faithfully follow the plain 'Thus saith the Lord,' keeping the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment. They are to exercise their powers without partiality and without hypocrisy, refusing to be bought or sold, scorning all bribes, and standing in moral independence and dignity before God. They are not to connive at one act of dishonesty or injustice."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1081.

Christians are to give loyal support to government so long as its claims do not conflict with the claims of God. 3

"We are to recognize human government as an ordinance of divine appointment, and teach obedience to it as a sacred duty, within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God, we must obey God rather than men. God's word must be recognized as above all human legislation. . . .

"We are not required to defy authorities. Our words, whether spoken or written, should be carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as uttering that which would make us appear antagonistic to law and order. We are not to say or do anything that would unnecessarily close up our way."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 69.

THINK IT THROUGH

To what extent should the Christian involve himself in politics?

"The Lord would have His people bury political questions. On these themes silence is eloquence. Christ calls upon His followers to come into unity on the pure gospel principles which are plainly revealed in the word of God."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 391.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 394, 395.

Part 5
RELATIONSHIPS
TO OTHERS

In his relationship with fellow human beings, what obligation rests upon a Christian?

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Rom. 13:8).

We have already defined the type of love here required. (See part 3.) It is *agapaō*, the love which is a principle, which one can make himself exercise. Since God is love, to love our fellow human beings is to respect and treat them as God respects and treats them. When we love others, we reflect God's character.

As did Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, Paul here amplifies the precepts of the law, showing that love must be the motivating power in law keeping. Since the law is a transcript of the character of God, and God is love, then to love is to fulfill the law.

Paul is here not substituting some vague standard of love for the precisely detailed precepts of the law, as some Christians claim. Antinomians claim that the law is done away with and that all the Christian needs to be concerned with is love. But, according to Paul, the moral law is still binding. However, as he points out, it can be truly kept only in the context of love. The love factor had been largely missing in the Jews' legalistic attitude toward the law.

Which sample commandments did Paul cite to illustrate the principle of love in law keeping? Rom. 13:9, 10.

Interestingly, the love factor was not a newly introduced principle. By quoting Leviticus 19:18, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” Paul showed that the principle was an integral part of the Torah. Again Paul appealed to the Torah for support for his gospel preaching.

Who besides Paul tied in the command “Love thy neighbour as thyself” with commands from the second table? Matt. 19:18, 19.

“His [the young ruler's] conception of the law was external and superficial. Judged by a human standard, he had preserved an unblemished character. To a great degree his outward life had been free from guilt; he verily thought that his obedience had been without a flaw. Yet he had a secret fear that all was not right between his soul and God.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 391.

The young ruler's problem was that he loved self more than his neighbor. “He professed to have kept the commandments, but he was destitute of the principle which is the very spirit and life of them all.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 392.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, p. 607.

Part 6
MOTIVATION
FOR RIGHT
LIVING

To what circumstance did Paul point as calling for urgent action?

“That, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Rom. 13:11).

This is one of the few references in the book of Romans to the nearness of the second advent. (Compare Rom. 16:20.) He has spoken of “the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Rom. 2:5). He is yet to mention the fact that “we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (Rom. 14:10).

We must not judge from the paucity of references to the nearness of the second advent that Paul regarded the time of the advent a matter of minor importance. In the Thessalonian and the Corinthian letters, for example, he deals with the matter at some length. But in writing to the Romans he had one major objective in mind—to clarify the gospel, particularly as it related to the Jew-Gentile situation.

Paul took for granted that the Roman Christians knew the time. This suggests that the second advent was an important feature in New Testament instruction of converts. Speaking of the coming antichrist, Paul said to the Thessalonian believers, “Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told [Greek, “kept telling”] you these things?” (2 Thess. 2:5).

How near did Paul represent the coming of Christ as being? Rom. 13:12.

“The long night of gloom is trying, but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God’s unwillingness to have His people perish has been the reason of so long delay.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 194.

“The Lord . . . is soon coming, and we must be ready and waiting for His appearing. O, how glorious it will be to see Him, and be welcomed as His redeemed ones! Long have we waited, but our hope is not to grow dim. If we can but see the King in His beauty we shall be forever blessed. I feel as if I must cry aloud: ‘Homeward bound!’ We are nearing the time when Christ will come in power and great glory to take His ransomed ones to their eternal home.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 253.

In the light of the nearness of the end, how is the Christian to live? Rom. 13:13, 14.

How appropriate in this sensual age is Paul’s admonition to make no “provision for the flesh”!

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 66-69.



Living the Life of Faith-2

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Rom. 13:8).

In our concluding lesson it is well to survey the quarter's lessons and ask a few questions. We have observed that the basic theme of the book of Romans is justification by faith.

What had sparked a discussion of the subject of justification was the Judaizers' insistence that Gentile converts keep the Mosaic law. Because of this insistence, Paul needed to define clearly what are the grounds upon which God accepts a person.

Three chapters of the book (3, 4, and 5) deal particularly with justification by faith. The first two chapters are introductory. From chapter 6 on, much of the discussion centers on victory over sin and proper ethical behavior. In our introduction to lesson 7 we explained that while in his epistle (as translated in the KJV) Paul does not use the word “sanctification,” what theologically is implied in this term receives extended attention. If one were to ask which of the two, justification or sanctification, receives the greater attention, it would be difficult to judge. What one can say is that Paul seeks to avoid any possible conclusion that his teaching of justification by faith gives a person a license to sin. There were those who accused Paul of such a teaching.

The danger always lurks that some people seize strongly upon one idea and emphasize it out of all proportion. Certainly no one studying the Epistle to the Romans in its entirety can come away with the idea that justification by faith is the only aspect of salvation.

While justification is extremely important, it is well to present it in the total picture of salvation as Paul does. And when the total picture is seen, it will be found to be in harmony with what other writers have said about the salvation process, even with what James says about works and justification. (See James 2:24.)

Time does not permit us to study Romans 16, in which Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchrea, a port city of Corinth, is introduced. She is believed to have been the bearer of the letter to Rome. After this follows a roster of friends to whom Paul sends greetings (verses 5-16). There is a final warning concerning “them which cause divisions” (verse 17), doubtless the Judaizers, whose arguments Paul has thoroughly answered in his letter.

In verse 22 Paul's amanuensis (one who writes from dictation) identifies himself. He is Tertius, of whom nothing further is known.

With a fitting benediction, to which we call attention in our lesson for Friday, the epistle closes. It is hoped that Sabbath School members this quarter will have been spiritually enriched and will have found that faith in Jesus and that walk in the Holy Spirit which Paul recommends.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The Weak Brother**
(Rom. 14:1, 2)
2. **Servants of One Master**
(Rom. 14:3)
3. **All Summoned to Judgment**
(Rom. 14:10)
4. **Giving No Offense**
(Rom. 14:15, 21)
5. **Observance of Days**
(Rom. 14:5)
6. **Fitting Benediction**
(Rom. 15:1)

Part 1
THE WEAK
BROTHER

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs” (Rom. 14:1, 2).

In the context of Romans 14, the one weak in the faith is one whose conscience is judged by his fellow church members as overscrupulous. He is anxious to do what is right, and if there is the least chance that a particular course of action may be wrong, he avoids it.

Specifically, the subject under consideration is the eating of meats that may have been sacrificed to idols. The Jerusalem council (Acts 15) had dealt with this problem: “One was the problem as to what attitude should be taken toward the use of meats offered to idols. Many of the Gentile converts were living among ignorant and superstitious people who made frequent sacrifices and offerings to idols. The priests of this heathen worship carried on an extensive merchandise with the offerings brought to them, and the Jews feared that the Gentile converts would bring Christianity into disrepute by purchasing that which had been offered to idols, thereby sanctioning, in some measure, idolatrous customs.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 191. The council ruled that Gentile converts should refrain from using such foods in their diet.

But there was always the question as to whether meats sold in public markets had come from animals sacrificed to idols. (See 1 Cor. 10:25.) The “strong Christian” wouldn’t bother to raise the question; the overscrupulous Christian, if there were the slightest doubt, chose to eat vegetables instead.

We should note that the subject under consideration is not one of vegetarianism versus a flesh diet. This was not a New Testament issue. Only in comparatively recent times has God urged vegetarianism upon His people. This dietary peculiarity must not be superimposed upon the New Testament church.

Nor is Paul implying in this passage that the distinction between clean and unclean meats has been abolished. This is not the subject under consideration. The Bible must always be interpreted in its context, and with reference to what the writer is talking about. A few words must never be lifted out of the text by themselves and a meaning placed upon them other than the author intended them to have. For example, if the words “he may eat all things” were taken to mean that now any animal, clean or otherwise, could be eaten, they would be misapplied. Comparison with other New Testament passages would rule against such an application. To “receive” one weak in the faith meant to accord him full membership and social status. He was not to be argued with, but given the right to his opinion.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 61.

Part 2
SERVANTS OF
ONE MASTER

**How was the "strong" Christian to relate to the over-
scrupulous Christian, and how was the latter to regard the
former?**

**"Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let
not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath
received him" (Rom. 14:3).**

Paul does not speak depreciatingly of the one who is "weak in the faith." Nor does he give him advice as to how to become strong. So far as God is concerned, the overscrupulous Christian (judged overscrupulous apparently not by God but by his fellow Christians) is accepted. "God hath received him."

**What important principle must a Christian constantly bear in
mind? Rom. 14:4.**

Here is stated clearly the New Testament principle of the priesthood of all believers—"to his own master he standeth or falleth." Each one must go directly to his Master to inquire as to his duty. No one else must be conscience for him.

Ellen White counsels: "I was shown the danger of the people of God in looking to Brother and Sister White and thinking that they must come to them with their burdens and seek counsel of them. This ought not so to be. They are invited by their compassionate, loving Saviour to come unto Him, when weary and heavy-laden, and He will relieve them. . . . Many come to us with the inquiry: Shall I do this? Shall I engage in that enterprise? Or, in regard to dress, Shall I wear this or that article? I answer them: You profess to be disciples of Christ. Study your Bible. Read carefully and prayerfully the life of our dear Saviour when He dwelt among men upon the earth. Imitate His life, and you will not be found straying from the narrow path. We utterly refuse to be conscience for you. If we tell you just what to do, you will look to us to guide you, instead of going directly to Jesus for yourselves."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 118, 119.

THINK IT THROUGH

What can assure safe guidance for me?

"We are not to place the responsibility of our duty upon others, and wait for them to tell us what to do. We cannot depend for counsel upon humanity. The Lord will teach us our duty just as willingly as He will teach somebody else. . . . Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

FURTHER STUDY

S.D.A. Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 719.

Part 3
ALL SUMMONED
TO JUDGMENT

What further reason does Paul set forth for not judging or despising a brother?

“Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set a nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (Rom. 14:10).

If Christ is the judge, then what right have I to play that role? Furthermore, since I must give an account before the judgment seat of Christ, I do not wish to have recorded against me that instead of loving my brother I despised and condemned him.

Of what significance is the statement from the Old Testament that Paul introduces here? Rom. 14:11.

The citation from Isaiah 45:23 supports the thought that *all* must appear for judgment. “Every knee” and “every tongue” individualizes the summons. The implication is that each one will have to answer for himself (verse 12). No one can answer for another. This solemn fact should banish any thought of superiority over, or any desire to “straighten out,” an over-scrupulous brother. There are too many beams in my own eyes for me to be concerned about the speck in my brother’s eye.

Coming back to the subject of meats sacrificed to idols, what is it that makes the eating of such foods wrong? Rom. 14:14.

The words must be interpreted so as to bring out what the author meant to say. The subject is still foods sacrificed to idols. Paul is saying that there is nothing wrong *per se* in eating such foods. Elsewhere he points out that this conclusion is based on the fact that idols do not have a real existence (1 Cor. 8:4, 5). Not all grasp this fact, Paul told the Corinthians, “for some with conscience of the idol until this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled” (verse 7).

It is always wrong to violate one’s conscience, even an unenlightened conscience. This fact the “strong” brethren apparently did not understand. They despised the scrupulosity of the “weak” brethren and put stumbling blocks in their way.

If the words of Romans 14:14 were taken by themselves without reference to what Paul meant them to say, they could lead to completely unwarranted conclusions, such as that there is nothing basically unclean. Think, for example, of the sexual perversions pointed out in Romans 1:26-29. No one could possibly conclude that Paul could be meaning there is nothing basically wrong with any of them, except as a person might have doubts about them.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, p. 166.

Part 4
GIVING NO
OFFENSE

In view of the “weak” brother’s scrupulosity, how was the “strong” brother to modify his conduct?

“If thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.”

“It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak” (Rom. 14:15, 21).

It is interesting to note that the modification Paul suggests is on the part of the “strong” brother.

In verses 17-20 Paul is trying to put various aspects of Christianity into proper perspective. While diet is an important aspect, Christians ought not to quarrel over the choice on the part of some to eat vegetables instead of flesh meats possibly sacrificed to idols. Instead, they ought to focus on righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

What limits does Paul place on individual independence?
Rom. 14:22, 23.

One can enjoy his independence “before God,” having settled it with Him as to what is allowed and what is forbidden. But “before God” expresses the limit. Before our fellow Christians we must act with reference to their scruples.

Have you heard someone say, “It is none of anyone’s business what I eat or what I wear or what kind of entertainment I engage in”? It may be true that it’s none of the scrupulous brother’s business. But it is Christ’s business. He is concerned about the scrupulous brother. If, through our independent conduct, the weak brother “for whom Christ died” is led to violate his conscience and as a result “perish,” sin against Christ is registered against us. “When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth; lest I make my brother to offend” (1 Cor. 8:12, 13).

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the real danger in individual independence?

“There have ever been in the church those who are constantly inclined toward individual independence. They seem unable to realize that independence of spirit is liable to lead the human agent to have too much confidence in himself and to trust in his own judgment rather than to respect the counsel and highly esteem the judgment of his brethren.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 163.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 477, 478.

Part 5
OBSERVANCE
OF DAYS

Over what other matter is the scrupulous brother concerned?

“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind” (Rom. 14:5).

About what days is Paul speaking? Was there a controversy in the early church over the observance or nonobservance of certain days? We get a hint of such a controversy in Galatians 4:9, 10, where Paul berates the Galatian Christians for observing “days, and months, and times, and years.” As we noted in lesson 2, the Judaizers had persuaded the Galatian Christians to be circumcised and keep other precepts of the law of Moses. Paul feared that these Judaizers might harm the Roman church as well. But perhaps in Rome it was particularly the Jewish Christian who had a hard time persuading himself that he need no longer observe the Jewish festivals.

Some Christians, to be on the safe side, decided to observe one or more of the obsolete Jewish festivals. Paul’s counsel is, Let them do it, if they are persuaded they should.

To bring the weekly Sabbath into Romans 14:5, as some antisabbarians do, is unwarranted. Those who introduce the Sabbath here are arguing from words rather than meaning.

What principle is it that allows for differences in practice among sincere Christians? Rom. 14:6.

In either case, the Christian is acting with reference to what he thinks the Lord wants him to do. Verse 6 explains further what is said in verse 5 about being “fully persuaded.” Whether they observe the day or not, they do so on the basis of what they are persuaded is the Lord’s will in the matter.

What does Paul mean when he says, “None of us liveth to himself”? Rom. 14:7, 8.

This verse has so long been interpreted to mean that every person exerts an influence on others that for many people its contextual meaning has been lost. While it is true that every person exerts an influence, and that the words of this passage can be interpreted in that way, what Paul is saying in context is that no man acts with reference to himself, but with reference to the Lord. “No man” is here “no true Christian.” Such a Christian does not consult his own mind or his own pleasure as to what to do, but always the will of the Lord. Whatever he does, he undertakes because he believes such a course to be the will of the Lord for him. Paul thus sets forth an important principle by which a Christian should guide his conduct.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 7, p. 50.

Part 6
FITTING
BENEDICTION

How did Paul sum up his counsel concerning mature attitudes toward weak Christians?

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Rom. 15:1).

Read also verses 2 and 3. More is here commended than an attitude of leaving the weak brother alone to believe and act as he is persuaded he should. Positive action supporting him, helping him bear his infirmities, pleasing him is enjoined. No better example for such positive Christian action can be cited than Christ, who, instead of pleasing Himself, gave Himself for others selflessly.

As Paul brought his letter to a close, what varied benedictions did he utter? Rom. 15:5, 6, 13, 33.

The God of patience means the God who helps His children steadfastly to endure. The word for "patience," *hupomonē*, means "fortitude," "steadfast endurance." The word for "consolation" may be translated "encouragement." The God of encouragement is the God who encourages. The God of hope is the God who has given hope to mankind. Likewise, the God of peace is the God who gives peace and in whom one may have peace.

What a fitting benediction to a letter whose dominant theme is righteousness by faith—encouragement, hope, peace! How sorely our present world needs these.

After numerous personal greetings, how did Paul bring his letter to a close? Rom. 16:25-27.

Paul ends his letter in a glorious ascription of praise to God. God is the one in whom the Roman Christians and all Christians can safely put their trust to confirm their standing as redeemed sons and daughters of God, justified by faith, and now led by the Spirit of God.

Paul is thrilled to be the herald of such glorious news. He calls this news his gospel. What he means is the gospel he proclaims. But what he preaches has been confirmed by the preaching of Jesus and by the messages of the prophets. It was kept secret, not because God did not want men to know, but because men refused light from heaven, preventing God from giving them further light. Moreover, there were some aspects of the plan that men would be unable to grasp until the Messiah would come in human flesh. He gave a demonstration, not only of what God is like, but also of what man may become by laying hold of divine power. The new kind of life would be one of "obedience of faith," that is, obedience, or godlikeness, springing from faith, the true motivating power.

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3. *The Witness of God (1 John 5:9-12)*
4. *The Power of God*
5. *True Words of God (Rev. 19:9; 21:5; 22:6; 2 Tim. 3:16)*
6. *Blessed Is He That Reads, Hears, and Keeps (Rev. 1:3)*

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2. *The Faithful Witness (Rev. 1:9)*
3. *The Spirit of Prophecy (Rev. 19:10)*
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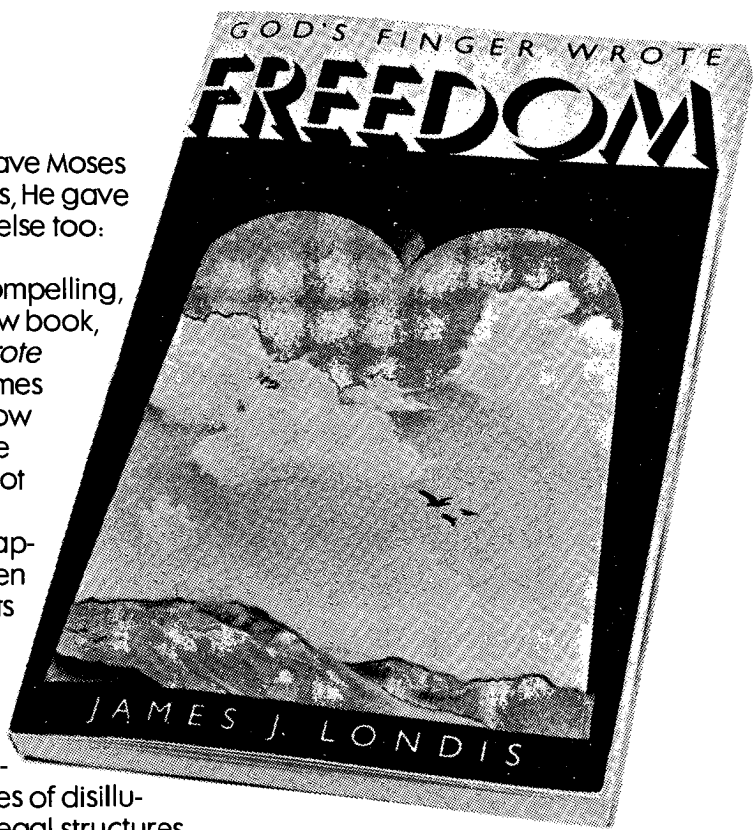
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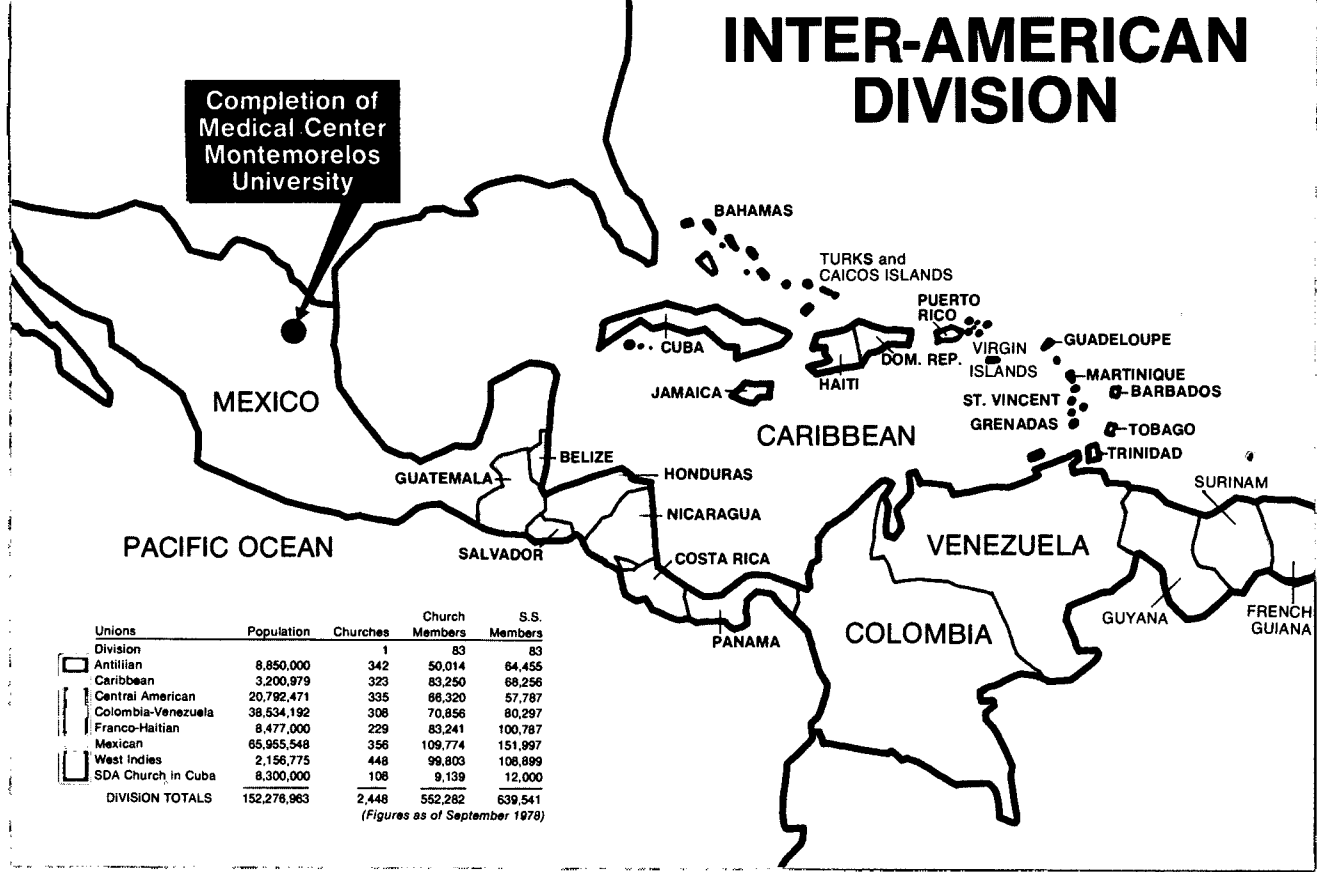


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