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GOSAF RWANDA

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FREE INDELU!

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death” Romans8:1-2. In this booklet, we are thoroughly studying The letter of Paul to the Romans, Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10 in Good Samaritan Family “GOSAF” CONVENTION 2012, 20-24 December and Bible studies in GOSAF Cells.

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Introduction

The booklet you hold has been designed for cell group leaders as they facilitate the Bible study, discipleship and any other sharing of the word of God in GOSAF and in the community that God has given us.

After studying *The letter of Paul to the Romans*, you'll understand:

- What salvation is,
- The difference between Christianity and religion, what it really means to be sanctified,
- How Christians are supposed to behave,
- Whether Christians continue to sin, what to do about it if you do and much more.

You'll learn how and when to use, strengthen and develop powerful gifts from God. You'll discover huge differences between what Christianity is and what people today think it is. You'll see the entire doctrine of salvation in one powerful verse you can use to reinforce your faith or help someone else meet Jesus.

Though we will centre our attention on four chapters: 7, 8, 9 and 10, we encourage you to read the whole *letter of Paul to the Romans* as we have encouraged many people to do so before GOSAF Convention of 2012.

Points to consider while sharing have been provided just before the commentaries of a couple of verses. Useful to guide you as you read the scriptures and grasping its sense.

Shalom

John MANISHIMWE.

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Chapter 7

We may observe in this chapter, I. Our freedom from the law further urged as an argument to press upon us sanctification, [Rom. 7:1-6](#). II. The excellency and usefulness of the law asserted and proved from the apostle's own experience, notwithstanding, [Rom. 7:7-14](#). III. A description of the conflict between grace and corruption in the heart, [Rom. 7:14-25](#).

Sharing: The Law Of Sin And Death, Verse 1-13:

1. What do you feel Paul meant when he said the Law is only over us while we live?
2. How is it that we "died to the Law?"
3. What does Paul mean by "sinful nature?"
4. Give some examples of how a law can arouse sinful passions.
5. Do you feel Paul is saying we are no longer bound by the Law? Why/why not?
6. How does this section of Scripture compare with what you've been told about Christians obeying the Law (10 commandments, etc)?
7. Do you feel Paul is saying the Law brought about sin? Why/why not?
8. In your own words, say what you feel Paul believes is the purpose of the law.

Verses 1-6

Among other arguments used in the foregoing chapter to persuade us against sin, and to holiness, this was one ([Rom. 6:14](#)), that we *are not under the law*; and this argument is here further insisted upon and explained ([Rom. 7:6](#)): *We are delivered from the law*. What is meant by this? And how is it an argument why sin should not reign over us, and why we should walk in newness of life? 1. We are delivered from the power of the law which curses and condemns

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us for the sin committed by us. The sentence of the law against us is vacated and reversed, by the death of Christ, to all true believers. The law saith, *The soul that sins shall die*; but we are delivered from the law. *The Lord has taken away thy sin, thou shalt not die*. We are *redeemed from the curse of the law*, [Gal. 3:13](#). 2. We are delivered from that power of the law which irritates and provokes the sin that dwelleth in us. This the apostle seems especially to refer to ([Rom. 7:5](#)): *The motions of sins which were by the law*. The law, by commanding, forbidding, threatening, corrupt and fallen man, but offering no grace to cure and strengthen, did but stir up the corruption, and, like the sun shining upon a dunghill, excite and draw up the filthy steams. We being lamed by the fall, the law comes and directs us, but provides nothing to heal and help our lameness, and so makes us halt and stumble the more. Understand this of the law not as a rule, but as a covenant of works. Now each of these is an argument why we should be holy; for here is encouragement to endeavours, though in many things we come short. We are under grace, which promises strength to do what it commands, and pardon upon repentance when we do amiss. This is the scope of these verses in general, that, in point of profession and privilege, we are under a covenant of grace, and not under a covenant of works—under the gospel of Christ, and not under the law of Moses. The difference between a law-state and a gospel-state he had before illustrated by the similitude of rising to a new life, and serving a new master; now here he speaks of is under the similitude of being married to a new husband.

I. Our first marriage was to the law, which, according to the law of marriage, was to continue only during the life of the law. The law of marriage is binding till the death of one of the parties, no matter which, and no longer. The death of either discharges both. For this he appeals to themselves, as persons knowing the law ([Rom. 7:1](#)): *I speak to those that know the law*. It is a great advantage to discourse with those that have knowledge, for such can more readily understand and apprehend a truth. Many of the Christians at Rome were such as had been Jews, and so were well acquainted with the law. One has some hold of knowing people. *The law hath power over a man as long as he liveth*; in particular, the law of marriage hath power; or, in general, every law is so limited—the laws of

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nations, of relations, of families, etc. 1. The obligation of laws extends no further; by death the servant who, while he lived, was under the yoke, is *freed from his master*, [Job 3:19](#). 2. The condemnation of laws extends no further; death is the finishing of the law. *Actio moritur cum personâ—The action expires with the person*. The severest laws could but kill the body, and after that there is no more that they can do. Thus while we were alive to the law we were under the power of it—while we were in our Old-Testament state, before the gospel came into the world, and before it came with power into our hearts. Such is the law of marriage ([Rom. 7:2](#)), the woman is bound to her husband during life, so bound to him that she cannot marry another; if she do, she shall be reckoned an adulteress, [Rom. 7:3](#). It will make her an adulteress, not only to be defiled by, but to be married to, another man; for that is so much the worse, upon this account, that it abuses an ordinance of God, by making it to patronise the uncleanness. Thus were we married to the law ([Rom. 7:5](#)): *When we were in the flesh*, that is, in a carnal state, under the reigning power of sin and corruption—in the flesh as in our element—then *the motions of sins which were by the law did work in our members*, we were carried down the stream of sin, and the law was but as an imperfect dam, which made the stream to swell the higher, and rage the more. Our desire was towards sin, as that of the wife towards her husband, and sin ruled over us. We embraced it, loved it, devoted all to it, conversed daily with it, made it our care to please it. We were under a law of sin and death, as the wife under the law of marriage; and the product of this marriage was fruit brought forth unto death, that is, actual transgressions were produced by the original corruption, such as deserve death. Lust, having conceived by the law (which is the strength of sin, [1 Cor. 15:56](#)), *bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death*, [Jas. 1:15](#). This is the posterity that springs from this marriage to sin and the law. This comes of the motions of sin working in our members. And this continues during life, while the law is alive to us, and we are alive to the law.

II. Our second marriage is to Christ: and how comes this about?
Why,

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1. We are freed, by death, from our obligation to the law as a covenant, as the wife is from her obligation to her husband, [Rom. 7:3](#). This resemblance is not very close, nor needed it to be. *You are become dead to the law*, [Rom. 7:4](#). He does not say, "The law is dead" (some think because he would avoid giving offence to those who were yet zealous for the law), but, which comes all to one, *You are dead to the law*. As the crucifying of the world to us, and of us to the world, amounts to one and the same thing, so doth the law dying, and our dying to it. We are *delivered from the law* ([Rom. 7:6](#)), **katergethemen**—*we are nulled* as to the law; our obligation to it as a husband is cassated and made void. And then he speaks of the law being dead as far as it was a law of bondage to us: *That being dead wherein we were held*; not the law itself, but its obligation to punishment and its provocation to sin. It is dead, it has lost its power; and this ([Rom. 7:4](#)) *by the body of Christ*, that is, by the sufferings of Christ in his body, by his crucified body, which abrogated the law, answered the demands of it, made satisfaction for our violation of it, purchased for us a covenant of grace, in which righteousness and strength are laid up for us, such as were not, nor could be, by the law. We are dead to the law by our union with the mystical body of Christ. By being incorporated into Christ in our baptism professedly, in our believing powerfully and effectually, we are dead to the law, have no more to do with it than the dead servant, that is free from his master, hath to do with his master's yoke.

2. We are married to Christ. The day of our believing is the day of our espousals to the Lord Jesus. We enter upon a life of dependence on him and duty to him: *Married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead*, a periphrasis of Christ and very pertinent here; for as our dying to sin and the law is in conformity to the death of Christ, and the crucifying of his body, so our devotedness to Christ in newness of life is in conformity to the resurrection of Christ. We are married to the raised exalted Jesus, a very honourable marriage. Compare [2 Cor. 11:2](#); [Eph. 5:29](#). Now we are thus married to Christ, (1.) *That we should bring forth fruit unto God*, [Rom. 7:4](#). One end of marriage is fruitfulness: God instituted the ordinance that he might seek a *godly seed*, [Mal. 2:15](#). The wife is compared to the fruitful vine, and children are called the fruit of

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the womb. Now the great end of our marriage to Christ is our fruitfulness in love, and grace, and every good work. This is fruit unto God, pleasing to God, according to his will, aiming at his glory. As our old marriage to sin produced fruit unto death, so our second marriage to Christ produces fruit unto God, fruits of righteousness. Good works are the children of the new nature, the products of our union with Christ, as the fruitfulness of the vine is the product of its union with the root. Whatever our professions and pretensions may be, there is no fruit brought forth to God till we are married to Christ; it is in Christ Jesus that we are created unto good works, [Eph. 2:10](#). The only fruit which turns to a good account is that which is brought forth in Christ. This distinguishes the good works of believers from the good works of hypocrites and self-justifiers that they are brought forth in marriage, done in union with Christ, in the name of the Lord Jesus, [Col. 3:17](#). This is, without controversy, one of the great mysteries of godliness. (2.) *That we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter*, [Rom. 7:6](#). Being married to a new husband, we must change our way. Still we must serve, but it is a service that is perfect freedom, whereas the service of sin was a perfect drudgery: we must now serve in newness of spirit, by new spiritual rules, from new spiritual principles, in spirit and in truth, [John 4:24](#). There must be a renovation of our spirits wrought by the spirit of God, and in that we must serve. *Not in the oldness of the letter*; that is, we must not rest in mere external services, as the carnal Jews did, who gloried in their adherence to the letter of the law, and minded not the spiritual part of worship. The letter is said to kill with its bondage and terror, but we are delivered from that yoke that we may serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness, [Luke 1:74, 75](#). We are under the dispensation of the Spirit, and therefore must be spiritual, and serve in the spirit. Compare with this [2 Cor. 3:3, 6](#) It becomes us to worship within the veil, and no longer in the outward court.

Verses 7–13

To what he had said in the former paragraph, the apostle here raises an objection, which he answers very fully: *What shall we say then? Isa. the law sin?* When he had been speaking of the dominion

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of sin, he had said so much of the influence of the law as a covenant upon that dominion that it might easily be misinterpreted as a reflection upon the law, to prevent which he shows from his own experience the great excellency and usefulness of the law, not as a covenant, but as a guide; and further discovers how sin took occasion by the commandment. Observe in particular,

I. The great excellency of the law in itself. Far be it from Paul to reflect upon the law; no, he speaks honourably of it. 1. It is *holy, just, and good*, [Rom. 7:12](#). The law in general is so, and every particular commandment is so. Laws are as the law-makers are. God, the great lawgiver, is holy, just, and good, therefore his law must needs be so. The matter of it is holy: it commands holiness, encourages holiness; it is holy, for it is agreeable to the holy will of God, the original of holiness. It is just, for it is consonant to the rules of equity and right reason: the ways of the Lord are right. It is good in the design of it; it was given for the good of mankind, for the conservation of peace and order in the world. It makes the observers of it good; the intention of it was to better and reform mankind. Wherever there is true grace there is an assent to this—that the law is holy, just, and good. 2. *The law is spiritual* ([Rom. 7:14](#)), not only in regard to the effect of it, as it is a means of making us spiritual, but in regard to the extent of it; it reaches our spirits, it lays a restraint upon, and gives a direction to, the motions of the inward man; *it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*, [Heb. 4:12](#). It forbids spiritual wickedness, heart-murder, and heart-adultery. It commands spiritual service, requires the heart, obliges us to worship God in the spirit. It is a spiritual law, for it is given by God, who is a Spirit and the Father of spirits; it is given to man, whose principal part is spiritual; the soul is the best part, and the leading part of the man, and therefore the law to the man must needs be a law to the soul. Herein the law of God is above all other laws, that it is a spiritual law. Other laws may forbid *compassing and imagining*, etc., which are treason in the heart, but cannot take cognizance thereof, unless there be some overt act; but the law of God takes notice of the iniquity regarded in the heart, though it go no further. *Wash thy heart from wickedness*, [Jer. 4:14](#). *We know this*: Wherever there is true grace

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there is an experimental knowledge of the spirituality of the law of God.

II. The great advantage that he had found by the law. 1. It was discovering: *I had not known sin but by the law*, [Rom. 7:7](#). As that which is straight discovers that which is crooked, as the looking-glass shows us our natural face with all its spots and deformities, so there is no way of coming to that knowledge of sin which is necessary to repentance, and consequently to peace and pardon, but by comparing our hearts and lives with the law. Particularly he came to the knowledge of the sinfulness of lust by the law of the tenth commandment. By lust he means sin dwelling in us, sin in its first motions and workings, the corrupt principle. This he came to know when the law said, *Thou shalt not covet*. The law spoke in other language than the scribes and Pharisees made it to speak in; it spoke in the spiritual sense and meaning of it. By this he knew that lust was sin and a very sinful sin, that those motions and desires of the heart towards sin which never came into act were sinful, exceedingly sinful. Paul had a very quick and piercing judgment, all the advantages and improvements of education, and yet never attained the right knowledge of indwelling sin till the Spirit by the law made it known to him. There is nothing about which the natural man is more blind than about original corruption, concerning which the understanding is altogether in the dark till the Spirit by the law reveal it, and make it known. Thus *the law is a schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ*, opens and searches the wound, and so prepares it for healing. Thus sin by the commandment does appear sin ([Rom. 7:13](#)); it appears in its own colours, appears to be what it is, and you cannot call it by a worse name than its own. Thus by the commandment it becomes *exceedingly sinful*; that is, it appears to be so. We never see the desperate venom or malignity there is in sin, till we come to compare it with the law, and the spiritual nature of the law, and then we see it to be an evil and a bitter thing. 2. It was humbling ([Rom. 7:9](#)): *I was alive*. He thought himself in a very good condition; he was alive in his own opinion and apprehension, very secure and confident of the goodness of his state. Thus he was *once, pote—in times past*, when he was a Pharisee; for it was the common temper of that generation of men that they had a very good conceit of themselves; and Paul was then

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like the rest of them, and the reason was he was then *without the law*. Though brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, though himself a great student in the law, a strict observer of it, and a zealous stickler for it, yet *without the law*. He had the letter of the law, but he had not the spiritual meaning of it—the shell, but not the kernel. He had the law in his hand and in his head, but he had it not in his heart; the notion of it, but not the power of it. There are a great many who are spiritually dead in sin, that yet are alive in their own opinion of themselves, and it is their strangeness to the law that is the cause of the mistake. *But when the commandment came*, came in the power of it (not to his eyes only, but to his heart), *sin revived*, as the dust in a room rises (that is, appears) when the sunshine is let into it. Paul then saw that in sin which he had never seen before; he then saw sin in its causes, the bitter root, the corrupt bias, the bent to backslide,—sin in its colours, deforming, defiling, breaking a righteous law, affronting an awful Majesty, profaning a sovereign crown by casting it to the ground,—sin in its consequences, sin with death at the heels of it, sin and the curse entailed upon it. “Thus sin revived, and then I died; I lost that good opinion which I had had of myself, and came to be of another mind. *Sin revived, and I died*; that is, the Spirit, but the commandment, convinced me that I was in a state of sin, and in a state of death because of sin.” Of this excellent use is the law; it is a lamp and a light; it converts the soul, opens the eyes, prepares the way of the Lord in the desert, rends the rocks, levels the mountains, makes ready a people prepared for the Lord.

III. The ill use that his corrupt nature made of the law notwithstanding. 1. *Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence*, [Rom. 7:8](#). Observe, Paul had in him all manner of concupiscence, though one of the best unregenerate men that ever was; as touching the righteousness of the law, blameless, and yet sensible of all manner of concupiscence. And it was sin that wrought it, indwelling sin, his corrupt nature (he speaks of a sin that did work sin), and it took occasion by the commandment. The corrupt nature would not have swelled and raged so much if it had not been for the restraints of the law; as the peccant humours in the body are raised, and more inflamed, by a purge that is not strong enough to carry them off. It is incident to

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corrupt nature, *in vetitum niti—to lean towards what is forbidden*. Ever since Adam ate forbidden fruit, we have all been fond of forbidden paths; the diseased appetite is carried out most strongly towards that which is hurtful and prohibited. *Without the law sin was dead*, as a snake in winter, which the sunbeams of the law quicken and irritate. 2. It *deceived men*. Sin puts a cheat upon the sinner, and it is a fatal cheat, Rom. 7:11. *By it* (by the commandment) *slew me*. There being in the law no such express threatening against sinful lustings, sin, that is, his won corrupt nature, took occasion thence to promise him impunity, and to say, as the serpent to our first parents, *You shall not surely die*. Thus it deceived and slew him. 3. It *wrought death in me by that which is good*, Rom. 7:13. That which works concupiscence works death, for sin bringeth forth death. Nothing so good but a corrupt and vicious nature will pervert it, and make it an occasion of sin; no flower so sweet by sin will such poison out of it. Now in this sin appears sin. The worst thing that sin does, and most like itself, is the perverting of the law, and taking occasion from it to be so much the more malignant. Thus the commandment, which was ordained to life, was intended as a guide in the way to comfort and happiness, proved unto death, through the corruption of nature, Rom. 7:10. Many a precious soul splits upon the rock of salvation; and the same word which to some is an occasion of life unto life is to others an occasion of death unto death. The same sun that makes the garden of flowers more fragrant makes the dunghill more noisome; the same heat that softens wax hardens clay; and the same child was set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel. The way to prevent this mischief is to bow our souls to the commanding authority of the word and law of God, not striving against, but submitting to it.

Verses 14-25

Sharing: *Who Will Rescue Me, Verse 14-25:*

1. Compare vs 14-15 with I John 1:8 and Acts 15:5-19.
 - a. What do you feel Paul, John, James and Peter believed concerning Christians and sin?
 - b. How is this different from what you've been told about Christian behavior?

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- c. What do you feel Paul, John, James and Peter believed concerning salvation?
2. Was Paul admitting he couldn't avoid sinning? Why/why not?
 3. How does this compare with what you've heard about the Apostles?
 4. Name as many Biblical leaders as you can that the Bible says did not sin.
 5. If your list has more than one name on it, please share with us your Scripture reference.
 6. How is it that sin can still live in someone who belongs to Jesus?
 7. Explain the difference between the inner being and the members of the body?
 8. Describe some situations in which your inner being and your body are at war.
 9. In your own words, state who it is that saves us from this body of death and explain how He has done it.

Here is a description of the conflict between grace and corruption in the heart, between the law of God and the law of sin. And it is applicable two ways:—1. To the struggles that are in a convinced soul, but yet unregenerate, in the person of whom it is supposed, by some, that Paul speaks. 2. To the struggles that are in a renewed sanctified soul, but yet in a state of imperfection; as other apprehend. And a great controversy there is of which of these we are to understand the apostle here. So far does the evil prevail here, when he speaks of one sold under sin, doing it, not performing that which is good, that it seems difficult to apply it to the regenerate, who are described to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; and yet so far does the good prevail in hating sin, consenting to the law, delighting in it, serving the law of God with the mind, that it is more difficult to apply it to the unregenerate that are dead in trespasses and sins.

I. Apply it to the struggles that are felt in a convinced soul, that is yet in a state of sin, knows his Lord's will, but does it not, approves the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law, and yet lives in the constant breach of it, [Rom. 2:17-23](#). Though he has that within him that witnesses against the sin he commits, and

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it is not without a great deal of reluctance that he does commit it, the superior faculties striving against it, natural conscience warning against it before it is committed and smiting for it afterwards, yet the man continues a slave to his reigning lusts. It is not thus with every unregenerate man, but with those only that are convinced by the law, but not changed by the gospel. The apostle had said ([Rom. 6:14](#)), *Sin shall not have dominion, because you are not under the law, but under grace*, for the proof of which he here shows that a man under the law, and not under grace, may be, and is, under the dominion of sin. The law may discover sin, and convince of sin, but it cannot conquer and subdue sin, witness the predominancy of sin in many that are under very strong legal convictions. It discovers the defilement, but will not wash it off. It makes a man weary and heavy laden ([Matt. 11:28](#)), burdens him with his sin; and yet, if rested in, it yields no help towards the shaking off of that burden; this is to be had only in Christ. The law may make a man cry out, *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?* and yet leave him thus fettered and captivated, as being too weak to deliver him ([Rom. 8:3](#)), give him a spirit of bondage to fear, [Rom. 8:15](#). Now a soul advanced thus far by the law is in a fair way towards a state of liberty by Christ, though many rest here and go no further. Felix trembled, but never came to Christ. It is possible for a man to go to hell with his eyes open ([Num. 24:3, 4](#)), illuminated with common convictions, and to carry about with him a self-accusing conscience, even in the service of the devil. He may *consent to the law that it is good*, delight to know God's ways (as they, [Isa. 58:2](#)), may have that within him that witnesses against sin and for holiness; and yet all this overpowered by the reigning love of sin. Drunkards and unclean persons have some faint desires to leave off their sins, and yet persist in them notwithstanding, such is the impotency and such the insufficiency of their convictions. Of such as these there are many that will needs have all this understood, and contend earnestly for it: though it is very hard to imagine why, if the apostle intended this, he should speak all along in his own person; and not only so, but in the present tense. Of his own state under conviction he had spoken at large, as of a thing past ([Rom. 7:7](#)): *I died; the commandment I found to be unto death*; and if here he speaks of the same state as his present state, and the condition he was now in, surely he did not intend to be so understood: and therefore,

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II. It seems rather to be understood of the struggles that are maintained between grace and corruption in sanctified souls. That there are remainders of indwelling corruption, even where there is a living principle of grace, is past dispute; that this corruption is daily breaking forth in sins of infirmity (such as are consistent with a state of grace) is no less certain. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, [1 John 1:8, 10](#). That true grace strives against these sins and corruptions, does not allow of them, hates them, mourns over them, groans under them as a burden, is likewise certain ([Gal. 5:17](#)): *The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would.* These are the truths which, I think, are contained in this discourse of the apostle. And his design is further to open the nature of sanctification, that it does not attain to a sinless perfection in this life; and therefore to quicken us to, and encourage us in, our conflicts with remaining corruptions. Our case is not singular, that which we do sincerely strive against, shall not be laid to our charge, and through grace the victory is sure at last. The struggle here is like that between Jacob and Esau in the womb, between the Canaanites and Israelites in the land, between the house of Saul and the house of David; but great is the truth and will prevail. Understanding it thus, we may observe here,

1. What he complains of—the remainder of indwelling corruptions, which he here speaks of, to show that the law is insufficient to justify even a regenerate man, that the best man in the world hath enough in him to condemn him, if God should deal with him according to the law, which is not the fault of the law, but of our own corrupt nature, which cannot fulfil the law. The repetition of the same things over and over again in this discourse shows how much Paul's heart was affected with what he wrote, and how deep his sentiments were. Observe the particulars of this complaint. (1.) *I am carnal, sold under sin*, [Rom. 7:14](#). He speaks of the Corinthians as carnal, [1 Cor. 3:1](#). Even where there is spiritual life there are remainders of carnal affections, and so far a man may be *sold under sin*; he does not sell himself to work wickedness, as Ahab did ([1 Kgs. 21:25](#)), but he was sold by Adam when he sinned and fell—sold, as a poor slave that does his master's will against his own

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will—sold under sin, because conceived in iniquity and born in sin. (2.) *What I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I*, [Rom. 7:15](#). And to the same purport, [Rom. 7:19, 21](#), *When I would do good, evil is present with me*. Such was the strength of corruptions, that he could not attain that perfection in holiness which he desired and breathed after. Thus, while he was pressing forward towards perfection, yet he acknowledges that he had not already attained, neither was already perfect, [Phil. 3:12](#). Fain he would be free from all sin, and perfectly do the will of God, such was his settled judgment; but his corrupt nature drew him another way: it was like a clog, that checked and kept him down when he would have soared upward, like the bias in a bowl, which, when it is thrown straight, yet draws it aside. (3.) *In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good*, [Rom. 7:18](#). Here he explains himself concerning the corrupt nature, which he calls flesh; and as far as that goes there is no good to be expected, any more than one would expect good corn growing upon a rock, or on the sand which is by the sea-side. As the new nature, as far as that goes, cannot commit sin ([1 John 3:9](#)), so the flesh, the old nature, as far as that goes, cannot perform a good duty. How should it? For the flesh serveth the law of sin ([Rom. 7:25](#)), it is under the conduct and government of that law; and, while it is so, it is not likely to do any good. The corrupt nature is elsewhere called flesh ([Gen. 6:3](#); [John 3:6](#)); and, though there may be good things dwelling in those that have this flesh, yet, as far as the flesh goes, there is no good, the flesh is not a subject capable of any good. (4.) *I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind*, [Rom. 7:23](#). The corrupt and sinful inclination is here compared to a law, because it controlled and checked him in his good motions. It is said to be seated in his members, because, Christ having set up his throne in his heart, it was only the rebellious members of the body that were the instruments of sin—in the sensitive appetite; or we may take it more generally for all that corrupt nature which is the seat not only of sensual but of more refined lusts. This wars against the law of the mind, the new nature; it draws the contrary way, drives on a contrary interest, which corrupt disposition and inclination are as great a burden and grief to the soul as the worst drudgery and captivity could be. *It brings me into captivity*. To the same purport ([Rom. 7:25](#)), *With the flesh I serve the law of sin*; that is, the corrupt nature, the unregenerate

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part, is continually working towards sin. (5.) His general complaint we have in [Rom. 7:24](#); *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* The thing he complains of is a body of death; either the body of flesh, which is a mortal dying body (while we carry this body about with us, we shall be troubled with corruption; when we are dead, we shall be freed from sin, and not before), or the body of sin, the old man, the corrupt nature, which tends to death, that is, to the ruin of the soul. Or, comparing it to a dead body, the touch of which was by the ceremonial law defiling, if actual transgressions be dead works ([Heb. 9:14](#)), original corruption is a dead body. It was as troublesome to Paul as if he had had a dead body tied to him, which he must have carried about with him. This made him cry out, *O wretched man that I am!* A man that had learned in every state to be content yet complains thus of his corrupt nature. Had I been required to speak of Paul, I should have said, "O blessed man that thou art, an ambassador of Christ, a favourite of heaven, a spiritual father of thousands!" But in his own account he was a wretched man, because of the corruption of nature, because he was not so good as he fain would be, had not yet attained, neither was already perfect. Thus miserably does he complain. *Who shall deliver me?* He speaks like one that was sick of it, that would give any thing to be rid of it, looks to the right hand and to the left for some friend that would part between him and his corruptions. The remainders of indwelling sin are a very grievous burden to a gracious soul.

2. What he comforts himself with. The case was sad, but there were some allays. Three things comforted him:—

(1.) That his conscience witnessed for him that he had a good principle ruling and prevailing in him, notwithstanding. It is well when all does not go one way in the soul. The rule of this good principle which he had was the law of God, to which he here speaks of having a threefold regard, which is certainly to be found in all that are sanctified, and no others. [1.] *I consent unto the law that it is good*, [Rom. 7:16](#); ***sympheimi***—*I give my vote to the law*; here is the approbation of the judgment. Wherever there is grace there is not only a dread of the severity of the law, but a consent to the goodness of the law. "It is a good in itself, it is good for me." This is

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a sign that the law is written in the heart, that the soul is delivered into the mould of it. To consent to the law is so far to approve of it as not to wish it otherwise constituted than it is. The sanctified judgment not only concurs to the equity of the law, but to the excellency of it, as convinced that a conformity to the law is the highest perfection of human nature, and the greatest honour and happiness we are capable of. [2.] *I delight in the law of God after the inward man*, [Rom. 7:22](#). His conscience bore witness to a complacency in the law. He delighted not only in the promises of the word, but in the precepts and prohibitions of the word; *synedomai* expresses a becoming *delight*. He did herein concur in affection with all the saints. All that are savingly regenerate or born again do truly delight in the law of God, delight to know it, to do it—cheerfully submit to the authority of it, and take a complacency in that submission, never better pleased than when heart and life are in the strictest conformity to the law and will of God. *After the inward man*; that is, *First*, The mind or rational faculties, in opposition to the sensitive appetites and wills of the flesh. The soul is the inward man, and that is the seat of gracious delights, which are therefore sincere and serious, but secret; it is the renewing of the inward man, [2 Cor. 4:16](#). *Secondly*, The new nature. The new man is called the *inner man* ([Eph. 3:16](#)), the *hidden man of the heart*, [1 Pet. 3:4](#). Paul, as far as he was sanctified, had a delight in the law of God. [3.] *With the mind I myself serve the law of God*, [Rom. 7:25](#). It is not enough to consent to the law, and to delight in the law, but we must serve the law; our souls must be entirely delivered up into the obedience of it. Thus it was with Paul's mind; thus it is with every sanctified renewed mind; this is the ordinary course and way; thitherward goes the bent of the soul. *I myself—autos ego*, plainly intimating that he speaks in his own person, and not in the person of another.

(2.) That the fault lay in that corruption of his nature which he did really bewail and strive against: *It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me*. This he mentions twice ([Rom. 7:17, 20](#)), not as an excuse for the guilt of his sin (it is enough to condemn us, if we were under the law, that the sin which does the evil dwelleth in us), but as a salvo for his evidences, that he might not sink in despair, but take comfort from the covenant of grace, which accepts the

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willingness of the spirit, and has provided pardon for the weakness of the flesh. He likewise herein enters a protestation against all that which this indwelling sin produced. Having professed his consent to the law of God, he here professes his dissent from the law of sin. "It is not I; I disown the fact; it is against my mind that it is done." As when in the senate the major part are bad, and carry every thing the wrong way, it is indeed the act of the senate, but the honest party strive against it, bewail what is done, and enter their protestation against it; so that it is no more they that do it.— *Dwelleth in me*, as the Canaanites among the Israelites, though they were put under tribute: dwelleth in me, and is likely to dwell there, while I live.

(3.) His great comfort lay in Jesus Christ ([Rom. 7:25](#)): *I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord*. In the midst of his complaints he breaks out into praises. It is a special remedy against fears and sorrows to be much in praise: many a poor drooping soul hath found it so. And, in all our praises, this should be the burden of the son, "Blessed be God for Jesus Christ." *Who shall deliver me?* says he ([Rom. 7:24](#)), as one at a loss for help. At length he finds an all-sufficient friend, even Jesus Christ. When we are under the sense of the remaining power of sin and corruption, we shall see reason to bless God through Christ (for, as he is the mediator of all our prayers, so he is of all our praises)--to bless God for Christ; it is he that stands between us and the wrath due to us for this sin. If it were not for Christ, this iniquity that dwells in us would certainly be our ruin. He is our advocate with the Father, and through him God pities, and spares, and pardons, and lays not our iniquities to our charge. It is Christ that has purchased deliverance for us in due time. Through Christ death will put an end to all these complaints, and waft us to an eternity which we shall spend without sin or sigh. *Blessed be God that giveth us this victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!*

Chapter 8

The apostle, having fully explained the doctrine of justification, and pressed the necessity of sanctification, in this chapter applies

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himself to the consolation of the Lord's people. Ministers are helpers of the joy of the saints. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people," so runs our commission, [Isa. 40:1](#). It is the will of God that his people should be a comforted people. And we have here such a draught of the gospel charter, such a display of the unspeakable privileges of true believers, as may furnish us with abundant matter for joy and peace in believing, that by all these immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation. Many of the people of God have, accordingly, found this chapter a well-spring of comfort to their souls, living and dying, and have sucked and been satisfied from these breasts of consolation, and with joy drawn water out of these wells of salvation. There are three things in this chapter: I. The particular instances of Christians' privileges, [Rom. 8:1-28](#). II. The ground thereof laid in predestination, [Rom. 8:29, 30](#). III. The apostle's triumph herein, in the name of all the saints, [Rom. 8:31-39](#).

Sharing: *Who Are The Sons Of God? Verse 1-17:*

1. In your opinion, what is "therefore" there for?
2. Does this mean that, even if Christians sin, we will not be condemned? Why/why not?
3. What do you feel Paul means in verse 5 by having our "minds set?"
4. How does this compare with 7:25?
5. Do you feel it is our mind set or our action that is the deciding factor? Explain!
6. When you are disappointed in yourself for sinning, is this a sign that you're a child of God or of the devil? Explain!
7. In your own words, how does Paul's testimony of himself and analysis of the Christian experience help us in our walk today?

Verses 1-9

I. The apostle here begins with one signal privilege of true Christians, and describes the character of those to whom it belongs: *There is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus*, [Rom. 8:1](#). This is his triumph after that melancholy complaint and conflict in the foregoing chapter—sin remaining, disturbing, vexing, but, blessed be God, not ruining.

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The complaint he takes to himself, but humbly transfers the comfort with himself to all true believers, who are all interested in it. 1. It is the unspeakable privilege and comfort of all those that are in Christ Jesus that there is therefore now no condemnation to them. He does not say, "There is no accusation against them," for this there is; but the accusation is thrown out, and the indictment quashed. He does not say, "There is nothing in them that deserves condemnation," for this there is, and they see it, and own it, and mourn over it, and condemn themselves for it; but it shall not be their ruin. He does not say, "There is no cross, no affliction to them or no displeasure in the affliction," for this there may be; but *no condemnation*. They may be chastened of the Lord, but not condemned with the world. Now this arises from their being in Christ Jesus; by virtue of their union with him through faith they are thus secured. They are in Christ Jesus, as in their city of refuge, and so are protected from the avenger of blood. He is their advocate, and brings them off. There is therefore no condemnation, because they are interested in the satisfaction that Christ by dying made to the law. In Christ, God does not only not condemn them, but is well pleased with them, [Matt. 17:5](#). 2. It is the undoubted character of all those who are so in Christ Jesus as to be freed from condemnation that *they walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit*. Observe, The character is given from their walk, not from any one particular act, but from their course and way. And the great question is, What is the principle of the walk, the flesh or the spirit, the old or the new nature, corruption or grace? Which of these do we mind, for which of these do we make provision, by which of these are we governed, which of these do we take part with?

II. This great truth, thus laid down, he illustrates in the [Rom. 8:2-9](#); and shows how we come by this great privilege, and how we may answer this character.

1. How we come by these privileges—the privilege of justification, that *there is no condemnation to us*—the privilege of sanctification, that *we walk after the Spirit, and not after the flesh*, which is no less our privilege than it is our duty. How comes it about?

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(1.) The law could not do it, [Rom. 8:3](#). It could neither justify nor sanctify, neither free us from the guilt nor from the power of sin, having not the promises either of pardon or grace. The law made nothing perfect: *It was weak*. Some attempt the law made towards these blessed ends, but, alas! it was weak, it could not accomplish them: yet that weakness was not through any defect in the law, but *through the flesh*, through the corruption of human nature, by which we became incapable either of being justified or sanctified by the law. We had become unable to keep the law, and, in case of failure, the law, as a covenant of works, made no provision, and so left us as it found us. Or understand it of the ceremonial law; that was a plaster not wide enough for the wound, it could never take away sin, [Heb. 10:4](#).

(2.) *The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus* does it, [Rom. 8:2](#). The covenant of grace made with us in Christ is a treasury of merit and grace, and thence we receive pardon and a new nature, *are freed from the law of sin and death*, that is, both from the guilt and power of sin—from the course of the law, and the dominion of the flesh. We are under another covenant, another master, another husband, under the *law of the Spirit*, the law that gives the Spirit, spiritual life to qualify us for eternal. The foundation of this freedom is laid in Christ's undertaking for us, of which he speaks [Rom. 8:3](#); *God sending his own Son*. Observe, When the law failed, God provided another method. Christ comes to do that which the law could not do. Moses brought the children of Israel to the borders of Canaan, and then died, and left them there; but Joshua did that which Moses could not do, and put them in possession of Canaan. Thus what the law could not do Christ did. The best exposition of this verse we have [Heb. 10:1-10](#). To make the sense of the words clear, which in our translation is a little intricate, we may read it thus, with a little transposition:—*God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, etc.*, [Rom. 8:4](#). Observe, [1.] How Christ appeared: *In the likeness of sinful flesh*. Not sinful, for he was holy, harmless, undefiled; but in the likeness of that flesh which was sinful. He took upon him that nature which was corrupt, though perfectly abstracted from the corruptions of it. His being circumcised,

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redeemed, baptized with John's baptism, bespeaks the likeness of sinful flesh. The bitings of the fiery serpents were cured by a serpent of brass, which had the shape, through free from the venom, of the serpents that bit them. It was great condescension that he who was God should be made in the likeness of flesh; but much greater that he who was holy should be made in the likeness of sinful flesh. *And for sin*,—here the best Greek copies place the comma. God sent him, ***en homoiomati sarkos hamartias, kai peri hamartias***—*in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as a sacrifice for sin*. The LXX. call a sacrifice for sin no more than ***peri hamartias***—*for sin*; so Christ was a sacrifice; he was sent to be so, [Heb. 9:26](#). [2.] What was done by this appearance of his: *Sin was condemned*, that is, God did therein more than ever manifest his hatred of sin; and not only so, but for all that are Christ's both the damning and the domineering power of sin is broken and taken out of the way. He that is condemned can neither accuse nor rule; his testimony is null, and his authority null. Thus by Christ is sin condemned; though it live and remain, its life in the saints is still but like that of a condemned malefactor. It was by the condemning of sin that death was disarmed, and the devil, who had the power of death, destroyed. The condemning of sin saved the sinner from condemnation. Christ was made sin for us ([2 Cor. 5:21](#)), and, being so made, when he was condemned sin was condemned in the flesh of Christ, condemned in the human nature: So was sanctification made to divine justice, and way made for the salvation of the sinner. [3.] The happy effect of this upon us ([Rom. 8:4](#)): *That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us*. Both in our justification and in our sanctification, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled. A righteousness of satisfaction for the breach of the law is fulfilled by the imputation of Christ's complete and perfect righteousness, which answers the utmost demands of the law, as the mercy-seat was as long and as broad as the ark. A righteousness of obedience to the commands of the law is fulfilled in us, when by the Spirit the law of love is written upon the heart, and that love is the fulfilling of the law, [Rom. 13:10](#). Though the righteousness of the law is not fulfilled by us, yet, blessed be God, it is fulfilled in us; there is that to be found upon and in all true believers which answers the intention of the law. *Us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. This is the description of all

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those that are interested in this privilege—they act from spiritual and not from carnal principles; as for others, the righteousness of the law will be fulfilled upon them in their ruin. Now,

2. Observe how we may answer to this character, [Rom. 8:5](#)

(1.) By looking to our minds. How may we know whether we are after the flesh or after the Spirit? By examining what we mind, the things of the flesh or the things of the spirit. Carnal pleasure, worldly profit and honour, the things of sense and time, are the things of the flesh, which unregenerate people mind. The favour of God, the welfare of the soul, the concerns of eternity, are the things of the Spirit, which those that are after the Spirit do mind. The man is as the mind is. The mind is the forge of thoughts. *As he thinketh in his heart, so is he*, [Prov. 23:7](#). Which way do the thoughts move with most pleasure? On what do they dwell with most satisfaction? The mind is the seat of wisdom. Which way go the projects and contrivances? whether are we more wise for the world or for our souls? ***phronousi ta tes sarkos***—*they savour the things of the flesh*; so the word is rendered, [Matt. 16:23](#). It is a great matter what our savour is, what truths, what tidings, what comforts, we do most relish, and are most agreeable to us. Now, to caution us against this carnal-mindedness, he shows the great misery and malignity of it, and compares it with the unspeakable excellency and comfort of spiritual-mindedness. [1.] It is death, [Rom. 8:6](#). It is spiritual death, the certain way to eternal death. It is the death of the soul; for it is its alienation from God, in union and communion with whom the life of the soul consists. A carnal soul is a dead soul, dead as a soul can die. She that *liveth in pleasure is dead* ([1 Tim. 5:6](#)), not only dead in law as guilty, but dead in state as carnal. Death includes all misery; carnal souls are miserable souls. But to be *spiritually minded*, ***phronema tou pneumatos***—*a spiritual savour* (the wisdom that is from above, a principle of grace) is *life and peace*; it is the felicity and happiness of the soul. The life of the soul consists in its union with spiritual things by the mind. A sanctified soul is a living soul, and that life is peace; it is a very comfortable life. All the paths of spiritual wisdom are paths of peace. It is life and peace in the other world, as well as in this. Spiritual-mindedness is eternal life and peace begun, and an

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assuring earnest of the perfection of it. [2.] It is enmity to God ([Rom. 8:7](#)), and this is worse than the former. The former speaks the carnal sinner a dead man, which is bad; but this speaks him a devil of a man. It is not only an enemy, but enmity itself. It is not only the alienation of the soul from God, but the opposition of the soul against God; it rebels against his authority, thwarts his design, opposes his interest, spits in his face, spurns at his bowels. Can there be a greater enmity? An enemy may be reconciled, but enmity cannot. How should this humble us for and warn us against, carnal-mindedness! Shall we harbour and indulge that which is enmity to God our creator, owner, ruler, and benefactor? To prove this, he urges that *it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*. The holiness of the law of God, and the unholiness of the carnal mind, are as irreconcilable as light and darkness. The carnal man may, by the power of divine grace, be made subject to the law of God, but the *carnal mind* never can; this must be broken and expelled. See how wretchedly the corrupt will of man is enslaved to sin; as far as the carnal mind prevails, there is no inclination to the law of God; therefore wherever there is a change wrought it is by the power of God's grace, not by the freedom of man's will. Hence he infers ([Rom. 8:8](#)), *Those that are in the flesh cannot please God*. Those that are in a carnal unregenerate state, under the reigning power of sin, cannot do the things that please God, wanting grace, the pleasing principle, and an interest in Christ, the pleasing Mediator. The very *sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination*, [Prov. 15:8](#). Pleasing God is our highest end, of which those that are in the flesh cannot but fall short; they cannot please him, nay, they cannot but displease him. We may know our state and character,

(2.) By enquiring whether we have the Spirit of God and Christ, or not ([Rom. 8:9](#)): *You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit*. This expresses states and conditions of the soul vastly different. All the saints have flesh and spirit in them; but to be in the flesh and to be in the Spirit are contrary. It denotes our being overcome and subdued by one of these principles. As we say, A man is *in love*, or *in drink*, that is, overcome by it. Now the great question is whether we are in the flesh or in the Spirit; and how may we come to know it? Why, by enquiring whether the Spirit of God dwell in us. The Spirit dwelling in us is the best evidence of our being in the

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Spirit, for the indwelling is mutual ([1 John 4:16](#)): *Dwelleth in God, and God in him*. The Spirit visits many that are unregenerate with his motions, which they resist and quench; but in all that are sanctified he dwells; there he resides and rules. He is there as a man at his own house, where he is constant and welcome, and has the dominion. Shall we put this question to our own hearts, Who dwells, who rules, who keeps house, here? Which interest has the ascendant? To this he subjoins a general rule of trial: *If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*. To be Christ's (that is, to be a Christian indeed, one of his children, his servants, his friends, in union with him) is a privilege and honour which many pretend to that have no part nor lot in the matter. None are his but those that have his Spirit; that is, [1.] That are spirited as he was spirited—are meek, and lowly, and humble, and peaceable, and patient, and charitable, as he was. We cannot tread in his steps unless we have his spirit; the frame and disposition of our souls must be conformable to Christ's pattern. [2.] That are actuated and guided by the Holy Spirit of God, as a sanctifier, teacher, and comforter. Having the Spirit of Christ is the same with having the Spirit of God to dwell in us. But those two come much to one; for all that are actuated by the Spirit of God as their rule are conformable to the spirit of Christ as their pattern. Now this description of the character of those to whom belongs this first privilege of freedom from condemnation is to be applied to all the other privileges that follow.

Verses 10–16

In these verses the apostle represents two more excellent benefits, which belong to true believers.

I. Life. The happiness is not barely a negative happiness, not to be condemned; but it is positive, it is an advancement to a life that will be the unspeakable happiness of the man ([Rom. 8:10, 11](#)): *If Christ be in you*. Observe, If the Spirit be in us, Christ is in us. He dwells in

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the heart by faith, [Eph. 3:17](#). Now we are here told what becomes of the bodies and souls of those in whom Christ is.

1. We cannot say but that *the body is dead*; it is a frail, mortal, dying body, and it will be dead shortly; it is a house of clay, whose foundation is in the dust. The life purchased and promised does not immortalize the body in its present state. It is dead, that is, it is appointed to die, it is under a sentence of death: as we say one that is condemned is a dead man. In the midst of life we are in death: be our bodies ever so strong, and healthful, and handsome, they are as good as dead ([Heb. 11:12](#)), and this *because of sin*. It is sin that kills the body. This effect the first threatening has ([Gen. 3:19](#)): *Dust thou art*. Methinks, were there no other argument, love to our bodies should make us hate sin, because it is such an enemy to our bodies. The death even of the bodies of the saints is a remaining token of God's displeasure against sin.

2. But the spirit, the precious soul, that is life; it is now spiritually alive, nay, it is life. Grace in the soul is its new nature; the life of the saint lies in the soul, while the life of the sinner goes no further than the body. When the body dies, and returns to the dust, *the spirit is life*; not only living and immortal, but swallowed up of life. Death to the saints is but the freeing of the heaven-born spirit from the clog and load of this body, that it may be fit to partake of eternal life. When Abraham was dead, yet God was the God of Abraham, for even then his spirit was life, [Matt. 22:31, 32](#). See [Ps. 49:15](#). And this *because of righteousness*. The righteousness of Christ imputed to them secures the soul, the better part, from death; the righteousness of Christ inherent in them, the renewed image of God upon the soul, preserves it, and, by God's ordination, at death elevates it, and improves it, and makes it meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light. The eternal life of the soul consists in the vision and fruition of God, and both assimilating, for which the soul is qualified by the righteousness of sanctification. I refer to [Ps. 17:15](#); *I will behold thy face in righteousness*.

3. There is a life reserved too for the poor body at last: *He shall also quicken your mortal bodies*, [Rom. 8:11](#). The Lord is for the body; and though at death it is cast aside as a despised broken vessel, a

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vessel in which is no pleasure, yet God will have a desire to the work of his hands ([Job 14:15](#)), will remember his covenant with the dust, and will not lose a grain of it; but the body shall be reunited to the soul, and clothed with a glory agreeable to it. Vile bodies shall be newly fashioned, [Phil. 3:21](#); [1 Cor. 15:42](#). Two great assurances of the resurrection of the body are mentioned:—(1.) The resurrection of Christ: He *that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken*. Christ rose as the head, and first-fruits, and forerunner of all the saints, [1 Cor. 15:20](#). The body of Christ lay in the grave, under the sin of all the elect imputed, and broke through it. O grave, then, where is thy victory? It is in the virtue of Christ's resurrection that we shall rise. (2.) The indwelling of the Spirit. The same Spirit that raiseth the soul now will raise the body shortly: *By his Spirit that dwelleth in you*. The bodies of the saints are the temples of the Holy Ghost, [1 Cor. 3:16](#); [6:19](#). Now, though these temples may be suffered for awhile to lie in ruins, yet they shall be rebuilt. The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, shall be repaired, whatever great mountains may be in the way. The Spirit, breathing upon dead and dry bones, will make them live, and the saints even in their flesh shall see God. Hence the apostle by the way infers how much it is our duty to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, [Rom. 8:12, 13](#). Let not our life be after the wills and motions of the flesh. Two motives he mentions here:—[1.] We are not debtors to the flesh, neither by relation, gratitude, nor any other bond or obligation. We owe no suit nor service to our carnal desires; we are indeed bound to clothe, and feed, and take care of the body, as a servant to the soul in the service of God, but no further. We are not debtors to it; the flesh never did us so much kindness as to oblige us to serve it. It is implied that we are debtors to Christ and to the Spirit: there we owe our all, all we have and all we can do, by a thousand bonds and obligations. Being delivered from so great a death by so great a ransom, we are deeply indebted to our deliverer. See [1 Cor. 6:19, 20](#). [2.] Consider the consequences, what will be at the end of the way. Here are life and death, blessing and cursing, set before us. *If you live after the flesh, you shall die*; that is, die eternally. It is the pleasing, and serving, and gratifying, of the flesh, that are the ruin of souls; that is, the second death. Dying indeed is the soul's dying: the death of the saints is but a sleep. But, on the other hand, *You shall live*, live and be happy to

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eternity; that is the true life: *If you through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body*, subdue and keep under all fleshly lusts and affections, deny yourselves in the pleasing and humouring of the body, and this through the Spirit; we cannot do it without the Spirit working it in us, and the Spirit will not do it without our doing our endeavour. So that in a word we are put upon this dilemma, either to displease the body or destroy the soul.

II. The *Spirit of adoption* is another privilege belonging to those that are in Christ Jesus, [Rom. 8:14-16](#).

1. All that are Christ's are taken into the relation of Children to God, [Rom. 8:14](#). Observe, (1.) Their property: They are *led by the Spirit of God*, as a scholar in his learning is led by his tutor, as a traveller in his journey is led by his guide, as a soldier in his engagements is led by his captain; not driven as beasts, but led as rational creatures, drawn with the cords of a man and the bands of love. It is the undoubted character of all true believers that they are led by the Spirit of God. Having submitted themselves in believing to his guidance, they do in their obedience follow that guidance, and are sweetly led into all truth and all duty. (2.) Their privilege: *They are the sons of God*, received into the number of God's children by adoption, owned and loved by him as his children.

2. And those that are the sons of God have the Spirit,

(1.) To work in them the disposition of children.

[1.] *You have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear*, [Rom. 8:15](#). Understand it, *First*, Of that spirit of bondage which the Old-Testament church was under, by reason of the darkness and terror of that dispensation. The veil signified bondage, [2 Cor. 3:15](#). Compare [Rom. 8:17](#). The Spirit of adoption was not then so plentifully poured out as now; for the law opened the wound, but little of the remedy. Now you are not under that dispensation, you have not received that spirit. *Secondly*, Of that spirit of bondage which many of the saints themselves were under at their conversion, under the convictions of sin and wrath set home by the Spirit; as those in [Acts 2:37](#); the jailer ([Acts 16:30](#)), Paul, [Acts 9:6](#).

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Then the Spirit himself was to the saints a spirit of bondage: "But," says the apostle, "with you this is over." "God as a Judge," says Dr. Manton, "by the spirit of bondage, sends us to Christ as Mediator, and Christ as Mediator, by the spirit of adoption, sends us back again to God as a Father." Though a child of God may come under fear of bondage again, and may be questioning his sonship, yet the blessed Spirit is not again a spirit of bondage, for then he would witness an untruth.

[2.] But you *have received the Spirit of adoption*. Men may give a charter of adoption; but it is God's prerogative, when he adopts, to give a spirit of adoption—the nature of children. The Spirit of adoption works in the children of God a filial love to God as a Father, a delight in him, and a dependence upon him, as a Father. A sanctified soul bears the image of God, as the child bears the image of the father. *Whereby we cry, Abba, Father*. Praying is here called *crying*, which is not only an earnest, but a natural expression of desire; children that cannot speak vent their desires by crying. Now, the Spirit teaches us in prayer to come to God as a Father, with a holy humble confidence, emboldening the soul in that duty. *Abba, Father*. *Abba* is a Syriac word signifying *father* or *my father*; *pater*, a Greek word; and why both, *Abba, Father*? Because Christ said so in prayer ([Mark 14:36](#)), *Abba, Father*: and we have received the Spirit of the Son. It denotes an affectionate endearing importunity, and a believing stress laid upon the relation. Little children, begging of their parents, can say little but *Father, Father*, and that is rhetoric enough. It also denotes that the adoption is common both to Jews and Gentiles: the Jews call him *Abba* in their language, the Greeks may call him *pater* in their language; for in Christ Jesus there is neither Greek nor Jew.

(2.) To witness to the relation of children, [Rom. 8:16](#). The former is the work of the Spirit as a Sanctifier; this as a Comforter. *Beareth witness with our spirit*. Many a man has the witness of his own spirit to the goodness of his state who has not the concurring testimony of the Spirit. Many speak peace to themselves to whom the God of heaven does not speak peace. But those that are sanctified have God's Spirit witnessing with their spirits, which is to be understood not of any immediate extraordinary revelation, but an ordinary work

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of the Spirit, in and by the means of comfort, speaking peace to the soul. This testimony is always agreeable to the written word, and is therefore always grounded upon sanctification; for the Spirit in the heart cannot contradict the Spirit in the word. The Spirit witnesses to none the privileges of children who have not the nature and disposition of children.

Sharing: More Than Conquerors, Verse 17-39:

1. What sufferings do you feel Paul was writing about?
2. In the first few verses, is Paul suggesting salvation goes beyond mankind? Why/why not?
3. What does "redemption of our bodies" mean?
4. Describe ways in which you've experienced the Spirit interceding for you with groans words cannot express.
5. What are some ways you've experienced God taking something bad and working it for the good?
6. Do you feel verses 29-30 are saying some people have no choice, but are predestined to salvation or condemnation? Explain!
7. Does verse 33 mean that Christians don't need to obey civil laws?
8. What do you feel vs 35-39 says about the belief many have that if something bad happens to you, it's God punishing you?

Verses 17-25

In these words the apostle describes a fourth illustrious branch of the happiness of believers, namely, a title to the future glory. This is fitly annexed to our sonship; for as the adoption of sons entitles us to that glory, so the disposition of sons fits and prepares us for it. *If children, then heirs*, [Rom. 8:17](#). In earthly inheritances this rule does not hold, only the first-born are heirs; but the church is a church of first-born, for they are all heirs. Heaven is an inheritance that all the saints are heirs to. They do not come to it as purchasers by any merit or procurement of their own; but as heirs, purely by the act of God; for God makes heirs. The saints are heirs though in this world they are heirs under age; see [Gal. 4:1, 2](#). Their present state is a state of education and preparation for the inheritance.

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How comfortable should this be to all the children of God, how little soever they have in possession, that, being heirs, they have enough in reversion! But the honour and happiness of an heir lie in the value and worth of that which he is heir to: we read of those that inherit the wind; and therefore we have here an abstract of the premises. 1. *Heirs of God*. The Lord himself is the portion of the saints' inheritance ([Ps. 16:5](#)), a goodly heritage, [Rom. 8:6](#). The saints are spiritual priests, that have the Lord for their inheritance, [Num. 18:20](#). The vision of God and the fruition of God make up the inheritance the saints are heirs to. God himself will be with them, and will be their God, [Rev. 21:3](#). 2. *Joint-heirs with Christ*. Christ, as Mediator, is said to be the heir of all things ([Heb. 1:2](#)), and true believers, by virtue of their union with him, *shall inherit all things*, [Rev. 21:7](#). Those that now partake of the Spirit of Christ, as his brethren, shall, as his brethren, partake of his glory ([John 17:24](#)), shall sit down with him upon his throne, [Rev. 3:21](#). Lord, what is man, that thou shouldst thus magnify him! Now this future glory is further spoken of as the reward of present sufferings and as the accomplishment of present hopes.

I. As the reward of the saints' present sufferings; and it is a rich reward: *If so be that we suffer with him* ([Rom. 8:17](#)), *or forasmuch as we suffer with him*. The state of the church in this world always is, but was then especially, an afflicted state; to be a Christian was certainly to be a sufferer. Now, to comfort them in reference to those sufferings, he tells them that they suffered with Christ—for his sake, for his honour, and for the testimony of a good conscience, and should be glorified with him. Those that suffered with David in his persecuted state were advanced by him and with him when he came to the crown; see [2 Tim. 2:12](#). See the gains of suffering for Christ; though we may be losers for him, we shall not, we cannot, be losers by him in the end. This the gospel is filled with the assurances of. Now, that suffering saints may have strong supports and consolations from their hopes of heaven, he holds the balance ([Rom. 8:18](#)), in a comparison between the two, which is observable.

1. In one scale he puts the *sufferings of this present time*. The sufferings of the saints are but sufferings of this present time, strike no deeper than the things of time, last no longer than the present time ([2 Cor. 4:17](#)), light affliction, and but for a moment. So that on

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the sufferings he writes *tekel*, weighed in the balance and found light. 2. In the other scale he puts the glory, and finds that a weight, an exceeding and eternal weight: *Glory that shall be revealed*. In our present state we come short, not only in the enjoyment, but in the knowledge of that glory ([1 Cor. 2:9](#); [1 John 3:2](#)): it shall be revealed. It surpasses all that we have yet seen and known: present vouchsafements are sweet and precious, very precious, very sweet; but there is something to come, something behind the curtain, that will outshine all. *Shall be revealed in us*; not only revealed to us, to be seen, but revealed in us, to be enjoyed. The kingdom of God is within you, and will be so to eternity. 3. He concludes the sufferings *not worthy to be compared with the glory—ouk axia pros ten doxan*. They cannot merit that glory; and, if suffering for Christ will not merit, much less will doing. They should not at all deter and frighten us from the diligent and earnest pursuit of that glory. The sufferings are small and short, and concern the body only; but the glory is rich and great, and concerns the soul, and is eternal. This he reckons. *I reckon—logizomai*. It is not a rash and sudden determination, but the product of a very serious and deliberate consideration. He had reasoned the case within himself, weighed the arguments on both sides, and thus at last resolves the point. O how vastly different is the sentence of the word from the sentiment of the world concerning the sufferings of this present time! *I reckon*, as an arithmetician that is balancing an account. He first sums up what is disbursed for Christ in the sufferings of this present time, and finds they come to very little; he then sums up what is secured to us by Christ in the glory that shall be revealed, and this he finds to be an infinite sum, transcending all conception, the disbursement abundantly made up and the losses infinitely countervailed. And who would be afraid then to suffer for Christ, who as he is before-hand with us in suffering, so he will not be behind-hand with us in recompence? Now Paul was as competent a judge of this point as ever any mere man was. He could reckon not by art only, but by experience; for he knew both. He knew what the sufferings of this present time were; see [2 Cor. 11:23-28](#). He knew what the glory of heaven is; see [2 Cor. 12:3, 4](#). And, upon the view of both, he gives this judgment here. There is nothing like a believing view of the glory which shall be revealed to support and bear up the spirit under all the sufferings of this present time. The

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reproach of Christ appears riches to those who have respect to the recompence of reward, [Heb. 11:26](#).

II. As the accomplishment of the saints' present hopes and expectations, [Rom. 8:19](#) As the saints are suffering for it, so they are waiting for it. Heaven is therefore sure; for God by his Spirit would not raise and encourage those hopes only to defeat and disappoint them. He will establish that word unto his servants on which he has caused them to hope ([Ps. 119:49](#)), and heaven is therefore sweet; for, if hope deferred makes the heart sick, surely when the desire comes it will be a tree of life, [Prov. 13:12](#). Now he observes an expectation of this glory,

1. In the creatures [Rom. 8:19-22](#). That must needs be a great, a transcendent glory, which all the creatures are so earnestly expecting and longing for. This observation in these verses has some difficulty in it, which puzzles interpreters a little; and the more because it is a remark not made in any other scripture, with which it might be compared. By the *creature* here we understand, not as some do the Gentile world, and their expectation of Christ and the gospel, which is an exposition very foreign and forced, but the whole frame of nature, especially that of this lower world—the whole creation, the compages of inanimate and sensible creatures, which, because of their harmony and mutual dependence, and because they all constitute and make up one world, are spoken of in the singular number as the *creature*. The sense of the apostle in these four verses we may take in the following observations:—(1.) That there is a present vanity to which the creature, by reason of the sin of man, is made subject, [Rom. 8:20](#). When man sinned, the ground was cursed for man's sake, and with it all the creatures (especially of this lower world, where our acquaintance lies) became subject to that curse, became mutable and mortal. *Under the bondage of corruption*, [Rom. 8:21](#). There is an impurity, deformity, and infirmity, which the creature has contracted by the fall of man: the creation is sullied and stained, much of the beauty of the world gone. There is an enmity of one creature to another; they are all subject to continual alteration and decay of the individuals, liable to the strokes of God's judgments upon man. When the world was drowned, and almost all the creatures in it, surely then it was

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subject to vanity indeed. The whole species of creatures is designed for, and is hastening to, a total dissolution by fire. And it is not the least part of their vanity and bondage that they are used, or abused rather, by men as instruments of sin. The creatures are often abused to the dishonour of their Creator, the hurt of his children, or the service of his enemies. When the creatures are made the food and fuel of our lusts, they are subject to vanity, they are captivated by the law of sin. And this *not willingly*, not of their own choice. All the creatures desire their own perfection and consummation; when they are made instruments of sin it is not willingly. Or, They are thus captivated, not for any sin of their own, which they had committed, but for man's sin: *By reason of him who hath subjected the same*. Adam did it meritoriously; the creatures being delivered to him, when he by sin delivered himself he delivered them likewise into the bondage of corruption. God did it judicially; he passed a sentence upon the creatures for the sin of man, by which they became subject. And this yoke (poor creatures) they bear in hope that it will not be so always. ***Ep elpidi hoti kai***, etc.—*in hope that the creature itself*; so many Greek copies join the words. We have reason to pity the poor creatures that for our sin have become subject to vanity. (2.) That the creatures *groan and travail in pain* together under this vanity and corruption, [Rom. 8:22](#). It is a figurative expression. Sin is a burden to the whole creation; the sin of the Jews, in crucifying Christ, set the earth a quaking under them. The idols were a burden to the weary beast, [Isa. 46:1](#). There is a general outcry of the whole creation against the sin of man: the stone crieth out of the wall ([Hab. 2:11](#)), the land cries, [Job 31:38](#). (3.) That the creature, that is now thus burdened, shall, at the time of the restitution of all things, be *delivered from this bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God* ([Rom. 8:21](#))-- they shall no more be subject to vanity and corruption, and the other fruits of the curse; but, on the contrary, this lower world shall be renewed: when there will be new heavens there will be a new earth ([2 Pet. 3:13](#); [Rev. 21:1](#)); and there shall be a glory conferred upon all the creatures, which shall be (in the proportion of their natures) as suitable and as great an advancement as the glory of the children of God shall be to them. The fire at the last day shall be a refining, not a destroying annihilating fire. What becomes of the souls of brutes, that go downwards, none can tell. But it should seem by the

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scripture that there will be some kind of restoration of them. And if it be objected, What use will they be of to glorified saints? we may suppose them of as much use as they were to Adam in innocency; and if it be only to illustrate the wisdom, power, and goodness of their Creator, that is enough. Compare with this [Ps. 96:10-13; 98:7-9](#). *Let the heavens rejoice before the Lord, for he cometh.*

(4.) That the creature doth therefore earnestly expect and wait for the *manifestation of the children of God*, [Rom. 8:19](#). Observe, At the second coming of Christ there will be a manifestation of the children of God. Now the saints are God's hidden ones, the wheat seems lost in a heap of chaff; but then they shall be manifested. It does not yet appear what we shall be ([1 John 3:2](#)), but then the glory shall be revealed. The children of God shall appear in their own colours. And this redemption of the creature is reserved till then; for, as it was with man and for man that they fell under the curse, so with man and for man they shall be delivered. All the curse and filth that now adhere to the creature shall be done away then when those that have suffered with Christ upon earth shall reign with him upon the earth. This the whole creation looks and longs for; and it may serve as a reason why now a good man should be merciful to his beast.

2. In the saints, who are new creatures, [Rom. 8:23-25](#). Observe, (1.) The grounds of this expectation in the saints. It is our having received *the first-fruits of the Spirit*, which both quickens our desires and encourages our hopes, and both ways raises our expectations. The first-fruits did both sanctify and ensure the lump. Grace is the first-fruits of glory, it is glory begun. We, having received such clusters in this wilderness, cannot but long for the full vintage in the heavenly Canaan. *Not only they*—not only the creatures which are not capable of such a happiness as the first-fruits of the Spirit, but even we, who have such present rich receivings, cannot but long for something more and greater. In having the first-fruits of the Spirit we have that which is very precious, but we have not all we would have. *We groan within ourselves*, which denotes the strength and secrecy of these desires; not making a loud noise, as the hypocrites howling upon the bed for corn and wine, but with silent groans, which pierce heaven soonest of all. Or, *We groan among ourselves*. It is the unanimous vote, the

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joint desire, of the whole church, all agree in this: *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly*. The groaning denotes a very earnest and importunate desire, the soul pained with the delay. Present receivings and comforts are consistent with a great many groans; not as the pangs of one dying, but as the throes of a woman in travail—groans that are symptoms of life, not of death. (2.) The object of this expectation. What is it we are thus desiring and waiting for? What would we have? *The adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body*. Though the soul be the principal part of the man, yet the Lord has declared himself for the body also, and has provided a great deal of honour and happiness for the body. The resurrection is here called *the redemption of the body*. It shall then be rescued from the power of death and the grave, and the bondage of corruption; and, though a vile body, yet it shall be refined and beautified, and made like that glorious body of Christ, [Phil. 3:21](#); [1 Cor. 15:42](#). This is called *the adoption*. [1.] It is the adoption manifested before all the world, angels and men. Now are we the sons of God, but it does not yet appear, the honour is now clouded; but then God will publicly own all his children. The deed of adoption, which is now written, signed, and sealed, will then be recognized, proclaimed, and published. As Christ was, so the saints will be, declared to be the sons of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead, [Rom. 1:4](#). It will then be put past dispute. [2.] It is the adoption perfected and completed. The children of God have bodies as well as souls; and, till those bodies are brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, the adoption is not perfect. But then it will be complete, when the Captain of our salvation shall bring the many sons to glory, [Heb. 2:10](#). This is that which we expect, in hope of which our flesh rests, [Ps. 16:9, 10](#). All the days of our appointed time we are waiting, till this change shall come, when he shall call, and we shall answer, and he will have a desire to the work of his hands, [Job 14:14, 15](#). (3.) The agreeableness of this to our present state, [Rom. 8:24, 25](#). Our happiness is not in present possession: *We are saved by hope*. In this, as in other things, God hath made our present state a state of trial and probation—that our reward is out of sight. Those that will deal with God must deal upon trust. It is acknowledged that one of the principal graces of a Christian is hope ([1 Cor. 13:13](#)), which necessarily implies a good thing to come, which is the object of that hope. Faith respects the

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promise, hope the thing promised. Faith is the evidence, hope the expectation, of things not seen. Faith is the mother of hope. *We do with patience wait.* In hoping for this glory we have need of patience, to bear the sufferings we meet with in the way to it and the delays of it. Our way is rough and long; but he that shall come will come, and will not tarry; and therefore, though he seem to tarry, it becomes us to wait for him.

Verses 26–28

The apostle here suggests two privileges more to which true Christians are entitled:—

I. The help of the Spirit in prayer. While we are in this world, hoping and waiting for what we see not, we must be praying. Hope supposes desire, and that desire offered up to God is prayer; we groan. Now observe,

1. Our weakness in prayer: *We know not what we should pray for as we ought.* (1.) As to the matter of our requests, we know not what to ask. We are not competent judges of our own condition. *Who knows what is good for a man in this life?* [Eccl. 6:12](#). We are short-sighted, and very much biassed in favour of the flesh, and apt to separate the end from the way. *You know not what you ask,* [Matt. 20:22](#). We are like foolish children, that are ready to cry for fruit before it is ripe and fit for them; see [Luke 9:54, 55](#). (2.) As to the manner, we know not how to pray as we ought. It is not enough that we do that which is good, but we must do it well, seek in a due order; and here we are often at a loss—graces are weak, affections cold, thoughts wandering, and it is not always easy to *find the heart to pray,* [2 Sam. 7:27](#). The apostle speaks of this in the first person: *We know not.* He puts himself among the rest. Folly, and weakness, and distraction in prayer, are what all the saints are complaining of. If so great a saint as Paul knew not what to pray for, what little reason have we to go forth about that duty in our own strength!

2. The assistances which the Spirit gives us in that duty. He *helps our infirmities*, meant especially of our praying infirmities, which

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most easily beset us in that duty, against which the Spirit helps. The Spirit in the world helps; many rules and promises there are in the word for our help. The Spirit in the heart helps, dwelling in us, working in us, as a Spirit of grace and supplication, especially with respect to the infirmities we are under when we are in a suffering state, when our faith is most apt to fail; for this end the Holy Ghost was poured out. *Helpeth, **synantilambanetai**—heaves with us, over against us,* helps as we help one that would lift up a burden, by lifting over against him at the other end—helps with us, that is, with us doing our endeavour, putting forth the strength we have. We must not sit still, and expect that the Spirit should do all; when the Spirit goes before us we must bestir ourselves. We cannot without God, and he will not without us. What help? Why, the *Spirit itself makes intercession for us*, dictates our requests, indites our petitions, draws up our plea for us. Christ intercedes for us in heaven, the Spirit intercedes for us in our hearts; so graciously has God provided for the encouragement of the praying remnant. The Spirit, as an enlightening Spirit, teaches us what to pray for, as a sanctifying Spirit works and excites praying graces, as a comforting Spirit silences our fears, and helps us over all our discouragements. The Holy Spirit is the spring of all our desires and breathings towards God. Now this intercession which the Spirit makes is, (1.) *With groanings that cannot be uttered*. The strength and fervency of those desires which the Holy Spirit works are hereby intimated. There may be praying in the Spirit where there is not a word spoken; as Moses prayed ([Exod. 14:15](#)), and Hannah, [1 Sam. 1:13](#). It is not the rhetoric and eloquence, but the faith and fervency, of our prayers, that the Spirit works, as an intercessor, in us. *Cannot be uttered*; they are so confused, the soul is in such a hurry with temptations and troubles, we know not what to say, nor how to express ourselves. Here is the Spirit interceding with groans that cannot be uttered. When we can but cry, *Abba, Father*, and refer ourselves to him with a holy humble boldness, this is the work of the Spirit. (2.) *According to the will of God*, [Rom. 8:27](#). The Spirit in the heart never contradicts the Spirit in the word. Those desires that are contrary to the will of God do not come from the Spirit. The Spirit interceding in us evermore melts our wills into the will of God. *Not as I will, but as thou wilt*.

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3. The sure success of these intercessions: *He that searches the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit*, [Rom. 8:27](#). To a hypocrite, all whose religion lies in his tongue, nothing is more dreadful than that God searches the heart and sees through all his disguises. To a sincere Christian, who makes heart-work of his duty, nothing is more comfortable than that God searches the heart, for then he will hear and answer those desires which we want words to express. He knows what we have need of before we ask, [Matt. 6:8](#). He knows what is the mind of his own Spirit in us. And, as he always hears the Son interceding for us, so he always hears the Spirit interceding in us, because his intercession is according to the will of God. What could have been done more for the comfort of the Lord's people, in all their addresses to God? Christ had said, "Whatever you ask the Father according to his will he will give it you." But how shall we learn to ask according to his will? Why, the Spirit will teach us that. Therefore it is that the seed of Jacob never seek in vain.

II. The concurrence of all providences for the good of those that are Christ's, [Rom. 8:28](#). It might be objected that, notwithstanding all these privileges, we see believers compassed about with manifold afflictions; though the Spirit makes intercession for them, yet their troubles are continued. It is very true; but in this the Spirit's intercession is always effectual, that, however it goes with them, all this is working together for their good. Observe here.

1. The character of the saints, who are interested in this privilege; they are here described by such properties as are common to all that are truly sanctified. (1.) *They love God*. This includes all the out-goings of the soul's affections towards God as the chief good and highest end. It is our love to God that makes every providence sweet, and therefore profitable. Those that love God make the best of all he does, and take all in good part. (2.) *They are the called according to his purpose*, effectually called according to the eternal purpose. The call is effectual, not according to any merit or desert of ours, but according to God's own gracious purpose.

2. The privilege of the saints, that *all things work together for good to them*, that is, all the providences of God that concern them. All

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that God performs he performs for them, [Ps. 57:2](#). Their sins are not of his performing, therefore not intended here, though his permitting sin is made to work for their good, [2 Chron. 32:31](#). But all the providences of God are theirs—merciful providences, afflicting providences, personal, public. They are all for good; perhaps for temporal good, as Joseph's troubles; at least, for spiritual and eternal good. That is good for them which does their souls good. Either directly or indirectly, every providence has a tendency to the spiritual good of those that love God, breaking them off from sin, bringing them nearer to God, weaning them from the world, fitting them for heaven. *Work together*. They work, as physic works upon the body, various ways, according to the intention of the physician; but all for the patient's good. *They work together*, as several ingredients in a medicine concur to answer the intention. God hath set the one over against the other ([Eccl. 7:14](#)): **synergei**, a very singular, with a noun plural, denoting the harmony of Providence and its uniform designs, all the wheels as one wheel, [Ezek. 10:13](#). *He worketh all things together for good*; so some read it. It is not from any specific quality in the providences themselves, but from the power and grace of God working in, with, and by, these providences. All this *we know*—know it for a certainty, from the word of God, from our own experience, and from the experience of all the saints.

Verses 29–30

The apostle, having reckoned up so many ingredients of the happiness of true believers, comes here to represent the ground of them all, which he lays in predestination. These precious privileges are conveyed to us by the charter of the covenant, but they are founded in the counsel of God, which infallibly secures the event. That Jesus Christ, the purchaser, might not labour in vain, nor spend his strength and life for nought and in vain, there is a remnant given him, a seed that he shall see, so that the good pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. For the explication of this he here sets before us the order of the causes of our salvation, a golden chain, which cannot be broken. There are four links of it:—

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I. *Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.* All that God designed for glory and happiness as the end he decreed to grace and holiness as the way. Not, whom he did foreknow to be holy those he predestinated to be so. The counsels and decrees of God do not truckle to the frail and fickle will of men; no, God's foreknowledge of the saints is the same with that everlasting love wherewith he is said to have loved them, [Jer. 31:3](#). God's knowing his people is the same with his owning them, [Ps. 1:6](#); [John 10:14](#); [2 Tim. 2:19](#). See [Rom. 11:2](#). Words of knowledge often in scripture denote affection; so here: *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God*, [1 Pet. 1:2](#). And the same word is rendered *fore-ordained*, [1 Pet. 1:20](#). *Whom he did foreknow*, that is, whom he designed for his friends and favourites. *I know thee by name*, said God to Moses, [Exod. 33:12](#). Now those whom god thus foreknew he did predestinate to be conformed to Christ. 1. Holiness consists in our conformity to the image of Christ. This takes in the whole of sanctification, of which Christ is the great pattern and sampler. To be spirited as Christ was, to walk and live as Christ did, to bear our sufferings patiently as Christ did. Christ is the express image of his Father, and the saints are conformed to the image of Christ. Thus it is by the mediation and interposal of Christ that we have God's love restored to us and God's likeness renewed upon us, in which two things consists the happiness of man. 2. All that God hath from eternity foreknown with favour he hath predestinated to this conformity. It is not we that can conform ourselves to Christ. Our giving ourselves to Christ takes rise in God's giving us to him; and, in giving us to him, he predestinated us to be conformable to his image. It is a mere cavil therefore to call the doctrine of election a licentious doctrine, and to argue that it gives encouragement to sin, as if the end were separated from the way and happiness from holiness. None can know their election but by their conformity to the image of Christ; for all that are chosen are chosen to sanctification ([2 Thess. 2:13](#)), and surely it cannot be a temptation to any to be conformed to the world to believe that they were predestinated to be conformed to Christ. 3. That which is herein chiefly designed is the honour of Jesus Christ, that he might be the *first-born among many brethren*; that is, that Christ might have the honour of being the great pattern, as well as the great prince, and in this, as in other things, might have pre-eminence. It

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was in the first-born that all the children were dedicated to God under the law. The first-born was the head of the family, on whom all the rest did depend: now in the family of the saints Christ must have the honour of being the first-born. And blessed be God that there are many brethren; though they seem but a few in one place at one time, yet, when they come all together, they will be a great many. There is, therefore, a certain number predestinated, that the end of Christ's undertaking might be infallibly secured. Had the event been left at uncertainties in the divine counsels, to depend upon the contingent turn of man's will, Christ might have been the first-born among but few or no brethren—a captain without soldiers and a prince without subjects—to prevent which, and to secure to him many brethren, the decree is absolute, the thing ascertained, that he might be sure to see his seed, there is a remnant predestinated to be conformed to his image, which decree will certainly have its accomplishment in the holiness and happiness of that chosen race; and so, in spite of all the opposition of the powers of darkness, Christ will be the first-born among many, very many brethren.

II. *Whom he did predestinate those he also called*, not only with the external call (so many are called that were not chosen, [Matt. 20:16; 22:14](#)), but with the internal and effectual call. The former comes to the ear only, but this to the heart. All that God did from eternity predestinate to grace and glory he does, in the fulness of time, effectually call. The call is then effectual when we come at the call; and we then come at the call when the Spirit draws us, convinces the conscience of guilt and wrath, enlightens the understanding, bows the will, persuades and enables us to embrace Christ in the promises, makes us willing in the day of his power. It is an effectual call from self and earth to God, and Christ, and heaven, as our end—from sin and vanity to grace, and holiness, and seriousness as our way. This is the gospel call. *Them he called*, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand: we are called to that to which we were chosen. So that the only way to make our election sure is to make sure our calling, [2 Pet. 1:10](#).

III. *Whom he called those he also justified*. All that are effectually called are justified, absolved from guilt, and accepted as righteous

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through Jesus Christ. They are *recti in curia*—*right in court*; no sin that ever they have been guilty of shall come against them, to condemn them. The book is crossed, the bond cancelled, the judgment vacated, the attainder reversed; and they are no longer dealt with as criminals, but owned and loved as friends and favourites. Blessed is the man whose iniquity is thus forgiven. None are thus justified but those that are effectually called. Those that stand it out against the gospel call abide under guilt and wrath.

IV. *Whom he justified those he also glorified.* The power of corruption being broken in effectual calling, and the guilt of sin removed in justification, all that which hinders is taken out of the way, and nothing can come between that soul and glory. Observe, It is spoken of as a thing done: *He glorified*, because of the certainty of it; he *hath* saved us, and called us with a holy calling. In the eternal glorification of all the elect, God's design of love has its full accomplishment. This was what he aimed at all along—to bring them to heaven. Nothing less than that glory would make up the fulness of his covenant relation to them as God; and therefore, in all he does for them, and in them, he has this in his eye. Are they chosen? It is to salvation. Called? It is to his kingdom and glory. Begotten again? It is to an inheritance incorruptible. Afflicted: It is to work for them this exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Observe, The author of all these is the same. It is God himself that predestinated, calleth, justifieth, glorifieth; so *the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him.* Created wills are so very fickle, and created powers so very feeble, that, if any of these did depend upon the creature, the whole would shake. But God himself hath undertaken the doing of it from first to last, that we might abide in a constant dependence upon him and subjection to him, and ascribe all the praise to him—that every crown may be cast before the throne. This is a mighty encouragement to our faith and hope; for, as for God, his way, his work, is perfect. He that hath laid the foundation will build upon it, and the top-stone will at length be brought forth with shoutings, and it will be our eternal work to cry, Grace, grace to it.

Verses 31–39

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The apostle closes this excellent discourse upon the privileges of believers with a holy triumph, in the name of all the saints. Having largely set forth the mystery of God's love to us in Christ, and the exceedingly great and precious privileges we enjoy by him, he concludes like an orator: *What shall we then say to these things?* What use shall we make of all that has been said? He speaks as one amazed and swallowed up with the contemplation and admiration of it, wondering at the height and depth, and length and breadth, of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. The more we know of other things the less we wonder at them; but the further we are led into an acquaintance with gospel mysteries the more we are affected with the admiration of them. If Paul was at a loss what to say to these things, no marvel if we be. And what does he say? Why, if ever Paul rode in a triumphant chariot on this side of heaven, here it was: with such a holy height and bravery of spirit, with such a fluency and copiousness of expression, does he here comfort himself and all the people of God, upon the consideration of these privileges. In general, he here makes a challenge, throws down the gauntlet, as it were, dares all the enemies of the saints to do their worst: *If God be for us, who can be against us?* The ground of the challenge is God's being for us; in this he sums up all our privileges. This includes all, that *God is for us*; not only reconciled to us, and so not against us, but in covenant with us, and so engaged for us—all his attributes for us, his promises for us. All that he is, and has, and does, is for his people. He performs all things for them. He is for them, even when he seems to act against them. And, if so, *who can be against us*, so as to prevail against us, so as to hinder our happiness? Be they ever so great and strong, ever so many, ever so might, ever so malicious, what can they do? While God is for us, and we keep in his love, we may with a holy boldness defy all the powers of darkness. Let Satan do his worst, he is chained; let the world do its worst, it is conquered: principalities and powers are spoiled and disarmed, and triumphed over, in the cross of Christ. Who then dares fight against us, while God himself is fighting for us? And this we say to these things, this is the inference we draw from these premises. More particularly.

I. We have supplies ready in all our wants ([Rom. 8:32](#)): *He that spared*, etc. Who can be against us, to strip us, to deprive us of our

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comforts? Who can cut off our streams, while we have a fountain to go to? 1. Observe what God has done for us, on which our hopes are built: *He spared not his own Son*. When he was to undertake our salvation, the Father was willing to part with him, did not think him too precious a gift to bestow for the salvation of poor souls; now we may know that he loves us, in that he hath not withheld his Son, his own Son, his only Son, from us, as he said of Abraham, [Gen. 22:12](#). If nothing less will save man, rather than man shall perish let him go, though it were out of his bosom. Thus did he *deliver him up for us all*, that is, for all the elect; *for us all*, not only for our good, but in our stead, as a sacrifice of atonement to be a propitiation for sin. When he had undertaken it, he did not spare him. Though he was his own Son, yet, being made sin for us, it pleased the Lord to bruise him. ***Ouk epheisato***—*he did not abate* him a farthing of that great debt, but charged it home. *Awake, O sword*. He did not *spare his own Son that served him*, that he might spare us, though we have done him so much disservice. 2. What we may therefore expect he will do: He will *with him freely give us all things*. (1.) It is implied that he will give us Christ, for other things are bestowed with him: not only with him given for us, but with him given to us. He that put himself to so much charge to make the purchase for us surely will not hesitate at making the application to us. (2.) He will with him freely give us all things, all things that he sees to be needful and necessary for us, all good things, and more we should not desire, [Ps. 34:10](#). And Infinite Wisdom shall be the judge whether it be good for us and needful for us or no. *Freely give*—freely, without reluctancy; he is ready to give, meets us with his favours;--and freely, without recompence, without money, and without price. *How shall he not?* Can it be imagined that he should do the greater and not do the less? that he should give so great a gift for us when we were enemies, and should deny us any good thing, now that through him we are friends and children? Thus may we by faith argue against our fears of want. He that hath prepared a crown and kingdom for us will be sure to give us enough to bear our charges in the way to it. He that hath designed us for the inheritance of sons when we come to age will not let us want necessaries in the mean time.

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II. We have an answer ready to all accusations and a security against all condemnations (Rom. 8:33, 34): *Who shall lay any thing?* Doth the law accuse them? Do their own consciences accuse them? Isa. the devil, the accuser of the brethren, accusing them before our God day and night? This is enough to answer all those accusations, *It is God that justifieth*. Men may justify themselves, as the Pharisees did, and yet the accusations may be in full force against them; but, if God justifies, this answers all. He is the judge, the king, the party offended, and his judgment is according to truth, and sooner or later all the world will be brought to be of his mind; so that we may challenge all our accusers to come and put in their charge. This overthrows them all; it is God, the righteous faithful God, that justifieth. *Who is he that condemneth?* Though they cannot make good the charge yet they will be ready to condemn; but we have a plea ready to move in arrest of judgment, a plea which cannot be overruled. *It is Christ that died*, etc. It is by virtue of our interest in Christ, our relation to him, and our union with him, that we are thus secured. 1. His death: *It is Christ that died*. By the merit of his death he paid our debt; and the surety's payment is a good plea to an action of debt. It is Christ, an able all-sufficient Saviour. 2. His resurrection: *Yea, rather, that has risen again*. This is a much greater encouragement, for it is a convincing evidence that divine justice was satisfied by the merit of his death. His resurrection was his acquittance, it was a legal discharge. Therefore the apostle mentions it with a *yea, rather*. If he had died, and not risen again, we had been where we were. 3. His sitting at the right hand of God: He is *even at the right hand of God*—a further evidence that he has done his work, and a mighty encouragement to us in reference to all accusations, that we have a friend, such a friend, in court. *At the right hand of God*, which denotes that he is ready there—always at hand; and that he is ruling there—all power is given to him. Our friend is himself the judge. 4. The intercession which he makes there. He is there, not unconcerned about us, not forgetful of us, but *making intercession*. He is agent for us there, an advocate for us, to answer all accusations, to put in our plea, and to prosecute it with effect, to appear for us and to present our petitions. And is not this abundant matter for comfort? What shall we say to these things? Isa. this the manner of men, O Lord God? What room is left for doubting and disquietment? Why art thou cast

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down, O my soul? Some understand the accusation and condemnation here spoken of of that which the suffering saints met with from men. The primitive Christians had many black crimes laid to their charge—heresy, sedition, rebellion, and what not? For these the ruling powers condemned them: “But no matter for that” (says the apostle); “while we stand right at God’s bar it is of no great moment how we stand at men’s. To all the hard censures, the malicious calumnies, and the unjust and unrighteous sentences of men, we may with comfort oppose our justification before God through Christ Jesus as that which doth abundantly countervail,” [1 Cor. 4:3, 4](#).

III. We have good assurance of our preservation and continuance in this blessed state, [Rom. 8:35-39](#). The fears of the saints lest they should lose their hold of Christ are often very discouraging and disquieting, and create them a great deal of disturbance; but here is that which may silence their fears, and still such storms, that nothing can separate them. We have here from the apostle,

1. A daring challenge to all the enemies of the saints to separate them, if they could, from the love of Christ. *Who shall?* None shall, [Rom. 8:35-37](#). God having manifested his love in giving his own Son for us, and not hesitating at that, can we imagine that any thing else should divert or dissolve that love? Observe here,

(1.) The present calamities of Christ’s beloved ones supposed—that they meet with *tribulation* on all hands, are in *distress*, know not which way to look for any succour and relief in this world, are followed with *persecution* from an angry malicious world that always hated those whom Christ loved, pinched with *famine*, and starved with *nakedness*, when stripped of all *creature-comforts*, exposed to the greatest *perils*, the *sword* of the magistrate drawn against them, ready to be sheathed in their bowels, bathed in their blood. Can a case be supposed more black and dismal? It is illustrated ([Rom. 8:36](#)) by a passage quoted from [Ps. 44:22](#); *For thy sake we are killed all the day long*, which intimates that we are not to think strange, no not concerning the fiery bloody trial. We see the Old-Testament saints had the same lot; so persecuted they the prophets that were before us. *Killed all the day long*, that is, continually

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exposed to and expecting the fatal stroke. There is still every day, and all the day long, one or other of the people of God bleeding and dying under the rage of persecuting enemies. *Accounted as sheep for the slaughter*; they make no more of killing a Christian than of butchering a sheep. Sheep are killed, not because they are hurtful while they live, but because they are useful when they are dead. They kill the Christians to please themselves, to be food to their malice. *They eat up my people as they eat bread*, [Ps. 14:4](#).

(2.) The inability of all these things to separate us from the love of Christ. Shall they, can they, do it? No, by no means. All this will not cut the bond of love and friendship that is between Christ and true believers. [1.] Christ doth not, will not, love us the less for all this. All these troubles are very consistent with the strong and constant love of the Lord Jesus. They are neither a cause nor an evidence of the abatement of his love. When Paul was whipped, and beaten, and imprisoned, and stoned, did Christ love him ever the less? Were his favours intermitted? his smiles any whit suspended? his visits more shy? By no means, but the contrary. These things separate us from the love of other friends. When Paul was brought before Nero all men forsook him, but then the Lord stood by him, [2 Tim. 4:16, 17](#). Whatever persecuting enemies may rob us of, they cannot rob us of the love of Christ, they cannot intercept his love-tokens, they cannot interrupt nor exclude his visits: and therefore, let them do their worst, they cannot make a true believer miserable. [2.] We do not, will not, love him the less for this; and that for this reason, because we do not think that he loves us the less. Charity thinks no evil, entertains no misgiving thoughts, makes no hard conclusions, no unkind constructions, takes all in good part that comes from love. A true Christian loves Christ never the less though he suffer for him, thinks never the worse of Christ through he lose all for him.

(3.) The triumph of believers in this ([Rom. 8:37](#)): *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors.*

[1.] We are conquerors: though killed all the day long, yet conquerors. A strange way of conquering, but it was Christ's way; thus he triumphed over principalities and powers in his cross. It is a surer and a nobler way of conquest by faith and patience than by

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fire and sword. The enemies have sometimes confessed themselves baffled and overcome by the invincible courage and constancy of the martyrs, who thus overcame the most victorious princes by not loving their lives to the death, [Rev. 12:11](#).

[2.] We are more than conquerors. In our patiently bearing these trials we are not only conquerors, but more than conquerors, that is, triumphers. Those are more than conquerors that conquer, *First*, With little loss. Many conquests are dearly bought; but what do the suffering saints lose? Why, they lose that which the gold loses in the furnace, nothing but the dross. It is no great loss to lose things which are not—a body that is of the earth, earthy. *Secondly*, With great gain. The spoils are exceedingly rich; glory, honour, and peace, a crown of righteousness that fades not away. In this the suffering saints have triumphed; not only have not been separated from the love of Christ, but have been taken into the most sensible endearments and embraces of it. As afflictions abound, consolations much more abound, [2 Cor. 1:5](#). There is one more than a conqueror, when pressed above measure. He that embraced the stake, and said, "Welcome the cross of Christ, welcome everlasting life,"—he that dated his letter from the delectable orchard of the Leonine prison,—he that said, "In these flames I feel no more pain than if I were upon a bed of down,"—she who, a little before her martyrdom, being asked how she did, said, "Well and merry, and going to heaven,"—those that have gone smiling to the stake, and stood singing in the flames—these were more than conquerors.

[3.] It is only *through Christ that loved us*, the merit of his death taking the sting out of all these troubles, the Spirit of his grace strengthening us, and enabling us to bear them with holy courage and constancy, and coming in with special comforts and supports. Thus we are conquerors, not in our own strength, but in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. We are conquerors by virtue of our interest in Christ's victory. He hath overcome the world for us ([John 16:33](#)), both the good things and the evil things of it; so that we have nothing to do but to pursue the victory, and to divide the spoil, and so are more than conquerors.

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2. A direct and positive conclusion of the whole matter: *For I am persuaded*, [Rom. 8:38, 39](#). It denotes a full, and strong, and affectionate persuasion, arising from the experience of the strength and sweetness of the divine love. And here he enumerates all those things which might be supposed likely to separate between Christ and believers, and concludes that it could not be done. (1.) *Neither death nor life*—neither the terrors of death on the one hand nor the comforts and pleasures of life on the other, neither the fear of death nor the hope of life. Or, We shall not be separated from that love either in death or in life. (2.) *Nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers*. Both the good angels and the bad are called principalities and powers: the good, [Eph. 1:21](#); [Col. 1:16](#); the bad, [Eph. 6:12](#); [Col. 2:15](#). And neither shall do it. The good angels will not, the bad shall not; and neither can. The good angels are engaged friends, the bad are restrained enemies. (3.) *Nor things present, nor things to come*—neither the sense of troubles present nor the fear of troubles to come. Time shall not separate us, eternity shall not. Things present separate us from things to come, and things to come separate and cut us off from things present; but neither from the love of Christ, whose favour is twisted in with both present things and things to come. (4.) *Nor height, nor depth*—neither the height of prosperity and preferment, nor the depth of adversity and disgrace; nothing from heaven above, no storms, no tempests; nothing on earth below, no rocks, no seas, no dungeons. (5.) *Nor any other creature*—any thing that can be named or thought of. It will not, it cannot, separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It cannot cut off or impair our love to God, or God's to us; nothing does it, can do it, but sin. Observe, The love that exists between God and true believers is through Christ. He is the Mediator of our love: it is in and through him that God can love us and that we dare love God. This is the ground of the steadfastness of the love; therefore God rests in his love ([Zeph. 3:17](#)), because Jesus Christ, in whom he loves us, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Mr. Hugh Kennedy, an eminent Christian of Ayr, in Scotland, when he was dying, called for a Bible; but, finding his sight gone, he said, "Turn me to the eighty of the Romans, and set my finger at these words, *I am persuaded that neither death nor life*," etc. "Now," said

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he, "is my finger upon them?" And, when they told him it was, without speaking any more, he said, "Now, God be with you, my children; I have breakfasted with you, and shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ this night;" and so departed.

Chapter 9

The apostle, having plainly asserted and largely proved that justification and salvation are to had by faith only, and not by the works of the law, by Christ and not by Moses, comes in this and the following chapters to anticipate an objection which might be made against this. If this be so, then what becomes of the Jews, of them all as a complex body, especially those of them that do not embrace Christ, nor believe the gospel? By this rule they must needs come short of happiness; and then what becomes of the promise made to the fathers, which entailed salvation upon the Jews? Isa. not that promise nullified and made of none effect? Which is not a thing to be imagined concerning any word of God. That doctrine therefore, might they say, is not to be embraced, from which flows such a consequence as this. That the consequence of the rejection of the unbelieving Jews follows from Paul's doctrine he grants, but endeavours to soften and mollify, [Rom. 9:1-15](#). But that from this it follows that the word of God takes no effect he denies ([Rom. 9:6](#)), and proves the denial in the rest of the chapter, which serves likewise to illustrate the great doctrine of predestination, which he had spoken of ([Rom. 8:28](#)) as the first wheel which in the business of salvation sets all the other wheels a-going.

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Sharing: God's Choice, verse 1-18:

1. Why do you feel Paul found it necessary to start this section with the statement, "I'm not lying?"
2. What is behind Paul referring to his own race, Israel, as "they?"
3. How do you feel Paul's discussion of the descendents of Abraham applies to Christians?
4. When Paul refers to "election", what do you feel he means?
5. How do you feel verse 12 could encourage Christians?
6. Do verses 16-18 suggest God is arbitrary or capricious? Why/why not?

Verses 1-5

We have here the apostle's solemn profession of a great concern for the nation and people of the Jews—that he was heartily troubled that so many of them were enemies to the gospel, and out of the way of salvation. For this he had *great heaviness and continual sorrow*. Such a profession as this was requisite to take off the odium which otherwise he might have contracted by asserting and proving their rejection. It is wisdom as much as may be to mollify those truths which sound harshly and seem unpleasant: dip the nail in oil, it will drive the better. The Jews had a particular pique at Paul above any of the apostles, as appears by the history of the Acts, and therefore were the more apt to take things amiss of him, to prevent which he introduces his discourse with this tender and affectionate profession, that they might not think he triumphed or insulted over the rejected Jews or was pleased with the calamities that were coming upon them. Thus Jeremiah appeals to God concerning the Jews of his day, whose ruin was hastening on ([Jer. 17:16](#)), *Neither have I desired the woeful day, thou knowest*. Nay, Paul was so far from desiring it that he most pathetically deprecates it. And lest this should be thought only a copy of his countenance, to flatter and please them,

I. He asserts it with a solemn protestation ([Rom. 9:1](#)): *I say the truth in Christ*, "I speak it as a Christian, one of God's people, children that will not lie, as one that knows not how to give flattering title." Or, "I appeal to Christ, who searches the heart,

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concerning it." He appeals likewise to his own conscience, which was instead of a thousand witnesses. That which he was going to assert was not only a great and weighty thing (such solemn protestations are not to be thrown away upon trifles), but it was likewise a secret; it was concerning a sorrow in his heart to which none was a capable competent witness but God and his own conscience.—*That I have great heaviness, [Rom. 9:2](#)*. He does not say for what; the very mention of it was unpleasant and invidious; but it is plain that he means for the rejection of the Jews.

II. He backs it with a very serious imprecation, which he was ready to make, out of love to the Jews. *I could wish*; he does not say, I do wish, for it was no proper means appointed for such an end; but, if it were, *I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren*—a very high pang of zeal and affection for his countrymen. He would be willing to undergo the greatest misery to do them good. Love is apt to be thus bold, and venturous, and self-denying. Because the glory of God's grace in the salvation of many is to be preferred before the welfare and happiness of a single person, Paul, if they were put in competition, would be content to forego all his own happiness to purchase theirs. 1. He would be content to be cut off from the land of the living, in the most shameful and ignominious manner, as an anathema, or a devoted person. They thirsted for his blood, persecuted him as the most obnoxious person in the world, the curse and plague of his generation, [1 Cor. 4:13](#); [Acts 22:22](#). "Now," says Paul, "I am willing to bear all this, and a great deal more, for your good. Abuse me as much as you will, count and call me at your pleasure; your unbelief and rejection create in my heart a heaviness so much greater than all these troubles can that I could look upon them not only as tolerable, but as desirable, rather than this rejection." 2. He would be content to be excommunicated from the society of the faithful, to be separated from the church, and from the communion of saints, as a heathen man and a publican, if that would do them any good. He could wish himself no more remembered among the saints, his name blotted out of the church-records; though he had been so great a planter of churches, and the spiritual father of so many thousands, yet he would be content to be disowned by the church, cut off from all communion with it, and have his name buried in oblivion or

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reproach, for the good of the Jews. It may be, some of the Jews had a prejudice against Christianity for Paul's sake; such a spleen they had at him that they hated the religion he was of: "If this stumble you," says Paul, "I could wish I might be cast out, not embraced as a Christian, so you might but be taken in." Thus Moses ([Exod. 32:33](#)), in a like holy passion of concern, *Blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written*. 3. Nay, some think that the expression goes further, and that he could be content to be cut off from all his share of happiness in Christ, if that might be a means of their salvation. It is a common charity that begins at home; this is something higher, and more noble and generous.

III. He gives us the reason of this affection and concern.

1. Because of their relation to them: *My brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh*. Though they were very bitter against him upon all occasions, and gave him the most unnatural and barbarous usage, yet thus respectfully does he speak of them. It shows him to be a man of a forgiving spirit. *Not that I had ought to accuse my nation of*, [Acts 28:19](#). *My kinsmen*. Paul was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. We ought to be in a special manner concerned for the spiritual good of our relations, our brethren and kinsmen. To them we lie under special engagements, and we have more opportunity of doing good to them; and concerning them, and our usefulness to them, we must in a special manner give account.

2. Especially because of their relation to God ([Rom. 9:4, 5](#)): *Who are Israelites*, the seed of Abraham, God's friend, and of Jacob his chosen, taken into the covenant of peculiarity, dignified and distinguished by visible church-privileges, many of which are here mentioned:—(1.) *The adoption*; not that which is saving, and which entitled to eternal happiness, but that which was external and typical, and entitled them to the land of Canaan. *Israel is my son*, [Exod. 4:22](#). (2.) *And the glory*; the ark with the mercy-seat, over which God dwelt between the cherubim—this was the glory of Israel, [1 Sam. 4:21](#). The many symbols and tokens of the divine presence and guidance, the cloud, the Shechinah, the distinguishing favours conferred upon them—these were the glory. (3.) *And the covenants*—the covenant made with Abraham, and often renewed

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with his seed upon divers occasions. There was a covenant at Sinai ([Exod. 24:1-18](#)), in the plains of Moab ([Deut. 29:1-29](#)), at Shechem ([Josh. 24:1-33](#)), and often afterwards; and still these pertained to Israel. Or, the covenant of peculiarity, and in that, as in the type, the covenant of grace. (4.) *And the giving of the law.* It was to them that the ceremonial and judicial law were given, and the moral law in writing pertained to them. It is a great privilege to have the law of God among us, and it is to be accounted so, [Ps. 147:19,20](#). This was the grandeur of Israel, [Deut. 4:7, 8](#). (5.) *And the service of God.* They had the ordinances of God's worship among them—the temple, the altars, the priests, the sacrifices, the feasts, and the institutions relating to them. They were in this respect greatly honoured, that, while other nations were worshipping and serving stocks, and stones, and devils, and they knew not what other idols of their own invention, the Israelites were serving the true God in the way of his own appointment. (6.) *And the promises*—particular promises added to the general covenant, promises relating to the Messiah and the gospel state. Observe, The promises accompany the giving of the law, and the service of God; for the comfort of the promises is to be had in obedience to that law and attendance upon that service. (7.) *Whose are the fathers* ([Rom. 9:5](#)), Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, those men of renown, that stood so high in the favour of God. The Jews stand in relation to them, are their children, and proud enough they are of it: *We have Abraham to our father.* It was for the father's sake that they were taken into covenant, [Rom. 11:28](#). (8.) But the greatest honour of all was that *of them as concerning the flesh* (that is, as to his human nature) *Christ came*; for he took on him the seed of Abraham, [Heb. 2:16](#). As to his divine nature, he is the Lord from heaven; but, as to his human nature, he is of the seed of Abraham. This was the great privilege of the Jews, that Christ was of kin to them. Mentioning Christ, he interposes a very great word concerning him, that he is *over all, God blessed for ever*. Lest the Jews should think meanly of him, because he was of their alliance, he here speaks thus honourably concerning him: and it is a very full proof of the Godhead of Christ; he is not only over all, as Mediator, but he is God blessed for ever. Therefore, how much sorer punishment were they worthy of that rejected him! It was likewise the honour of the Jews, and one reason why Paul had a kindness for them, that, seeing God blessed for ever would be a

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man, he would be a Jew; and, considering the posture and character of that people at that time, it may well be looked upon as a part of his humiliation.

Verses 6–13

The apostle, having made his way to that which he had to say, concerning the rejection of the body of his countrymen, with a protestation of his own affection for them and a concession of their undoubted privileges, comes in these verses, and the following part of the chapter, to prove that the rejection of the Jews, by the establishment of the gospel dispensation, did not at all invalidate the word of God's promise to the patriarchs: *Not as though the word of God hath taken no effect* ([Rom. 9:6](#)), which, considering the present state of the Jews, which created to Paul so much *heaviness and continual sorrow* ([Rom. 9:2](#)), might be suspected. We are not to ascribe inefficacy to any word of God: nothing that he has spoken does or can fall to the ground; see [Isa. 55:10, 11](#). The promises and threatenings shall have their accomplishment; and, one way or other, he will magnify the law and make it honourable. This is to be understood especially of the promise of God, which by subsequent providences may be to a wavering faith very doubtful; but it is not, it cannot be, made of no effect; at the end it will speak and not lie.

Now the difficulty is to reconcile the rejection of the unbelieving Jews with the word of God's promise, and the external tokens of the divine favour, which had been conferred upon them. This he does in four ways:—1. By explaining the true meaning and intention of the promise, [Rom. 9:6-13](#). 2. By asserting and proving the absolute sovereignty of God, in disposing of the children of men, [Rom. 9:14-24](#). 3. By showing how this rejection of the Jews, and the taking in of the Gentiles, were foretold in the Old Testament, [Rom. 9:25-29](#). 4. By fixing the true reason of the Jews' rejection, [Rom. 9:30](#); to the end.

In this paragraph the apostle explains the true meaning and intention of the promise. When we mistake the word, and misunderstand the promise, no marvel if we are ready to quarrel with God about the accomplishment; and therefore the sense of this

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must first be duly stated. Now he here makes it out that, when God said he would be *a God to Abraham, and to his seed* (which was the famous promise made unto the fathers), he did not mean it of all his seed according to the flesh, as if it were a necessary concomitant of the blood of Abraham; but that he intended it with a limitation only to such and such. And as from the beginning it was appropriated to Isaac and not to Ishmael, to Jacob and not to Esau, and yet for all this the word of God was not made of no effect; so now the same promise is appropriated to believing Jews that embrace Christ and Christianity, and, though it throws off multitudes that refuse Christ, yet the promise is not therefore defeated and invalidated, any more than it was by the typical rejection of Ishmael and Esau.

I. He lays down this proposition—that *they are not all Israel who are of Israel* ([Rom. 9:6](#)), *neither because they are*, etc., [Rom. 9:7](#). Many that descended from the loins of Abraham and Jacob, and were of that people who were surnamed by the name of Israel, yet were very far from being Israelites indeed, interested in the saving benefits of the new covenant. They are not all really Israel that are so in name and profession. It does not follow that, because they are the seed of Abraham, therefore they must needs be the children of God, though they themselves fancied so, boasted much of, and built much upon, their relation to Abraham, [Matt. 3:9](#); [John 8:38, 39](#). But it does not follow. Grace does not run in the blood; nor are saving benefits inseparably annexed to external church privileges, though it is common for people thus to stretch the meaning of God's promise, to bolster themselves up in a vain hope.

II. He proves this by instances; and therein shows not only that some of Abraham's seed were chosen, and others not, but that God therein wrought according to the counsel of his own will; and not with regard to that law of commandments to which the present unbelieving Jews were so strangely wedded.

1. He specifies the case of Isaac and Ishmael, both of them the seed of Abraham; and yet Isaac only taken into covenant with God, and Ishmael rejected and cast out. For this he quotes [Gen. 21:12](#); *In Isaac shall thy seed be called*, which comes in there as a reason why Abraham must be willing to cast out the bond-woman and her

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son, because the covenant was to be established with Isaac, [Gen. 17:19](#). And yet the word which God had spoken, that he would be a God to Abraham and to his seed, did not therefore fall to the ground; for the blessings wrapt up in that great word, being communicated by God as a benefactor, he was free to determine on what head they should rest, and accordingly entailed them upon Isaac, and rejected Ishmael. This he explains further ([Rom. 9:8, 9](#)), and shows what God intended to teach us by this dispensation. (1.) That the children of the flesh, as such, by virtue of their relation to Abraham according to the flesh, are not therefore the children of God, for then Ishmael had put in a good claim. This remark comes home to the unbelieving Jews, who boasted of their relation to Abraham according to the flesh, and looked for justification in a fleshly way, by those carnal ordinances which Christ had abolished. They had confidence in the flesh, and looked for justification in a fleshly way, by those carnal ordinances which Christ had abolished. They had confidence in the flesh, [Phil. 3:3](#). Ishmael was a child of the flesh, conceived by Hagar, who was young and fresh, and likely enough to have children. There was nothing extraordinary or supernatural in his conception, as there was in Isaac's; he was born after the flesh ([Gal. 4:29](#)), representing those that expect justification and salvation by their own strength and righteousness. (2.) That the *children of the promise are counted for the seed*. Those that have the honour and happiness of being counted for the seed have it not for the sake of any merit or desert of their own, but purely by virtue of the promise, in which God hath obliged himself of his own good pleasure to grant the promised favour. Isaac was a child of promise; this his proves, [Rom. 9:9](#); quoted from [Gen. 18:10](#). He was a child promised (so were many others), and he was also conceived and born by force and virtue of the promise, and so a proper type and figure of those who are now counted for the seed, even true believers, who are born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God—of the incorruptible seed, even the word of promise, by virtue of the special promise of a new heart: see [Gal. 4:28](#). It was through faith that Isaac was conceived, [Heb. 11:11](#). Thus were the great mysteries of salvation taught under the Old Testament, not in express words, but by significant types and dispensations of providence, which to them then were not so clear

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as they are to us now, when the veil is taken away, and the types are expounded by the antitypes.

2. The case of Jacob and Esau ([Rom. 9:10-13](#)), which is much stronger, to show that the carnal seed of Abraham were not, as such, interested in the promise, but only such of them as God in sovereignty had appointed. There was a previous difference between Ishmael and Isaac, before Ishmael was cast out: Ishmael was the son of the bond-woman, born long before Isaac, was of a fierce and rugged disposition, and had mocked or persecuted Isaac, to all which it might be supposed God had regard when he appointed Abraham to cast him out. But, in the case of Jacob and Esau, it was neither so nor so, they were both the sons of Isaac by one mother; they were conceived **hex henos**—by one conception; **hex henos koitou**, so some copies read it. The difference was made between them by the divine counsel before they were born, or had done any good or evil. Both lay struggling alike in their mother's womb, when it was said, *The elder shall serve the younger*, without respect to good or bad works done or foreseen, *that the purpose of God according to election might stand*—that this great truth may be established, that God chooses some and refuses others as a free agent, by his own absolute and sovereign will, dispensing his favours or withholding them as he pleases. This difference that was put between Jacob and Esau he further illustrates by a quotation from [Mal. 1:2, 3](#), where it is said, not of Jacob and Esau the person, but the Edomites and Israelites their posterity, *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated*. The people of Israel were taken into the covenant of peculiarity, had the land of Canaan given them, were blessed with the more signal appearances of God for them in special protections, supplies, and deliverances, while the Edomites were rejected, had no temple, altar, priests, nor prophets—no such particular care taken of them nor kindness shown to them. Such a difference did God put between those two nations, that both descended from the loins of Abraham and Isaac, as at first there was a difference put between Jacob and Esau, the distinguishing heads of those two nations. So that all this choosing and refusing was typical, and intended to shadow forth some other election and rejection. (1.) Some understand it of the election and rejection of conditions or qualifications. As God chose

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Isaac and Jacob, and rejected Ishmael and Esau, so he might and did choose faith to be the condition of salvation and reject the works of the law. Thus Arminius understands it, *Deut. rejectis et assumptis talibus, certa qualitate notatis*—Concerning such as are rejected and such as are chosen, being distinguished by appropriate qualities; so John Goodwin. But this very much strains the scripture; for the apostle speaks all along of persons, he has mercy on whom (he does not say on what kind of people) he will have mercy, besides that against this sense those two objections ([Rom. 9:14, 19](#)) do not at all arise, and his answer to them concerning God's absolute sovereignty over the children of men is not at all pertinent if no more be meant than his appointing the conditions of salvation. (2.) Others understand it of the election and rejection of particular person—some loved, and others hated, from eternity. But the apostle speaks of Jacob and Esau, not in their own persons, but as ancestors—Jacob the people, and Esau the people; nor does God condemn any, or decree so to do, merely because he will do it, without any reason taken from their own deserts. (3.) Others therefore understand it of the election and rejection of people considered complexly. His design is to justify God, and his mercy and truth, in calling the Gentiles, and taking them into the church, and into covenant with himself, while he suffered the obstinate part of the Jews to persist in unbelief, and so to un-church themselves—thus hiding from their eyes the things that belonged to their peace. The apostle's reasoning for the explication and proof of this is, however, very applicable to, and, no doubt (as is usual in scripture) was intended for the clearing of the methods of God's grace towards particular person, for the communication of saving benefits bears some analogy to the communication of church-privileges. The choosing of Jacob the younger, and preferring him before Esau the elder (so crossing hands), were to intimate that the Jews, though the natural seed of Abraham, and the first-born of the church, should be laid aside; and the Gentiles, who were as the younger brother, should be taken in in their stead, and have the birthright and blessing. The Jews, considered as a body politic, a nation and people, knit together by the bond and cement of the ceremonial law, the temple and priesthood, the centre of their unity, had for many ages been the darlings and favourites of heaven, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, dignified and distinguished by God's

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miraculous appearances among them and for them. Now that the gospel was preached, and Christian churches were planted, this national body was thereby abandoned, their church-polity dissolved; and Christian churches (and in process of time Christian nations), embodied in like manner, become their successors in the divine favour, and those special privileges and protections which were the products of that favour. To clear up the justice of God in this great dispensation is the scope of the apostle here.

Sharing: Israel's Unbelief, verse 19-33:

1. Paul continues his discussion of God's choice in all this. Instead of looking at these verses narrowly as applying to the issue of election or predestination, try applying the actual context of the chapter to it. Based on the beginning verses in chapter 9, to whom does all this talk of creating things for destruction apply?
2. Is there any way that God could have revealed the riches of His mercy and glory, exercised His sovereign choice in all this, and still leave each of us responsible for his own decisions (free will) regarding God? Explain!
2. In other words...Explain how man's free will and God's predestination could work together.
3. What do you feel Paul means by verses 30-32?
4. What do you think would be the fate of someone who pursued Christianity by works?
5. What are some examples you've heard of "Christian" teachings on works, rather than faith?
6. Can you think of any Christian "works" you believe must be done?
7. How do you feel you can reconcile this Scripture and the one in James that faith without works is dead?

Verses 14-24

The apostle, having asserted the true meaning of the promise, comes here to maintain and prove the absolute sovereignty of God, in disposing of the children of men, with reference to their eternal state. And herein God is to be considered, not as a rector and

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governor, distributing rewards and punishments according to his revealed laws and covenants, but as an owner and benefactor, giving to the children of men such grace and favour as he has determined in and by his secret and eternal will and counsel: both the favour of visible church-membership and privileges, which is given to some people and denied to others, and the favour of effectual grace, which is given to some particular persons and denied to others.

Now this part of his discourse is in answer to two objections.

I. It might be objected, *Isa. there unrighteousness with God?* If God, in dealing with the children of men, do thus, in an arbitrary manner, choose some and refuse others, may it not be suspected that there is unrighteousness with him? This the apostle startles at the thought of: *God forbid!* Far be it from us to think such a thing; shall not the judge of all the earth do right? [Gen. 18:25](#); [Rom. 3:5, 6](#). He denies the consequences, and proves the denial.

1. In respect of those to whom he shows mercy, [Rom. 9:15,16](#). He quotes that scripture to show God's sovereignty in dispensing his favours ([Exod. 33:19](#)): *I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious*. All God's reasons of mercy are taken from within himself. All the children of men being plunged alike into a state of sin and misery, equally under guilt and wrath, God, in a way of sovereignty, picks out some from this fallen apostatized race, to be vessels of grace and glory. He dispenses his gifts to whom he will, without giving us any reason: according to his own good pleasure he pitches upon some to be monuments of mercy and grace, preventing grace, effectual grace, while he passes by others. The expression is very emphatic, and the repetition makes it more so: *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*. It imports a perfect absoluteness in God's will; he will do what he will, and giveth not account of any of his matters, nor is it fit he should. As these great words, *I am that I am* ([Exod. 3:14](#)) do abundantly express the absolute independency of his being, so these words, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*, do as fully express the absolute prerogative and sovereignty of his will. To vindicate the righteousness of God, in showing mercy to whom he will, the apostle appeals to that which God himself had

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spoken, wherein he claims this sovereign power and liberty. God is a competent judge, even in his own case. Whatsoever God does, or is resolved to do, is both by the one and the other proved to be just. ***Eleeso on han heleo***—*I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*. When I begin, I will make an end. Therefore God's mercy endures for ever, because the reason of it is fetched from within himself; therefore his gifts and callings are without repentance. Hence he infers (Rom. 9:16), *It is not of him that willeth*. Whatever good comes from God to man, the glory of it is not to be ascribed to the most generous desire, nor to the most industrious endeavour, of man, but only and purely to the free grace and mercy of God. In Jacob's case it was *not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth*; it was not the earnest will and desire of Rebecca that Jacob might have the blessing; it was not Jacob's haste to get it (for he was compelled to run for it) that procured him the blessing, but only the mercy and grace of God. Wherein the holy happy people of God differ from other people, it is God and his grace that make them differ. Applying this general rule to the particular case that Paul has before him, the reason why the unworthy, undeserving, ill-deserving Gentiles are called, and grafted into the church, while the greatest part of the Jews are left to perish in unbelief, is not because those Gentiles were better deserving or better disposed for such a favour, but because of God's free grace that made that difference. The Gentiles did neither will it, nor run for it, for they *sat in darkness*, Matt. 4:16. In darkness, therefore not willing what they knew not; *sitting* in darkness, a contented posture, therefore not running to meet it, but anticipated with these invaluable blessings of goodness. Such is the method of God's grace towards all that partake of it, for he is found of those that sought him not (Isa. 65:1); in this preventing, effectual, distinguishing grace, he acts as a benefactor, whose grace is his own. Our eye therefore must not be evil because his is good; but, of all the grace that we or others have, he must have the glory: *Not unto us*, Ps. 115:1.

2. In respect of those who perish, Rom. 9:17. God's sovereignty, manifested in the ruin of sinners, is here discovered in the instance of Pharaoh; it is quoted from Exod. 9:16. Observe,

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(1.) What God did with Pharaoh. He raised him up, brought him into the world, made him famous, gave him the kingdom and power,— set him up as a beacon upon a hill, as the mark of all his plagues (compare [Exod. 9:14](#))-- hardened his heart, as he had said he would ([Exod. 4:21](#)): *I will harden his heart*, that is, withdraw softening grace, leave him to himself, let Satan loose against him, and lay hardening providences before him. Or, by raising him up may be meant the intermission of the plagues which gave Pharaoh respite, and the reprieve of Pharaoh in those plagues. In the Hebrew, *I have made thee stand*, continued thee yet in the land of the living. Thus doth God raise up sinners, make them for himself, even for the day of evil ([Prov. 16:4](#)), raise them up in outward prosperity, external privileges ([Matt. 11:23](#)), sparing mercies.

(2.) What he designed in it: *That I might show my power in thee*. God would, by all this, serve the honour of his name, and manifest his power in baffling the pride and insolence of that great and daring tyrant, who bade defiance to Heaven itself, and trampled upon all that was just and sacred. If Pharaoh had not been so high and might, so bold and hardy, the power of God had not been so illustrious in the ruining of him; but the taking off of the spirit of such a prince, who hectorated at that rate, did indeed proclaim God glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders, [Exod. 15:11](#). This is Pharaoh, and all his multitude.

(3.) His conclusion concerning both these we have, [Rom. 9:18](#). *He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth*. The various dealings of God, by which he makes some to differ from others, must be resolved into his absolute sovereignty. He is debtor to no man, his grace is his own, and he may give it or withhold it as it pleaseth him; we have none of us deserved it, nay, we have all justly forfeited it a thousand times, so that herein the work of our salvation is admirably well ordered that those who are saved must thank God only, and those who perish must thank themselves only, [Hos. 13:9](#). We are bound, as God hath bound us, to do our utmost for the salvation of all we have to do with; but God is bound no further than he has been pleased to bind himself by his own covenant and promise, which is his revealed will; and that is that he will receive, and not cast out, those that come to Christ; but

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the drawing of souls in order to that coming is a preventing distinguishing favour to whom he will. Had he mercy on the Gentiles? It was because he would have mercy on them. Were the Jews hardened? It was because it was his own pleasure to deny them softening grace, and to give them up to their chosen affected unbelief. *Even so, Father, because it seemed good unto thee.* That scripture excellently explains this, [Luke 10:21](#); and, as this, shows the sovereign will of God in giving or withholding both the means of grace and the effectual blessing upon those means.

II. It might be objected, *Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?* [Rom. 9:19](#). Had the apostle been arguing only for God's sovereignty in appointing and ordering the terms and conditions of acceptance and salvation, there had not been the least colour for this objection; for he might well find fault if people refused to come up to the terms on which such a salvation is offered; the salvation being so great, the terms could not be hard. But there might be colour for the objection against his arguing for the sovereignty of God in giving and withholding differing and preventing grace; and the objection is commonly and readily advanced against the doctrine of distinguishing grace. If God, while he gives effectual grace to some, denies it to others, why doth he find fault with those to whom he denies it? If he hath rejected the Jews, and hid from their eyes the things that belong to their peace, why doth he find fault with them for their blindness? If it be his pleasure to discard them as not a people, and not obtaining mercy, their knocking off themselves was no resistance of his will. This objection he answers at large,

1. By reproving the objector ([Rom. 9:20](#)): *Nay but, O man.* This is not an objection fit to be made by the creature against his Creator, by man against God. The truth, as it is in Jesus, is that which abases man as nothing, less than nothing, and advances God as sovereign Lord of all. Observe how contemptibly he speaks of man, when he comes to argue with God his Maker: "*Who art thou, thou that art so foolish, so feeble, so short-sighted, so incompetent a judge of the divine counsels? Art thou able to fathom such a depth, dispute such a case, to trace that way of God which is in the sea, his path in the great waters?*" *That repliest against God.* It becomes us

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to submit to him, not to reply against him; to lie down under his hand, not to fly in his face, nor to charge him with folly. **Hos. antapokrिनomenos**—*That answerest again*. God is our master, and we are his servants; and it does not become servants to answer again, Titus 2:9.

2. By resolving all into the divine sovereignty. We are the thing formed, and he is the former; and it does not become us to challenge or arraign his wisdom in ordering and disposing of us into this or that shape of figure. The rude and unformed mass of matter hath no right to this or that form, but is shaped at the pleasure of him that formeth it. God's sovereignty over us is fitly illustrated by the power that the potter hath over the clay; compare Jer. 18:6; where, by a like comparison, God asserts his dominion over the nation of the Jews, when he was about to magnify his justice in their destruction by Nebuchadnezzar.

(1.) He gives us the comparison, Rom. 9:21. The potter, out of the same lump, may make either a fashionable vessel, and a vessel fit for creditable and honourable uses, or a contemptible vessel, and a vessel in which is no pleasure; and herein he acts arbitrarily, as he might have chosen whether he would make any vessel of it at all, or whether he would leave it in the hole of the pit, out of which it was dug.

(2.) The application of the comparison, Rom. 9:22-24. Two sorts of vessels God forms out of the great lump of fallen mankind:—
[1.] *Vessels of wrath*—vessels filled with wrath, as a vessel of wine is a vessel filled with wine; *full of the fury of the Lord*, Isa. 51:20. In these God is willing to show his wrath, that is, his punishing justice, and his enmity to sin. This must be shown to all the world, God will make it appear that he hates sin. He will likewise make his power known, **to dynaton autou**. It is a power of strength and energy, an inflicting power, which works and effects the destruction of those that perish; it is a destruction that proceeds from the *glory of his power*, 2 Thess. 1:9. The eternal damnation of sinners will be an abundant demonstration of the power of God; for he will act in it himself immediately, his wrath preying as it were upon guilty consciences, and his arm stretched out totally to destroy their well-

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being, and yet at the same instant wonderfully to preserve the being of the creature. In order to this, *God endured them with much long-suffering*—exercised a great deal of patience towards them, let them alone to fill up the measure of sin, to grow till they were ripe for ruin, and so they became *fitted for destruction*, fitted by their own sin and self-hardening. The reigning corruptions and wickedness of the soul are its preparedness and disposedness for hell: a soul is hereby made combustible matter, fit for the flames of hell. When Christ said to the Jews ([Matt. 23:32](#)), *Fill you up then the measure of your father, that upon you may come all the righteous blood* ([Rom. 9:23](#)), he did, as it were, endure them with much long-suffering, that they might, by their own obstinacy and wilfulness in sin, fit themselves for destruction. [2.] *Vessels of mercy*—filled with mercy. The happiness bestowed upon the saved remnant is the fruit, not of their merit, but of God's mercy. The spring of all the joy and glory of heaven is that mercy of God which endures for ever. Vessels of honour must to eternity own themselves vessels of mercy. Observe, *First*, What he designs in them: *To make known the riches of his glory*, that is, of his goodness; for God's goodness is his greatest glory, especially when it is communicated with the greatest sovereignty. *I beseech thee show me thy glory*, says Moses, [Exod. 33:18](#). *I will make all my goodness to pass before thee*, says God ([Rom. 9:19](#)), and that given out freely: *I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious*. God makes known his glory, this goodness of his, in the preservation and supply of all the creatures: the earth is full of his goodness, and the year crowned with it; but when he would demonstrate the riches of his goodness, unsearchable riches, he does it in the salvation of the saints, that will be to eternity glorious monuments of divine grace. *Secondly*, What he does for them he does before *prepare them to glory*. Sanctification is the preparation of the soul for glory, making it meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light. This is God's work. We can destroy ourselves fast enough, but we cannot save ourselves. Sinners fit themselves for hell, but it is God that prepares saints for heaven; and all those that God designs for heaven hereafter he prepares and fits for heaven now: he works them to the self-same thing, [2 Cor. 5:5](#). And would you know who these *vessels of mercy are*? Those whom he hath called ([Rom. 9:24](#)); for whom he did predestinate those he also called with an

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effectual call: and these not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles; for, the partition-wall being taken down, the world was laid in common, and not (as it had been) God's favour appropriated to the Jews, and they put a degree nearer his acceptance than the rest of the world. They now stood upon the same level with the Gentiles; and the question is not now whether of the seed of Abraham or no, that is neither here nor there, but whether or no called according to his purpose.

Verses 25–29

Having explained the promise, and proved the divine sovereignty, the apostle here shows how the rejection of the Jews, and the taking in of the Gentiles, were foretold in the Old Testament, and therefore must needs be very well consistent with the promise made to the fathers under the Old Testament. It tends very much to the clearing of a truth to observe how the scripture is fulfilled in it. The Jews would, no doubt, willingly refer it to the Old Testament, the scriptures of which were committed to them. Now he shows how this, which was so uneasy to them, was there spoken of.

I. By the prophet Hosea, who speaks of the taking in of a great many of the Gentiles, [Hos. 2:23](#); [Hos. 1:10](#). The Gentiles had not been the people of God, not owning him, nor being owned by him in that relation: "But," says he, "*I will call them my people, make them such and own them as such, notwithstanding all their unworthiness.*" A blessed change! Former badness is no bar to God's present grace and mercy.—*And her beloved which was not beloved.* Those whom God calls his people he calls beloved: he loves those that are his own. And lest it might be supposed that they should become God's people only by being proselyted to the Jewish religion, and made members of that nation, he adds, from [Hos. 1:10](#); *In the place where it was said, etc., there shall they be called.* They need not be embodied with the Jews, nor go up to Jerusalem to worship; but, wherever they are scattered over the face of the earth, there will God own them. Observe the great dignity and honour of the saints, that they are called the children of the living God; and his calling them so makes them so. Behold, what manner of love! This honour have all his saints.

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II. By the prophet Isaiah, who speaks of the casting off of many of the Jews, in two places.

1. One is [Isa. 10:22, 23](#), which speaks of the saving of a remnant, that is, but a remnant, which, though in the prophecy it seems to refer to the preservation of a remnant from the destruction and desolation that were coming upon them by Sennacherib and his army, yet is to be understood as looking further, and sufficiently proves that it is no strange thing for God to abandon to ruin a great many of the seed of Abraham, and yet maintain his word of promise to Abraham in full force and virtue. This is intimated in the supposition that the number of children of Israel was as the sand of the sea, which was part of the promise made to Abraham, [Gen. 22:17](#). And yet only a remnant shall be saved; for many are called, but few are chosen. In this salvation of the remnant we are told ([Rom. 9:28](#)) from the prophet, (1.) That he will complete the work: *He will finish the work*. When God begins he will make an end, whether in ways of judgment or of mercy. The rejection of the unbelieving Jews God would finish in their utter ruin by the Romans, who soon after this quite took away their place and nation. The assuming of Christian churches into the divine favour, and the spreading of the gospel in other nations, was a work which God would likewise finish, and be known by his name JEHOVAH. As for God, his work is perfect. Margin, *He will finish the account*. God, in his eternal counsels, has taken an account of the children of men, allotted them to such or such a condition, to such a share of privileges; and, as they come into being, his dealings with them are pursuant to these counsels: and he will finish the account, complete the mystical body, call in as many as belong to the election of grace, and then the account will be finished. (2.) That he will contract it; not only finish it, but finish it quickly. Under the Old Testament he seemed to tarry, and to make a longer and more tedious work of it. The wheels moved but slowly towards the extent of the church; but now he will *cut it short*, and make a short work upon the earth. Gentile converts were now flying as a cloud. But he will cut it short *in righteousness*, both in wisdom and in justice. Men, when they cut short, do amiss; they do indeed despatch causes; but, when God cuts short, it is always in righteousness. So the fathers generally apply it. Some understand it of the evangelical law and

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covenant, which Christ has introduced and established in the world: he has in that finished the work, put an end to the types and ceremonies of the Old Testament. Christ said, *It is finished*, and then the veil was rent, echoing as it were to the word that Christ said upon the cross. And he will cut it short. *The work* (it is **logos**—*the word*, the law) was under the Old Testament very long; a long train of institutions, ceremonies, conditions: but now it is cut short. Our duty is now, under the gospel, summed up in much less room than it was under the law; the covenant was abridged and contracted; religion is brought into a less compass. And it is in righteousness, in favour to us, in justice to his own design and counsel. With us contractions are apt to darken things:—

----Brevis esse laboro, Obscurus fio---- I strive to be concise, but prove obscure. but it is not so in this case. Though it be cut short, it is clear and plain; and, because short, the more easy.

2. Another is quoted from [Isa. 1:9](#); where the prophet is showing how in a time of general calamity and destruction God would preserve a seed. This is to the same purport with the former; and the scope of it is to show that it was no strange thing for God to leave the greatest part of the people of the Jews to ruin, and to reserve to himself only a small remnant: so he had done formerly, as appears by their own prophets; and they must not wonder if he did so now. Observe, (1.) What God is. He is *the Lord of sabaoth*, that is, the Lord of hosts—a Hebrew word retained in the Greek, as [Jas. 5:4](#). All the host of heaven and earth are at his beck and disposal. When God secures a seed to himself out of a degenerate apostate world, he acts as Lord of sabaoth. It is an act of almighty power and infinite sovereignty. (2.) What his people are; they are a *seed*, a small number. The corn reserved for next year's seedings is but little, compared with that which is spent and eaten. But they are a useful number—the seed, the substance, of the next generation, [Isa. 6:13](#). It is so far from being an impeachment of the justice and righteousness of God that so many perish and are destroyed, that it is a wonder of divine power and mercy that all are not destroyed, that there are any saved; for even those that are left to be a seed, if God had dealt with them according to their sins, had

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perished with the rest. This is the great truth which this scripture teacheth us.

Verses 30–33

The apostle comes here at last to fix the true reason of the reception of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews. There was a difference in the way of their seeking, and therefore there was that different success, though still it was the free grace of God that made them differ. He concludes like an orator, *What shall we say then?* What is the conclusion of the whole dispute?

I. Concerning the Gentiles observe, 1. How they had been alienated from righteousness: they followed not after it; they knew not their guilt and misery, and therefore were not at all solicitous to procure a remedy. In their conversion preventing grace was greatly magnified: God was *found of those that sought him not*, [Isa. 65:1](#). There was nothing in them to dispose them for such a favour more than what free grace wrought in them. Thus doth God delight to dispense grace in a way of sovereignty and absolute dominion. 2. How they attained to righteousness, notwithstanding: *By faith*; not by being proselyted to the Jewish religion, and submitting to the ceremonial law, but by embracing Christ, and believing in Christ, and submitting to the gospel. They attained to that by the short cut of believing sincerely in Christ for which the Jews had been long in vain beating about the bush.

II. Concerning the Jews observe, 1. How they missed their end: they *followed after the law of righteousness* ([Rom. 9:31](#))-- they talked much of justification and holiness, seemed very ambitious of being the people of God and the favourites of heaven, but they did not attain to it, that is, the greatest part of them did not; as many as stuck to their old Jewish principles and ceremonies, and pursued a happiness in those observances, embracing the shadows now that the substance was come, these fell short of acceptance with God, were not owned as his people, nor went to their house justified. 2. How they mistook their way, which was the cause of their missing the end, [Rom. 9:32, 33](#). They sought, but not in the right way, not in the humbling way, not in the instituted appointed way. *Not by*

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faith, not by embracing the Christian religion, and depending upon the merit of Christ, and submitting to the terms of the gospel, which were the very life and end of the law. But they sought by the *works of the law*; as if they were to expect justification by their observance of the precepts and ceremonies of the law of Moses. This was the *stumbling-stone at which they stumbled*. They could not get over this corrupt principle which they had espoused, That the law was given them for no end but that merely by their observance of it, and obedience to it, they might be justified before God: and so they could by no means be reconciled to the doctrine of Christ, which brought them off from that to expect justification through the merit and satisfaction of another. Christ himself is to some a stone of stumbling, for which he quotes [Isa. 8:14;28:16](#). It is sad that Christ should be set for the fall of any, and yet it is so ([Luke 2:34](#)), that ever poison should be sucked out of the balm of Gilead, that the foundation-stone should be to any a stone of stumbling, and the rock of salvation a rock of offence; so he is to multitudes; so he was to the unbelieving Jews, who rejected him, because he put an end to the ceremonial law. But still there is a remnant that do believe on him; and they *shall not be ashamed*, that is, their hopes and expectations of justification by him shall not be disappointed, as theirs are who expect it by the law. So that, upon the whole, the unbelieving Jews have no reason to quarrel with God for rejecting them; they had a fair offer of righteousness, and life, and salvation, made to them upon gospel terms, which they did not like, and would not come up to; and therefore, if they perish, they may thank themselves—their blood is upon their own heads.

Chapter 10

Sharing: *Faith Comes by Hearing, verse 1-21:*

1. What do you feel Paul means by saying Israel sought to establish their own righteousness?
2. Can you think of some modern day examples of people trying to establish their own righteousness?
3. How do you feel Christ established righteousness for all who believe?

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4. Verse 11, Paul says we will never be put to shame if we trust in Jesus. How do you feel trying to perform righteous acts, like circumcision or Sabbath observance could express distrust in Jesus?
5. Is vs 13 saying it's possible for someone who asks for the Lord's healing (but not professing Christianity) can be expressing saving faith? Why/why not?
6. What are some things you hear modern Christians saying and doing that might interfere with others hearing the word of Christ?

The dissolving of the peculiar church-state of the Jews, and the rejection of that polity by the repealing of their ceremonial law, the vacating of all the institutions of it, the abolishing of their priesthood, the burning of their temple, and the taking away of their place and nation, and in their room the substituting and erecting of a catholic church-state among the Gentile nations, though to us, now that these things have long since been done and completed, they may seem no great matter, yet to those who lived when they were doing, who knew how high the Jews had stood in God's favour, and how deplorable the condition of the Gentile world had been for many ages, it appeared very great and marvellous, and a mystery hard to be understood. The apostle, in this chapter, as in the foregoing and that which follows, is explaining and proving it; but with several very useful digressions, which a little interrupt the thread of his discourse. To two great truths I would reduce this chapter:—I. That there is a great difference between the righteousness of the law, which the unbelieving Jews were wedded to, and the righteousness of faith offered in the gospel, [Rom. 10:1-11](#). II. That there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles; but, in point of justification and acceptance with God, the gospel sets them both upon the same level, [Rom. 5:12-21](#).

Verses 1-11

The scope of the apostle in this part of the chapter is to show the vast difference between the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith, and the great pre-eminence of the righteousness of faith above that of the law; that he might induce

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and persuade the Jews to believe in Christ, aggravate the folly and sin of those that refused, and justify God in the rejection of such refusers.

I. Paul here professes his good affection to the Jews, with the reason of it (Rom. 10:1, 2), where he gives them a good wish, and a good witness.

1. A good wish (Rom. 10:1), a wish that they might be saved—saved from the temporal ruin and destruction that were coming upon them—saved from the wrath to come, eternal wrath, which was hanging over their heads. It is implied in this wish that they might be convinced and converted; he could not pray in faith that they might be saved in their unbelief. Though Paul preached against them, yet he prayed for them. Herein he was merciful, as God is, who is *not willing that any should perish* (2 Pet. 3:9), desires not the death of sinners. It is our duty truly and earnestly to desire the salvation of our own. This, he says, was *his heart's desire and prayer*, which intimates, (1.) The strength and sincerity of his desire. It was *his heart's desire*; it was not a formal compliment, as good wishes are with many from the teeth outward, but a real desire. This it was before it was his prayer. The soul of prayer is the heart's desire. Cold desires do but beg denials; we must even breathe out our souls in every prayer. (2.) The offering up of this desire to God. It was not only his heart's desire, but it was his prayer. There may be desires in the heart, and yet no prayer, unless those desires be presented to God. Wishing and woulding, if that be all, are not praying.

2. A good witness, as a reason of his good wish (Rom. 10:2): *I bear them record that they have a zeal of God*. The unbelieving Jews were the most bitter enemies Paul had in the world, and yet Paul gives them as good a character as the truth would bear. We should say the best we can even of our worst enemies; this is blessing those that curse us. Charity teaches us to have the best opinion of persons, and to put the best construction upon words and actions, that they will bear. We should take notice of that which is commendable even in bad people. *They have a zeal of God*. Their opposition to the gospel is from a principle of respect to the law,

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which they know to have come from God. There is such a thing as a blind misguided zeal: such was that of the Jews, who, when they hated Christ's people and ministers, and cast them out, said, *Let the Lord be glorified* ([Isa. 66:5](#)); nay, they killed them, and thought they did God good service, [John 16:2](#).

II. He here shows the fatal mistake that the unbelieving Jews were guilty of, which was their ruin. Their zeal was *not according to knowledge*. It is true God gave them that law for which they were so zealous; but they might have known that, by the appearance of the promised Messiah, an end was put to it. He introduced a new religion and way of worship, to which the former must give place. He proved himself the Son of God, gave the most convincing evidence that could be of his being the Messiah; and yet they did not know and would not own him, but shut their eyes against the clear light, so that their zeal for the law was blind. This he shows further, [Rom. 10:3](#); where we may observe,

1. The nature of their unbelief. They *have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God*, that is, they have not yielded to gospel-terms, nor accepted the tender of justification by faith in Christ, which is made in the gospel. Unbelief is a non-submission to the righteousness of God, standing it out against the gospel proclamation of indemnity. *Have not submitted*. In true faith, there is need of a great deal of submission; therefore the first lesson Christ teaches is to deny ourselves. It is a great piece of condescension for a proud heart to be content to be beholden to free grace; we are loth to sue *sub forma pauperis—as paupers*.

2. The causes of their unbelief, and these are two:—(1.) Ignorance of God's righteousness. They did not understand, and believe, and consider, the strict justice of God, in hating and punishing sin, and demanding satisfaction, did not consider what need we have of a righteousness wherein to appear before him; if they had, they would never have stood out against the gospel offer, nor expected justification by their own works, as if they could satisfy God's justice. Or, being ignorant of God's way of justification, which he has now appointed and revealed by Jesus Christ. They did not know it, because they would not; they shut their eyes against the

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discoveries of it, and love darkness rather. (2.) A proud conceit of their own righteousness: *Going about to establish their own*—a righteousness of their own devising, and of their own working out, by the merit of their works, and by their observance of the ceremonial law. They thought they needed not to be beholden to the merit of Christ, and therefore depended upon their own performances as sufficient to make up a righteousness wherein to appear before God. They could not with Paul disclaim a dependence upon this ([Phil. 3:9](#)), *Not having my own righteousness*. See an instance of this pride in the Pharisee, [Luke 18:10, 11](#). Compare [Rom. 10:14](#).

III. He here shows the folly of that mistake, and what an unreasonable thing it was for them to be seeking justification by the works of the law, now that Christ had come, and had brought in an everlasting righteousness; considering,

1. The subserviency of the law to the gospel ([Rom. 10:4](#)): *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness*. The design of the law was to lead people to Christ. The moral law was but for the searching of the wound, the ceremonial law for the shadowing forth of the remedy; but Christ is the end of both. See [2 Cor. 3:7](#); [Gal. 3:23, 24](#). The use of the law was to direct people for righteousness to Christ. (1.) Christ is the end of the ceremonial law; he is the period of it, because he is the perfection of it. When the substance comes, the shadow is gone. The sacrifices, and offerings, and purifications appointed under the Old Testament, prefigured Christ, and pointed at him; and their inability to take away sin discovered the necessity of a sacrifice that should, by being once offered, take away sin. (2.) Christ is the end of the moral law in that he did what the law could not do ([Rom. 8:3](#)), and secured the great end of it. The end of the law was to bring men to perfect obedience, and so to obtain justification. This is now become impossible, by reason of the power of sin and the corruption of nature; but Christ is the end of the law. The law is not destroyed, nor the intention of the lawgiver frustrated, but, full satisfaction being made by the death of Christ for our breach of the law, the end is attained, and we are put in another way of justification. Christ is thus the end of the law for righteousness, that is, for justification; but it is only to *every one*

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that believeth. Upon our believing, that is, our humble consent to the terms of the gospel, we become interested in Christ's satisfaction, and so are justified through the redemption that is in Jesus.

2. The excellency of the gospel above the law. This he proves by showing the different constitution of these two.

(1.) What is the righteousness which is of the law? This he shows, [Rom. 10:5](#). The tenour of it is, *Do, and live*. Though it directs us to a better and more effectual righteousness in Christ, yet in itself, considered as a law abstracted from its respect to Christ and the gospel (for so the unbelieving Jews embraced and retained it), it owneth nothing as a righteousness sufficient to justify a man but that of perfect obedience. For this he quotes that scripture ([Lev. 18:5](#)), *You shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them*. To this he refers likewise, [Gal. 3:12](#); *The man that doeth them, shall live in them*. *Live*, that is, be happy, not only in the land of Canaan, but in heaven, of which Canaan was a type and figure. The doing supposed must be perfect and sinless, without the least breach or violation. The law which was given upon Mount Sinai, though it was not a pure covenant of works (for who then could be saved under that dispensation?) yet, that is might be the more effectual to drive people to Christ and to make the covenant of grace welcome, it had a very great mixture of the strictness and terror of the covenant of works. Now, was it not extreme folly in the Jews to adhere so closely to this way of justification and salvation, which was in itself so hard, and by the corruption of nature now become impossible, when there was a new and a living way opened?

(2.) What is that righteousness which is of faith, [Rom. 10:6](#) This he describes in the words of Moses, in Deuteronomy, in the *second law* (so Deuteronomy signifies), where there was a much clearer revelation of Christ and the gospel than there was in the first giving of the law: he quotes it from [Deut. 30:11-14](#), and shows,

[1.] That it is not at all hard or difficult. The way of justification and salvation has in it no such depths or knots as may discourage us, no

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insuperable difficulties attending it; but, as was foretold, it is a high-way, [Isa. 35:8](#). We are not put to climb for it—it is not in heaven; we are not put to dive for it—it is not in the deep. *First*, We need not go to heaven, to search the records there, or to enquire into the secrets of the divine counsel. It is true Christ is in heaven; but we may be justified and saved without going thither, to fetch him thence, or sending a special messenger to him. *Secondly*, We need not go to the deep, to fetch Christ out of the grave, or from the state of the dead: *Into the deep, to bring up Christ from the dead*. This plainly shows that Christ's descent into the *deep*, or into **hades**, was no more than his going into the state of the dead, in allusion to Jonah. It is true that Christ was in the grave, and it is as true that he is now in heaven; but we need not perplex and puzzle ourselves with fancied difficulties, nor must we create to ourselves such gross and carnal ideas of these things as if the method of salvation were impracticable, and the design of the revelation were only to amuse us. No, salvation is not put at so vast a distance from us.

[2.] But it is very plain and easy: *The word is nigh thee*. When we speak of looking upon Christ, and receiving Christ, and feeding upon Christ, it is not Christ in heaven, nor Christ in the deep, that we mean; but Christ in the promise, Christ exhibited to us, and offered, in the word. Christ is nigh thee, for the word is nigh thee: nigh thee indeed: it is *in thy mouth, and in thy heart*; there is no difficulty in understanding, believing, and owning it. The work thou hast to do lies within thee: *the kingdom of God is within you*, [Luke 17:21](#). Thence thou must fetch thy evidences, not out of the records of heaven. *It is*, that is, it is promised that it shall be, *in thy mouth* ([Isa. 59:21](#)), *and in thy heart*, [Jer. 31:33](#). All that which is done for us is already done to our hands. Christ is come down from heaven; we need not go to fetch him. He is come up from the deep; we need not perplex ourselves how to bring him up. There is nothing now to be done, but a work in us; this must be our care, to look to our heart and mouth. Those that were under the law were to do all themselves, *Do this, and live*; but the gospel discovers the greatest part of the work done already, and what remains cut short in righteousness, salvation offered upon very plain and easy terms, brought to our door, as it were, in the word which is nigh us. It is in

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our mouth—we are reading it daily; it is in our heart—we are, or should be, thinking of it daily. Even *the word of faith*; the gospel and the promise of it, called the word of faith because it is the object of faith about which it is conversant, the word which we believe;--because it is the precept of faith, commanding it, and making it the great condition of justification;--and because it is the ordinary means by which faith is wrought and conveyed. Now what is this word of faith? We have the tenour of it, [Rom. 10:9, 10](#), the sum of the gospel, which is plain and easy enough. Observe,

First, What is promised to us: *Thou shalt be saved*. It is salvation that the gospel exhibits and tenders—saved from guilt and wrath, with the salvation of the soul, an eternal salvation, which Christ is the author of, a Saviour to the uttermost.

Secondly, Upon what terms,

a. Two things are required as conditions of salvation:—

(a.) *Confessing the Lord Jesus*—openly professing relation to him and dependence on him, as our prince and Saviour, owning Christianity in the face of all the allurements and affrightments of this world, standing by him in all weathers. Our Lord Jesus lays a great stress upon this confessing of him before men; see [Matt. 10:32, 33](#). It is the product of many graces, evinces a great deal of self-denial, love to Christ, contempt of the world, a mighty courage and resolution. It was a very great thing, especially, when the profession of Christ or Christianity hazarded estate, honour, preferment, liberty, life, and all that is dear in this world, which was the case in the primitive times. (b.) *Believing in the heart that God raised him from the dead*. The profession of faith with the mouth, if there be not the power of it in the heart, is but a mockery; the root of it must be laid in an unfeigned assent to the revelation of the gospel concerning Christ, especially concerning his resurrection, which is the fundamental article of the Christian faith, for thereby he was declared to be the Son of God with power, and full evidence was given that God accepted his satisfaction.

b. This is further illustrated ([Rom. 10:10](#)), and the order inverted, because there must first be faith in the heart before there can be an

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acceptable confession with the mouth. (a.) Concerning faith: It is *with the heart that man believeth*, which implies more than an assent of the understanding, and takes in the consent of the will, an inward, hearty, sincere, and strong consent. It is not believing (not to be reckoned so) if it be not with the heart. This is *unto righteousness*. There is the righteousness of justification and the righteousness of sanctification. Faith is to both; it is the condition of our justification ([Rom. 5:1](#)), and it is the root and spring of our sanctification; in it it is begun; by it it is carried on, [Acts 15:9](#). (b.) Concerning profession: It is with *the mouth that confession is made*—confession to God in prayer and praise ([Rom. 15:6](#)), confession to men by owning the ways of God before others, especially when we are called to it in a day of persecution. It is fit that God should be honoured with the mouth, for he made man's mouth ([Exod. 4:11](#)), and at such a time has promised to give his faithful people a *mouth and wisdom*, [Luke 21:15](#). It is part of the honour of Christ that every tongue shall confess, [Phil. 2:11](#). And this is said to be *unto salvation*, because it is the performance of the condition of that promise, [Matt. 10:32](#). Justification by faith lays the foundation of our title to salvation; but by confession we build upon that foundation, and come at last to the full possession of that to which we were entitled. So that we have here a brief summary of the terms of salvation, and they are very reasonable; in short this, that we must devote, dedicate, and give up, to God, our souls and our bodies—our souls in believing with the heart, and our bodies in confessing with the mouth. This do, and thou shalt live. For this ([Rom. 10:11](#)) he quotes [Isa. 28:16](#); *Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed; ou kataischynthesetai*. That is, [a.] He will not be ashamed to own that Christ in whom he trusts; he that believes in the heart will not be ashamed to confess with the mouth. It is sinful shame that makes people deny Christ, [Mark 8:38](#). He that believeth will not make haste (so the prophet has it)--will not make haste to run away from the sufferings he meets with in the way of his duty, will not be ashamed of a despised religion. [b.] He shall not be ashamed of his hope in Christ; he shall not be disappointed of his end. It is our duty that we must not, it is our privilege that we shall not, be ashamed of our faith in Christ. He shall never have cause to repent his confidence in reposing such a trust in the Lord Jesus.

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Verses 12-21

The first words express the design of the apostle through these verses, that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, but they stand upon the same level in point of acceptance with God. In Jesus Christ there is neither Greek nor Jews, [Col. 3:11](#). God doth not save any nor reject any because they are Jews, nor because they are Greeks, but doth equally accept both upon gospel terms: *There is no difference*. For the proof of this he urges two arguments:—

I. That God is the same to all: *The same Lord over all is rich unto all*. There is not one God to the Jews who is more kind, and another to the Gentiles who is less kind; but he is the same to all, a common father to all mankind. When he proclaimed his name, *The Lord, the Lord god, gracious and merciful*, he thereby signified not only what he was to the Jews, but what he is and will be to all his creatures that seek unto him: not only good, but rich, plenteous in goodness: he hath wherewith to supply them all, and he is free and ready to give out to them; he is both able and willing: not only rich, but rich unto us, liberal and bountiful in dispensing his favours *to all that call upon him*. Something must be done by us, that we may reap of this bounty; and it is as little as can be, we must call upon him. He will for this be enquired of ([Ezek. 36:37](#)), and surely that which is not worth the asking is not worth the having. We have nothing to do but to draw out by prayer, as there is occasion.

II. That the promise is the same to all ([Rom. 10:13](#)): *Whoever shall call*—one as well as another, without exception. This extent, this undifferencing extent, of the promise both to Jews and Gentiles he thinks should not be surprising, for it was foretold by the prophet, [Joel 2:32](#). Calling upon the name of the Lord is here put for all practical religion. What is the life of a Christian but a life of prayer? It implies a sense of our dependence on him, an entire dedication of ourselves to him, and a believing expectation of our all from him. He that thus calls upon him shall be saved. It is but ask and have; what would we have more? for the further illustration of this he observes,

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1. How necessary it was that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, [Rom. 10:14, 15](#). This was what the Jews were so angry with Paul for, that he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and preached the gospel to them. Now he shows how needful it was to bring them within the reach of the forementioned promise, an interest in which they should not envy to any of their fellow-creatures. (1.) *They cannot call on him in whom they have not believed.* Except they believe that he is God, they will not call upon him by prayer; to what purpose should they? The grace of faith is absolutely necessary to the duty of prayer; we cannot pray aright, nor pray to acceptation, without it. He that comes to God by prayer must believe, [Heb. 11:6](#). Till they believed the true God, they were calling upon idols, O Baal, hear us. (2.) *They cannot believe in him of whom they have not heard.* some way or other the divine revelation must be made known to us, before we can receive it and assent to it; it is not born with us. In hearing is included reading, which is tantamount, and by which many are brought to believe ([John 20:31](#)): *These things are written that you may believe.* But hearing only is mentioned, as the more ordinary and natural way of receiving information. (3.) *They cannot hear without a preacher;* how should they? Somebody must tell them what they are to believe. Preachers and hearers are correlates; it is a blessed thing when they mutually rejoice in each other—the hearers in the skill and faithfulness of the preacher, and the preacher in the willingness and obedience of the hearers. (4.) *They cannot preach except they be sent,* except they be both commissioned and in some measure qualified for their preaching work. How shall a man act as an ambassador, unless he have both his credentials and his instructions from the prince that sends him? This proves that to the regular ministry there must be a regular mission and ordination. It is God's prerogative to send ministers; he is the Lord of the harvest, and therefore to him we must *pray that he would send forth labourers*, [Matt. 9:38](#). He only can qualify men for, and incline them to, the work of the ministry. But the competency of that qualification, and the sincerity of that inclination, must not be left to the judgment of every man for himself: the nature of the thing will by no means admit this; but, for the preservation of due order in the church, this must needs be referred and submitted to the judgment of a competent number of those who are themselves in

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that office and of approved wisdom and experience in it, who, as in all other callings, are presumed the most able judges, and who are empowered to set apart such as they find so qualified and inclined to this work of the ministry, that by this preservation of the succession the name of Christ may endure for ever and his throne as the days of heaven. And those that are thus set apart, not only may, but must preach, as those that are sent.

2. How welcome the gospel ought to be to those to whom it was preached, because it showed the way to salvation, [Rom. 10:15](#). For this he quotes [Isa. 52:7](#). The like passage we have, [Nah. 1:15](#); which, if it point at the glad tidings of the deliverance of Israel out of Babylon in the type, yet looks further to the gospel, the good news of our salvation by Jesus Christ. Observe, (1.) What the gospel is: It is *the gospel of peace*; it is the word of reconciliation between God and man. *On earth peace*, [Luke 2:14](#). Or, peace is put in general for all good; so it is explained here; it is *glad tidings of good things*. The things of the gospel are good things indeed, the best things; tidings concerning them are the most joyful tidings, the best news that ever came from heaven to earth. (2.) What the work of ministers is: To preach this gospel, to *bring these glad tidings*; to *evangelize peace* (so the original is), to evangelize good things. Every good preacher is in this sense an evangelist: he is not only a messenger to carry the news, but an ambassador to treat; and the first gospel preachers were angels, [Luke 2:13](#) (3.) How acceptable they should therefore be to the children of men for their work's sake: *How beautiful are the feet*, that is, how welcome are they! Mary Magdalene expressed her love to Christ by kissing his feet, and afterwards by holding him by the feet, [Matt. 28:9](#). And, when Christ was sending forth his disciples, he washed their feet. Those that preach the gospel of peace should see to it that their feet (their life and conversation) be beautiful: the holiness of ministers' lives is the beauty of their feet. *How beautiful!* namely, in the eyes of those that hear them. Those that welcome the message cannot but love the messengers. See [1 Thess. 5:12, 13](#).

3. He answers an objection against all this, which might be taken from the little success which the gospel had in many places ([Rom. 10:16](#)): *But they have not all obeyed the gospel*. All the Jews have

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not, all the Gentiles have not; far the greater part of both remain in unbelief and disobedience. Observe, The gospel is given us not only to be known and believed, but to be obeyed. It is not a system of notions, but a rule of practice. This little success of the word was likewise foretold by the prophet ([Isa. 53:1](#)): *Who hath believed our report?* Very few have, few to what one would think should have believed it, considering how faithful a report it is and how well worthy of all acceptance,—very few to the many that persist in unbelief. It is no strange thing, but it is a very sad and uncomfortable thing, for the ministers of Christ to bring the report of the gospel, and not to be believed in it. Under such a melancholy consideration it is good for us to go to God and make our complaint to him. *Lord, who hath believed,* etc. In answer to this,

(1.) He shows that the word preached is the ordinary means of working faith ([Rom. 10:17](#)): *So then, **ara**—however;* though many that hear do not believe, yet those that believe have first heard. *Faith cometh by hearing.* It is the summary of what he had said before, [Rom. 10:14](#). The beginning, progress, and strength of faith, are by hearing. The word of God is therefore called *the word of faith*: it begets and nourishes faith. God gives faith, but it is by the word as the instrument. *Hearing* (that hearing which works faith) is *by the word of God*. It is not hearing the enticing words of man's wisdom, but hearing the word of God, that will befriend faith, and hearing it as the word of God. See [1 Thess. 2:13](#).

(2.) That those who would not believe the report of the gospel, yet, having heard it, were thereby left inexcusable, and may thank themselves for their own ruin, [Rom. 10:18](#); *to the end*.

[1.] The Gentiles have heard it ([Rom. 10:18](#)): *Have they not heard?* Yes, more or less, they have either heard the gospel, or at least heard of it. *Their sound went into all the earth*; not only a confused sound, but their *words* (more distinct and intelligible notices of these things) are *gone unto the ends of the world*. The commission which the apostles received runs thus: *Go you into all the world—preach to every creature—disciple all nations*; and they did with indefatigable industry and wonderful success pursue that commission. See the extent of Paul's province, [Rom. 15:19](#). To this

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remote island of Britain, one of the utmost corners of the world, not only the sound, but the words, of the gospel came within a few years after Christ's ascension. It was in order to this that the gift of tongues was at the very first poured so plentifully upon the apostles, [Acts 2:1-47](#). In the expression here he plainly alludes to [Ps. 19:4](#); which speaks of the notices which the visible works of God in the creation give to all the world of the power and Godhead of the Creator. As under the Old Testament God provided for the publishing of the work of creation by the sun, moon, and stars, so now for the publishing of the work of redemption to all the world by the preaching of gospel ministers, who are therefore called *stars*.

[2.] The Jews have heard it too, [Rom. 10:19-21](#). For this he appeals to two passages of the Old Testament, to show how inexcusable they are too. *Did not Israel know* that the Gentiles were to be called in? They might have known it from Moses and Isaiah.

First, One is taken from [Deut. 32:21](#); *I will provoke you to jealousy*. The Jews not only had the offer, but saw the Gentiles accepting it and benefitted by that acceptance, witness their vexation at the event. They had the refusal: *To you first*, [Acts 3:26](#). In all places where the apostles came still the Jews had the first offer, and the Gentiles had but their leavings. If one would not, another would. Now this provoked them to jealousy. They, as the elder brother in the parable ([Luke 15:1-32](#)) envied the reception and entertainment of the prodigal Gentiles upon their repentance. The Gentiles are here called *no people*, and *a foolish nation*, that is, not the professing people of God. How much soever there be of the wit and wisdom of the world, those that are not the people of God are, and in the end will be found to be, a foolish people. Such was the state of the Gentile world, who yet were made the people of God, and Christ to them the wisdom of God. What a provocation it was to the Jews to see the Gentiles taken into favour we may see, [Acts 13:45](#); [17:5](#), [13](#), and especially [Acts 22:22](#). It was an instance of the great wickedness of the Jews that they were thus enraged; and this in Deuteronomy is the matter of a threatening. God often makes people's sin their punishment. A man needs no greater plague than to be left to the impetuous rage of his own lusts.

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Secondly, Another is taken from [Isa. 65:1, 2](#), which is very full, and in it Esaias is very bold—bold indeed, to speak so plainly of the rejection of his own countrymen. Those that will be found faithful have need to be very bold. Those that are resolved to please God must not be afraid to displease any man. Now Esaias speaks boldly and plainly.

a. Of the preventing grace and favour of God in the reception and entertainment of the Gentiles ([Rom. 10:20](#)): *I was found of those that sought me not*. The prescribed method is, Seek and find; this is a rule for us, not a rule for God, who is often found of those that do not seek. His grace is his own, distinguishing grace his own, and he dispenses it in a way of sovereignty, gives or withholds it at pleasure—anticipates us with the blessings, the riches choicest blessings, of his goodness. Thus he manifested himself to the Gentiles, by sending the light of the gospel among them, when they were so far from seeking him and asking after him that they were following after lying vanities, and serving dumb idols. Was not this our own particular case? Did not God begin in love, and manifest himself to us when we did not ask after him? And was not that a time of love indeed, to be often remembered with a great deal of thankfulness.

b. Of the obstinacy and perverseness of Israel, notwithstanding the fair offers and affectionate invitations they had, [Rom. 10:21](#). Observe,

(a.) God's great goodness to them: *All day long I have stretched forth my hands*. [a.] His offers: *I have stretched forth my hands*, offering them life and salvation with the greatest sincerity and seriousness that can be, with all possible expressions of earnestness and importunity, showing them the happiness tendered, setting it before them with the greatest evidence, reasoning the case with them. Stretching forth the hands is the gesture of those that require audience ([Acts 26:1](#)), or desire acceptance, [Prov. 1:24](#). Christ was crucified with his hands stretched out. *Stretched forth my hands* as offering reconciliation—come let us shake hands and be friends; and our duty is to give the hand to him, [2 Chron. 30:8](#). [b.] His patience in making these offers: *All day long*. The patience of God towards

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provoking sinners is admirable. He waits to be gracious. The time of God's patience is here called a day, lightsome as a day and fit for work and business, but limited as a day, and a night at the end of it. he bears long, but he will not bear always.

(b.) Their great badness to him. They were a *disobedient gainsaying people*. One word in the Hebrew, in Isaiah, is here well explained by two; not only disobedient to the call, not yielding to it, but gainsaying, and quarrelling with it, which is much worse. Many that will not accept of a good proposal will yet acknowledge that they have nothing to say against it: but the Jews who believed not rested not there, but contradicted and blasphemed. God's patience with them was a very great aggravation of their disobedience, and rendered it the more exceedingly sinful; as their disobedience advanced the honour of God's patience and rendered it the more exceedingly gracious. It is a wonder of mercy in God that his goodness is not overcome by man's badness; and it is a wonder of wickedness in man that his badness is not overcome by God's goodness.

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