

## Romans

Author: Paul (1:1), apostle to the Gentiles (11:13, 15:15-20) as he is described elsewhere (Galatians 2:7-8, Acts 26:16-18)

Date: Paul was in possession of a contribution from Achaia and Macedonia (15:25 – 26) and was on his way to deliver it. That collection is also mentioned in 2 Corinthians 8:1 – 6, which was prior to Paul's arrest in Jerusalem, so this letter was likely written about 56 or 57, probably from Corinth (Phoebe, 16:1; Gaius, 16:23 and 1 Corinthians 1:14; Erastus, 16:23, 2 Timothy 4:20).

Audience: "to all who are beloved of God" (1:7) rather than to "the church at" (1 Corinthians 1:2, 2 Corinthians 1:2, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:1), "to the saints who are at" (Ephesians 1:1, Phillipians 1:1, Colossians 1:2), or "to the churches of Galatia" (Galatians 1:2). There seems to have been more than one group of Christians in Rome (16:5, 16:15). Many appear to have been Gentiles (11:13, 1:5, 15:18 – 20). Many of the names in chapter 16 are Gentile names. And, the elders of the Jews in Acts 28:22 knew little of the church, although that event was several years after the writing of this letter. Paul had not been there (Acts 19:21, 15:18 – 28). The gospel may have been carried there by Priscilla and Aquilla (Acts 18:2), or by some who learned of Jesus in Jerusalem (Acts 2:10), or by some of Paul's converts in Turkey and Greece.

Theme: Our acceptability to God is based on our faith.

- Introduction (1:1 – 15)
  - Credentials (1:1 – 7)
    - A slave, not a hired servant or a partner or an ambassador
    - Called: summoned to a task, literally, on the road to Damascus (*cf.* 1 Corinthians 9:16)
    - Apostle: one sent as a representative, which can be a slave
    - Separated into the gospel: to set a boundary, immersed in the gospel
      - Promised by the prophets
      - God's Son
      - Seed of David
      - Raised by the Spirit
    - Received a gracious nature (note: does not mention authority) and was sent out "into" the obedience of faith among the Gentiles "in behalf of" His essential nature (His name). So, the obedience was already there; Paul was sent into it to present the true nature of God.
    - The faithful of Rome were already beloved of God and had been summoned to be among the pure (holy). Paul wished for them to receive a gracious nature like God's (as explained more fully in chapter 8) and peace. The "grace and peace" purpose opens 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Phillipians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, 1 & 2 Peter, 2 John, Jude, and Revelation.

- Paul's connection to the faithful of Rome (1:8 – 15)
  - Relays to them that their reputation for faithfulness was well known.
  - “Whom I serve in my spirit.” This was not a physical task only, but more importantly one that originated from Paul's spirit.
  - Paul prayed for them frequently (similar announcements in Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 2 Timothy, and Philemon).
  - Paul desired to see them physically
    - To impart some spiritual gift. Apparently, no other apostles had been to Rome, so those “special” powers, including leadership and various miraculous abilities, were not available to them. So, their faith was well known despite having no special abilities.
    - For mutual encouragement. Both parties would benefit.
    - Paul also wanted to use the congregations of Rome as a starting point for reaching more Gentiles. Paul considered himself to be indebted to the Gentiles to whom he might speak, rather than the other way around.
- Theme: The just shall live by faith (1:16 – 17)
  - Not ashamed: At this point, we can only speculate why one might be ashamed. The rationale is explored in the next few chapters. Some reasons to be proud are listed:
    - Power of God into rescue. In the following paragraph and chapters, that rescue is from the wrath of God, from this broken world, and from ourselves.
    - For the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Israel was promised first access to the Messiah, although the Gentiles were also in the target audience. This is why Paul always went to the synagogue first.
    - The “rightness” of God is revealed in this good news. The competing gods were not always right (they had some negative attributes). The gracious nature of God was revealed in this good news.
    - “Out of faith, into faith.” This good news emerged out of God's nature (His faithfulness) and was absorbed into those who believed.
  - “The just shall live by faith.” (Habakkuk 2:4) God had outlined the nature of the eternal kingdom at least six centuries before Jesus. The primary motivator for life would be trusting God, as opposed to obeying God (legalism).
  - In this letter, the means of achieving this faith that results in being “right” is through the grace and peace of 1:7.
  - As the letter unfolds, the explanation of “not ashamed” seems to be the defense of faith being the central focus of the relationship between God and people. Many relationship styles have been tried and all have failed except this one. Paul will present the illogic of using any other foundation.
- Exposing excuses for acceptability before God by human means (1:18 – 3:20)
  - Those who suppress the truth cannot hide from it (1:18 – 2:10)
    - Sufficient comprehension of God (who is truth, the One who gets to decide what is right) is innate and has been demonstrated (1:19 – 20)
    - Being able to deduce the attributes of God, but yet refusing to do so results in futile thinking and “dark” passions. Philosophies attempting to defend setting aside this understanding result in foolishness or vanity or uselessness, as Solomon put it in Ecclesiastes. (1:21 – 31) Examples of futility:

- Idols that resemble physical animals are foolish in that God obviously cannot be bound by dimensionality.
- When people set aside the obvious nature of God, God does not force them to change, but lets them go down their dark paths. The list of self-justified paths has not changed in all of history.
- Such hypocrisy deserves death (1:32 – 2:3)
- Logically, the goodness of God leads you to repentance (2:4), not fear of God or hope of receiving a physical benefit.
- Logically, justice will be served (2:5 – 10)
  - The contrast is between those who seek godly character versus the self-seeking.
  - So, the goal is neither achievement nor self-justification, but godly character achieved through faith.
- Logically, God could not be partial to one ethnic group (2:11 – 3:20)
  - Universality implies that the Law was not the permanent standard, since it was not given to all. (2:14)
  - Rather, each culture will be judged using its own rules. Not to worry, no culture could keep up with their own rules. (2:12)
  - The existence of law codes in every culture implies that all understand there is a right and wrong. (2:15)
  - If God is impartial, what was the point of choosing Israel? (2:17 – 24)
    - Did the Law make Israel do the right things?
    - If Israel was to be the standard for all, how have you done?
  - Circumcision is not the standard for acceptance; “rightness” is (2:25 – 29)
    - Circumcision did not make Israel do the right things.
    - Circumcision is a symbol or revealing one’s most private part to God.
  - What advantage was the Law or circumcision? (3:1 – 3)?
    - God chose to reveal the plan for redemption through Israel.
    - The evidence came through Israel.
    - Israel messing up did not cancel God’s plan.
  - If bad behavior revealed God’s purpose, should He not praise the unrighteousness for its result? (3:4 – 8)
    - No, justice still must be served.
    - Convolution logic for the purpose of justifying myself just makes things worse.
  - All ethnic groups fall under the same condemnations for the same reasons (3:9 – 20)
    - Note that each of the quotes is from Psalms with the exception of verse 15 which is from Isaiah. In each case, the description is about people who have forsaken God. Those who pursue God are also in the same contexts. So, Paul’s point is not to make the claim that all people are inherently and irretrievably evil. Rather, he is making the point that there are a lot of evil people. All of these quotes describe evil Israelites (3:19). By extension, Gentiles surely have the same problems. One ethnic groups is not better

than another. The point of the Law was to make thoughtful people recognize their sin. (3:20)

- Psalm 14:1 – 3 The “none” is among the foolish, not among all people. The righteous are described in verse 5.
- In Psalm 53, the “none” are the fool and worker of iniquity. Certainly, one faithful person was on earth at that time, if only the author.
- Psalm 5:9 The “their” describes those of bad behavior, whereas the author appeals to God and claims that some have trust in God.
- Psalm 10:7 This describes “the wicked.” But the appeal is for God to act against such people and aid those who have committed themselves to God.
- Isaiah 59:7 – 8 This long description of the ills of Israel ends with hope for “those who turn from transgression in Jacob.” (Verse 20)
- Psalm 36:1 The description is about the “wicked.” The other group is described in verses 7 – 12.
- The logical resolution of the justice problem is to let God resolve it (3:21 – 31)
  - Evidence: the Law and the Prophets (3:21)
  - Method: Through the faith of Jesus. (3:22) Redemption: We are not required to be “good enough,” which is fraught with problems of attaining a minimum requirement. Rather, Jesus paid the debt for all, paid off the system once for all. (3:24) Note: if we are justified by our own faith, we are back in the same problem as with Law. We cannot obey law well enough. Likewise, we cannot have enough faith. Any shortcoming is to fall short.
  - Motivation: Grace (3:24). God’s integrated and consistent character.
  - Audience: All who believe (3:22). The Law was for a small ethnic group, so lacks universality. Performance methods always leave people falling short. (3:23)
  - Scary verse: “...justifier of the one who has the faith of Jesus.” (3:26) Note: Jesus redeemed everyone. (1 John 2:2) So, the “justified” are those whom Jesus declares as such, who are described as having His faith. However, the next verse takes away the scary part, “Where is the boasting?” So, Paul’s point was not to set a benchmark, but to show that Jesus did the heavy lifting. What remains for us to accomplish is not boast-worthy.
  - “Law of faith” is sarcasm.
  - “Justified (made righteous) apart from the deeds of the Law.” As the explanation unfolds, the idea is that faith results in good works, but good works without faith is worthless (James 2). In 3:31, faith does not dispose of rules, but rather puts rules in context.
  - God of the Gentiles also. (3:29) Note that some non-Israelites are described as faithful in the Old Testament (e.g., Melchizedek, Jethro).
- Another way to look at faith versus Law (4:1 – 25)
  - Consider the account in Genesis 15 in which Abram was first called righteous and Genesis 17, in which that promise was repeated and in which circumcision was first introduced.
    - In Genesis 15:4 – 6, Abraham is promised an heir and an uncountable number of descendants. “Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him as righteousness.” Circumcision began at least 14 years later, in chapter 17.

Chapter 15 is before Ishmael. In chapter 17, Ishmael is 13. The Genesis 15 scene is recalled in Romans 4:3, 9 – 12, and 16 – 22, making the point that Abraham’s faith was accounted as righteousness before he was circumcised. Therefore, circumcision is not necessary to be acceptable since Abraham was uncircumcised when he was first said to be righteous, as well as after being circumcised.

- Genesis 17:2 – 4 repeats this promise, but again before God introduced the concept of circumcision. Two more promises are given in 17:7 – 8, that God will be the God of Abraham’s descendants and that those descendants will inherit the land of Canaan in perpetuity. The sign of this covenant (promise) was to be circumcision. Some include the promise in 17:2 – 4 in the sign of circumcision. Others do not because the “uncountable descendants” promise was a repeat of 15:4 – 6, so they count only the latter two promises in the sign of circumcision.
  - Romans 4:17 repeats the Genesis 17:5 account of the “uncountable descendants” promise, but separates it from circumcision by insisting that Abraham is the “father” of all the faithful, whether or not the faithful person has been circumcised.
  - Faithful Gentiles were not circumcised as a point of some importance (Galatians 2:3), although faithful Jews were (Acts 16:3). Whether to circumcise faithful Gentiles was a matter of some contention (Acts 15:1, 15:5) and was addressed directly by Paul (Galatians 5:2 – 6, 6:12 – 13). The faithful are described sarcastically as “the circumcision” (Philippians 3:2 – 4), in opposition to those who believed circumcision to be necessary for all the faithful. The faithful are “circumcised with a circumcision made without hands.” (Colossians 2:11) Paul specifically instructed the uncircumcised not to be circumcised. (1 Corinthians 7:18 – 19)
  - Therefore, the “countless descendants” promise in Genesis 17 is not part of the other two promises for which circumcision is the sign. However, since the promise in Genesis 17:7 – 8 includes the adjective, everlasting, it seems that a promise remains for faithful Israelites (circumcised, presumably) to be able to claim the Promised Land. The present Israelis are not in this group because they fail to follow Jesus as the faithful will do.
- Paul’s point is to show the illogic of claiming that God accepts the physical descendants of Abraham, or the circumcised, or those who follow the Law. Note throughout the chapter that faith was accounted “into” righteousness, painting a picture.
- (1 – 5) Abraham’s faith was accounted as righteousness. Obviously, Abraham lived five centuries before the Law, so he was not counted righteous by the Law. Further, following rules, if that were the appropriate measure, would incur a debt on the part of God; acceptance would be earned. Paul, contrary to many modern Calvinists, did not consider faith a “work.” Instead, Paul says that such acceptance is due to God’s gracious nature in which Abraham trusted.
  - (6 – 8) To defeat the rebuttal that Abraham was the only one who was acceptable in this way, Paul points out that David (Psalm 32) said the same

thing. Note the parallelism between forgiven and “covered,” a metaphor for redeemed, which is also parallel to “not impute.”

- (9 – 12) Many rabbis connected circumcision with acceptance, connecting all three promises of Genesis 17 rather than just the latter two. Paul points out that Abraham was counted righteous due to his faith before he was circumcised. Then, since Abraham later was circumcised as a sign of his faith in the latter two promises, he was also the “father” of the circumcised. Therefore, Abraham is the ancestor of both circumcised and uncircumcised faithful people.
- (13 – 16) For those who missed that the Law came five centuries after Abraham, Paul points out that if Law is the benchmark, then God’s declaration of Abraham’s acceptance by his faith was incorrect.
- (17 – 22) As a small point, Paul noted that God’s promise in Genesis 17:5 is in the past tense, although this would not come true for a significant period of time. The idea is that God’s promise was so certain that it could rightly be said that Abraham was already the father of many nations, and Abraham understood that.
- (23 – 25) This historical account is more than history, but designed to be used in the way Paul was using it, as an illustration of how to be counted righteous throughout all ages. “Delivered up because of our offenses” – someone had to pay our debts. “Raised because of our justification” – Jesus was raised to prove that His payment had been successful, that people were now square with justice.
- How we may succeed to peace, hope, love, graciousness, and “rightness” in this broken world while other methods fail (Chapter 5)
  - (1 – 5) As previously shown, people are declared square with justice through their faith (1:17, 3:22 – 26, 3:28 – 30, 4:3, 4:5, 4:9, 4:22).
    - Being justified by faith gives us peace with God. The faithful are no longer adversaries to God or in fear of attack.
    - This faith gives the faithful access into the gracious nature of God, absorbing it into themselves.
    - The faithful rejoice in the fact that their own graciousness will be increasing. They have this hope (confident expectation).
    - “We glory [display a parade of godly character traits] in tribulation.” Over the centuries, the misinterpretation of “glory” caused an expectation that they needed to be happy during bad times. See also James 1:2 – 4.
    - Because the faithful see godly character (in verse 5, love) being produced in themselves during tribulation, they have hope (a confident expectation) of having been accepted by God. See also 2 Corinthians 4:7, Romans 12:1 – 8, 1 Peter 4:7 – 11, John 17:20 – 23, Romans 8:13, 2 Corinthians 3:16 – 18, and 1 John 2:27.
  - (6 – 11) As previously shown, becoming right with God through personal effort has a low probability of success. The method God chose was to justify all people of all eras (see also 1 John 2:2; Jesus paid off the justice system, not just the penalties accrued by those who were being saved). This technique removes the skill of people from the equation and greatly increases the probability of success.
    - The fact that Jesus died for people who did not care (most of whom never would) makes redemption a gift rather than something earned or achieved.

- “Saved by His life”
      - Jesus was without sin in His earthly life (Hebrews 4:15), so He was a suitable sacrifice (1 Peter 1:19).
      - Jesus was resurrected and was seen by many. So, His claims are proven and He continues to live.
      - Jesus went back to heaven and presented His blood in the Temple in heaven, completing the redemption (Hebrews 9:11 – 15)
  - (12 – 21) Logically, if people can cause so much failure, surely Jesus can cause that much success.
    - Note (verse 13): Paul cautions not to get side-tracked by the Law of Moses. God has always had a right-and-wrong system with which all people were imbued (1:18 – 21), yet messed up.
    - Note: Death in this paragraph is spiritual death, separation from God. If Paul refers to physical death, the counterpoint would be physical life, promising that faithful people would live forever physically. However, faithful people in the Bible died, including Christians.
    - (12) Spiritual death spread not by inheritance (as taught by Calvinism and Catholicism) but because everyone has messed up something. The implication is that the preponderance of sin made it spread faster.
    - (14) “Type” An example. In this case, the example is opposite. What Adam messed up, Jesus fixed.
    - (15) By observation, sin spread through people. If people can have such an influence, logically Jesus could have at least as much influence for good as people have for evil, probably more.
    - (16, 18) Second contrast: Sin brought debt to justice. Jesus paid off the debt.
    - (17, 19) Third contrast: If sin could affect people through so many generations, then Jesus could affect people oppositely to an equal or greater degree.
    - (20 – 21) The Law (and every law code) did not fix anything. It just made the mistakes more obvious. Rather than making God angry so that He might lash out at us (as would most pagan gods), God’s gracious nature prompted Him to offer the fix for the problem.
- Logically, we need to participate to gain the benefits. Therefore, be obedient to your new master (Chapter 6)
  - (1 – 2) Trying to take advantage of redemption to feel empowered to do whatever you want is illogical. The point was raised earlier in 2:8. See also Galatians 5:13 and 1 Peter 2:16. Here, Paul will expand on the “dead to sin” image.
  - (3 – 7) Symbolism of baptism that relates to “dead to sin.” There are more symbols, but Paul addresses only the ones that relate to his point.
    - Baptism symbolizes our participation in the death of Jesus. Although not specified here, Paul will liken this to being “living sacrifices” (12:1 – 2) through which we prove to outsiders what the desire of God is. Although we do not redeem anyone (Jesus did that once for all), we “die” to self.
    - Baptism symbolizes rising to walk a new life, not the old life.
    - Baptism symbolizes our acceptance of the assurance of the final resurrection. Those who continue in the old ways are not suited to heaven.

- Baptism symbolizes the end of slavery to sin. The analogy is that when a slave dies, he is no longer a slave (akin to when a spouse dies, one is no longer married, which is used as an illustration in chapter 7). Therefore, we are free.
  - (8 – 23) Further logical arguments for good behavior
    - (8 – 11) Jesus died to sin and lives to God. If we died to sin, we also should live to God.
    - (12 – 14) If we are dead to sin, we no longer obey it. If we live to God, we present ourselves to Him for His uses. We are not under Law because Jesus paid the debt to justice. We serve God because of His nature (grace), not because of His power to condemn.
    - (15 – 20) Your master is the one you obey. If you died to sin, you no longer obey it. Rather, obey God from the heart by following the teaching which was entrusted to you.
    - (21 – 23) What benefit was derived from slavery to sin? Sin produces shame, debt, and death. Serving God yields holiness and eternal life.
- Law codes do not work (Chapter 7)
  - Although the primary focus in the chapter is the inability of the Law of Moses to deliver people from sin, the same arguments would work for any law code due to the argument made in 2:10 – 17.
  - In this chapter, Paul laments his inability to defeat the sin in himself so that he might pursue what he really desires (God). This may be taken as a personal lament about Paul himself, or a national lament about Israel, or a common complaint among all people who have a desire to serve God. All of them work. Paul probably meant all three ways, as excellent literature that makes one think.
  - (1 – 4) Using the analogy of marriage, when one’s spouse dies, one is free to marry another. Being dead to sin implies being dead to the Law also. The purpose is that we may be married to another and bear fruit (implying “children”).
  - (5 – 11) Laws describe bad behavior, so dedication to the Law causes us to focus our attention on bad behavior. This subjects us to constant temptation to which we then succumb. If we are freed from the Law (through our being dead to self), we are free to focus on good stuff.
  - (12 – 14) But we cannot blame the Law. The Law itself is “holy just, and good.” The problem is not the Law, but our exposure to sin in the world which then is brought to the front by reading the Law. The Law is spiritual, but I am fleshly. Note: This does not mean that flesh is inherently sinful, but that we make bad choices and get stuck in that mindset. See Romans 1:18 – 19 (knowledge of right and wrong and the nature of God are built into us) and Ecclesiastes 7:29 (God made man upright; he goes astray in his schemes).
  - (15 – 19) Why do I keep failing? The line “nothing good dwells in me,” has been taken out of context to prove Total Depravity. Note that Paul already made the point that a knowledge of right and wrong plus the nature of God are built in (1:18 – 19), and here says that we desire to do good (7:15 – 16, 19). Some put the blame on “sin” as though it were a thinking being who invades us (like demon possession). Rather, this is a figure of speech for the sinful world in which we live. We allow the influence of the world to distract us from what we desire to do.



- (20 – 25) Repeating the conclusion of the previous paragraph, we desire to do good, but fail. It is as if our physical bodies have minds of their own. Paul laments that this situation has seemed unconquerable for a very long time. But then Paul provides the answer to the dilemma: Jesus. He will expand on how this works in chapter 8.
- Walking by the Spirit yields success (8:1 – 17)
  - (1 – 8) The justice problem is solved by the redemption paid by Jesus.
    - (2) We have been liberated from the failures described in chapter 7.
    - (4) The Law (and all law codes) did not have as its purpose the controlling of behavior, but the teaching of what is right. Therefore, when the faithful become focused on what is right, they “fulfill” the Law; they illustrate in their lives the purpose of the Law.
    - (6) Interpreting life through the physical results in failure as previously shown. Being focused on the ideas of God (what is right) results in peace and successful life. Success is defined as achieving the goals of creation: a big family that will last.
    - (7) The mind which interprets life through the physical will become opposed to God because God is not physical, but a Spirit. The physically minded cannot comprehend God’s purpose because it is not physical.
  - (9 – 17) The faithful get help in making the transition to the spiritual
    - (9) Having the indwelling Spirit is the sign that one is acceptable. It is also called a down-payment (2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5, Ephesians 1:13 – 14).
    - (10) “The body is dead because of sin” recalls mortality. Like 7:9 – 11, the Law pointed out sin, thereby, figuratively, killing us. But the faithful person, who by definition is focused not on the physical but the spiritual, avoids that death by measuring all things based on what is right, not by what is wrong.
    - (11) “Give life to your mortal body” A person may physically be alive but only exist. The faithful are enabled by the indwelling Spirit to have worthwhile and joyful life while still on earth.
    - (12) We do not owe this physical world anything.
    - (13) We overcome by the power of the indwelling Spirit. As 7:19 – 20, we discover at some point that we cannot fix ourselves. So, we must rely on the Spirit.
    - (14) The meaning of “led” has been variously understood. Of course, claiming to be led by God’s voice in your head cannot be proven, so is not a reasonable answer. We may be led by the wisdom that the Spirit develops in us (James 1:5) or by the character development we experience through the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18) or through understanding the Word better (1 Corinthians 2:9 – 12, Ephesians 1:17 – 19).
    - (15) The Law mentality leads to a life of fear of failure. A focus on the Spirit results in a positive family dynamic.
    - (16) This indwelling Spirit also intercedes for us and with us, as further described in 8:26 – 27.
    - (17) “If indeed we suffer with Him.” Suffering is to be expected by the faithful, much like 1 Peter 2:21. See also Philippians 1:29, 3:8 – 10, Colossians 1:24, 2 Thessalonians 1:4 – 5, James 1:2 – 4.
- Suffering is a mark of success, not failure (8:18 – 39)

- (18) First, suffering in this life is a very small price to pay for the next life.
- (19 – 22) Using the personification of creation:
  - If creation could think, it would be really happy to see us, knowing that when this family of God is assembled, creation can stop being broken.
  - Creation was made this way (broken) because God wanted a place where spirits could learn hope.
  - When this heaven and earth are destroyed and the new heaven and earth are delivered (Revelation 21:1), both it and we will be free of the downward spiral.
- (23 – 28) Even this life is not so bad. We have a taste of success.
  - (23) We have the first fruits of the Spirit (the promises of the work of the indwelling Spirit). So, we eagerly anticipate the transition at Judgment.
  - (24) This creation, broken as it is, provides that scenario for learning hope, which is an essential characteristic of Biblical faith (based on evidence, understanding the need for a sacrifice, knowing that the Word is true, confident expectation – hope, acting on the promises, developing the divine nature, evangelism).
  - (26 – 27) Promise of translation of our prayers. The implication from the context is that these are prayers about hardship
  - (28) In this context of a decaying creation, even these bad things will not derail the plan of God. Everything will work out in the end. Remember how the section started in 8:18. The difficulties of life are small compared to absorbing the character of God.
- (29 – 39) The plan itself is a source of positivity.
  - (29) God planned before creation for this big family (many brethren), setting in motion the factors that would result in each faithful person being conformed to the character of Jesus.
  - (30) God also planned before creation to summon people to this family. He did not expect us to figure it out and come looking for Him. Further, He planned before creation to handle the justice problem.
  - (31 – 34) If God made this plan before creation, we may have a confident expectation of success.
  - (35 – 39) None of our bad times can separate us from God. First, bad times are not a mark of failure. Second, God announced that this suffering was part of the plan centuries in advance (Psalm 44:22). Third, we have been enabled to overcome (8:13), so we are rightly called conquerors. Fourth, outside influences cannot force us out.
- The failure of the nation of Israel does not mitigate against this plan, rather it is part of the plan. (Chapter 9)
  - (1 – 5) Before making the argument that the low response rate within Israel was expected and useful, Paul expresses his sorrow of that failure.
    - (3) This is called hyperbole. However, Paul was so outward-focused, volunteering to switch places with unbelieving Israelites would be in keeping with his character.
    - (4 – 5) Perhaps so he cannot be accused of hating those who have rejected his message, Paul recounts all the great things that have happened in Israel, much like his argument about the Law, that it was holy, just, and good (7:12).

- (6 – 13) Paul answers the question of why so many of Israel failed to respond. This first paragraph is not the whole argument, which concludes at the end of the chapter. As background to the principle, Paul recalls that physical lineage does not put one into the family of God.
  - (7 – 9) Abraham had multiple children: Ishmael with Hagar, and six more sons (and an unknown number of daughters) with Keturah (Genesis 25:1 – 2). But, only Isaac is counted as the “seed” (Genesis 21:12). The question would arise from, “Who are the children of promise?” Galatians 3:6 – 29 gives more detail, but the question is answered before the end of this chapter.
  - (10 – 13) Isaac had two sons, but only one was included in the plan.
    - Jacob was chosen before he was born, before he could earn the superior position as an illustration that God is in control of the plan.
    - (13) This quote from Malachi 1:2 – 3 speaks of the nations that came from Jacob and Esau, not the two men as individuals. Malachi’s point was that Israel returned from Captivity whereas Edom did not.
- (14 – 23) God is not required to treat everyone exactly the same. This point assumes that people have free will, so they will all be in different situations. Further, acceptability is by faith, not works, so having equal physical conditions is not required.
  - (14) The “fairness” crowd (socialism) claims that everyone must have equal physical conditions – except those who are making the decisions, of course.
  - (15) The quote is from Exodus 33:19, the burning bush scene. God’s point was that He can fix problems and show compassion on whomever He wants. His actions are still right even if He does not help everyone. Again, this implies free will, that we are responsible for our own choices.
  - (16) If everyone were treated exactly the same, we would be back to a performance mentality, so our acceptability would be by our performance rather than by God’s initiative (of redemption and evidence and such).
  - (17 – 18) A negative example, God decided to set up the Pharaoh for failure for the purpose of advancing His plan. If the Pharaoh had no free will, God’s actions would have been evil. So, again, this implies free will on the part of the Pharaoh.
  - (19) This is the whiny response, “That’s not fair.” Everyone resists the will of God at some point; we call it sin. Further, only a small number of people were selected to be leaders in God’s plan. That is not favoring that small group, but rather is just asking a lot of them.
  - (20 – 23) First, God is a lot smarter than people. So, we ought not question God’s planning and abilities. Paul’s example is the plethora of bad people throughout history. God was patient and let them have every opportunity to change. At the other end of the spectrum, even to those who responded, God had to show mercy to get them where they needed to be (to become a parade of godly character traits).
- (24 – 29) The children of Abraham are his “children” for a reason other than physical inheritance. As in the first section, this is proved by choosing Isaac and Jacob. The key is “children of promise” (8). Believing the promises is faith. So, the children of promise are the faithful. Paul gives examples of prophets who predicted this.

- (25 – 26) Hosea 2:23 and 1:10 (and the whole allegory that Hosea played out) illustrated that the children of God will come from those whom the religious leaders considered outcasts.
    - (27 – 28) Isaiah 10:22 – 23 predicted that only a small portion of the nation of Israel would become part of the family of God.
    - (29) Isaiah 1:9 predicted that this small remnant would be the seed for the family of God, not the whole family of God.
  - (30 – 33) Answering the question raised in verse 6 (Who are the children?), Paul concludes that the family is composed of those who have faith.
    - (30) This implies that those outside of Israel (outside of the Law of Moses) were eligible, as well as those who, historically, had no connection with the One True God.
    - (31) Israel had an advantage, as noted in verses 4 and 5, yet largely failed.
    - (32) The answer: God is looking for faith, not lineage. By having the wrong perception of the criterion for acceptability, they tripped over their preconceptions and missed Jesus.
    - (33) A composite of Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16, this conclusion repeats that the criterion for acceptance is faith, despite the many who could not come to grips with the person of Jesus.
- Summary of the history of faith (Chapter 10)
  - (1 – 8) Repeating the story of the failure of Israel
    - (1) Repeating the sentiment in 9:1 – 3.
    - (2 – 3) Israel failed because they failed to connect the dots, overlooking the impossibility of fixing oneself and of getting all the right answers about what God wants. Israel failed to let God take care of what people cannot do.
    - (4) “End of the Law.” This is not to say that Jesus came to cancel the Law of Moses. He said He did not come to change any of it (Matthew 5:18), and He did not. However, Daniel and Zechariah predicted the end of the Law with the destruction of the second Temple. Paul’s point here is that Jesus ushered in a method of looking toward what is right (righteousness) instead of being tempted by the boundary between right and wrong. Law is of no use to the faithful, as in 1 Timothy 1:9.
    - (5 – 8) Paul cites a series of lines from Deuteronomy 30:12 – 14 to illustrate that this principle of acceptance through faith, not Law, was apparent to Moses. That paragraph opens, “This is not too difficult for you.” Anyone who pondered the Law should have recognized that it was a little complex, and that it would be hard to follow consistently, so there must have been a simpler way of understanding what God wanted. God would make it plain and it would come from the hearts of the faithful. The last line, “the word of faith which we preach,” makes a parallel with the gospel, which also is not too difficult, not requiring special people to explain it.
    - (9 – 11) In the development of church doctrines, this passage has been greatly abused. “Confess” was a serious matter in that day, implying that one was wholly dedicated to the allegiance specified. It was not just the recitation of certain words. “Believe” is the verb form of faith, and Biblical faith has certain essential characteristics (evidence, Scriptures, sacrifice, confident expectation,

promises, taking on the divine nature, and evangelism), not just a mental exercise. Verse 10 shows the connection between the heart and action, and the seriousness of swearing allegiance. Again, the concept was presented by God centuries before Jesus, as illustrated by the citation from Isaiah 28:16.

- (12 – 13) Expanding the application to the Gentiles, Paul cites Joel 2:32. Joel promised restoration to Israel in 2:21 – 27, but then expanded the promise to “all” in 2:28 – 32, which Peter quoted in Acts 2, for the Messianic era.
- (14 – 15) In keeping with the theme of Israel’s place in the plan of God, Paul makes a logical argument that the Gentiles could not know about this salvation unless those who know the plan, the faithful Jews, tell them about it.
- (16 – 21) Anticipating a complaint that the poor response rate among Jews mitigated against his argument, Paul cited representative examples from Israelite history in which only small groups were faithful.
  - (16) Isaiah complained (53:1) that the response was too small.
  - (18) Prior to the gospel, the knowledge of God had been spread worldwide if only by observation of nature (Psalm 19:4), as already argued in 1:20.
  - (19) God had promised through Moses to stimulate a response from Israel by having a relationship with non-Israelites (Deuteronomy 32:21). So the inclusion of Gentiles should be no surprise.
  - (20 – 21) Isaiah 65:1 – 2, in a long Messianic section, included reference to the Messiah being found by non-Israelites despite the poor response rate in Israel.
- Despite a poor record, Israel was not totally rejected. (Chapter 11)
  - Paul closed out the logic of God’s plan for Israel by explaining that the low response rate was part of the plan, and that the response rate would improve soon (although not to a huge degree, but up to the percentage experienced by other groups).
  - Previous arguments have been:
    - (9:6 – 13) Physical lineage does not constitute being part of the family of God.
    - (9:14 – 23) God is not required to treat everyone the same.
    - (9:24 – 33) The children of promise are those of faith.
    - (10:1 – 8) The majority of Israel failed to connect the dots
    - (10:9 – 11) The measure has always been heart resulting in action not rules.
    - (10:12 – 15) Incorporating the Gentiles was promised for centuries. The job of Israel was to let them know, not keep them out.
    - (10:16 – 21) The “remnant” theme is recurring in Israel.
  - (1 – 6) Israel was not totally rejected. The faithful remnant remains.
    - (1) Paul uses himself as an example, as a faithful Israelite.
    - (2 – 4) Elijah thought he was the only one left, but God let him know that there were many more (1 Kings 19:10 – 18).
    - (5 – 6) The same is true in Paul’s day; a remnant remains.
      - “According to the election by grace.” Elect and chosen are the same Greek word. Some have taught that this is individual election, but the context will not support that assertion. The previous two chapters concluded that the faithful were the children of Abraham, so the chosen

are the faithful as a group, not individuals. “Choosing” emphasizes that the initiative was God’s, not ours. Without God’s initiative, we would not have sought Him. That initiative emerged from His grace, the integrated and consistent character traits of God, finding a means by which justice could be preserved and a family formed.

- If the initiative is God’s then acceptability on the basis of Law is disallowed, since reaching acceptability through Law emerges from self-discipline, not faith.
- (7 – 10) The political and financial success of Israel (many Jews remembered only the good parts of their history) became their downfall, as noted in Hosea 1:10 and 2:23 as well as Isaiah 10:22 – 23, centuries earlier.
- (11 – 32) God planned to use the small initial response in Israel to drive the gospel out of Israel to the Gentiles. Then, the fact that Gentiles responded would incite more Jews to respond. The result would be that all faithful people would eventually come together.
  - (15) The second wave of Jewish Christians will be like a resurrection. I assume that this refers to the many Jews who turned to Jesus as the Messiah after the Temple was destroyed as predicted by Daniel 9:26. If so, this is future to Paul by 10 – 15 years.
  - (16) If the firstfruits or root of the gospel are acceptable to God (the initial Jewish Christians), then those whom they taught (Gentiles) would be acceptable, too.
  - (17 – 24) The olive tree analogy
    - If the people of God are likened to an olive tree, everyone knows that branches can be broken off, either intentionally or by a storm. Further, branches from other trees may be grafted into the original tree.
    - The branches grafted in should not be arrogant, but rather acknowledge that they are kept alive by the root and trunk. Further, the grafted-in branches should realize that they could be removed just as easily as the original branches had been, and for the same reasons.
    - The branches broken off can be grafted back in, so the unbelieving Jews are not permanently banned.
    - This analogy disproves Once-Saved-Always-Saved.
  - (25 – 32) How God would incorporate the Gentiles while extracting the faithful from Israel was a mystery. No prophets predicted the methodology God would use.
    - (25) At the time of this writing, the blindness of Israel was in the first stage so that the remnant would be forced to seek the Gentiles.
    - (26 – 27) “All Israel.” The argument began in 9:6, “They are not all Israel who are of Israel.” So, “All Israel will be saved” means “All the faithful will be saved.” The quote from Isaiah 59:20 – 21 reminds the reader that the Deliverer was promised to come out of the nation of Israel (capital: Zion, or Mount Zion, or Jerusalem).
    - (28) Don’t forget that the history of Israel is how the calling was done.

- (29) The small response from Israel does not mean that the gifts and call are revoked. God is still summoning them. They still have their history (evidence). However, this does not say that they still have the “land promise.” The territory promised to Abraham was delivered in the time of David and Solomon (and again in the time of Jeroboam II). That was not a gift but a promise, and that promise was completed. The same goes for other promises to Israel.
  - (30 – 32) Don’t look down on them for their disobedience. You Gentiles were no better. Everyone needed mercy (a repair job).
  - (33 – 36) The chapter ends with an explanation of how clever the plan of God was.
- If the goal is not just to stay on the right side of the line, what is our purpose? (Chapter 12)
  - (1) In keeping with the theme of the previous 11 chapters of logical arguments, Paul begins with a concise statement of the logical response of the faithful. The adjective to the last word of verse 1 is variously translated. In Greek, it is where we get our word “logical.” “Reasonable” and “rational” are the next best choices.
    - “By the mercies of God” – God has set about fixing the broken parts of the faithful. Use that. Demonstrate that.
    - “Present your bodies a living sacrifice” – Obviously, the faithful are not sin offerings. Jesus already did that, once for all. But, we can be thank offerings. We can be walking celebrations of forgiveness. We become the main course at a party.
    - “Holy, acceptable to God” – All sacrifices were to be the best, not what you could spare.
  - (2 – 21) Details and examples of how a sacrifice lives.
    - (2) Conformed – Everyone is molded by culture. Many poor choices become normal and acceptable. The trap seems inescapable.
    - (2) Transformed – The Greek word is the one from which we translate metamorphosis. Be something entirely different, not just a spruced up version of the society in which you live. Transformation is the result of the work of the Spirit described in chapter 8.
    - (2) Prove what the desire of God is – Many have opinions and guesses concerning what is godly, or even concerning what is right. The proof is in superhuman transformation.
    - (3) Be humble despite being super-conquerors (8:37).
    - (3) A promise of more faith – Obviously, God cannot deposit faith in individuals and then call them acceptable because they have faith. Such would eliminate free will and defeat God’s purpose for creation. Faith without free will does not exist. So, Paul means that God promises to strengthen an individual’s faith as needed.
    - (4 – 8) We are all different, and that is the way God wants it. The point is to use what you have for the body, rather than wishing you were a different body part. How do we know which gift is ours? Look for something that you did not have before coming to faith that is clearly superhuman.
    - (9 – 21) Further examples of transformed behavior by way of reminder since culture often squashes one or more of these godly behaviors.

- If God is in charge, then it is only logical to obey the government (13:1 – 7)
  - Remember the nature of governments in the time of Paul.
  - (1) Clearly, Paul says that God appoints governing authorities.
  - See also Titus 3:1, 1 Peter 2:13 – 17, Acts 4:19 – 20, 5:29,
    - Peter was opposing a religious authority, not a civil one. Peter’s example shows us that it is proper to oppose religious authorities that demand that the truth be suppressed.
    - The dilemma of the apostles in Acts 4 and 5 was due to Jesus’ clear command to obey their Jewish leaders (Matthew 23:2 – 3). The church came together and prayed fervently for direction (Acts 4:23 – 30) concerning the order from the Sanhedrin to stop speaking by the authority of Jesus (Acts 4:18). They received a miraculous response (Acts 4:31).
    - In the New Testament, there is no record of Christians opposing the civil government despite severe persecution and injustice, including imprisonment, torture, and execution.
    - Why have so many defied governments in the name of Jesus?
      - Failure to look for a better answer
      - Overconfidence in one’s own discernment of the will of God
      - Reading American freedoms into the gospel
  - (2 – 5) Clearly, governments in different places and centuries have done terrible things, including persecuting Christians. Of course, governments also punish lawbreakers in ways with which we agree. So, where is the dividing line?
    - Pray for wisdom.
    - Be confident that God really is in control.
    - Be confident that, even if I make the wrong choice, God can handle it.
    - Never declare that my conclusion is the will of God. Leave space for self-deception to be revealed.
  - (6 – 7) Clearly, governments spend tax money on things with which we disagree. That is not an excuse to refuse to pay taxes. (Note: tax evasion is illegal; tax avoidance is encouraged).
- The important thing is to put on Jesus (13:8 – 14)
  - (8) How broadly should this be applied?
    - To “owe” gives someone else control of you.
    - To “love” is to do what you think they need, so you are still in control.
  - (8 – 10) Love causes one to act in the ways prescribed in the Law, not because of the rule but because of love.
  - (11 – 14) Solve the conflicts listed above by becoming like Jesus.
    - “Knowing the time” They understood Jesus’ predictions of the worst decade in all of history (Matthew 24 and parallels). Survival (not necessarily physically) would depend on having the right attitude.
    - “Salvation is nearer” The probable date of writing (56 – 57 AD) appears to be prior to Jesus taking control. Satan was still a viable force but not for long (Romans 16:20). Whereas, when John wrote Revelation, Jesus had taken control (Revelation 1:5 *et al*). So, Jesus may not have had opportunity to complete the presentation of His blood in the tabernacle in heaven, since the



tabernacle first needed to be cleansed (Hebrews 9:11 – 15) after the war (Revelation 12:5 – 12). So, rather than the trite explanation that Judgment Day is always getting closer, we can see this as the original audience counting down to the defeat of Satan and the completion of our redemption.

- “Make no provision for the flesh” We are accustomed to making allowances for “the way we are.”
- Logical discussion of how to handle varying levels of faith within a congregation (chapter 14)
  - (1 – 6) Accept those with different ideas
    - (1) Obviously, the other person is “weak,” whether he really is or not.
    - “Doubtful things” At least one side thinks it is not “doubtful.”
    - (2) Paul classified those who would not eat meat for religious reasons as “weak.” This probably was due to not knowing if the butcher had dedicated it to his pagan god.
    - (3) No matter which side you are on, do not judge the other side. How do I know if God has received the other person? By observing the work of the Spirit in that person. Most disputers assume that the other person has not been accepted because of the other person’s view on the point at hand.
    - (4) A second point (perhaps if I cannot tell if God has received him) is to realize that God will judge, and God is able to make this work out.
    - (5) “Be fully convinced” Differences should not make us stop holding strong conclusions. We need confidence that God will sort it out.
    - (6) Recognize that the other person is trying to honor God. Do not assume devious or self-serving motives.
  - (7 – 13) Disputes can be a stumbling block
    - (7 – 9) We are a team. Act like it.
    - (10 – 13) Judging shows contempt. But we are all equal.
    - The citation is from Isaiah 45:23. Note that “every” refers to the faithful.
    - (12) Each shall give an account for himself. My opinion of another does not have any impact on that person’s destination.
  - (14 – 23) Things are neither inherently bad nor good. The difference is in how we treat them. So, all that is not of faith is sin.
    - (14, 20) To go against one’s own belief, even if the belief is misguided, is wrong.
    - (15, 21) Flaunting my “liberty” in not liberty, rather self-possession.
    - (17) The point is righteousness, peace, and joy, not specific practices. How does this relate to how we treat those in congregations who have different doctrines?
    - (18) God likes it when we are inclusive, and so does the unbelieving world. The counterpoint is that God is displeased by denominationalism, and it makes outsiders disgusted, too.
    - (19) So, seek peace and building up. The difference will take care of itself.
    - (22) Remember liberty and grant it to others. Strictness leads to hypocrisy.
    - (23) So, making the wrong choice by faith is acceptable. Every decision must pass through faith on the way to action. If not, even the right answer is wrong. Proper action without faith worthless.

- Bearing with the weak in faith is promised to lead to joy, peace, and hope (15:1 – 14)
  - This section is the follow-on to chapter 14, addressing how the strong can keep from being frustrated by the weak.
  - Review from chapter 14
    - (14:3 – 13) Neither side in a dispute should judge the acceptability to God of the other side.
    - (14:14 – 21) Do not allow your maturity to destroy the faith of the weak. Instead, pursue peace and building up
    - (14:22 – 23) Whatever is not from faith is sin.
  - (1 – 4) Jesus put up with the weak in faith. So can we.
    - (3) Psalm 69:9 This Messianic psalm has as one of its points that the Messiah would be reproached by the same people who speak against God. So, do not be diverted by the nay-sayers. That situation is normal.
    - (2) How to build up one of weak faith who thinks he is strong: present the needed information in a pleasing way.
    - (4) Use the Old Testament to reassure yourself that “there is nothing new under the sun,” that such confrontations are to be expected. Israel arrived at the Messiah despite their history of blunders. The church with its mixture of weak and strong can reach their goal, too.
  - (5 – 7) The goal is unity so that God is glorified. Make it work.
    - Remember Jesus’ prayer in the Garden (John 17:20 – 24). Unity is a proof for Jesus.
    - The ability to arrive at unity is a promise (*c.f.*, Philippians 3:15, 2:13, Ephesians 4:13 – 16)
    - The goal is to announce the character traits of God to the outsiders. They won’t believe a contentious and divisive group.
    - Receive the weak in faith in the way that God received you.
  - (8 – 12) A significant part of the backdrop of the weak/strong problem was the inclusion of the Gentiles. Remember the many predictions of the universal kingdom.
    - Jesus did not overlook or slight Israel; He was their servant also, “confirming the promises made to the fathers.” A Savior was promised to them, and He has arrived. They received first exposure (“to the Jew first”). The Israelites were custodians of God’s interactions with people. See chapters 9 – 11.
    - Psalm 18:49 David gave thanks to God among the nations for his deliverance from his enemies. So, speaking of the great things God has done for us among all peoples is only natural for faithful people.
    - Deuteronomy 32:43 Even in the Law of Moses, the Gentiles were named as the audience for the proclamation of this atonement.
    - Psalm 117:1 This very short psalm is addressed to the Gentiles, that they should praise God’s mercy and kindness and truth.
    - Isaiah 11:10 Isaiah predicted that the Gentiles would seek the Messiah.
  - (13 – 14) God promises joy, peace, and hope through the indwelling Spirit if we are unified (strong and weak, Jew and Gentile). Paul expressed his confidence in them that such was within their grasp.
- (15:15 – 33) What Paul expected of the Christians in Rome
  - (15) Paul admitted to being bold, but the information was a reminder, not new.

- (16 – 21) As the designated “minister to the Gentiles,” Paul outlined his plan
  - (16) Paul considered the faithful Gentiles to be his thank offering to God.
  - (18 – 19) Paul spoke only about the things God did through him, not mentioning any of his personal efforts. Note: Illyricum refers to a region now divided between Croatia, Montenegro, and Bosnia & Herzegovina (north of Albania). Between those names, it was called Dalmatia. How far Paul went into this region is unknown.
  - (20) Paul made it his habit to go to places where the gospel had not been before.
  - (21) Isaiah 52:15 predicted that the message of the Messiah would be preached to such people.
- (22 – 33) Paul’s plans and the role the Christians of Rome might play in them.
  - (22) Paul had not visited them because he was busy in Turkey and Greece.
  - (23 – 24) But now that those regions were reasonably well covered, new regions are on the radar, particularly Spain. Since Rome is in the middle, that seems a good place to rest along the way. Therefore, Paul does not consider Rome to be a destination as apostle to the Gentiles, just a place to rest up before moving on.
  - (25 – 27) But first, Paul related that he planned to deliver famine relief funds to Jerusalem from Greece.
  - (28 – 29) After delivering the funds, he planned to head for Spain via Rome.
  - (30 – 31) Paul solicited their prayers that he not be hindered by the unbelieving Jews of Jerusalem. Historically, that group delayed Paul’s visit to Rome by four years.
  - (32) I see this as a veiled request for lodging when in Rome and some funds to get to Spain.
- Personal greetings and closing (Chapter 16)
  - Many faithful people in Rome were mentioned by name. Some were noted as those whom Paul met in Greece or Turkey who later moved to Rome. Paul kept track of people he met in his travels.
  - (1 – 2) Phoebe probably carried this letter. Likely she was going to Rome anyway for business purposes as such a trip just to deliver this letter would be exorbitantly expensive. Paul gave his endorsement of her to encourage them to see that she had what she needed.
  - (3 – 4) Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:1 – 19), apparently, had left Ephesus and returned to Rome. The assumption is made that the banishment of Jews from Rome was no longer in force.
  - (5) Epaenetus was one of the first converts in the region of Corinth, but he had subsequently moved to Rome.
  - (7) Note that Andronicus and Junia are styled “apostles.” Barnabas is called an apostle in Acts 14:14.
  - (13) Is Rufus the brother of Paul?
  - (16) The “holy kiss” is also found in 1 Corinthians 16:20. Likely, this is just a cultural method of greeting. A few of the other names used to describe the church are The Way (Acts 24:22), church of the First Born (Hebrews 12:23) along with several other names in that place, the church of God (1 Corinthians 1:2, 10:32, 11:16, 11:22,

- 15:9, 2 Corinthians 1:1, Galatians 1:13, 1 Thessalonians 2:14, 2 Thessalonians 1:4, 1 Timothy 3:5), the church of the Living God (1 Timothy 3:15), plus the assembly (James 2:2) and “the sect everywhere spoken against” (Acts 28:22).
- (17) Avoid the divisive (see also Titus 3:10).
  - (18) Smooth talkers develop a following composed of the simple (see also Colossians 2:4, 2 Timothy 3:1 – 9)
  - (20) Satan will be crushed under their feet, not by God or angels. “Shortly” indicates something reasonably close at hand, so likely refers to Satan being deposed as lord of the earth, being replaced by Jesus. See the explanation with 13:11 – 14.
  - (21) This list of people were with Paul at the time of writing.
  - (22) Tertius was the scribe employed for this task.
  - (23) Several people named Gaius appear in the New Testament. Erastus is an historical figure, the treasurer of Corinth (and therefore wealthy). His name is immortalized in a plaque on a section of road in Corinth for which he paid. Wealthy people were expected to finance public works. So, Paul probably wrote Romans from Corinth.
  - (25 – 27) God is able to establish them, so they are not worried about being sufficiently skilled within themselves. All the mysteries mentioned in the New Testament are accompanied by the revelation of that mystery, so no mysteries remain. The Old Testament is to be a vehicle for verifying the plan of God to all nations.