

## *ROMANS - The Lord is our Righteousness*

*Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*

### *An Introduction to the Epistle to the Romans*

One of the greatest gifts from Christ the Lord, who has risen from the dead, to his church in all times, is the important epistle he inspired Paul, his ambassador, to write to the Romans who lived in the Roman capital.

### *The cause and the purpose of the Epistle*

At that time, the apostle of the Gentiles completed his preaching in Asia Minor and the Greek regions during his three missionary journeys. During these missionary journeys he founded living churches in the chief cities, established the believers in the services of love, and appointed elders, priests, and bishops for the church members. He then found that his service in the eastern basin of the Mediterranean had been completed. So, he went westward to set up the Kingdom of Christ in France and Spain (Romans 15:22-24).

In agreement with these plans, he wrote his famous epistle to the church members in Rome, in order to encourage their confidence in him, making clear to them that he was an apostle of Christ to all the Gentiles through careful, regular study of the Gospel committed into his hands. He tried to touch their hearts that they might participate in his missionary journey to the west, as the church of Antioch in Syria had supported his journeys, preaching, and sufferings with their faithful prayers. Therefore, the epistle to the Romans contains a preliminary study, intended to convince the church to establish itself in true faith, and prepare it for preaching to the world through joint participation in the work.

### *Who founded the church in Rome?*

Neither Paul, nor Peter, nor any other apostle, or well-known elder founded the Roman church. However, it was through some Roman pilgrims who appeared in the holy land at Pentecost, where Christ poured out the Holy Spirit on the repentant prayers. Their tongues were filled with the great things of the Mighty One, and following that they went back to the metropolis, and bore witness in their meetings to the Almighty who was crucified. They talked with their Jewish and Gentile friends about his salvation, and formed circles in their homes for studying the Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ.

During his travels in Asia and Greece, the Apostle Paul repeatedly met believers from Rome, particularly when the Jews had been banished from Rome during the reign of Claudius Caesar, before 54 A.D. (Acts 18:2). Paul sought to be personally acquainted with the church of Rome, and to give the gifts of the Holy Spirit who worked in him. He did not think that a long stay in the capital of the world was needed, for he found a living, independent church there. He wanted, rather, to go on his way in the fellowship of those brothers in the Lord, to spread the gospel of salvation in the closed regions.

*Who wrote the epistle? When? And where?*

The Apostle Paul wrote this epistle in 58 A.D. during his stay at Gaius' house in Corinth, in which he summed up his spiritual experiences and apostolic teachings. Nobody else can write as Paul did in this epistle, for the living, glorious Christ personally stood in his way, when he, in his zeal for the Law, sought to carry out the rigorous persecution of the Christians in Damascus. And when the shining divine light penetrated him, he recognized the great truth that the despised Jesus of Nazareth is living, and that he is the Lord of glory, who was not corrupted in the tomb after his crucifixion. Rather Jesus overcame death, and has truly risen, proving himself the Almighty, who has control over all. Then Paul understood that the Son of God did not condemn or destroy his persecutor, but had mercy on him and called him to his missionary work, not because of his own worthiness, but according to grace only. Therefore, the zealous, pious Paul was broken down and distressed. He believed in the grace of God and the essence of the new righteousness. He did not rely any longer on his human deeds, according to the Law. Instead he set out throughout the world, as a servant to the divine love of Christ, calling all the deceived and the corrupt to accept the reconciliation with God.

*What are the distinguished styles in this epistle?*

Paul meant to clarify this religious change to every member of the church of Rome. Yet, for this purpose, he did not write a book in beautiful, pure language, or a long, comparative discussion. He wrote, rather, an epistle with all fluency and clarity, and answered the questions he expected to be asked by the Jews and the Romans. Paul dictated his epistle to Tertius, his brother in the Lord, imagining in his spirit the addressees to whom he wrote. At one point he addressed the fresh believers, treating their superficiality in the purifying holiness of God. Then he drew those who were broken to the living faith, which is

found in complete justification in Christ, who is the only hope for men. At another point he shook the haughty lawyers, and broke their self-righteousness, showing their corruption and complete failure, and how they were consecrated in humble faith to the services of God's love, in obedience to the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, in his epistle, the apostle connected effectual preaching to ordinary, calm teaching. He did not address a certain society, but all kinds of hearers; the Gentiles and the Jews, the young and the old, the learned and the unlearned, the bond and the free, both men and women. The Epistle to the Romans is, until today, one of the principal teachings within Christianity, as Dr. Martin Luther testified in his statement: "This book is the main part of the New Testament and the purest gospel, which deserves to be memorized by every Christian, and adopted everyday as a spiritual treasure for the soul, because we abundantly find in this epistle what a believer must know: The Law and the Gospel, sin and judgment, grace and faith, righteousness and truth, Christ and God, good deeds and love, hope and the cross. We also know how to behave towards every man, no matter how pious or sinful, strong or weak, friendly or unfriendly he may be; and also how to treat ourselves. Thus, I suggest to all Christians that they must train themselves in it."

Dear brother, if you seek a close study and training of your faith, then reflect on the Epistle to the Romans and study it carefully. It is like a university of God, which is filled with knowledge, power, and spirit. Then Christ will deliver you from your haughtiness and self-reliance, and establish you in perfect righteousness that you may become a mighty servant in the practice of the divine love, growing in faith day by day.

### *Analysis of the Epistle to the Romans*

**Romans 1:1-17** -- Identity of the writer disclosed to the church in Rome. The apostolic benediction. Presentation of God's righteousness as the emblem of his epistle.

### **PART 1 - GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS JUSTIFIES US**

**Romans 1:18 - 3:23** -- We are all sinful, and God will certainly condemn us according to the Law, which breaks the sentiments of our pride.

**Romans 3:24 - 4:25** -- God will freely justify all men through the redemptive work of Christ, if they believe in him.

**Romans 5:01 - 8:39** -- The Spirit of the Lord dwells in the believers and gives them hope and triumph over sin, and they walk in the power of the Spirit, free from the Law.

Part 2 - God's righteousness in history

**Romans 9:1 - 11:36** -- God continues to be righteous in spite of the Old covenant people's refusal of his grace.

Part 3 - God's righteousness in practice

**Romans 12:1 - 16:27** -- True faith changes our behavior and life into works of love and mutual submission.

This is not an easy epistle to study. It requires of you careful examination, prayers, and thoughtful reflection, that you may enjoy its blessings, repent sincerely, renew your mind, and see a new horizon of life in Christ. As this epistle did not bring spiritual sluggishness to the Romans, but rather prepared them for the work of preaching in their surroundings and in other countries, so Christ invites you to be filled with his grace that he may send you with your righteous brothers to the people who are void of love and hope. Listen, pray, and go.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. *What are the reason and the end of the Epistle to the Romans?*
2. *Who founded the church in Rome?*
3. *Who wrote this epistle? Where? And when?*
4. *What styles did Paul use in his epistle?*
5. *What is the outline of this epistle?*

**The Opening: Salutation, Thanks to God, and Emphasis on "God's Righteousness" As the Motto of his Epistle (Romans 1:1-17)**

*a) Identification and apostolic benediction (Romans 1:1-7)*

**ROMANS**

**1:1**

**1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the Good News of God,**

When Paul was born, he was given the name of Saul, the proud king and member of the tribe of Benjamin. But when the persecutor of the church had witnessed the glory of Christ, he recognized that he was nothing. He then accepted the name "Paul", which means "the little one", and he began his famous epistle with the words: I, the little one, am a bondservant of Jesus Christ.

In his statement that he was a bondservant of Christ, Paul had agreed to lose his freedom, and submit himself completely to his master. He

willingly emptied and humbled himself, and died to his haughtiness, and therefore lived for the motives of the spirit of Christ, and fulfilled the will of his Lord with great joy. This means that the living Christ himself is the writer of this letter to the Romans, having revealed it to his listening servant. However, this revelation was not made to Paul against his will, but willingly and agreeably, for Christ does not enslave his believers, but leaves them to their own freedom; to believe, and to love, and even to be independent from him. They do not, however, want to be separated from him, for he is the source of love; they rather drown themselves in him.

Paul was exalted to a high rank and station of dignity and honor through his humility as a bondservant of Christ. His Lord had called him to be his apostle in order to spread his kingdom among the nations, providing Paul with authority and rights, just as kings and presidents empower and authorize their ambassadors provided that they continuously keep in touch and in agreement with them. As such, Christ also calls you today directly to his service. Open your heart to the call of Jesus and commit yourself completely to him without delay, in submission and humility, that his power may run from you to others. As Christ's ambassador to the nations, Paul could change the world with his letters. Nobody, after Christ, is greater than Paul, "the little one".

What was the good news of Paul, the bondservant of Christ? It was but the glorious gospel of God. Paul did not come with thoughts of his own, but clarified the gospel to the miserable world. The word "gospel" was familiar to the Romans at that time. It was used in the house of Roman Caesar for official announcements, i.e. when a child was born to him, or when he won victory over the enemies. Thus, the word signifies a proclamation of good tidings at the royal family level. However, Paul brought the good tidings of God to men, testifying to the presence of Christ, his victory over the opposing powers, and the results of his salvation, that the hearers might be sanctified, and enter into the divine righteousness.

The holy God separated Paul, the lawyer, and delivered him from his slavery to the evil one. He did so in order that he might deliver those who have brought their necks under the heavy yoke of the law from clinging to good works, and bring them to the age of grace, that they might not redeem themselves by themselves, but enter heaven through Christ, who is the only door which leads to his Father.

*PRAYER: O Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you because you called your*

*bondservant Paul, and sent him to the world that we might hear your word through him. Forgive us our haughtiness and self-contentment, and help us to humble ourselves, to become bondservants of your love, and fulfill the will of your kindness with all the believers of the world.*

*QUESTION 6: What are the titles, which Paul took for himself in the first sentence of his epistle?*

## **ROMANS**

**1:2-4**

**2** which he promised before through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, **3** concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, **4** who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, **Jesus Christ our Lord,**

As the Nile softens and moistens the dry barren areas of land making them fruitful, so the gospel works in believers giving them power and making them fruitful and joyful. The great mystery of the gospel is the coming and the working of Jesus Christ. You are invited to believe not in a book, but in a historical, timeless character. Thousands of years ago God declared, through his prophets, that a man would be born of the Spirit of God and of a chaste virgin, and his name would be the only Son of God. The Torah is filled with prophecies about this event. Therefore, every true prophet confesses, in his message, that Christ is the Son of God. Who, then, would oppose the holy God, if he proclaimed himself, in his unity, to be the Holy Trinity, in order to change our unhealthy thoughts and raise us to a new deeper insight? Ever since Christ came, we have known that God is a merciful and loving Father, for the image of the merciful Son suggested to us a new notion or lesson about God; that He is Love.

And the Son of God became a true man, born from the seed of King David, the prophet and psalmist, who received a promise from God that one of his descendants would be the Son of the Most High (2 Sam 7:14). In this incarnation, the eternal Christ clothed himself with the weakness of our flesh and was tempted, in every way, just as we are.

Yet he was without sin, and death had no power over him, for the Holy Spirit, who had dwelt in him with all his fullness, overcame the body of sin. Jesus proved his power effectually and undeniably when he rose from the grave, triumphing and securing dominion over death, the enemy of men. Through this miraculous event God confirmed the

sonship of Jesus, and ordained him to sit on his right hand as the true Lord, where he now reigns as Jesus said: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth", and lives with the Father and the Holy Spirit; one God forever."

The power of Christ sprang from Paul and rushed into the churches; and the power of Jesus works even today in those who confess that He who was born of a virgin is our living Lord himself. The statement: "Jesus Christ our Lord" is the summary of our faith since the beginning of Christianity. It contains all the meanings of the mystery of the Holy Trinity, the power of salvation, and hope.

*PRAYER: We worship you, O Son of God, because you became incarnate by way of your love, and you overcame sin and death in your body. Please accept our mortal life in gratitude to you, and purify us with your Holy Spirit that we may become qualified for the kingdom of your love. We ask you to prevail over our thoughts, speech, and behavior that we may be faithful witnesses to you with all the bondservants of your faithfulness in our nation.*

*QUESTION 7: What is the meaning of the statement that Christ is the Son of God?*

## **ROMANS**

**1:5-7**

**5 through whom we received grace and apostleship, for obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name's sake; 6 among whom you are also called to belong to Jesus Christ; 7 to all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:**

Jesus Christ is the key to all the gifts of God. Neither prophets, nor saints, nor the Virgin Mary can mediate for you before God in grace or blessing. The heavenly Father answers our prayers for the sake of Jesus Christ, for he is the only one who intercedes with God for us. His name is the channel through which our prayers pass to God, and through which all spiritual gifts come. No one else but Jesus reconciled us with the Holy One. Thus, we receive from him the fullness of grace including forgiveness, peace, salvation and righteousness. All other divine blessings are but a favor, which we do not deserve.

"Grace" is the summary of Paul's epistle. He experienced it in himself, for he was a persecutor of the church. He was saved not because of his enthusiasm, prayers, or good works, but because of the mercy of God bestowed on him in Christ. So, bring to everyone the good news

of the absolute and great grace, as Christ gave you first grace, forgiveness, and peace.

As soon as you understand and confess the principle of grace, you become a bearer of grace, a preacher of the love of God, and a messenger of free justification. Did the Holy Spirit put his message into your heart? Or are you still silent, sad, and bound with the cords of your sins?

Whoever recognizes the message of grace loves God and his Christ, and obeys the laws of his kindness. The term "obedience to the faith" means to Paul the response of man to this grace. God did not ask of us obedience against our will with spite and noncompliance, but an entire dedication of our saved souls in gratitude to our Savior and Redeemer. Paul called himself a bondservant of Jesus Christ. In this title, he gave an exact explanation of the term "obedience to the faith". Are you a bondservant of Christ? God forgave all men, in all times, all their sins for the sake of Christ. As we find no other message as useful and helpful to man as this one, we invite all those whom we know to submit to God and love his Christ, and experience the power of his grace. What a great message! Did you call your friends to obey the faith in the Giver of all grace?

The members of the church of Rome were directly called by Christ, and not by Paul or any other person. This is the mystery of the sound faith: that no man calls another man to salvation, except when the caller is at his best state, for we are instruments in the hand of our Lord. Jesus chooses and calls his followers personally and evidently. His voice penetrates to the depths of hearts, for it is the voice of Him who raises the dead. The word "church" means the fellowship of the called who left the pessimists, and assumed the responsibility of love in the service of God. Are you a called one of Jesus Christ? On the other hand, are you still useless and fruitless? Our religion is the religion of calling.

Whoever accepts and answers this call is beloved by God. How beautiful and glorious is the statement, which explains who the Christians are! They are the relatives of the Most High, and are known to him and respected by him. Moreover, God descended to their level and, because of his atonement, made them worthy of his fellowship. The love of God is greater and purer than the love of parents to their children, or the love between the bride and the bridegroom. The love of God is holy and never fails. Are you one of God's beloved ones, filled with his love, and walking in his holiness?

Christ called us to forgiveness, obedience, and following. The summit of these characteristics is holiness. No one is holy in and of himself, but through our engagement with the redeeming Savior we became worthy of receiving the Holy Spirit. Only through grace can we become holy and blameless before God in love. All the saints are separated from the world and are appointed for the service of God. They do not belong to themselves or to their relatives any more, because they became God's own for the work of holiness. Are you one of them? Are you indeed holy by grace?

*PRAYER: Our holy God, You called us in Jesus Christ to become holy, as you are holy. We confess our unfairness, and beg for forgiveness of all our known and unknown sins. We thank you because you love us and purify us with the blood of Christ, and sanctify us with your Holy Spirit. Change all our life that we may belong to you with all our strength and time, and love you as you love us.*

*QUESTION 8: What is grace, and what is man's answer to it?*

## **ROMANS**

**1:7**

### **7 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

The apostolic benediction, with which Paul begins most of his epistles, is the summary of his theological knowledge, the concentration of his apostolic power, and the comprehension of his many blessings, which he pours out on his readers. So, put yourself consciously under the shower of grace in these words, and consider them in your heart that you may be rich in God. Keep the apostolic benediction in your heart, and delight yourself with it word by word.

The first thing which the apostle presents to you is complete grace, for you are lost and perishing, but God loves you and does not want to destroy you. Because of the death of his only Son, God, instead of judging you, will justify you. Grace is the lawful form of the love of God. The Holy One continues to be righteous, even if he justifies you who are unworthy to be justified. All God's gifts are yours, and all the answers of your prayers are but a favor, for you deserve nothing else but wrath.

However, our state towards God has been changed since the death of Christ; formerly there was an enmity between God and sinners, but peace has now prevailed because of the reconciliation in the cross. The

eternal Holy One will not destroy us at all. The first words which Christ said after his resurrection were: "Peace be with you". He fulfilled all the requirements of the Law, and there are no more complaints against us before God, because of Christ's blood, which cleanses us. A new era began with the true peace that had dwelt in the purified hearts.

Whoever accepts the comprehensive grace of Christ and lives in peace with God, recognizes the great miracle that the Creator and Almighty is not a tyrant who wants us to worship him in trembling, but he is our Father who loves us, and cares for us. He does not leave us, but endlessly forebears us. There are no words in the New Testament more beautiful than "God our Father". This theological knowledge is brought by Christ himself. The notion of the fatherhood of God is the new revelation in Christianity. Moreover, the purpose of the cross is but to cleanse us that we may deserve the adoption, the second birth, and the dwelling of eternal life in us. This being in order that God may truly be our God, and we his children.

Do you know Jesus Christ? Do you recognize his greatness and his humility? He is both a man and God in his person. He gave up his glory, and humbled himself to redeem us. And when he had completed the atonement for all humanity, he ascended to his Father, where he sits at his right hand, highly honored, because he is the only one who could reconcile the world to God. This is why Jesus inherited the authority of God. He is the Lord himself. Is he also your Lord? He wants to have authority over your life; to purify, sanctify, and send you as he pleases.

*PRAYER: O heavenly Father, You are my Father in Jesus Christ. You chose me lost and unclean to be a child of yours. I fall on my face, worship you, and love you, giving my life, my money, my strength, and my time to you and your Son. Make of me what you will that I may not be a shame to you, but glorify your fatherhood with behavior proper for your name. Thank you because you sent your Son Jesus to save all sinners. I worship you with everlasting praise.*

*QUESTION 9: Which statement in the apostolic benediction do you consider as the most important and the most effecting with respect to your life?*

## **ROMANS**

**1:8-12**

**8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world. 9 For God is**

**my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the Good News of his Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers, 10 requesting, if by any means now at last I may be prospered by the will of God to come to you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, to the end that you may be established; 12 that is, that I with you may be encouraged in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.**

Paul heard much about the church of Rome, met some of its members during his missionary journeys, and found that their faith was true, living, and mature. He thanked God heartily for this miracle, for each living Christian is a miracle of the reconciliation in Christ, whose essence requires our thanking. Wherever a group serves God and the Son in the Holy Spirit, there we must worship the Father, and praise him and rejoice in him day and night.

Paul called God "my God", as if he were his own. He knew that his soul was bound to him by a new covenant, and he loved him sincerely. But in spite of this warm relationship, he did not pray to the exalted God in his own name, but only in the name of Christ, knowing that all our invocations, and even our thanks, do not deserve to be presented to the glory of God. All pouring out of our hearts need the purifying power of the blood of Jesus Christ. Only through this purification, can we pray to God, who gives us his Spirit that we may sanctify his fatherly name and worship him joyfully. All his servants are holy to him, and they belong to him as bondservants of his love.

The content of their service is the Gospel. We notice that Paul, in the first verse of this epistle, mentions the gospel as "the gospel of God", whereas in verse 9 we read "the gospel of His Son". By this term he means that the divine good news of salvation depends on the essence of the Son of God. All Paul's ambition turns around the sonship of Christ and the fatherhood of God. Whoever denies this gospel actively, and refuses it intentionally is cursed.

Paul lived in close fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He called the unity of the Holy Trinity to testify that he had always thought of the church of Rome, and prayed for her. The apostle of the nations did not forget the churches in spite of his several engagements, and also prayed faithfully for individuals. There is no faithful shepherd, or priest endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit, except through persevering prayer. Where there is power coming out of someone, the

reason must be love, prayer, and longing for God and men.

Paul had cherished his purpose to visit Rome for years, particularly in the period which he calls “now”, i.e. at the time of his service in Anatolia, Macedonia, and Greece. He saw that it was time to wear the Italian boot.

However, he did not decide to take his journey according to his own wishes and plans. He took constant care to conform himself to the will of God, taking into consideration the fact that one’s own planning, without conformity, leads to failure, misery, and trouble. Paul was not a prisoner of his own desires and wishes, but he arranged everything completely under the guidance of his heavenly Father.

This submission, however, did not stop his earnest desire to visit the church in Rome, where he had never been. He was aware that he was filled with the Holy Spirit. He was like a volcano throwing the power of God in all directions; and therefore, he wished to make the Roman church a partner in the authority given to him by Christ, that the church might become revived, prepared for service, and established in love, faith, and true hope. This is the one design of the ministry and the chief goal of the Acts of the Apostles: that the believers may be established and strengthened.

Paul did not want to enter Rome as the great donor, but he humbled himself greatly, and wrote that he did not come only to give, but also to take through hearing and seeing. He did this in order to experience what God directly did without him to the believers of the capital that he might be comforted together with all the apostles through the testimony of the divine Comforter in the saints of Rome.

Paul also testified, beforehand, that he did not come with a new faith, but that the same belief, knowledge, and power work in all the true Christians, who are members of the spiritual body of Christ. Everyone who claims that there is more than one church is a liar, because the Holy Spirit is one, Christ is one, and the Father is one. Wherever faithful believers meet, they meet together as children to one Father, even if they did not know each other before. They rejoice greatly, and meet in one accord, as born of the same Spirit, belonging to the same family, and united in the same principles and interests.

*PRAYER: We worship you, O Father, because you gather your church throughout the whole world, and you establish it, and fill it with your characteristics. Teach us to pray for our brothers everywhere. Thank*

*you for all your faithful children, for each one born of your Holy Spirit is a miracle. Open our eyes that we may love and understand each other, and rejoice in your presence. Give us wisdom and forgiveness that our fellowship may abound and be kept in your truth, and that we may not move away from our fellowship with you, with the Son and with the Holy Spirit.*

**QUESTION 10:** *Why did Paul thank God at all times?*

*b) Paul's Longstanding Desire to Visit Rome (Romans 1:8-15)*

## **ROMANS**

**1:13-15**

**13** Now I don't desire to have you unaware, brothers, that I often planned to come to you, and was hindered so far, that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles. **14** I am debtor both to Greeks and to foreigners, both to the wise and to the foolish. **15** So, as much as is in me, I am eager to preach the Good News to you also who are in Rome.

In this epistle, Paul opens his heart to the people of the church of Rome. He tells them how often he had purposed and planned to visit them, but that God had interrupted all his plans. The great apostle had to learn early that the thoughts of God are different from his, and the ways of God are as far above his as the heavens are higher than the earth. The Spirit of Christ prevented him from executing his plans, even if they seemed to him useful, good, and holy. Furthermore, when the opportunity to travel appeared to him favorable, God also prevented him.

However, Paul put in his heart that he must preach to the world. He wished, through his life, to set up the kingdom of God in Rome and in other nations. He did not think of edifying individuals, but instead aimed to edify nations, for he was certain of the blessing of Christ, which worked in him. He had seen his glorious Lord, and was sure that the entire world is owned by the King of kings, and that his victory was assured.

The Apostle of the Nations saw himself as a debtor to all men, not because he took money from them, but because God had committed his authority and power to him. He was therefore under obligation to commit such power and authority to all the elect in Christ. In truth, we all live today from God's gifts to Paul, who by his epistles makes us

partners in his power. Under this meaning, we became debtors to you, as you are debtors to all the people around you, for the spirit who works in us is not ours, but is prepared to dwell in the hearts of many.

Paul worked among the classes of educated Greeks, and the Lord established his service through Paul's weakness. He founded churches in the parts of the Mediterranean, which wash the Grecian isles. Then at the time of writing this epistle, he intended to work among the Barbarians in France, Spain, and Germany. He was eager to proclaim to everyone the good tidings that God had a Son who redeemed us on the cross. In his intense and ardent devotion, the Apostle of the Nations was like a rocket prepared to be launched. He received that he might communicate. Out of his love for the Barbarians, he wished to gain the attention of the Romans that they might accompany him and take part with him in preaching to the nations. Thus, he wanted to preach to the believers in Rome that they, in turn, might become preachers; for attainment of salvation creates in him who is saved an obligation to take the message of salvation to others. Paul put Rome before his eyes as a center and starting point for preaching to the whole world.

However, God answered the prayer of his apostle in another way. He did not send his ambassador directly to Rome, rather he returned him first to Jerusalem to be arrested and imprisoned. After long and painful years, Paul arrived at the capital bound, imprisoned, and a bondservant of Christ. Yet, the power of God was not extinguished in him. He, even in his chains, preached to the whole world through his epistle to Rome, which still preaches to peoples and nations even today.

Now we, who are grandchildren of those Barbarians whom Paul intended to preach to, joyfully spread the gospel of God as it had already been committed to Paul to do at that time. Maybe it did not cross Paul's mind that his epistle to Rome is the accomplishment of his wish to preach to the nations. No other book, beside the gospel of John, has changed the world like this epistle, which was written with many prayers and groanings of the Spirit.

*PRAYER: O Lord, You are the King, and you guide your servants according to your will. Forgive us if we intended anything, which is not in conformity with your will. Subject us completely to your guidance that we may not run outside the plan of your love, but obey the orders of your Spirit, and accomplish your wishes gladly, even if they were against our imaginations. O Lord, your way is holy, and we surrender to your providence. Thank you because you do not allow us to fall from*

*your mercy.*

*QUESTION 11: How, and how often, did God prevent Paul from executing his plans?*

*c) The Righteousness of God is Established and Realized in us Through Constant Faith (Romans 1:16-17)*

## **ROMANS**

**1:16**

**16 For I am not ashamed of the Good News of Christ, for it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes; for the Jew first, and also for the Greek.**

Paul was aware that the word “gospel” was both familiar and had a pleasant meaning in Rome, for there were many gospels, i.e. proclamations of glad tidings at the royal family level, which the people of the capital were interested to hear.

He raised the glad tidings of salvation to the same level of the royal proclamations, as if he wanted to say: “I am not ashamed of my epistle, which comes from Palestine, the small colony. Instead I bring it out in the midst of the capital, for I carry to you the glad tidings that the only God has a unique Son, who proceeded from him before all ages, and became incarnate to be near to us in his divinity, and to redeem all men by his death and resurrection. My epistle does not contain an annunciation that a mortal son was born to the mortal Caesar, but it contains the glad annunciation of the birth of the eternal Son of the eternal Father. If the royal gospels carried to you glad tidings of victories of the Roman armies, or announced to you the royal games or the food to satisfy the multitudes, I hereby carry to you the good news that all mankind is entirely redeemed from sin, death, Satan, God’s wrath, and judgment. My gospel is greater than all the Roman gospels, for it is universal, lofty, eternal, powerful, great, and glorious. It is not built on philosophies, books, or empty hope, but is centered on one person”.

The Romans did not know the various meanings of the word “Christ” as given by the Jews. They understood its meaning as “the anointed one”, which was a title given to the Caesar, who, in addition to his civil functions, was regarded as the high priest. Caesar combined in himself the political, military, and lawful functions together with the ministry of reconciliation of the multitudes to the national gods and spirits, as if he were the mediator for all blessing and peace.

However, Christ is the Lord of lords, to whom all power was given both in heaven and on earth, for he is the true High Priest, and our only Mediator and Intercessor with God.

By this announcement in the beginning of his gospel, Paul did not only clarify the sonship of Christ to God and his divine nature, but he also clarified his functions as the Lord, Judge, King, Ruler, and Reconciler, who alone deserves the title: "Savior of the World," which at that time belonged solely to the Caesars.

This glad tidings of the Son of God and his different ministries is not a mere thought. It is an explosive power which is greater than all the powers of the world, for the gospel contains all the power of God. The Lord himself is present in the gospel. He speaks through the black letters, creating a new life in the hearers and regenerating the called. So, do not put the Book of books on the same level with other books on your shelves, but raise it and put it in a suitable place, for this book condemns all other books. The gospel is perfect in itself, as God is perfect and filled with power to build a new universe.

The power of God did not come to the world, through the gospel of Christ, to destroy our evil world, but to save it, for God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Our heavenly Father is not a dictator. He does not force anyone to accept the gospel of his Son, but he offers his truth to everyone freely. Whoever opens his heart to the words of Christ, and trusts him, experiences the power of God. There is no salvation without faith. Whoever believes becomes united with the Son of God, who places his divinity in the believer, and purifies, sanctifies, and revives him.

Faith in Christ establishes eternal salvation in whoever opens his heart to him; and trust in the Son of God is the only way to salvation. Through faith, the believer receives forgiveness and resurrection from the dead. Therefore, faith is the decisive act in the Epistle to the Romans, for without faith you do not know God, or feel his power. He who believes, however, becomes justified, and lives indeed.

The Jews experienced this pleasant truth, though the majority of them rejected Christ, hated him, and crucified him. However, the humble choice knew him and believed in him. They became filled with the Holy Spirit, and continued in the love of God. The power of the Holy Trinity, even today, dwells in people through the testimony of the early apostles.

When the minority of the Jews had accepted the salvation of Christ, the multitudes of the Greeks and other nations, who opened their hearts to the gospel of salvation, followed them. They experienced that this message was not empty words, but was filled with power of God, which connects the believers with the living Christ in an eternal covenant.

Dear brother, if you carefully read the gospel of Christ, open your heart to his word, believe in the divinity of Jesus, and speak with him in your prayer, you will experience that the crucified and risen Christ is the true Savior and Priest, the Mighty King, and Redeemer of the World. So, be courageous and build your life completely on the gospel that the power of God may be magnified in your weakness.

*PRAYER: We glorify you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, because you proclaim yourself in the gospel of Christ, and you purify us in faith, and dwell in us in your fullness. We also glorify you because your power works completely through the letters of the Epistle to the Romans, and pours out from every book of the New Testament. Open our eyes and our minds that we may hear your voice, trust in you, and commit our life completely to your providence and your guidance.*

*QUESTION 12: Which statement in verse 16 do you consider as the most important? Why?*

## **ROMANS**

**1:17**

**17 For in it is revealed God's righteousness from faith to faith. As it is written, "But the righteous shall live by faith."**

There is a great dilemma in theology, which is the righteousness of God. If our religion were superficial, such a dilemma would not have appeared. However, when we learn that the holiness of God requires that every sinner should be killed, and that there is no one righteous before God, we become sad, because all humanity deserves death immediately. Yet God is not only a holy and a just Judge, in himself, but is a merciful Father, filled with love, goodness, and longsuffering. He would not destroy the sinner, but would rather save him.

Because of his holiness, God could not forgive whomever and whenever he pleased, though he seeks to forgive everyone freely, for the majesty of God defines his being.

As a solution to this problem, he brought about the right of substitution in the sacrifice, which dies as a substitute for the sinner. Since there was no animal or human sacrifice to meet the requirements of God's

holiness, he chose to have his Son before all ages, that he might become incarnate in the fullness of time, to die in our place, atone for our sins, and justify us. Yet, the subject of the Epistle to the Romans is not our own justification, but the righteousness of God himself: How does the Holy One continue to be righteous, in spite of justifying us who are sinful? Christ is the only answer to this question.

The people of the Law blasphemed against the cross, saying: "If every man could be justified by faith in Christ, then let us sin more, as long as the grace of the Crucified justifies us automatically." Paul condemned them, and testified to them that the Christian faith is not mere belief, but it is living together with Christ, where his power works in our weakness, and he creates his fruits in us. Following Jesus resembles a chain whose connecting links are measures of faith filled with thanks and love to Christ who justifies, sanctifies, and perfects us. We are not saviors of ourselves, but we open our hearts to God's grace. Those who are justified live from faith alone. They come from faith to faith, and do not consider themselves righteous in themselves. Christ has justified them, and he keeps and sanctifies them day by day, through the workings of his Spirit. As such, God continues to be righteous, because he forgives us everyday, and sanctifies us every minute. We are his own, and are holy to him.

Another question was raised about the people of the old covenant, which put God's righteousness under a question mark. It is the Jews' rejection of grace. The Jews crucified the Son of God, and have therefore missed the history of their salvation. Moreover, they have always opposed the voice of the Holy Spirit who sought to bring them into repentance and faith. In view of this indisputable truth, Paul and the other apostles wondered: "How could God continue to be righteous, if he had chosen the family of Abraham, and bound himself with them in an eternal covenant? Yet, we see in our days that God hardens them and rejects them, because they were not open to his Holy Spirit. Did God fail then?" "No," answers Paul in his epistle, where he clarifies the answer of the revelation (in Romans 9 to 11), not to justify the Jews, but only to emphasize the righteousness of God, for the Apostle of the Nations was zealous for the divinity, holiness, and righteousness of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Whoever obtains true faith, and surrenders to the direction of the Holy Spirit, becomes renewed in his mind, and able to live in holiness with all the justified in the New Testament. Christian Ethics do not stop at

the education of man, or human powers, but extend to the obedience of drawing from the love of God, and the power of his salvation, which bears all those who believe in the Son. The behavior of Christians sanctifies the name of the Father. The demonstration of his righteousness is the subject of the Epistle to the Romans.

*PRAYER: O God, Holy Trinity, we worship you because you admitted us to the true faith, and justified us freely, and you sanctify us every day and guide us. You are the Righteous One, and you continue to be righteous, though we do not understand many movements of peoples in the history of the world. Sanctify us completely, and take away the remaining sin from our characters that we may become a praise, and a sweet smell among all people.*

*QUESTION 13: How is the righteousness of God related to our faith?*

## **PART 1 - The Righteousness of God Condemns all Sinners and Justifies and Sanctifies all Believers in Christ (Romans 1:18 - 8:39)**

### **A - The Whole World Lies under the Sway of the Wicked One, and God will Judge all in Righteousness (Romans 1:18 - 3:20)**

*1. The Wrath of God against the Nations is Revealed (Romans 1:18-32)*

#### **ROMANS**

**1:18-21**

**18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known of God is revealed in them, for God revealed it to them. 20 For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse. 21 Because, knowing God, they didn't glorify him as God, neither gave thanks, but became vain in their reasoning, and their senseless heart was darkened.**

After Paul had greeted the church of Rome with humility, love, and longing, emphasizing to them the theme of the Gospel, that is God's righteousness in Christ, he began the first part of his deep research. He revealed that the righteous wrath of God is coming down against all our

impiety toward God and iniquity toward people. Today, we live not only in the age of grace, but also in the age of God's wrath, which is the motive and mystery of our days. God's disgust at the abominations of men and his just revenge on their sins are the emblem of our days. Whoever knows the Holy One fears him, and trembles from his anger. Nobody knows himself until he has recognized a little of the rays of the holiness of the Holy One. The offense of man appears in the majesty of divinity.

God created men in his image, but they, in their malicious haughtiness, foolishly chose independence from him. However, in his patience, he did not destroy the poor and disobedient, but expected that they would turn to him thankfully, and surrender to him immediately. But they loved themselves more than God, and kept far away from him, until they became spiritually blind. They no longer felt the glory of the Holy One, but continued in evil, corrupting themselves by themselves, and preventing the others from obtaining salvation, emphasizing their falsehood and their corruption as the right way.

In spite of his falling into sin, man is still able to recognize the existence of God through his wonders in nature. Study the structure of plants, the power of atoms, and the greatness of the innumerable number of stars, and you will worship the Creator, for he is wise, almighty, and eternal. Do you recognize the beauty of your soul, the sense of your conscience, and the creativity of your mind? Do you listen to the pulses of your heart, which beats one hundred thousand times daily, in order to bring blood to all parts of your body? These wonders are not automatic, but are the Creator's gift to you.

Who of us can fail to stand in awe and to tremble when we see the glory of God in nature? The testimonies to his glory speak without ceasing. The civilized man of our age, however, does not have enough time to read in the open book of nature, which is most clearly written by the hand of God.

He, who fails to honor the Creator, return thanks to him for what he has done and submit to his glory, becomes foolish. He loses the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, becomes blind in his mind, and like a beast. So, dear brother, praise God with love and fear, for he created you in his image and breathed in you the breath of life. You belong to him, and cannot live without him.

All men who do not worship God truly are lost, sinful, and unbelievers. They have lost the center of their energy and power, suppressed their

consciences, and darkened their minds. They consider lying in their opinions as truth, twist the knowledge of God, and suppress it violently. Therefore, ask your Lord for a living faith, and guide others to believe in the existence of God, for without trust in his glory, and praise to his mercy, humanity perishes in God's wrath, which is revealed against them.

*PRAYER: O holy God, the Almighty, we thank you because you brought us into being, and caused us to be in the best formation. Forgive us our superficiality and our negligence of praising you. Help us to turn to you, confess your existence publicly, continue in your love daily, glorify you at all times, and proclaim your just anger against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, that they may repent and turn to you.*

*QUESTION 14: Why is the wrath of God revealed?*

## **ROMANS**

**1:22-23**

**22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 and traded the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed animals, and creeping things.**

No mortal man can live without God. If he denied his Lord in his heart, he would turn to other gods, for man, in himself, is created to believe. All atheists, whether educated or uneducated, have their own idols, which they count on, love, glorify, dedicate themselves to, and sacrifice themselves for. The multitudes deify the leaders, hoping for success from them. Everyone gathers money and seeks riches to secure his ease and comfort. The educated are immersed in their books and their empty philosophies, supposing that they know something, while they are nothing but sinners. Politicians hope for their success by all means, whatever the price may be. Students rely on cultural development, and activists dedicate themselves to the spirit of revolution. Fear prevails over everybody, because the peace of God is not found in their hearts.

Some taxi drivers put a blue bead on the mirror of their cars to keep them from the evil eye, thus denying God's ability to protect them. Some travelers wear amulets, which are also thought to give them such protection. Many people race to diviners and fortunetellers. They stand in queues waiting for their turn to have contact with the dead and with the spirits. Men sin more than million times daily against the first commandment: "I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods before me".

The world has become blind to the truth of the glory of God, and men are going astray after a mirage, desiring after hope and peace for their empty hearts. Many are dominated by despair and pessimism.

People have great interest in following up the news of spacemen, movie stars, and politicians, without paying any attention to, or walking in, the commandments of God. They destroy one another in wars, and destroy themselves by denying their Creator.

Examine yourself! Do you love yourself, or anyone else, more than you love your Creator? Do you rely on the engine of your car? Do you love your appearance? Do you seek mediation from people? All your earthly inclinations belittle God. So, love your Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength, that your idols and gods, and even your selfishness may die, and the glory and help of God may shine on you.

*PRAYER: O Father, we thank you because you created us in your image, and revealed your essence in your Son. Please reveal your love to all men that unbelief may disappear from the whole world, and your Fatherly name be sanctified. Forgive us if we have had other gods or idols, and wipe them away from our thoughts, that your Son alone may reign in us forever.*

*QUESTION 15: Why does a man who lives without God have to make an earthly god for himself?*

## **ROMANS**

**1:24-25**

**24 Therefore God also gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.**

Verse 24 shows us the first level of the revelation of the wrath of God. The holy Judge abandons all those who know him but do not honor him, that they may fall into the lusts of their hearts. They become spiritually blind because of their disobedience. They no longer see God as the center of the universe, but begin to center around themselves; for egoism begins in all those who do not love God. As such, the direction of their life has changed, and the end of their life becomes dominated by the spirit of self, instead of God. They live only for carnal pleasures and lusts, abjuring responsibility toward God and denying his existence.

And where the will of man is enslaved to his lust, then sin appears not only in theory, but also in practice, for nearly all sins are committed outside the body after it has been polluted. Your conscience revolts against all kinds of impurity, for by practicing sin, you corrupt the image of God in you. Your body is made to be a temple of the Holy Spirit, and any sin against your body is a profanation of the temple of the Holy Spirit, through bringing your body, which is created in God's image, into dishonor and contempt.

There are steps to impurity. When man turns away from God, he falls out from normality to abnormality, and considers what is unlawful as lawful, for twisting the truth of God is an introduction to the conscienceless sin. A pervert is an indifferent person, who corrupts others, and is enslaved to his own lusts. How deep is the sea of temptation, of the corruption of body and soul, and of the curses coming out from a life without the Spirit of God! Sin appears sweet and pleasant in the beginning, but when we practice it, we feel disgust for it, and become ashamed of ourselves. In the same way many will blush from embarrassment and shame when their abominations will be uncovered in the Last Judgment.

The essence of sin is not perversion, but wrong worship. Turning away from God corrupts the inner position in man, for as soon as he turns away from his Lord, he lives without a direction. Whoever does not recognize God is compelled to make idols for himself, for he cannot live without a direction. However, all the idols of people are false, perishing, and handmade. If only man could distinguish between life and eternity! Then he would not be enslaved to money, spirits, books, and people.

There is One, who deserves our appreciation and reverence. He is the Almighty; without whom nothing happens, the Omniscient and Wise; who is merciful to his creatures. Let his praise be always on our mouths, for he is exalted and infallible, and there is no unrighteousness in him. His love is new every morning. His faithfulness is great. He never dies or changes, but he keeps us with his invincible patience. If only all men would turn to their Creator that they could find a foundation for their life, a measure for their value, and an aim for their hope!

Paul sealed his statement that the Creator is blessed forever with the word "Amen", as if his lecture were a prayer and testimony. The word "Amen" means, "So be it". Truly, verily, and most assuredly, God is incomparable. May the Lord let his divinity be the main purpose of our thoughts, plans, and workings that our life and our minds may become

healthy and sound. The world without God is a premature hell, for those who are given up to the lusts of their hearts corrupt themselves with their shameful uncleanness.

*PRAYER: We worship you O holy God, for you are eternal, clean, and just. You created us in the best form, and you keep us in your kindness. We love you, and ask you to draw our hearts to you that we may live for you, honor you, and thank you at all times. Forgive us our turning away from you, and cleanse us from our uncleanness. Deliver us from our own idols that we may love nothing in this world but YOU.*

*QUESTION 16: What is the consequence of improper worship of God?*

## **ROMANS**

**1:26-28**

**26 For this reason, God gave them up to vile passions. For their women changed the natural function into that which is against nature. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural function of the woman, burned in their lust toward one another, men doing what is inappropriate with men, and receiving in themselves the due penalty of their error. 28 Even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting;**

Paul wrote the terrible phrase, “God gave them up” three times in the first chapter. This phrase signifies termination, anger, and the first level of condemnation. Woe to those whom God gave up to the power of evil, for they have fallen from the providence and protection of the Almighty.

This separation from God manifests itself in the raging passions of lusts and atheistic thoughts. They run like an animal in heat, thinking only of satisfying their sexual desires. Where the Holy Spirit does not dwell in the heart of man, and does not control his body and subconscious, man turns into an adulterer, even if he was covered with the mask of good manners and politeness.

Particularly today, in the age of equality between man and woman, some women claim to have the right to satisfy their desires without a man. Moreover, some organizations propagate homosexuality to put an end to the multiplication of people. However, Paul considers all those who give themselves up to lust in abnormal ways, as given up to self-deceit under the wrath of God.

They all have a great harm in themselves, as well as devious complexes in their minds. They are not normal people any longer, but

they dream and do what they do not want to do; for whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. There are also many strong, sinful engagements and involvements, which enslave all those who do not abide in the order of God.

The reason for the decline of civilization is deep. The essence of evil is not sexual deviation, but the corrupt, who do not want to keep God in their minds. Because they loved themselves and the world more than God, they fell from impurity to adultery. He who reads testimonies of people saved by Christ quickly recognizes that these people, before their salvation, were far from God. As a result of their unbelief, these people were enslaved to all forms of sexual deviation and uncleanness. But when Christ found them, he gave them forgiveness, purification, change, comfort, strength, hope, and gladness.

Yet, he who willfully keeps away from God, and opposes the drawing of the Holy Spirit to repentance and redemption, will have a debased mind. There is no sentence pronounced on a man more burdensome than having the word "debased" written over him with the hand of God; for under such a situation, he cannot return to God, because such a return requires conversion. The Greek word "repentance" literally means a change of mind. God expects a fundamental and thorough change in the hearts of men that involves a reversal of previous thinking and conduct, in order that he may receive them and renew them.

Now, what about your heart? Is your mind open to the Spirit of God, and his salvation and purity? If you still live indifferently, away from God, turn to him as long as it is still called "Today". Ask your Lord to purify your subconscious and change your heart. Do not let your past remain impure. Your Lord is your Healer. He alone can release you from all your engagements if you want him to release you from your lusts with all your heart. You can never save yourself by yourself. You have only to will, decide, ask, and receive the salvation of the Lord who is prepared to save you.

*PRAYER: O holy God, you know me, and all my thoughts are uncovered to you. You know my past, and everyone to whom I have sinned. Forgive me my lusts, and purify my subconscious. Draw me to your word that I may love you. I do not want to sin anymore. Please create in me a strong will that I may receive my freedom at your hand. Save me from my debased mind and corrupt body. You are my Physician and my Savior. In You I trust.*

*QUESTION 17: How did Paul depict the appearance of the wrath of*

God?

## ROMANS

1:29-32

**29** being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil habits, secret slanderers, **30** backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, **31** without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, unforgiving, unmerciful; **32** who, knowing the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also approve of those who practice them.

Paul puts the catalogue of sins before our eyes as an explanation of the Ten Commandments, not that we may talk about the terms in a positive way, as philosophers, or measure others and condemn them by these measures, but to recognize ourselves with fear, and see all the possibilities of sin in us. He, who lives without the Creator, is filled with wrongdoing and injustice, for the spirit of the evil one brings various fruits in those who are void of the Holy Spirit. Man lives either in Christ, or in the evil one. There is no neutral zone.

The Lord Jesus and his apostle Paul classify adultery as the first sin. Adultery dissolves the bond of pure love, wipes out the trust in the faithfulness of the other partner, and opens wide the door to atheism and unbelief. Sinful lust dominates all those who did not deny themselves in the power of God; the majority of people are adulterers whether in thought, word, or deed. They are unclean and corrupt. Do you know yourself? Your conscience speaks to you clearly. So, do not deny your past, but confess what you did!

Did you know that man without God is not righteous, but wicked? Why do educators speak about humanity, education, and social service, if humanity in itself is wicked and corrupt? We don't need reformation or cultivation, but new creation, and renewal of minds and hearts.

He who does not know God loves money, and builds his life on this mortal god. His love of money grows as much as his money itself grows. It leads him away from the hope of the Christian to the pride and pomp of life, and to the dominion of evil and hateful passions.

All those ruled by a depraved mind are filled with malice, trickery, vengeance, hypocrisy, lying, deceit, and craftiness. A malicious man devises wickedness against his enemies as well as his neighbors. He

pretends to have affection for them, but his heart is a nest of vipers.

Usually, the motive of a malicious man is envy and jealousy of others. He does not rejoice at the blessings of others, because he wants to be more prosperous and successful than they are. Furthermore, he wants to be richer, more beautiful, smarter, and more honored than anyone else. Stinginess and envy are the origin of most of the evil deeds. Advertisements now employ the passions of envy and covetousness in people to promote new products at any cost.

Such destructive passions do not only divert the mind from that which is good, but also open the door to murder, hatred, rude slander and defamation. Keep in your mind that Jesus taught us that the mere thinking of rejecting, despising, or hating others is in itself a sin similar to that of murder, for our intent is to destroy others. We are all killers and sons of killers in the eyes of God.

This destroying spirit quickly appears in our words and actions when we make divisions and parties in our societies and families, while the Holy Spirit prompts us to peace and mediation between the parties in dispute, that we may be peacemakers. Are you a reason for disorder and division among the sons of disobedience? Do you put fuel on the fire? Or do you bring forgiveness and reconciliation, and prefer to put an end to the enmity, even if you have to sacrifice yourself to do it?

Deceit is a characteristic of the devil, which is not found at all in our Lord. Whoever executes his plans through tricks, and ensnares simple people with kind words is a son of the evil one. The fruits of the Divine Spirit are truthfulness, frankness, and straightforwardness. But lying and its branches are very evil.

Other fruits of hell are tale bearing, and defamation of our fellowman in order to highlight our names. Our lips are filled with poison, and our feet are first to corrupt others. We are prepared to deny our closest relatives in order to save ourselves and bring ourselves into prominence.

All those who commit these sins, whether willfully or inattentively, hate God, for whoever loves his Lord, loves people as well. But when you speak with people impolitely, and despise them and condemn them, then the spirit, which speaks from you with these iniquities, is you. When you hate somebody, you hate God, for God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and forgives, blesses, and loves even the unlovable, in harmony with the source of love.

As the devil is proud in the innermost recesses of his heart, so are all

the wicked. They know, in their hearts, all their sins, malice, and shortcomings, and because of this knowledge, they seek to cover their corrupting souls. They become arrogant, and exaggerated, and they strut and boast like the peacock thinking they make themselves illustrious, when really they make themselves ridiculous. Such as these are cruel to the poor and barbarous to all who lie at their mercy. They serve their own lusts, and are filled with malice and artifice. They appear as good, gifted, and important, but when they are alone, they hear God condemning them with one word: "reprobate".

In their uncovering of the others' weaknesses, and their employment of their kindness, they greatly heighten their guilt; and their evil spirit appears in their families in the form of disobedience. They do not regard their parents as their guardians according to the law of God, but rudely claim money, independence, and rights, without being prepared for service, sacrifice, love, and work. In this manner, they tread on the love given to them by life, and despise the ignorance of their uneducated parents. They do not know that sin is the highest folly, while the fear of God is the highest wisdom. All those who do not submit to the Spirit of God do not understand anything properly, but see all things wrongly. They have lost the standard for themselves and for the whole society.

In this condition, they do not find the ability to be faithful in themselves, and therefore become unreliable. All those who are not committed to God cannot cooperate with men. The faithfulness of God makes a man faithful, but he who lives without his Lord remains lost, straying, and poor.

Our God is love, mercy, and pity. Woe to those who leave the source of all good, for their heart becomes as hard as stone. They love themselves, and hate others. Look at yourself! Do you love your enemies? Do you feel pity for the poor? Jesus felt for his scattered people, and suffered from their sins. Do you condemn your people, or do you love them? Are you void of mercy and compassion, or did the Spirit of God renew you that you might stand before him as a priest to represent the sinful?

Our sins are more numerous than the sand of the seashore. Know God, and then you know yourself. Whoever separates himself from the characteristics of his Divine source deserves death and condemnation. All men are sinful from their childhood. You must die to your transgressions and sins today. The holiness of God requires your destruction. You have no right to survive. All the rights of men are lying.

We only have the right to die to our sins. You wander in your town as someone sentenced to death, not by men, but by God. So, when will you change your mind, and repent totally and sincerely?

If you do not repent completely, your sin reaches a point where you receive a vicarious satisfaction in the sinful deeds of others. You do not only sin with pleasure, but also delight in those who commit sin; and hence encourage them in it, excite them to it, and seduce them from the ways of innocence, extending to them the infection of your own sins. This is the grievous aggravation of the offence. Is it not enough that you yourself are evil? Is it necessary for you to corrupt your society? Look at yourself! Are you pleased with your sins? Are you satisfied with the hardheartedness of others? Do you not shed tears, in sincere repentance, for yourself and your people? Did the Spirit of God bring you to a true repentance, or are you still haughty?

*PRAYER: God be merciful to me a sinner. You know that every drop of my blood is sinful, and that in my cells, I am the source of evil thoughts. I am perishable in your wrath, and your judgment is righteous. Be patient with me, and do not destroy me according to your justice. Change me with all my friends and neighbors that we may not fall together to hell. Give my people and myself the knowledge of sin and the change of heart that you may begin in us in a new creation. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to your lovingkindness; and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.*

*QUESTION 18: What are the five sins in the catalogue of sins, which you deem as the most common in our world today?*

*The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. (Romans 1:18)*

**2. The Wrath of God is Revealed against the Jews (Romans 2:1-3:20)**

*a) He who Judges Others Condemns Himself (Romans 2:1-11)*

## **ROMANS**

**2:1-2**

**1 Therefore you are without excuse, O man, whoever you are who judge. For in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself. For you who judge practice the same things. 2 We know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice**

## **such things.**

The crown of sin is hypocrisy. People pretend to be righteous, wise, and pious, though they know from the testimony of their consciences that, in relation to the holiness of God, they are very wicked. Over and above this hypocrisy, they hatefully judge their friends, and speak of them scornfully, as if they themselves were the models of piety, and their friends were rubbish.

Yet, Paul breaks your haughtiness. He takes off your false mask, and shows you that you that you have no sound judgment. Do you know anybody who is untruthful? You are more untruthful than he is. Have you seen a murderer? You are more murderous in your hatred than he is. Your thoughts about yourself are not true. The Spirit of God condemns you. He first condemns the false professors of piety, who consider themselves better than the other sinners, but have never known anything of true piety. Jesus was not crucified by the mobs, but by the proud hypocritical professors of religion who strut and boast like the peacock in their shows of piety, while on the inside they are tombs full of everything unclean.

God condemns you not only because of your works, but also because of your intents, thoughts, and wishes. Your dreams are evil from childhood. In your intent, you are selfish. You disobey God, oppose his designs, transgress his laws, and despise your fellowman. You are adulterous in your spirit, and separated from your Creator. Your evil thoughts proceed from your heart. However, in the Last Judgment, you will hear your recorded words, and see your photographed works, and your polluted intents, and you will tremble with terror, and keep silent. You are sinful. You are corrupt in the recess of your heart. Confess your malice in common, and never despise another sinner. Your neighbor may be very wicked. But your zeal against his wickedness is no proof of your innocence. You die to your own sins, for you are answerable for yourself before God. Therefore, know your criminal self in the pure holiness of God.

You may not accept these hard words, or you may only reason with them, without being broken in your haughtiness, or pouring out your heart in repentance before your Lord. Then be aware that your ignorance of your own condition does not save you from the Divine Judgment. The eternal right will prosecute you and condemn you. All the important religions in the world know something about the Day of Judgment. Some of them call it the Day of Resurrection, Al-Qari'ah, or

doomsday. Only the unbelievers deny standing before the living God. In that hour, all your secrets, thoughts, words, and abominations will be uncovered before everyone, and you will have to give an account for every idle word which you spoke, for every penny you squandered, and for every minute you did not seize to glorify God; for you are a steward of God's gifts, and he will settle accounts with you for everything he had deposited with you. The rays of the glory of God will penetrate into the inmost recesses of your heart and your past, more accurately and deeply than all the X rays and other instruments known in hospitals. You will stand there completely uncovered.

*PRAYER: O holy God, You are eternal and righteous, and I am guilty and sinful. Forgive me all my profession of piety, and open my heart that all filthiness may go out in your light. I confess all my sins before you, and ask you to give me the Spirit of your love that I may never reject, condemn, or hate anybody, but grow in love and discernment. I am foremost of all sinners. Have mercy upon me O God, according to your loving-kindness, and break the last sediments of my pride and sensitivity that I may become lowly in heart.*

*QUESTION 19: How does man condemn himself in whatever he judges another?*

**ROMANS**

**2:3-5**

**3 Do you think this, O man who judges those who practice such things, and do the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you despise the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and patience, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But according to your hardness and unrepentant heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath, revelation, and of the righteous judgment of God;**

Did you know that the most abominable filthiness is neither adultery nor pride, nor hatred to God, but hypocrisy? A hypocrite pretends to be righteous, straight, and pious, while in the inside he is full of lies, uncleanness, and deceit. He is an abomination to the Lord. The Holy One will remove the veil from your face, and uncover before all men, angels, and saints the truth of your sins, because you pretended to be holy before them. Your uncleanness is greater than you know. Do not indulge in false hopes. As passengers are not admitted to the airplane unless they are subjected to a strict inspection, so can nobody go into eternity unless he is called to a just judgment which no one can escape. Why do most people fear the hour of their death, and tremble from the arrival of the dreadful harvester? Because at these moments People immediately recognize that they have missed the object of their life, and that they are standing before the hour of judgment.

In that great Day of Judgment, all the peoples of the world; black, yellow, red, brown, and white, including rich and poor, high and low, wise men and fools, old and young, men and women, bond and free will meet before God. Then books will be opened containing the records of the deeds, words, and thoughts of people. It is not difficult for us, who live in the age of recorders, surveillance cameras, and micro films, to understand how easy it is for our Creator to keep a record of every one of his creatures. There is neither time nor haste in eternity, and God will have enough time to examine your case deliberately. You will not need to utter any word to defend yourself before Him who tests the hearts and minds, and it is useless to fasten accusations on the others, or blame your parents, teachers, or other people. You are guilty, and God condemns you. So, get ready to stand before the Great Judge, for you can never escape the hour of his judgment.

Know today, in the revelation of God's glory, that you are polluted. Do not begin to mutter sorrow and grief, but confess your sin before God, deny and condemn yourself, and utter what you have done. Do not hide any of your evil deeds, but confess in the presence of the Holy One that you are evil in all your intents. This brokenness of the spirit of self is the only way to your salvation. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for an arrogant man to enter the kingdom of God.

However, God is merciful. He does not mercilessly destroy his creatures, but he loves the repentant sinners who are fully determined to abandon sin. God knows that all men are corrupt, and none is righteous before his holiness, but he is patient, full of love and kindness; and because of his loving-kindness he does not cause the sinful to die at once. His justice requires judgment and trial for every man today, but his goodness gives us another chance to repent. We all live from God's deliberateness. Undoubtedly, he has the right and power to put an end to our world with one stroke, but God, who protects and pities us, does not act hastily, but expects that all will turn and change their minds. Did you repent to God regretting and asking him to create in you a clean heart, and to renew a right spirit within you? Do you use the kindness of God to fulfill the workings of your sin under cover of the robe of righteousness? Do you despise the love of God by turning away to false doctrines and philosophies, seeking to escape the idea of the judgment? The judgment of the Great Day is certain, and he who does not deny himself and die to his carnal pleasures despises him who tests the hearts and minds, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, but perfectly knows every man's true character.

Hold fast to the kindness of God, and you will be saved. Penetrate deeply into the tenders of his mercy, and you will obtain hope. Change your mind, and recognize the love of God to know who God is. He is a merciful father, and not a careless dictator who acts as he pleases without caring for the individuals. God sees, hears, and knows everything about you. He knows your grandfathers, as well as your background, and all the surroundings and conditions that affected your character. He also knows your temptations and your treacherous will. God is not unjust. He is good, and disposed to do justice and to bestow mercy. He is prepared to forgive you, and is willing to purify you if you completely commit yourself to him, hate your malicious soul, confess your malice, and make up your mind to forsake it in his name.

Woe to you when you know the holiness and kindness of God and you do not repent! For then your heart is hardened, and your mind is blinded. A stubborn hypocrite becomes defiled in his spirit and cannot turn. He can neither hear, nor easily understand the call of God any further. He reads the word of God without effect. Therefore, repent as long as it is called "Today", and give greater diligence to secure your salvation before there can be no other opportunity to do it.

At that fearful hour, the anger of God will be kindled particularly against those who heard of his kindness and neglected it, and did not turn to him with broken hearts. Those will be without hope in the Day of Judgment, because they squandered their spiritual capital, and brought nothing to God except guilt, abominations, hatred, faults, and injustice. Such must be uncovered, blamed, and condemned in the Last Judgment, because they neither repented nor confessed their sins.

*PRAYER: O holy Lord, Grant me a sincere repentance in the guidance of your Holy Spirit. Bring me back to you, because my return is not complete. Help me that I may not neglect your holiness and love, but recognize in your patience my impatience. O Lord, I am perishable in your righteous anger. Do not condemn me with your rage, but discipline me with your compassion. Break every kind of haughtiness in me that I may die to myself and live from your kindness. Free me from all kinds of hypocrisy, and do not give me up to hardheartedness. You are my Judge and Savior. In you I trust.*

*QUESTION 20: What are the secrets, which Paul reveals to us about the judgment of God?*

**ROMANS**

**2:6-11**

**6** who "will pay back to everyone according to their works:" **7** to those who by patience in well-

doing seek for glory, honor, and incorruptibility, eternal life; 8 but to those who are self-seeking, and don't obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, will be wrath and indignation, 9 oppression and anguish, on every soul of man who works evil, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 10 But glory, honor, and peace go to every man who works good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 11 For there is no partiality with God.

Dear brother, do you know the principles in the judgment of God? All men are rushing to the critical hour, but the discreet and wise man is he who prepares himself for that hour. The apostle of grace clearly reveals to us that, in the last judgment, our good and evil deeds will be examined as a ground for judging us. In Matthew 25, Christ clarifies to us that the practice of love in those who are disqualified, least, despised, poor, and simple is the thing which is pleasing in the sight of God. Christ did not mention fasting, praying, going on a pilgrimage, and giving alms as good deeds, but rather practical kindness to the needy.

By your secret deeds of love, it appears whether your heart is hard or soft, proud or merciful. Are you an educated man, who shows disdain and contempt for the simple and ignorant? Does the love of Christ drive you to those who are disqualified, abandoned, widowed, and parentless? You will be rewarded only for your deeds of love, and not for your worship and strict observance of the external forms of religion.

Paul shows you the only way to the outpouring of the love of God in our hearts. He who directs his mind toward the glory of God, and does not run after passing riches and mortal honor, comes near to God, and becomes changed in his mercy. He who seeks the glory of God becomes broken of his own haughtiness, and acknowledges no honor for himself. Such a repentant person opens his heart to God's forgiveness, and holds fast his mercy as a mighty shield. Everyone who senses his mortality, longs for eternal life, and accepts it with faith, participates in the designs of the eternal Spirit. Therefore, be careful, you are not saved by your own deeds, but your longing for God draws his power in your weakness, and his love overcomes your soul that you may carry out the motives of his love. Will you seek God and live forever?

He, who does evil, does not do it because he is born as a vessel of wrath predestined and prepared for destruction, but because he is not willing to obey the truth. Evil deeds are not done suddenly. They are the outcome of long, wrongful developments. Our conscience opposes all unfit deeds. It reproaches us and warns us not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Yet, he who becomes stubborn, and rejects the voice of God, surrendering to the spirit of disobedience, commits his crime

impudently and impenitently, smothering his conscience. Our evil deeds are a result of our yielding to the temptations around us, as well as to bad movies, books, and companies, and even to the thoughts of our own hearts, which attract us to evil.

Whoever opposes the drawing of the Spirit of God falls into judgment, having closed his heart against the gift of God, and despised the Most High, urging his anger. The punishments of God will certainly fall on all the disobedient, bringing troubles and suffering. Do you live in the power of Christ, on the level of love, or do you sink under the anger of the righteous Judge? You cannot escape the answer to this question. So, get ready, and prepare yourself for the day of separation between good and evil.

In his statement that the judgment falls first on the Jews, Paul meant that the old covenant laid a grave responsibility on them, and God will call them first to account. Whoever of the Jews, through the workings of the Holy Spirit, comes near to God will shine with the glory of the glorious One. But whoever of them continues in his hardheartedness will be brought down before the others to hell, for he did not allow the Spirit of God to change the spirit of disobedience in him.

The Greeks, Mongols, and Negroes, together with all races and tongues, will have the right to go near to God, because he is the creator of men, of all men, and he does not entertain racism. They are all equal before him. Even the rich geniuses will lose their limelight before his beautiful glory. We are all nothing before the Creator of all. The mothers who serve in their houses and the simple brothers will probably shine in the Spirit of Christ more than the bishops, the great leaders and the superstars.

God will measure us with the measure of his love. Whoever allows himself to be changed in the manner of the divine love will be accepted. But whoever hardens his heart, and loves himself more than others, will fall away from God and utter contempt. The Lord is just and faithful. There is no partiality with him.

We acknowledge that there is no one righteous in himself, or merciful like God. But whoever extends to the fountain of love becomes righteous, because the power of the heavenly Father changes all those who seek him. Yet do not think that such change and preparedness for the act of God's mercy happen quickly. The victory over the proud ego needs time, and only few want to become servants to those who fall. This is why Jesus preceded us and ate with adulterers and tax

collectors, that we might deny our hard hearts, receive a tender heart, and love sinners as God loves them.

Do you know the reward of those who continue in deeds of love with longsuffering? God will dress all those who are open to the spirit of grace with his own glory. Therefore, the divine end for men is not less than his first design. He created man in his image, and wanted to pour all his glories and characteristics in this vessel. The Most High honors those who have mercy on the disqualified. His peace dwells in the hearts of those who are cast away and rejected because of his righteousness.

The end of the judgment is to separate the tenderhearted who were transformed into glory in the joy of God, from those who hardened their hearts toward the drawing of the Holy Spirit, who will go down quickly to the everlasting torments of Hell. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

*PRAYER: O Lord, my love is little, and my selfishness is big. I am unclean before you. Forgive me my sins. Open my eyes to the deeds of your love. Guide me to the life of sacrifice and good deeds, for there is nothing good in me. Save me from myself, and fill my heart with your love that I may seek those who are despised, and sit with the mobs, love them, and bless them, just as you looked for those who were going astray to save them.*

*QUESTION 21: What are the divine principles in the last judgment?*

*b) The Law, or the Conscience Condemns Man (Romans 2:12-16)*

## **ROMANS**

**2:12-16**

**12 For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without the law. As many as have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For it isn't the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be justified 14 (for when Gentiles who don't have the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are a law to themselves, 15 in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience testifying with them, and their thoughts among themselves accusing or else excusing them) 16 in the day when God will judge the secrets of men, according to my Good News, by Jesus Christ.**

The church in Rome was composed of two groups: Christians of Jewish

origin, and believers from the Greek and Roman world. The first had knowledge of the promises and the Law, and kept their traditions according to the Old Testament; while the Christians of the Gentiles did not know any divine order for their life, but walked in the power of the Spirit of Christ.

Paul confirmed to the Christians of Jewish origin that God would condemn them according to the old Law, which is an image of his holiness. Hearing the word of God does not save, and spiritual thoughts and long prayers are not sufficient, for God requires the obedience of heart and of life. He wants his word to be embodied in us, and our life to be completely changed by his word. The Jew will be condemned for every transgression he commits against the Law, for all transgressions are considered as enmity to God.

When Paul wrote these truths, he heard, in his spirit, the argument of the Christians of Jewish origin, who said: "We have no law, and we do not know the Ten Commandments; then how will God deal with us in the Day of Judgment? We are free from the judgment".

He then frankly answered them that God's righteousness is in all cases unchangeable, even if it condemned those who ignored the Law, who had neither heard the Commandments and promises, nor known God's love and holiness; for the Creator put in every man a sensitive, cautious, controlling, warning, censuring, and reproaching conscience. This Warner may sometimes keep silent as if strangled in abeyance. But it certainly shows up newly to show you your faults. And a struggle may break out inside you. This remnant of the image of God in you cannot be silenced at all times. Your conscience condemns you. And you cannot find rest except in the grace of God. This is why many people look sad and nervous, because they live in enmity with their consciences, and do not confess their guilt, though their conscience watches their works and reproaches them. Do you thank God for your conscience, the moral law created in you? Train your conscience in the Gospel, and dye it in the thoughts of God's love that it may warn you with more exactness and guide you according to the directions of God, and you may become qualified and prepared for every good work. Then you will not fall into the last judgment, because you lived in harmony with the voice of God in your heart.

But if you do not penetrate deeply into the word of Christ, and do not free yourself from the complaints of your conscience, but continue in your obstinacy, and justify yourself by yourself, then your conscience

will rise against you in the last day. It will justify God, and condemn you. You have no other solution to your nervousness but to resort to the Gospel, which shows you that your Judge is Himself, your Savior. So, come to Christ immediately, and you will find rest for your soul.

Did you know that the last judgment of God will be put into the hands of Jesus Christ? Did you know that the full name of this Judge is not only "Christ", but also "Jesus"? The difference between these names is that "Jesus" is his personal name, while "Christ" is the description of his office. Jesus is the Anointed One, who is filled with the gifts and characteristics of God, who has supreme and full authority, and who is empowered with the judgment and salvation.

Thus, the apostle could say that God will condemn the world with all its mysteries according to the Gospel which Paul produced about Jesus. It is necessary for us to be acquainted with what is revealed in the gospel of Paul, as included in his epistle to the Romans, concerning the Day of Judgment.

*PRAYER: O holy God, You know me more than I know myself. All my works are uncovered before you. I confess my sin, and ask you to reveal to me all my hidden faults that I may bring them to the light of your Son, before the coming of the fearful day. Forgive me if I did not obey the voice of my conscience at once, or if I willfully neglected your voice. Give me determination and power to execute the orders of your love.*

*QUESTION 22: How will God deal with the Gentiles in the Day of Judgment?*

*c) Man is Saved not by Knowledge, but by Works (Romans 2:17-24)*

## **ROMANS**

**2:17-24**

**17** Indeed you bear the name of a Jew, and rest on the law, and glory in God, **18** and know his will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, **19** and are confident that you yourself are a guide of the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, **20** a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babies, having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth. **21** You therefore who teach another, don't you teach yourself? You who preach that a man shouldn't steal, do you steal? **22** You who say a man shouldn't commit adultery. Do you commit adultery? You who

**abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who glory in the law, through your disobedience of the law do you dishonor God? 24 For “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,” just as it is written.**

God entrusted the descendants of Abraham with the privilege of the holy Law, which testifies the greatness and holy glory of God. The Jews recognized the value of the Law. They relied on it, and were puffed up mightily by this privilege, and thought this enough to bring them to heaven, while the Law, in fact, was a reason for wrath and condemnation because of the way they acted.

Paul numbered the good and bad qualities, which characterized the Jews. The divine revelation gave the people of the wilderness tranquility, confidence, and pride, because they knew God and his will. They recognized the best way in life, and became in the past the teachers of the peoples, and the light of the nations.

On the other hand, Paul confirmed to them that the Law has no power to reform men. It is true that through it, the Jews knew what they were obliged to do, but they did not fulfill their obligations. They knew the mysteries of God, but they did not walk in them. Many of them arrived at a high stage of formal legalistic piety with iron determination. However, the will of God was not outpoured in their hearts.

Maybe they did not practically steal, but their eyes were blinded with covetousness. Maybe they did not commit adultery in common, but their hearts overflowed with unclean thoughts. They transgressed the Law of God thousands of times. In addition, Paul experienced the lack of love even in the life of the believers. They dishonored God by their sins, and caused the other nations to blaspheme against his holy name.

Paul was a Christian of Jewish origin and wrote down, apart from the delusions of grandeur, all the excellent properties of his people. Because of this statement, he had the right and the power to uncover the sins and scandals of his nation; that nothing remained of its righteousness compared with its great offences and aggravating faults. There is no complaint more burdensome against any people or nation than to say that the name of God is blasphemed because of their conduct. They did not respond to their original call to enlighten the peoples with the Law, but did the reverse. If only we could find nowadays a courageous witness like Paul, who does not deny our privileges, but removes the mask of piety from the face of our corrupt society that nothing might remain except repentance and brokenness.

Do you condemn the people of Abraham? Beware! They are sinful like you.

God said clearly: "Be holy, for I am holy". Are you really a holy and perfect Christian, as your heavenly Father is? Does your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven, because of the apparent change in your life? Do your friends despise your religion, because you are no better than those who deny the redemption of Christ? Are you a reason for blasphemy against the name of God? Can our heavenly Father reveal himself through your love and humility?

*PRAYER: O holy and great God, my sin is greater than I know. In my disobedience and hypocrisy, I became a reason for blasphemy of many. Forgive me when someone blasphemes against your holy name, because I did not walk perfectly before you. Forgive me my incomplete love, purity, and patience. You created me in your image that the others might see you in me; so help me to obey your commands and follow your example that your image may shine brighter and brighter in me. Save me from my weakness, my faults, and myself.*

*QUESTION 23: What are the privileges of the Law and its burdens on the Jews?*

*d) Circumcision is Spiritually Unprofitable (Romans 2:25-29)*

## **ROMANS**

**2:25-29**

**25 For circumcision indeed profits, if you are a doer of the law, but if you are a transgressor of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. 26 If therefore the uncircumcised keep the ordinances of the law, won't his uncircumcision be accounted as circumcision? 27 Won't the uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfills the law, judge you, who with the letter and circumcision are a transgressor of the law? 28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; 29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter; whose praise is not from men, but from God.**

When he had broken the pride of the believers of Jewish origin, as the people of the Law, and the teachers of the peoples, Paul heard in his spirit some of them saying: "Yes! We are wrong, because none is

perfect except God. But we have the promise of circumcision, for the Most High was engaged, by this symbol of the Law, with our father Abraham and all his seed. Thus we belong to God, not because we are righteous, but because he chose us”.

(Verse 25) Then Paul, who was an expert in the religious teachings of the Mosaic Law, answered their false impression, saying that the covenant with Abraham does not nullify the Law, for the covenant depends on the Law, just as the Law is dependent on the covenant, as the Lord said frankly to Abraham: "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless." (Genesis 17:1) This verse was the condition for the confirmation of the covenant, when Abraham had not believed the first promise, and he gave birth, without God's guidance, to Ishmael, his firstborn, from the Egyptian slave.

Thus, Paul proved to the Christians of Jewish origin in Rome that there is no covenant without the Law, and that circumcision is of no value without observation of the commandments. In principle, he saw in circumcision a good symbol that God purifies the sinner from his origin, and then the believer and his seed obey God.

However, this principle only applies as long as the participant of the covenant does the will of God. When the believer breaks the commandments and transgresses against God, he will be considered as uncircumcised in spite of his circumcision, far from God, and a stranger to him.

(Verse 26) But if a Gentile learned and kept the Law in the power of the Holy Spirit, then he who was considered as physically uncircumcised, would be considered by God as circumcised, included in the Law, and chosen from eternity, because the covenant and choosing are but to renew and bring up the elect. Whoever reaches the moral goal in his conduct, without the walls of the old covenant, is considered as included in the covenant.

(Verse 27) For a Jew to become a transgressor of the Law is really in God's sight to become uncircumcised. Not only is a Gentile a true Jew if he observes the requirements of the Law, but he who is physically uncircumcised will sit in judgment over the Jew who has the physical qualifications but nothing by way of obedience; for the symbol of circumcision does not save man, but man's holy work and conduct prove that he is engaged with God, and that God's power works in his weakness.

(Verse 28) After this masterstroke, which he aimed at the Jewish tradition, Paul came with a description of the name “Jew”, which is necessary to remember and recognize these days. The Jew is neither he who was born of Jewish root, speaks Hebrew, and has a hooked nose, nor is a Jew in God’s sight he who believes in the Law, becomes circumcised, or prays on Saturdays. The Jew who is acceptable to God is he who proves his relationship with God through love, humility, holiness, and perfection. According to this spiritual description, Jesus is the only perfect Jew. Because he was contrary to the obstinate Jews, they crucified him in their hypocrisy; and because of his meek spirit, the people of Abraham still persecute the people of Jesus until today. The description of the meaning of “Jew” as Paul wrote it requires our change of minds.

(Verse 29) Circumcision is not a proof that God belongs to a certain nation or believer, even if it were written hundreds of times in the Holy Book, because God does not want lazy partners in his covenant, but beloved with renewed hearts filled with his Holy Spirit. Only the born again are considered in God’s sight a partner of the covenant, and he blesses all those who bring the fruits of his Spirit with increased blessings. Yet, those who call themselves Jews or Christians, and oppose the Spirit of Christ’s love are not accepted by God in spite of their pure beliefs, but are considered his enemies and he their Judge.

*PRAYER: O holy God, we thank you because you were engaged in the past with your close friend Abraham and his children by the symbol of circumcision. We also thank you because you accepted us in your new covenant. Forgive us if we did not walk completely in holiness, or behaved as if our hearts were not circumcised and renewed. Purify us from all strange spirits, and give us the humility and love of Christ that we may follow him at all times.*

*QUESTION 24: What is the meaning of circumcision in both the Old and New Testaments?*

**In accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his deeds (Rom 2:5-6)**

*e) The Privilege of the Jews does not Save them from the Anger*

*(Romans 3:1-8)*

## **ROMANS**

**3:1-5**

**1 Then what advantage does the Jew have? Or what is the profit of circumcision? 2 Much in every way! Because first of all, they were entrusted with the oracles of God. 3 For what if some were without faith? Will their lack of faith nullify the faithfulness of God? 4 May it never be! Yes, let God be found true, but every man a liar. As it is written, "That you might be justified in your words, and might prevail when you come into judgment." 5 But if our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God, what will we say? Is God unrighteous who inflicts wrath? I speak like men do.**

Before Paul wrote his epistle to the church in Rome, there were several questions among its members. The believers of Gentile origin did not regard the Jews as greatly privileged and honored. Therefore, they were pleased when Paul confirmed, in his epistle, that the Law and circumcision would condemn the people of the old covenant.

On the other hand, the Christians of Jewish origin, who adhered to the Law, put the subject of righteousness by faith under question. They were displeased with Paul's clarifications, as he broke their privileges of the Law and covenant.

Paul knew of these different attitudes through his missionary journeys, and he answered their questions beforehand in his epistle to the Romans. He assumed that someone said to him: "You are right, Paul, the Jews are not greater than we are." And Paul answered him with a smile: "My dear brother, you are wrong, for the Jews still have a great privilege. It is neither their race, nor their genius, nor their nationality, which are all but dust and ashes. Their only privilege is the word of God deposited in their hands. This revelation will remain their pride and responsibility forever.

Then Paul assumed that another objector said: "But they were not faithful and keepers to the Law of the covenant." And Paul replied to this serious charge saying: "Do you think that man's fault makes the promises and faithfulness of the Lord null and void? God is neither hesitant, nor does he lie. His word is the eternal truth and the foundation of the universe. The grace of the Lord, in front of the infidelity of men, is faithful and lasting forever. If God invalidated the old covenant

because of the sins of its people, there would be no continuance of our new covenant. In fact, we in the new covenant sin more than those of old, compared with the considerable gifts given to us. Therefore, we do not build our hope on our apparent failure, or imagined success, but only on the grace of God. We admit that we are liars and false as all men, and we testify that God alone is the truthful and faithful one. His faithfulness and his promises never fail.

## **ROMANS**

**3:6-8**

**6 May it never be! For then how will God judge the world? 7 For if the truth of God through my lie abounded to his glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? 8 Why not (as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), "Let us do evil, that good may come?" Those who say so are justly condemned.**

As Paul emphasized our hope, which is built only on the faithfulness of God, he heard in his spirit evil voices crying out offensively: "How can God remain righteous if his faithfulness and grace are manifested through our sins? Is it not unjust for God to punish our sin and unbelief when the universal guilt and corruption of mankind give occasion to the manifestation of his great faithfulness? Then, come on; let us sin in order to glorify him!"

Paul did not keep silent at this serious charge, but he clarified and deepened it through other objections, and clarified that he did not put them as an apostle, but as a natural man. He said: Certainly, if the faithfulness of God is manifested through our injustice, it will be unjust for God to be the Judge of the world; and if our lying supports his truth, he will have no right to condemn the world. Then, it would certainly be good for us to sin to occasion the glorifying of the good.

Paul did not give, in these negative discussions, a reply to the original question, but he emphasized, clarified, and developed the evil spirit in the questioners, to take all the arguments from his adversaries beforehand. Then he summed up his reply in two words: Firstly, "Certainly not!" which signifies in the Greek text, "I would that this thought were not produced in me". I do not agree to it again at all, and God is my witness that I do not regard such blasphemy in my heart. And secondly, he said that the judgment of God will fall on those blasphemers, and that they cannot escape his anger, for he will destroy them immediately. From this apostolic style, we find that we sometimes arrive with the enemies of Christ at a stage where we have to stop all arguments and questions that we may not enter into blasphemy. Then

we must have the courage to end the discussion, and put the people completely before God and his glorious justice.

*PRAYER: O holy God, forgive us all our disobedient questions. Thank you for your patience, for you do not destroy us for our offense and ignorance, but you call us to reason that we may hear your word, and respond to the drawing of your Holy Spirit. Remove from us all opposing questions against your plan of love, and keep us in harmony with your will. O Lord, we do not want to be children of disobedience. So, teach us the humility of your Son, and fill us with the wisdom of your apostles that we may not speak, in our discussions with others, in human logic, but rather seek your guidance in all our services.*

*QUESTION 25: What are the original contradicting questions in the Epistle to the Romans, and what are their answers?*

*3. All Men are Corrupt and Blamable (Romans 3:9-20)*

## **ROMANS**

**3:9-10**

**9 What then? Are we better than they? No, in no way. For we previously warned both Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin. 10 As it is written, “There is no one righteous; no, not one.**

Paul summed up his complaint against both the Jews and Gentiles in the name of God, and proved to them that none has any preference or advantage over the other. All have sinned, and their sins are tangible. They left the straight way of God, and became slaves of sin, bound by their lusts and self-deceit. Paul included himself in his own complaint, confessing with us that he was sinful.

Have you ever seen anything so disgusting that you became nauseated? Your sin is so disgusting that it makes your spirit and soul nauseated. Compare yourself with Paul’s complaint, and you will recognize that you are he who is described in it.

## **ROMANS**

**3:11-12**

**11 There is no one who understands. There is no one who seeks after God. 12 They have all turned aside. They have together become unprofitable. There is no one who does good, no, not, so much as one.**

We are all unclean before the shining holiness of God. There is none righteous but Christ. Our minds are surrounded with a thick fog, and we are unable to see God, our great standard, as he is. We do not know

the horribleness of our sin. If only men would seek the glory of God that they might become clever! However, everyone takes his own way, clinging to his own honor, bound by his lust, and seeking ease. All men lost the way of their Lord, and nobody walks in the right way. You are not good in your manners at all. They have all turned aside, become unprofitable, and gone astray. We are all wicked in nature, and our consciences know us exactly.

## **ROMANS**

**3:13**

**13 Their throat is an open tomb. With their tongues they have used deceit.” The poison of vipers is under their lips;**

The corruption of men appears in their tongues. We are all killers and butchers, because we cause the destruction and ruin of the reputation, happiness, and peace of others with our sharp tongues; we poison the atmosphere with lies, charges, insults, and shameless jokes; and we complain against God’s directions. Our opposition is like bitter blasphemy in our mouths. We are disobedient to God’s discipline, and do not know that we deserve nothing but heavy blows and indispensable judgment.

## **ROMANS**

**3:14-17**

**14 whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood. 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways. 17 The way of peace, they haven’t known.**

Our hatred does not change quickly, for we do not like our enemies, but we wish to get rid of hard men. The peoples who hate their enemies shed rivers of blood, because man, in his fury, turns into a beast. There is no peace in us, in spite of all our chattering talks about peace. All men are murderers, and their hearts are filled with contempt, spite, and haughtiness, because they do not know that God is love, truth, and purity. They lost the sense of truth, and have neither a standard nor rest, but have dropped themselves in a critical situation.

## **ROMANS**

**3:18**

**18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.”**

All those who do not know God, are fools; and all those who do not fear him are void of wisdom, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. Unbelief is growing these days, and men behave as if there is no god. No wonder, therefore, that sin abounds, and raises its head impudently in the streets, in magazines, and in hearts!

## ROMANS

3:19-20

**19 Now we know that whatever things the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God. 20 Because by the works of the law, no flesh will be justified in his sight. For through the law comes the knowledge of sin.**

The godly of the Old Testament are only sinners, because the Law brought them up to know sin. It is true that the Law promises us with all blessings of heaven if we keep the commandments, but no man can fulfill this condition. Whenever we try to rebuild by our own efforts, our evil engagements appear in our blood. We all deserve God's punishment, and all our charities are polluted with our selfishness, and we find no favor with God. Do you agree to these Pauline principles? Read once again what Paul wrote that you might become prudent and broken.

*PRAYER: O heavenly Father, we thank you because you gave us hope in Christ that we may become neither desperate nor pessimistic. We are all evil in our hearts, tongues, hands, feet, and eyes; and our hearts are filled with deceit, hatred, lust, and lies. What a dirty person am I! Forgive me my sin, and draw your holiness before my eyes that the sediments of pride may be broken in me, and I may worship only you. O Lord, deliver me completely from my sins.*

*QUESTION 26: How did the apostle clarify our sins as to clarify the complete corruption of mankind?*

### QUIZ - 1

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ reader,  
Having read our comments on the Letter of Paul to the Romans in this booklet, you are now able to answer the following questions. If you answer 90% of the questions stated below, we will send you the next part of this series for your edification. Please do not forget to include your full name and address clearly on the answer sheet.

1. What are the reason and the end of the Epistle to the Romans?
2. Who founded the church in Rome?
3. Who wrote this epistle? Where? And when?
4. What styles did Paul use in his epistle?
5. What is the outline of this epistle?
6. What are the titles which Paul took for himself in the first sentence of his epistle?



Romans that you may receive an everlasting treasure. We are awaiting your answers and praying for you. Our address is:

Waters	of	Life
P.O.Box	600	513
70305		Stuttgart
Germany		

Internet: [www.waters-of-life.net](http://www.waters-of-life.net)

Internet: [www.waters-of-life.org](http://www.waters-of-life.org)

e-mail: [info@waters-of-life.net](mailto:info@waters-of-life.net)